

# The Strange Story of Abner, the Son of Ner.

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## The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Editor.*

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1: 16.

Address correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto

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## THE NEWLY-ORGANIZED DES MOINES UNIVERSITY FACULTY

1927-1928

### AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

We print in this article a list of the present Faculty of Des Moines University. The Faculty Committee have used their best judgment in procuring these professors, and feel the utmost satisfaction in their choice. Many have been praying that the right persons might be found, and we have been conscious of the Lord's special guidance in this matter.

It will be observed that as yet we have not found the men to man the Bible Department; the Headship of the Department of Mathematics and Physics is also vacant; as are the Assistant Professorships in Chemistry and in Biology. But as it stands, we feel we have a strong Faculty, all of whom are pledged to be true to the faith. We ask our readers to continue in prayer that the remaining vacancies may soon be filled.

When the Faculty is complete, two tasks that still remain will be to find money and students. We are hoping for a fine enrolment this fall; but it would be unreasonable to expect the maximum attendance from the beginning. In the student body also we are anxious for more than numbers. The more Christian young men and women we can secure as students, the easier it will be to maintain the high spiritual tone of college life we all desire. As to the money: educational institutions are like the daughters of the horseleach, ever crying, "Give, give"; and were the wise man living in our day, he would add a fifth to the "four things" which never say "It is enough". But Des Moines University needs its tens of thousands of dollars. As we write, we have just received a letter from Alberta containing \$21.00 for Des Moines. If every reader of *The Gospel Witness* would even send us \$10.00 for Des Moines, it would be a great boon. Some time in September we hope to be able to announce a Continent-wide financial campaign. Meanwhile we seek the help of the Lord's stewards for immediate needs.

## THE DES MOINES UNIVERSITY FACULTY.

(The new appointees are marked thus\*.)

### President

*To be appointed*

### Acting-President

The President of the Board of Trustees, Dr. T. T. Shields

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

### Dean.

*To be appointed*

### DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES

**Edward L. Grimes, A.M.**

*Professor of English Literature*

B.S., A.M., Northwestern; Des Moines University, '23

**\*Carrie V. Brown, A.M.**

*Instructor in English*

A.B., Des Moines; Graduate student, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago;  
A.M., Columbia; Des Moines University, '27

**Florence Tyler Stephenson, A.M.**

*Professor of English Literature, Emeritus*

A.B., A.M., Oberlin; Des Moines College, '87

**Flora E. Harris, A.M.**

*Professor of Greek and Latin*

A.B., Central; A.B., Chicago; A.M., Central; Des Moines College, '96

**Joseph A. Dreps, A.M.**

*Professor of French and Spanish*

A.B., A.M., Wisconsin; Des Moines University, '26

**\*Wilhelmina A. Becker, A.M.**

*Professor of German*

A.B., Iowa; A.M., Columbia; Special Study, University of Berlin;  
Des Moines University, '27

### DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

**S. P. Fogdall, Ph.D.**

*Professor of History and Political Science*

Ph.B., Des Moines; A.M., Chicago; Ph.D., Iowa; Des Moines College, '12

**Jeanette Lemley, A.M.**

*Assistant Professor of History*

A.B., Des Moines College; A.M., Chicago; Des Moines University, '24

**Jas. P. Stephenson, Ph.D., LL.D.**

*Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus*

A.B., A.M., Oberlin; Ph.D., Syracuse; LL.D., Des Moines;  
Des Moines College, '87

### DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

**\*Charles W. Rippie, Ph.D.**

*Professor of Chemistry*

B.S., Michigan; M.S., Illinois; Ph.D., Illinois; Des Moines University, '27

*Assistant Professor of Chemistry*

*To be appointed*

**DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND PHYSICS****Professor***To be appointed***\*W. R. Hale, Ph.D.***Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Physics*

A.B., Howard; A.M., Alabama; Ph.D., Peabody; Des Moines University, '27

**DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY****\*E. O. Kaserman, A.M., M.Sc., Th.D.***Professor of Biology*A.M., M.Sc., Tennessee; Mus.B.; Th.D., Louisville;  
Des Moines University, '27**Assistant Professor***To be appointed***DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION****Harold P. Chaffee, A.M.***Professor of Economics and Business Administration*  
A.B., Denison; A.M., Iowa; Des Moines University, '23**DEPARTMENT OF HOME ECONOMICS****\*Florence Wilcox, A.B.***Instructor in Home Economics*

A.B., Des Moines; Graduate Work, Ames; Des Moines University, '27

**DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION****Alan Gowans, B.Sc.***Athletic Coach.*

B.Sc., Cornell; Des Moines University, '26

**\*Harold Davis***Instructor of Physical Education*

Des Moines University, '27

**Isabelle A. Carpenter, B.Sc.***Instructor in Physical Education for Women*

B.Sc., Columbia; Des Moines University, '25

**Lois Staker.***Assistant in Physical Education for Women***COLLEGE OF EDUCATION****Arthur E. Bennett, Ph.D.***Professor of Education*

Dean of the College of Education, Director of the Summer School

**\*Fred J. Sales, Ph.D.***Professor of Psychology and Intermediate Education*  
A.M., Ohio; Ph.D., Marquette; Des Moines University, '27**Carolyn Forgrave***Instructor in Education***Alfred H. Smith***Professor in Supervisors' Music***LeRoy Wilson, B.Sc. in A.E.***Instructor in Art*

B.Sc. in A.E., Des Moines; Des Moines University, '27

## COLLEGE OF MUSIC

\*Robert Harkness

*Professor of Pianoforte*  
*Dean of the College of Music*  
 Des Moines University, '27

\*G. Harold Brown, A.R.C.O.

*Professor of Pianoforte, Organ, Theory and Voice*  
 A.R.C.O., London, Eng.; Des Moines University, '27

\*R. E. Neighbour, Jr., A.B., Mus.B.

*Professor of Violin*  
 A.B., Wheaton; Mus.B., Illinois; Private student of Leopold Auer, as well  
 as Professors Koesler, Sametini, Senior Anteneaque, Maerz,  
 Green, and others. Des Moines University, '27

Henrietta Emmons Isaacs, Mus.B.

*Professor of Pianoforte and Organ*  
 Mus.B., Albert Lea; Special training; Des Moines University, '22

\*Donald G. Davis

*Instructor in Wind Instruments*  
*Director of University Band*  
 Des Moines University, '27

## COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Lorin G. Miller, B.Sc., and B.Sc. in E.E.

*Dean of the College of Engineering*  
*Professor of Mechanical Engineering*  
 B.Sc., B.Sc. in E.E., Highland Park; Graduate work Mass. Institute of  
 Technology; Des Moines University, '23

George Wilcox, C.E.

*Professor of Civil Engineering*  
 C.E., Princeton; Des Moines University, '20

Wm. J. Starr, B.Sc. in M.E.

*Instructor in Mechanical Engineering*  
 B.Sc., Des Moines; Des Moines, '24

R. P. Stringham, B.Sc. in E.E.

*Instructor in Electrical Engineering*  
 B.Sc. in E.E. Des Moines; Des Moines University, '25

Marts D. Blue

*Instructor in Engineering Drawing*  
 Des Moines University, '25

## COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

\*E. C. Callaway, Ph.C., M.Sc.

*Professor of Pharmacy*  
*Dean of the College of Pharmacy*  
 M.Sc., Oregon; Des Moines University, '27

\*Horace J. Fuller, Ph.C.

*Professor of Materia Medica*  
 Ph.C., Ontario College of Pharmacy; Des Moines University, '27

## UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

\*James J. Mills

*Instructor in the University Institute*

**BIBLE DEPARTMENT.**

This department is of great importance. The Trustees are endeavouring to secure men of outstanding ability for its Faculty, but are unable at present to make any announcement. It is possible that we may be able to procure the services of able men for the first semester who are not open for a permanent appointment. The students may be assured that the standard of this department will be in keeping with the standard of the University Faculty as a whole.

**NEW FACULTY MEMBERS.**

It is not necessary to say anything about the members of the Faculty who served on the staff prior to June, 1927, except to say they are in hearty sympathy with the policy of the present Board of Trustees. The Trustees are happy that such tried and experienced professors as Dean Bennett, of the College of Education, Dean Miller of the College of Engineering, and Dr. Fogdall, of the Department of History, are still with us. But we call special attention in this issue of *The Witness* to the members of the Faculty who have been appointed by the present Trustees and who will begin their work in September. We are confident that every reader will acknowledge that the academic standards of Des Moines in these appointments have been fully maintained.

**C. W. Rippie, Ph.D.**

In the Department of Chemistry, we have Dr. Charles W. Rippie, who obtained his doctor's degree from Illinois University. Some time ago we heard of some in Illinois University discussing the new policy at Des Moines, and questioning whether the academic standard would be maintained; whereupon someone said, "We must wait and see how many Ph.D.'s they will have." Our answer to that attitude is, that the new head of the Department of Chemistry is a Ph.D. of the University of Illinois. Dr. Rippie is a member of a Baptist Church and stands uncompromisingly for the faith once for all delivered.

The assistant professor is yet to be appointed.

**W. R. Hale, Ph.D.**

In the Department of Mathematics and Physics, the professor is yet to be appointed, but the assistant professor, Dr. W. R. Hale, is a Ph.D. of Peabody University. Dr. Hale is a Baptist and a fundamentalist.

**E. O. Kaserman, A.M., M.Sc., Th.D.**

In the Department of Biology, we have Dr. E. O. Kaserman. Dr. Kaserman's department and work were specially praised by chief inspectors of the North Central Association. He has been asked to write biology courses for the State manual, and is also the author of special embryology courses for women. He presents the subject matter of biology from the conservative, non-evolution point of view. It is surely an advantage to have as the head of the Biology Department one who is trained in science, and in theology too. One of the greatest of present-day Greek scholars in issuing his Greek grammar requested Dr. Kaserman to read the proof. Too frequently Biology is discussed in its relation to evolution either by irreligious scientists or unscientific religionists. Dr. Kaserman knows his subject from both points of view. We predict that the Biology Department alone will attract a great company of students to Des Moines. Dr. Kaserman is a Baptist, a Biblical scholar, as well as a scientist and stands like a rock against modern infidelity.

Dr. Kaserman's assistant is yet to be appointed.

**Fred J. Sales, Ph.D.**

In the College of Education there is one new appointment, Dr. Fred J. Sales, Professor of Psychology and Intermediate Education. Dr. Sales received his A.M. from Ohio, and his Ph.D. from Marquette. He is a thorough-going fundamentalist, and in full sympathy with the present policy of the University.

#### Dean Robert Harkness.

In the College of Music there are four new appointments:

Dean Robert Harkness is known the world around as one of the greatest of present-day pianists. He was a technically-trained, professional musician in Australia, when asked to play at one of the Torrey-Alexander meetings. His contact with these evangelists resulted in his conversion, and in the dedication of his great talents to the services of the Lord. He has made several world tours, and his acceptance of the position of Dean of the College of Music will ensure both its efficiency and its popularity. Dean Harkness will bring strength and inspiration, not to the College of Music only, but to the whole University.

#### Professor G. Harold Brown, A.R.C.O.

Professor G. Harold Brown, A.R.C.O., is a teacher of long experience. He was for some years professor in Macdonald College, Montreal; for nine years organist of the First Presbyterian Church, Montreal, and comes to Des Moines from Youngstown, Ohio, where he was organist and choirmaster of the First Baptist Church. He is an Associate of the Royal College of Organists, London, and his work has been praised by Sir Alexander MacKenzie, Head of the Royal Academy of Music, London.

#### Professor R. E. Neighbour, Jr., A.B., Mus.B.

Professor R. E. Neighbour, Jr., received his A.B. at Wheaton, and his Mus.B. at Illinois, when his grade was ninety-eight—the highest but one, the highest being ninety-eight plus. Professor Neighbour has been a private student of Leopold Auer, the teacher of the famous Mischa Elman, Chrysler, and other famous violinists. Professor Neighbour is a Baptist and stands for the Book.

#### Donald G. Davis.

Donald G. Davis, Director of the University Band, is a young man of great promise. His work in this direction and as instructor in wind instruments will be of great service to the University.

#### Professor E. C. Callaway, B.S., M.Sc.

In the College of Pharmacy, Dean Callaway will bring a rich experience and great teaching ability to this department. Professor Callaway had eight years' experience as city chemist of Portland, Oregon; and was Professor of Chemistry in North Pacific College, Oregon. As a devout Christian and a thorough fundamentalist, it follows that Professor Callaway is not a modernist. Notwithstanding, he is essentially modern, and will modernize the College of Pharmacy by introducing an entirely new course in clinical laboratory work, and in training his students in methods of drug store administration.

Des Moines University has in the new Dean of the College of Pharmacy a man who will make himself felt outside of the class-room in the lives of the students, and who will be a distinct asset to the university life.

#### Professor Horace J. Fuller, Ph.C.

Professor Horace J. Fuller is the new professor of *Materia Medica*. He is a graduate of the Ontario College of Pharmacy, Toronto. It will be a distinct advantage to the pharmacy students to have two professors from different parts of the continent, combining new ideas and methods, and cooperating in keeping the college of pharmacy up to the latest development in pharmaceutical science.

#### AN ALUMNI COMMUNICATION.

The Trustees have received the following memorandum from a group of thirty-five alumni of Des Moines University, who gathered at a picnic July 17, 1927. The suggestions contained in this memorandum are so valuable that we print them in full because they afford us an opportunity to say certain things which need to be said.

But here we would express our great appreciation of the interest manifested by the alumni of the University; and we venture to hope that the attitude of the thirty-five gathered at Iowa City is typical of hundreds of others centred all over the continent.

**Memorandum of Alumni of Des Moines University at Iowa City, July 17, 1927.**

In view of the recent changes in management of the University, accompanied as it has been by many reports and much press comment of vague and varied character, the undersigned alumni and former students are prompted to communicate to you the following considerations:

It would be unnecessary to explain at any length our interest and concern in the University. We have those feelings of loyalty toward and appreciation for the institution common to all alumni toward their alma mater. It seems fitting here to express our appreciation and thanks to the men and women who gave devoted service to the institution while we were in school. The stamp of certain ideals which we have found wholesome and worthy was placed on their teaching. In this connection we should like to mention many men and women to whom we are indebted, but they may be personified in Dr. and Mrs. J. P. Stephenson, Miss Flora Harris, Dean Bennett, Mrs. Page, and Dr. Fogdall. With the desire of seeing those ideals blended into the new stream of life at Des Moines University and feeling an inherent interest in it as holders of diplomas from it and its component schools we submit a few suggestions which we hope might be helpful and which may be considered as forming in general the basis of our continued loyalty.

(1) While believing that the principal burden of education should be borne by the State we believe that a few private schools may and should be maintained to supplement the State system and to give opportunity for private enterprise and experiment with special educational programmes and under special conditions. Good traditions may thus be continued where desired and special opportunities for moral and religious activities offered.

(2) While admitting that such an institution should be under the special and dominating care and direction of the denomination owning it, we believe it advisable to be very catholic in applying this direction. While it is but fair and logical that the management and a major or predominating portion of the faculty should belong to that denomination owning a private school, yet we believe that a number of strong teachers of other branches of the Church at large should not only be permitted on the faculty, but sought for it. They should be required to furnish recommendations from their respective denominations and be of outstanding moral character.

(3) We suggest that in carrying out a policy of emphasis on a high moral standard a careful distinction be made between the use and misuse of organizations. If fraternities are abolished it should be on the grounds of their being undemocratic or uneconomical and not as a moral measure. We suggest that for the present fraternities be continued and required to show that there is nothing in their organization inimical to high moral standards of members.

(4) The same may be said of athletics as in the above paragraph. Athletics as play and recreation should be encouraged. The tendency in many colleges to professionalize and reduce to a technical science sports should not be followed. Mass athletics and recreation should be favored.

(5) We consider that the highest moral and religious standards are not only compatible with but necessary to high scholarship. Therefore we advocate the securing of the strongest faculties possible. In this connection it may be stated that certain requirements of standardizing agencies are artificial and arbitrary and may defeat the main purposes of true education, yet in the main most of the provisions are well founded. For that reason and for the convenience of favorable comparison in catalogues and statistics we recommend that the University make every effort to meet the requirements of some standard standardizing agencies with respect to faculties, endowments, etc.

Very respectfully submitted to the Board of Trustees, of Des Moines University, Des Moines, Iowa.

(Signed)

Chas. M. Neveln, Iowa Fall, Iowa, '08.

Wm. J. Dennis, Iowa City, Iowa, '16.

Myra H. Heeren, Creston, Iowa, '23.

Phebe E. Speirs, Hedrick, Iowa, '20.

Loleta Green, 1605 Park St., Hamburg, Iowa.

Forrest P. Hagan, LeRoy, Iowa, '26.

H. L. Ballinger, Iowa City, Iowa.

R. W. Newell, Seymour, Iowa.

Mrs. Ethel Stone Woodard, Scotland, So. Dakota, '16.

Edna L. Fegtly 1540—10th, Des Moines, Iowa.

Mrs. Elfeda Fegtly Dennis, Iowa City, Iowa.

Florence Pascoe, Albia, Iowa.

(There were thirty-five present at an alumni picnic, where it was decided to send a statement to the trustees; after the above memorandum was drawn up many did not have an opportunity to sign, but it was drawn up along lines suggested, and they probably would have signed unanimously had they had the opportunity.)

#### THE PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON THE FOREGOING.

The President of the Board of Trustees comments on the above memorandum as follows:

Paragraph One: The University heartily approves of paragraph one. Beyond question there is a place for a denominational university, voluntarily maintained by people of definite religious convictions. Baptists believe in the entire separation of church and state, and insist that it is no part of the state's function to teach religion. That position puts upon Baptists the obligation to provide a system, at least of higher education, based upon and conducted in harmony with the supreme revelation of truth in the Lord Jesus Christ. In such a school young people may be trained by a most thorough intellectual discipline, combined with sound religious teaching.

Paragraph Two: We have much sympathy with this second paragraph; and in reply thereto we would announce that the denominational aspect of Des Moines control, in the thought of the Trustees, while very important, is really secondary. The Baptist Bible Union recognizes that some of the worst enemies of Evangelical religion masquerade under the name of Baptists; while in pedo-Baptist bodies, although they are no more exempt from the taint of modernism than Baptists, there are to be found some of the truest servants of Christ who stand uncompromisingly for the Bible as the Word of God, and if, or when, the Trustees, in filling appointments, should be shut up to a choice between a non-evangelical "Baptist", and an evangelical pedo-Baptist, we should have no hesitation in appointing the pedo-Baptist. Important as the Christian ordinances are, and far-reaching also as are the principles of ecclesiology for which Baptists stand, we recognize that they are secondary to those vital matters which concern the soul's personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ.

In consonance with this principle, we have retained on the Faculty all true evangelicals, irrespective of denomination. No one has been dismissed from the Faculty, or appointed to the Faculty primarily, on the ground of their denominational affiliation. But we have kept constantly in mind, first: that the appointee must be an out-and-out Christian, accepting the Bible as the Word of God, but being that, he or she must also have the scholarship necessary to the position to be filled. Of course, other things being equal, we prefer to appoint Baptists.

Paragraph Three: With this paragraph the Trustees are in perfect accord. There is no organization in existence, the church included, which has not been misused. No radical steps will be taken respecting college fraternities; but if at any time it should be proved that they injuriously affect the

moral and religious life, or the academic work of the institution, we should not hesitate to take action to correct the evil.

**Paragraph Four:** With this we also are in hearty accord. The authorities of the university could not have more accurately defined their present policy respecting athletics than it is defined in this paragraph.

**Paragraph Five:** With this paragraph also we agree without any reservation. We call our readers' attention to the list of appointments named in this issue. We recognize that certain standards are useful, and we have endeavoured to conform to these, not only to the letter, but in some instances to go beyond the actual requirement. We name one instance in which we have not troubled to enquire what the standards are. In the case of the Dean of the College of Music, we have asked no questions about his training. Mr. Robert Harkness for many years has been a world-famous musician. Literally many hundreds of thousands of people have been thrilled by his playing, while probably millions have been inspired by his compositions. Who ever heard of Dr. Paderewski? Who cares anything about the degrees of Leopold Auer? Thus when we found it possible to secure the services of a man who was the peer of America's greatest musicians, we did not even ask him where he graduated: we ask only that he shall teach others to do what he has done.

But we recognize the value of certain university standards; and this applies especially to the College of Education, and the College of Arts and Sciences. In making appointments to these faculties, the Board of Trustees have had before them the standards of the North Central Association, and have complied with their requirements to the letter.

We are grateful to the thirty-five alumni of Iowa City for their memorandum.

#### WILL DES MOINES CREDITS BE ACCEPTED?

With the new faculty appointments, Des Moines University conforms to the standards of the North Central Association at every point, except in respect to endowment. But judged by the academic standing of the members of the Faculty, and the quality of their work, Des Moines University, we believe, will compare with any institution of its size on the continent. We could easily have filled every vacancy in half the time, had we not been determined somehow and from somewhere, to obtain professors whose standing will be recognized as of the highest.

It is particularly necessary that those contemplating a course in Education, having the teaching profession in view, should be assured that their credits will be accepted in other schools and by the state. Of course, the same principle in some measure applies to all other departments, especially to the College of Arts and Sciences where the general educational foundation is laid.

We invite prospective students to compare the Des Moines Faculty with that of any other similar institution.

#### FALL REGISTRATION.

Prospective Freshman are expected to be on the campus by noon, Friday, September 16, 1927. General registration begins Monday, September 19th.

#### UNIVERSITY CATALOGUE

Giving full information will be sent by return mail on application.

#### A GREAT BIBLE CONFERENCE.

In harmony with such a conception of the possibilities of life through the salvation which is in Christ, involving an experience of the supernatural grace of the Holy Spirit, the Baptist Bible Union proposes to celebrate the opening of the first term of its own University by the holding of a great three-day Bible Conference at the University, Tuesday to Thursday, September 27th, 28th and 29th.

## PROGRAMME

of

## BAPTIST BIBLE UNION CONFERENCE

to be held in

## DES MOINES UNIVERSITY ASSEMBLY HALL

Des Moines, Iowa,

September 27, 28 and 29

## TUESDAY

- 2:30 Prayer and Praise. Rev. H. O. Meyer, Des Moines, Iowa.  
 3:00 Address: Dr. J. W. Hoyt, Chicago, Ill. "The Pre-eminence of Christ."  
 3:45 Introduction of Newly-appointed Professors: Brief responses by heads of departments.  
 7:30 Prayer and Praise. Dr. Paul Riley Allen, Keokuk, Iowa.  
 8:00 Address: Dr. J. W. Gillon, Shawnee, Okla. "The Agencies in Christian Education."

## WEDNESDAY

- 2:30 Prayer and Praise. Rev. R. Kinney, Eldora, Iowa.  
 3:00 Address: Prof. E. C. Callaway, Des Moines University. "The Need of an Essentially Christian University."  
 7:30 Prayer and Praise. Rev. H. G. Hamilton, Austin, Minn.  
 8:00 Address: Dr. J. W. Gillon, Shawnee, Okla. "The Philosophy of a Biblical Paradox."

## THURSDAY

- 2:30 Prayer and Praise. Rev. R. F. Jaudon, Kansas City.  
 3:00 Address: Prof. E. O. Kaserman, Professor of Biology, Des Moines University. "The Biology of the Bible."  
 3:45 Address: Dr. C. P. Stealey, Oklahoma City, Okla. "Loyalty to Christ vs. Loyalty to Organizations."  
 7:30 Prayer and Praise. Rev. Minor Stephens.  
 8:00 Address: Dr. T. T. Shields, Toronto, Canada. "The Supernatural, the Storm Centre of Christianity."

## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### THE STRANGE STORY OF ABNER THE SON OF NER.

A Great Man Who Died as a Fool.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, August 7th, 1927.

(Stenographically Reported)

"And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth?"—II Samuel 3:33.



UR text is in the third chapter of the second book of Samuel, beginning at the twenty-second verse; but before I read it, let me give you the introduction. Abner the son of Ner was captain of Saul's hosts, and Joab the son of Zeruah was the commander of David's army. Even after Saul's death "there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David." And "Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul"; he set Ish-bosheth the son of Saul forward as Saul's successor, and rival to David the Lord's anointed. But when he was falsely accused by Ish-bosheth his heart

turned toward David, and he entered into communication with David, proposing to turn the tribes of Israel from the house of Saul to the house of David. David sent for Abner, and Abner came into the presence of the king. He came during the absence of Joab, and they made a covenant with each other, and the king sent Abner away in peace.

Now at the twenty-second verse, "And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it he is quite gone? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew it not. And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner; let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fall from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him. And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the kind did pleased all the people. For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."

Let us unite our hearts as we seek the Spirit's guidance: O Lord, for the understanding of Thy truth we pray for the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit. We pray that we may be able to understand that which is written, and that our hearts may be made receptive, that we may receive the truth in the love of it, and thereby be saved. Bless us every one for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

In this chapter of history which I have read to you there is a very striking illustration of how men throw their lives away, and fail to possess the salvation which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. Abner is a rebel, he has been in rebellion against the king; but he repents of his folly and comes into the king's presence. The king makes a feast to receive him, and sends him away in peace. But there is an enemy resolved upon Abner's destruction who bids him return to Hebron, and intercepts him in the way outside the city gate, and, taking him aside quietly to "speak peaceably to him", he smites him under the fifth rib so that Abner dies. Then we have the pathetic story of the king's mourning over Abner, calling all his people to witness that he is not responsible for Abner's death, that his blood must be upon another. The Word tells us that God willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.

I should like to unfold this story to you as I speak of a sovereign's love, of a rebel's lunacy—for Abner died as a fool—and of a monarch's lamentation.

## I.

Notwithstanding Abner's rebellion, DAVID GREATLY LOVED HIM, AND LAVISHED HIS AFFECTION EVEN UPON AN ENEMY. And so runs the gospel story, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." There is not one of us here this evening who has not been in rebellion against a greater King than David. If you go back and turn the pages of your own record, you will find, every one of you, that day after day, your thought, your time, and your strength, were spent in opposition to God. There are men and women here this evening who, if they were to confess the truth, would have to acknowledge that up to this hour they have done nothing but rebel against God. They hate His commandments, they take up an attitude of antagonism toward His Word, they wish that its prohibitions were not written, they desire their own will and their own way, and are "enemies in their minds by wicked works". I draw a bow at a venture, and yet I am sure there are some here to whom the Word applies, and for whom the shaft is divinely designed—there are people in this house of prayer this evening who know, in their heart of hearts, that their carnal mind is enmity against God. But oh, the wonder of the gospel is that God did not wait for our penitence, He loved us notwithstanding our rebellion, He loved us even in our rebellion, He loved us when we were doing our utmost to dishonour His Son, and to discredit His Word. So David poured forth the wealth of his affection upon one who had drawn his sword against him.

Then I would remind you also that at the first sign of penitence, *the king prepared a feast that thereby he might welcome the rebel to his presence.* As soon as Abner expressed his desire to come into conformity with God's Word respecting David, and said, "I know now that the plan and purpose of God is that David should sit upon the throne, and I am ready to give the king my sword, and to spend the rest of my life in bringing back the tribes I have alienated from the king that they may fight under his banner"—as soon as the king heard it, he welcomed Abner, and made a feast for him and the men who were with him. There is no reluctance on the part of our gracious King: the Lord Jesus Christ receives those who turn to Him.

On more than one occasion I have had men come to me who have told me they have come from the penitentiary after a long prison term. I had one not long ago who said, "Can you do anything to help me? Wherever I go they ask me, 'Where do you come from?' I want to go straight, but when I tell the truth, the door is instantly shut in my face. Even the best of people will not give me a chance, even the best of people will not help me. I am often hungry, yet they will not help me." That is how men treat their fellows; but it is not after that fashion the Lord Jesus treats the rebel: though we come to him with hands dyed with blood, though we have guilt in our hearts, though we have shared the hatred of those who crucified Him, even then He is ready to receive us with open arms; and not only so, but to welcome us with a great feast. The Apostle Paul never ceased to wonder at that, again and again he referred to it. He never forgot the day he stood by and kept the clothes of Stephen as he was stoned to death; it came back to him again and again, and he said, "And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." Then he spoke of the revelation of God to him and said, "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." Oh, the marvel of it, that the outstanding leader of the Christian forces of all time, who perhaps in his person more perfectly than any one, our Lord Himself excepted, exemplified the qualities of grace—that even he should have risen from the depths of a murderer to that exalted position! But it is thus our Lord receives and welcomes back again those who have rebelled against Him, that is His attitude; He loads us with benefits if we will but come to Him.

Notwithstanding Abner's reception when he came to the king, *he tarried but a little while, and went away in peace*, having resolved to do great things for the king. I know well that such as receive life from the hand of our gracious God, receive eternal life; I know that when He saves, He saves for

ever; but I know, too, that there are many who, like Abner, seem to come, there are many who actually profess to come into the presence of the King, who actually sit at His table and share the bounty of the feast, apparently, and who have resolved upon some high endeavour, that their lives shall henceforth be consecrated to the service of God, who yet at last die as fools as Abner died, never having partaken of the grace of life—almost saved, almost persuaded, yet altogether lost. "David sent Abner away, and he went in peace."

I wonder are there some here like that this evening? Some man says, "Yes, sir, I subscribe to all you say. I know I am a sinner; I know the Bible, I know the way of life; and I also pray, notwithstanding my wilfulness, and I trust some time to be wholly given up to the Lord. I have been into the presence of the King, I know all that you are talking about, and I have gone away again in peace—I did not abide with the King." That was the trouble with Abner. It is useless merely to visit the Lord Jesus, there is no salvation in a visit: there is salvation for those who abide. When you come to Jesus Christ, stay with Him: "Who, when he (Barnabas) came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." If Abner had only stayed, and if Abner had been in David's presence when Joab came, Joab would not have dared to lift his hand against him! It was because he came and went again, it was because he did not abide, it was because he did not make his home with him. I confess I am dealing with somewhat of a mystery, and yet at the same time, with a very practical problem. The problem we have to face today is this, that notwithstanding the teaching of God's Word which we so firmly believe, there are great companies of people who have professed to surrender to God, who are yet dying by the enemy's hand; that is the pity of it.

## II.

Let us examine, then, ABNER'S COURSE.

In the first place, Abner *did not die by the hand of the king*. It was, not by a sword in the hand of David that Abner fell; it was not by the king's will or purpose that Abner came down to the dust of death: it was by another hand than David's that Abner fell. And, my dear friends, the Scripture is perfectly plain that God has provided a way of escape for all of Adam's sons: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." No man was ever sent to hell for Adam's sin yet, but for his own sin: for his deliberate appropriation of Adam's guilt, and for rejection of the grace of the second Adam. We always have our choice, whether we will appropriate the guilt of the first transgressor, or the grace of Him Who was "numbered with the transgressors" in order that we might be saved. And let me tell you that the teaching of God's Word is perfectly clear that He will be justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges; and our blood will rest upon our own heads if at last we die the death of the sinner. Salvation has been provided in Christ, a door has been opened into the presence of the King.

And yet *there was no miscarriage of justice in the death of Abner*: he deserved to die, he was worthy of death, he had sinned grievously, he had done his utmost to destroy the kingdom of David and the king himself, he had set someone else up in the place of the Lord's anointed, he had tried to crown another brow instead of the brow of David; and when he died, he merited, he deserved, the fate that befell him.

But *he did not die by any legal process whatsoever*: "Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters." There is a sense in which Abner was a suicide, even though ostensibly he was slain in battle. He had slain Asahel the brother of Abishai, he who was "as light of foot as a wild roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. . . . And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me", but he would not, and Asahel fell on Abner's spear, "and he fell down there, and died in the same place." But it was in battle that Asahel fell, it was fair. But now Abishai is determined to avenge his brother's blood, and for this reason he was resolved upon Abner's destruc-

tion. Abner is returning to Hebron—and Hebron was one of the cities of refuge; had his foot once reached the gate of the city, he would have been safe, even from the blood of Asahel. In the presence of David in Hebron he would have been perfectly safe, but it was without the gate the enemy met him, and secretly turned him aside, and smote him under the fifth rib that he died.

Abner was the victim of misplaced faith. Abner was a great believer—but the trouble was that he believed the wrong person; he believed Joab, whereas Joab was unworthy of any man's confidence, as he had proved again and again. I hear a great many people saying in a very superior way, "I am not a Christian because I cannot believe"—and the people who "cannot believe" are the most credulous people on earth! There is sound reason underlying the Word of God, it is based in reason, there is nothing unreasonable about the Christian religion; in some respects it is above and beyond reason, but it is never unreasonable; it transcends the scope of the finite mind. But our hearts can find rest in the written Word of God that cannot lie. The difficulty to-day is that people will believe anything but the Bible, and anybody but God. For example, you will find a man who says, "I cannot believe"—and yet he believes the sophistries of the tempter, he believes that sin will give him what it promises. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat." When we listen to the tempter's promises, we believe them.

Do you know how sin entered into the world? It entered into the world by faith, faith in the wrong person. Unbelief is only the other side of faith, that is all. We are all believers, we all believe, believe a thousand things we cannot prove. But the difference is this: the Christian believes God and says, "Let God be true, but every man a liar"; the man who is not a Christian believes everybody but God, and by the fact that he does not believe God, he makes God a liar, "because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son." There are men and women here this evening who have had experience enough with sin already to know that sin is a liar. Never yet did it fulfil its promises; its siren call has always wooed men to destruction, and never to peace and prosperity. There are some who are not addicted to any gross or sensual pleasure, but they follow the world, they are bewitched by its attractiveness, they desire to scale the heights, and, by some great achievement, at last to win themselves a place in the world's esteem. What folly! What utter folly! "This vile world is not a friend to grace, to help us on to God", and there never was a man who served the world whole-heartedly who was not deceived and disappointed.

Take many public servants to-day. I said it in my class this morning, and I venture to repeat it here, gladly we all join in acclaiming a great man like Premier Baldwin. I have no doubt he deserves all the plaudits of the people, I have no doubt that in every respect he is a great man, but I remember being in the House of Commons during the war. I was in England every year during the war, and I remember when men's spirits were broken, and when everybody believed that we had fallen upon the darkest days of history, when night after night the searchlights were sweeping the sky to discover the enemy, when more men were needed, and more money was needed, when more munitions were needed, and when all the strength of the empire needed to be mobilized to meet the enemy, there was one great man who stood out head and shoulders above all other men, and the whole empire turned to him and loaded burden after burden upon his shoulders until one marvelled that he could stand up under it. I know for years it was my daily prayer that God would give him physical strength, that God would maintain him under the awful burden that rested upon him. And when France was tottering, and almost fallen, when she was bled white, Clemenceau, that old tiger stepped into the breach; but he would have failed utterly had not his English friend stood by his side. Later Clemenceau acknowledged it, and paid his tribute to that great Prime Minister who would not dream of defeat, the man who did more for the British Empire in those trying days than a dozen ordinary men, David Lloyd George. The blackest page in British history was written when little pigmies of men, moved by jealousy, conspired to destroy that man, because they knew so long as he was Prime

Minister, there was no chance of their being seen. They said, "Let us destroy him that we may be seen. It is all right for us now that the enemy is driven from our gates." Spend your all, to the last drop of your life's blood, and the world will trample you under its feet at last. You cannot expect any reward.

There are some very *intellectual Abners* who cannot believe! I have been speaking two or three Sunday evenings about Russellism. Some man comes along and says, "I cannot believe the Bible." Well, if you can believe the vagaries, the fallacies, and the deceptions of Charles Russell, there is nothing out of hell you cannot believe. The man who can swallow that, can swallow anything, and has parted company with reason, and has joined hands with those who have surrendered their judgments. I never anywhere saw, in any literature, anything that was so utterly false, so utterly unscriptural, and apparently so unbelievable, as that system which thousands of people swallow. But some superior gentleman comes along and says, "I do not believe Russellism at all, I am glad you spoke on that cult—I do not believe you either, but I do not believe that." You do not believe the gospel, do you? "No!" Somebody told me this morning he had at last found the faith—in the church of the Latter Day Saints! What delusions! we live in a day when men "cannot believe". The difficulty is, we live in a day when men will believe anything and anybody but the Word of God, and the God of the Word. Any Joab who will take them aside and speak peaceably to them, will gather his disciples.

And my dear friend who goes to college—he may be a student, or he may be a professor, but he comes to me and tells me he is an evolutionist. I ask him to prove it to me, and he says he cannot, he admits it. But it all happened away back unnumbered millions of years ago—I notice a professor has found something out in British Columbia that is, I believe he says, five millions of years old! You have got to be a great mathematician or else you cannot be an evolutionist, because you have to push your guess so far back that nobody could have been there, and nobody can possibly say it did not happen! It is nothing but a guess; leading scientists say so. But how easy it is to believe the first chapter of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"! A man came to see me this last week and said, "I am not an evolutionist; I am a theistic evolutionist. I believe that that is the method by which God brought things to pass." "Why do you believe it?" I said. You tell me that Darwinism is out-of-date, you do not believe that. What do you believe? The Scripture says that God created all things "after their kind," whose seed was in itself; and He commanded them to bring forth "after their kind"—and there is not a scientist in all the world to-day who can give one solitary instance in which any creature did ever bring forth any other than its kind. No scientist living can demonstrate the truth of evolution, and yet some professor tells us about the millions and millions of years ago when we originated,—like a certain American College President who speaks of, "My friend, the amoeba"! He is welcome to his ancestry! I did not come from any little thing like that!

That is only an illustration of my point, that if men will use their imaginations, and make a big enough guess, they will find people who, in the name of intellectuality, will believe it, when there is not an infinitesimal spark of reason in it. They can believe Joab any time he speaks, but they never can believe God. And Joab took him aside and drove his dagger under the fifth rib, and the great captain fell down dead. And that is what a man gets who believes the world, the flesh, and the devil. The devil was a liar from the beginning, and he takes us aside to slay us.

The king mourned when he heard that Abner was dead. He summoned all Israel to the mourning. He said, "I want all my people to know that my hands are free from his blood.—Died Abner as a fool dieth." So is it, my dear friends, if the sinner dies, his blood is upon his own head. We die for our own sins, not for somebody else's.

I must hasten. And the king stood at the bier; and they offered him food, but he said, "No." And the king wept, and when he wept all the people wept, and there was a great weeping and mourning in Israel that day. And the king said, "Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou." Abner's was an *unnecessary death*, a death that ought not to have occurred, a virtual suicide, he was a man who threw

his life away. "Let all my people know", said David, "that I am not responsible"—and "all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner."

"And the king said unto his servants, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" When we speak of the doctrine of total depravity, we do not for a moment question that *men were made to be princes*. If men were animals only, then there were not much occasion of mourning; but David saw that Abner was a man of splendid qualities, that he was a leader of men, a man possessed of princely powers. He saw in his character some elements of true greatness; but this splendid ship had been captained by a rebellious will, which had reduced it at last to a heap of wreckage. Had Abner not been in the service of the wrong king, his name would have gone down as immortal. We were made for some higher destiny than that for which our faces are set this evening if we are outside of Christ: we were made to be princes, great men. God has endowed men with great abilities, and yet the greater the ability, the greater the sin of using all their powers to turn away from God instead of turning to Him.

You cannot save a man by education. I heard a man say once that an uneducated thief will steal something out of a railroad car standing on a siding, but the educated thief will steal the whole railway! "A prince and a great man", and yet fallen in Israel; but Israel knew that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

And there is a great day coming when final sentence will be passed on men, "when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel"—by the same Christ Who shed His blood for their salvation. I wish I had time to talk to you about that. David did not take food, and by his demeanour showed that he did mourn deeply the death of Abner—but that was all he did, all he could do. But what shall we say of a greater David Who came from—

"The highest throne in glory  
To the cross of deepest woe"—

Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, Who went into hell itself for us. Do not believe that Russellite doctrine, that it was the body only of our Lord that made atonement: it was His infinite soul into which the sorrows of the world were poured; and when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, He laid down the life of God; even God went all the way, if I may dare to say so, to hell itself, and endured ten thousand hells that you and I might be saved. And when at last He takes His seat upon the judgment throne with the marks of the nails in His hands, and of the thorns about His brow, when He appears as a Lamb, "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us,"—what for?—"and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" There will be no excuse, my friends, there is no use preparing an excuse; every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world shall become guilty before God, when the very Judge upon the throne shall say, "Here is the proof that He died, and that God willeth not the death of the sinner"; and your blood is upon your own head whoever will die in the face of all that Jesus Christ did for us.

Will you trust Him? I want to leave you this evening without excuse in the judgment day. There may be here some man this evening who never again will be invited to come to Christ, who never again will have the opportunity of bowing at the feet of Christ, this may be the very last opportunity he will ever have on earth—it may be my last opportunity of preaching, I do not know. Your last opportunity of hearing, or my last of preaching, whichever it be, I would speak to you as one who, in the presence of God, would be free from the blood of all men; and I tell you in the name of the Lord that if you go to hell instead of heaven, it is because you committed suicide. "Died Abner as a fool dieth." He ought to have been saved, but threw his life away. Oh, shall we trust Christ to-night?