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H. E. Buchner

# The Gospel Witness

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Editor.*

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### Is Future Punishment Consistent with the Truth That God Is Love?

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 15th, 1928.

(Stenographically Reported)

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."—Hosea 11:8.

This passage originally, and I think perhaps, ultimately, has application to God's ancient people; but wrapped up in it there is a principle of divine government which is applicable to all people, in all ages, even to the end of time.

You will recall that when Jacob in Egypt pronounced a blessing upon Joseph's sons, they were brought to him with the elder, Manasseh, toward his right hand, and the younger, Ephraim, toward his left. But the old patriarch crossed his hands in blessing, and laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim and his left hand upon the head of Manasseh; and, blessing them, he predicted that in Ephraim should Israel be called. Thus "he set Ephraim before Manasseh." In later days the ten tribes were called by the name of Ephraim. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." In this case the whole people are addressed, the northern kingdom, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?" But the same principle which finds expression in this pathetic cry, applies to all with whom God has to do; for He is the God of all the earth.

I desire to speak to you in a very simple way this evening of three things: What Justice dictates; What Mercy designs; and, What Unbelief may determine.

#### I.

First of all, WHAT JUSTICE DICTATES. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" Here God contemplates the possibility of withdrawing His mercy from His people, of ceasing from all effort to bring them to repentance. They

are bent on backsliding from Him. He has laboured with them long; He has sent to them many messengers; He has all but exhausted the treasuries of His grace, if I may so say, in respect to them, until at last He asks, "How shall I give thee up?" So obdurate are they, so persistent in their rebellion, so unresponsive to every divine advance, that He stops to ask Himself, "Shall I abandon them? Shall I give them up?"

It is conceivable that a man, even a good man, may in a moment of distress contemplate a course of action which, on maturer thought, he will refuse to follow. He may be driven to ask, How shall I do this? or, How shall I do that? The course he contemplates may be wrong, may be ethically wrong, and may be contrary to every principle of wisdom; but he may even think of doing it. But, recovering himself, he may say, "No, that is impossible, that course is out of the question." It is otherwise with God. "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Our Lord Jesus said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." It is impossible that God should entertain a thought which would be at variance with the law of His own nature. And He is absolutely holy; therefore when God said, "How shall I give thee up?" He contemplated a course which would be in strict accord with justice, with righteousness, with truth. He might in justice give us up; He might make us as Admah, and set us as Zeboim; He might deliver us up to judgment. And if He did, His own nature would not be violated in the surrender; it would be in strict accord with the

law of His holiness, for we have merited only such treatment. The implication of that enquiry, therefore, is that the mere fact that God asks it, proves that it might justly be done.

What is *the figure of the text*? To what does He refer when He says, "How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim?" Admah and Zeboim were the two cities of the plain which shared in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. They were partakers of the same judgment, because they were guilty of the same sin. It is equivalent to His saying, "How shall I make thee as Sodom? How shall I set thee as Gomorrah? How shall I give thee up to the fires of judgment, and blot thee out of My sight? How shall I let Heaven's vengeance fall upon Ephraim, and unsheath the sword of My judgment against Israel?"

That is the figure of the text,—let us examine it for a few minutes.

It ought to teach us, in the first place, *how terrible a thing sin is in the sight of God*. There is an increasing tendency in our day to make light of sin. I suppose the prevalence of the evolutionary idea has a tendency to lead men to suppose that evil is but the residue of a lower animal existence, and that the man is not to be greatly blamed for being what he is; for that doctrine teaches, not that we were once made in the likeness of God, and have fallen, but that we were made in the likeness of the brute creation, and are on the upward road. That doctrine, of course, strikes at the very root of every evangelical principle; and no man who ever accepted it, or who now accepts it, can possibly, at the same time, accept the teaching of the Word of God; it is directly opposed to it at every point. The principle is here: if God in justice stops to enquire whether He shall give you up and give me up, whether He shall give up our sins to the judgment of fire from heaven—if that be the punishment our sins deserve, then how terrible a thing sin must be!

I read last week that one of our justices, in pronouncing sentence upon a young man guilty of an infamous crime, said, "I am only sorry I cannot send you to the gallows. I should like to sentence you to hang, to commit you to death. But for the fact that the Appellate Court reversed a sentence, commuted a death sentence, a short time ago for a similar crime, I would sentence you to death." What a terrible thing that was, for a man to listen to a judge on the bench, the incarnation of justice, say, "If you had your just deserts, you would be driven out of the world, you deserve to die"! Yet I felt like saying, Amen, to what the judge said.

But here is the great Judge Who said, "How shall I pass sentence of fire upon your sins?" Never would He have asked that question if our sins had not deserved that punishment. In the Book itself, judgment was committed to human hands for enforcement. Again and again severe penalties were prescribed for certain offences; but nowhere in the Book were men authorized to visit others with fire. I know that by lynch law sometimes great criminals—or supposedly great criminals, at least—have been burned to death. I know that religious intolerance has reared the stake, and has burned men for their faith. But nowhere in the Bible are men authorized to visit the iniquity of their fellows with fire. But the Judge of all judges, the Ruler of all rulers, the King of kings and Lord of lords, declares that sin deserves fire.

I do not know what that figure means, if it be but a figure. You are welcome to your view that it is figurative language. If it be so, it is the most terrible figure that can be conceived. The old philosophers used to say the elements of the universe were four: earth, air, fire, and water. Life is possible in the earth, the air is teeming with life, and so is the water; but can you tell me anything that can live in fire? It is a figure, if you take it on that ground, of the most terrible sort. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?"

I think there is nothing more necessary to-day than that we should apprehend the biblical idea of the heinousness of sin,—that it is a thing that is so contrary to God's nature that He cannot possibly permit it to come where He is. Of purer eyes than to behold evil, He cannot, and will not, look upon iniquity. It is of no use for us to make excuses for ourselves, it is of no use for us to say there are extenuating circumstances: the law of His nature will not permit God to allow sin to come where He is. If we could see sin in its true light, if we could see that it has in it the very germ of hell itself, and that if the fires of hell were put out, your sin or my sin, apart from the boundless mercy of God, would rekindle them, because it is a thing that is opposed to God, and that deserves the punishment of fire,—if we could realize these things, we should regard sin with indescribable horror.

But there is another view of this: "How shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?" There is here *not merely punishment suggested, but a remedy prescribed*. It is as though the Divine Surgeon, looking upon a sinful world, were saying, "Nothing but the severest operation will save it. But how shall I do it? How shall I apply such a remedy as that?" Some man comes to me and says, "You believe in the love of God, do you, sir?" "Yes, sir, I do." "Do you believe in the literal, historical, accuracy of the story of the Deluge?" "Yes, sir, I believe it literally." "Do you believe a God of love would thus visit the earth in judgment?" "I not only believe that He would: I believe that He did. It is written in the Book." And furthermore, the Deluge was more than a judgment: it was a mercy. It was necessary for the salvation of a remnant that judgment should fall; otherwise the whole race must have committed suicide and frustrated the purpose of God in the creation of the world. There is a process of moral sanitation going on in the world, there is a divine Physician, a divine Surgeon, there is an overruling Officer of moral health; and He sees the plague and says, "Nothing but fire can cure it." Thus He visited Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven.

I remember some years ago seeing a little house in a country place where a whole family had been wiped out with diphtheria of the most virulent form. It was a frame house, and the health authorities said, There is only one thing to do with it. It is not fit for habitation, the plague is there; and they ordered it destroyed by fire. The bodies were taken out, and the house and contents were burned to the ground. What for? As a judgment? No, as a mercy to the whole community.

If you go to old London you will see a great monument erected there to the memory of those who died through the visit to that great city of the awful Black Plague. You remember the record of how they died by

the thousand?—how the wagon went along the street to gather up the dead? how they cried as the bell was rung, "Bring out your dead, bring out your dead"? They brought out their dead, and they were taken away and buried by the hundred and by the thousand. It seemed as though nothing would stay the ravages of the plague, until a great fire broke out over the part of the city where the plague was, and purified the city. It probably destroyed millions of pounds of property, it destroyed great buildings that were of historic value in that day, probably many lives were added to those already taken by the plague; but that fire is looked upon to-day as one of the greatest blessings that ever visited London. It purified the city, and made it fit for habitation.

It is like that when God looks upon a nation and says, "How shall I give thee up? If I do not give thee up, what is the other alternative—how shall I deliver thee, Israel? And if I am to deliver thee, How shall I make thee as Admah?" Then He looked at the possibility, the awful possibility and said, "How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Can I turn fire upon the people I have loved? Can I burn out the plague that a remnant may be saved?" That is the awful suggestion of the text.

You can imagine a father, who is a surgeon, who has been called out to a critical case. He has found someone who has suffered a severe fall, and there is just a bare chance of saving life. We got a telegram some time ago, or a letter, from one of our dear brethren in the West, saying that his little boy had fallen out of an apple tree. He had broken both arms, and other bones beside; and the surgeon said that both arms would have to be amputated. Fortunately, one was saved, only one arm was amputated. But you imagine a surgeon's coming back from a case like that: it has been necessary for him to take the knife and the surgeon's saw and amputate a little arm, and there is left but a poor, broken, remnant of what the lad had been. He comes back to his own home full of concern for what he has been obliged to do, and on arriving there, discovers that his own son has suffered a similar fall. After he examines him he says, "It is almost an exact parallel." He looks upon that son and says, "How shall I give you up?" What is the alternative? He has just come from the operating room, he knows the horrors of it; and he looks upon that form and says, "How shall I do for you, or suffer some other surgeon to do for you, what I have just done to some other lad?" His heart is broken as he contemplates the knife, yet he knows that is the only remedy.

That is the picture here: it is God saying, "How shall I?"—it is almost impossible for even God to contemplate it. So awful a thing sin is, so virulent the nature of it—how shall He contemplate this radical cure for sin? Oh, what anxiety has our sin brought to the heart of a God of love! Can you not see it, my friends? There is not one of us here who has not done the very best he could to break the heart of God by his rebellion. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?" That is the picture. The stern necessity of the case demands that something should be done.

Let me give you another picture. I imagine the father of a family of children. He knows by long experience of the world what sin can do. He is not a young man; he has seen many a life, full of promise in the beginning,

utterly wrecked and absolutely ruined. He loves every one of his children, every one of them. But there is one boy who will not be controlled. He has plunged into every possible excess of riot, he has committed sin upon sin, he has dragged his father's honour in the dust, he has done his utmost to corrupt the whole family. His father has done everything in his power to turn him back from his sin, but all to no purpose. At last he says to that boy, "My boy, to-day you will leave your father's house; to-day you will go out of that door. I love you, I would fain keep you with me; but for the sake of the rest of the family, in order to save them, I must banish you from this home." I can see them doing it, father and mother, with breaking hearts and streaming eyes, taking that wicked son to the front door and saying at last, "Now go—go. The salvation of the home demands that you be separated from it."

*That is the philosophy of hell!* that is the reason for divine judgment; that is the explanation of the Deluge, and of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the extermination of the Canaanites, and of all the judgments of God down through the ages,—justice, pure, unadulterated, justice, in absolute agreement with the unspotted holiness of God; and yet, mixed with it, mercy and love for those whom God would save.

*It is not love that talks lightly of sin, and makes little of future punishment.* Some of you who were here last Sunday night did not like the sermon, and you went away saying you would not come back again—and you are half resolved to-night that you will not come back again. You say, "That is a disturbing sort of preacher. I know where I can go and not be disturbed by this sort of thing. That is the kind of preacher I will go to hear, a man who has human sympathy." My dear friend, it is not love for the souls of men that leads a preacher to withhold the testimony of future punishment when it is written in the Book. And if ever there was a day when these solemn truths needed to be re-emphasized, it is to-day.

I do not know how you feel about it, but I am afraid to read the newspapers. I said the other day that when travelling in the United States, seeing some of their sensational newspapers—and you cannot help seeing them, you can see them across the waiting room—I feel like having a bath. But our own papers are getting to be nearly as bad. What have you? Crime—crime—crime of every conceivable sort: divorce, scandal of every kind. I grant you there is this difference between this and an earlier age, that so-called enterprising newspapers seem to think it their special business to sweep the gutters and serve their contents to you for breakfast—or, rather, for evening dinner! Why these things should be published at all, I do not know; what good purpose can be served by their publication, I cannot understand. If these reports form a mirror of our time, if this is how men live, surely it is necessary that the prophets of the Lord should call men back to repentance. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?"

I read a book recently by a certain Modernist—who might better be called an infidel—who is a professor of theology in a certain Baptist institution in the United States. He was speaking of what he called the "apocalyptic" principle, the principle of revelation, communication from above, something that is beyond our reason, that comes to us from God, with a message from God.

And he said this principle has many disadvantages, and we need to be delivered from it. Yet, condescendingly he admits that its preaching brings a sense of responsibility to God, and that the old-fashioned proclamation of the gospel of a reckoning day, of a judgment to come, did have the effect of retarding the progress of crime. He admits that the old gospel that called men to repentance, and made men feel that they were responsible to God, did make men a little more respectable than they are to-day. Surely that was a great concession from a Modernist.

## II.

Let us consider a moment or two WHAT MERCY DESIGNS.

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?" He will not do it until after he has had long patience with me. This Surgeon is not quick to operate, not willingly does He afflict the children of men, not readily does He visit men with judgment. Why does He delay His coming? Why does not the Lord come to-night? I will tell you why, He "is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He delays His coming in order that He may extend our probation, and give this sinful world longer space in which to repent. That is the reason for His delay.

But how patient He has been with some who are here to-night! How long He has waited for some of you! "How shall I give thee up?" Oh yes, some will give you up. I can fancy when the prodigal went from home even the elder brother was somewhat lonely. After some days had passed I can fancy his saying, "I wish brother would come home again." And I can even fancy his taking a glimpse toward the far country and saying, "Maybe he will come back again." But he did not do it for very long; he soon forgot, he soon grew tired of watching the road. Perhaps some of the servants longed for their master's son, and wondered "Will he come home to-day?" But when the days stretched into months, and the months into weary years, they too grew tired, they gave him up. But when after a long, long, time—God only knows how long—at last, by divine mercy, his steps were turned toward the father's house, there was one who was still watching; there was one who said, "I will never give him up"; there was one who was always longing for his coming back again.

I used to know a house in a certain country place, a little farm house, from which a son had gone away more than twenty years before. He had gone away and left no message, nobody knew where he went, or whether he was living or dead. I passed by the house many a time at night. That young man's mother was still living. She was an old woman—I knew the young man's sister, and she was not a particularly young woman—the mother must have been in her seventies. But always, every night, as one passed that house, in the front window on a table there could be seen a candle burning. It never went out, for she always said, "He may come home to-night, and I want him to know that never for one minute has his mother despaired of his coming back again."

"How shall I give thee up?" Not readily will He give thee up, my friends. He is not easily discouraged; He has long, long, patience; He has waited for some of you men here to-night, not ten years or twenty, but thirty or forty years, and yet He has not given you up. That is why you are here to-night. You do not know why

you came, but I can tell you: God the Holy Ghost Who has been pleading with you all through the years, inclined you to come, that you might hear another message of the Father's love.

He will not give you up *until He has multiplied invitations*. You have a friend somewhere in the distance to whom you wrote a letter, and he did not answer. You wrote him a second letter, and he did not answer. After a while you wrote him a third—you may have written him five or six, or you may have written him a dozen. But at last you have said, "What is the use? He never replies. I will give him up"; and you have not written him now for many a day. We cannot blame you for that, but how many letters God has written to you! He has been speaking to you in some way or another almost every day for at least ten or twenty or thirty years, and you have not answered Him once. You have said, "I do not want His letters. They always disturb me." But still they come, still He sends His messages, speaking to you in one way or another, letting you know that He has not given you up. Is there never to come a time when you will answer Him? when you will respond to His appeals of love and grace?

That was a wonderful word our Lord Jesus uttered when the shadow of the Cross was deepening, and He knew that in a short time they would nail Him to that rugged cross of which you were singing a little while ago. He beheld the city, and wept over it and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" How often! How often! "How often I would, but ye would not." What did He mean? Did He mean from Nazareth to Calvary? No! No! The Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old, and from Genesis to Malachi He had been speaking: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." All down through the centuries, rising up early and sending His prophets—"how often I would, but ye would not!"

How often has He spoken to you! How often has He spoken to you in this place! There are some of you here who have been coming regularly for years. Year after year you have come—and I have wondered why you came. There is one woman, a member of this church, who told me this story: "I was a member of a certain church, and I used to go out Sunday evenings, with the intention of going to that church. I had to pass Jarvis Street, and I was compelled to come in. I learned one night that, although a member of a church, I never had been converted. I resolved again and again and again that I never would go to Jarvis Street again—and yet I went for nearly ten years. Then I left the city, I went to British Columbia, just to get away from Jarvis Street Church." That lady stayed in British Columbia for about eighteen months, and then returned to Toronto. The first night she came in after her return the Lord gloriously saved her. But for ten years, nearly every Sunday night, God called her,—"I would, but ye would not." But in His mercy at last she was led to surrender and receive Christ as her Saviour. How often!

There is a man here from England, from Scotland, from the United States, and back yonder there was a mother who prayed, and the memory of those influences

are with you still. You never have been able to get away from those prayers and examples. But you have said, No, to it all. You have gone from place to place, and yet, strangely enough to you, God has followed you; and wherever you go, His voice is heard. How often, oh, how often, has He called you, and ye would not!

*Not until every resource of love has been exhausted will God give anybody up.* Here is what God said to Ephraim: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. I have been a father unto Ephraim"—right from the beginning God had been teaching them, calling them, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that He healed them. He drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. What does it mean? What can it mean but a prophecy finding its fulfilment in Bethlehem and Calvary? For did He not come to us as a man? Did He not live our life for us; die our death for us; and rise again, as you saw here in a figure this evening? And He says, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." He has come to us, speaking to us with a human voice, loving us, entreating us, begging us, beseeching us, endeavouring to persuade us, doing everything that God can do to bring us to repentance and to His feet. Then He says, "How shall I give thee up?"

### III.

#### WHAT UNBELIEF MAY DETERMINE.

Let me remind you—and I have done when I have said this—let me remind you that **SOMETIMES HE GIVES MEN UP**, sometimes He does. There is a possibility that God may do exactly as He says here, and *He may at last give the sinner up.* "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." The Book is full of it, of a time when He shall say to those on his left hand, "Depart from me; I never knew you."

There was a time when Noah preached. He preached for many years. He was a preacher of righteousness, preaching repentance until the day came when God said, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." They came into the ark, and the Lord "shut him in". The people of Noah's day never heard another preacher, they never heard another invitation; and when he was shut in, the windows of heaven were opened, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and judgment came; all in whose nostrils was the breath of life perished, save only

those who were brought into the ark. God Himself came down to look at Sodom and to see "whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it". It is a terrible tale, too terrible for public discussion, but God went down into that cesspool of iniquity, and by their unspeakable iniquity and their attitude toward God Himself, they proved that their sin was as deep and as black as hell—and He let the fire fall! But not until He had entreated lovingly; not until the angel, being merciful to them, laid hold of Lot and his daughters and thrust them out of the city,—not until then were the heavens blackened, not until then did the flames descend, and fire and brimstone wipe out the plague-spot for ever. There was a moment beyond which God's Spirit did not strive.

Miracle after miracle was sent to Pharaoh. He partially repented, and then hardened his heart, until at last the preacher went to him and delivered his final message. Then Pharaoh was angry and commanded him to go out from his presence saying, "Take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die." The preacher said, "Thou hast well spoken, I will see thy face no more." God had spoken the last time,—and the angel of death spread his black wings over the city that night, and there was not a house in all the land of Egypt in which there was not one dead, save only the houses whose inhabitants were sheltered behind the sprinkled blood. God gave them up at last.

And *He does it sometimes by withdrawing His Spirit.* Some of you may attend Jarvis Street Church for the next twenty-five years. This preacher may long have delivered his last message and be gone, and some other abler and more faithful than he may take his place, and may preach to you year after year. And yet it is possible that after to-night, though you sit under the preaching of the gospel for a quarter of a century, you may never hear the voice of God. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." It is not the preacher with whom you are dealing: it is God.

Or, indeed, *He may withdraw the message.* He may put you where you may never hear the gospel message. Somebody here may have made up his mind now and said, "I had heard of this old gospel they preach in Jarvis Street, and I came down to sample it; but I shall never come again." If that is your decision, it is to God you will answer, but I am determined you shall get the gospel this one time if you never hear it again. I will make you responsible to God, and will make you to know that you are a sinner answerable to God. Though you never hear another gospel message, I charge you to remember that the Word of God says you are so hopelessly bankrupt morally, that you are so sunken in sin, that nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse you, and nothing but the Spirit of God Who created all things, can remake you and make you fit for the presence of God. If you never hear another sermon, you are responsible to God. Do you understand that? You have had the gospel; your blood shall be upon your own head if you reject.

Sometimes He gives men up *by destroying the flesh.* I was under the necessity of giving attention to a certain passage in the preparation of the notes for the Sunday School lessons, and I came upon this terrible text—I want you to listen to it: "For I verily, as absent in body but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this

deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." That is church discipline! A company of believers are bidden to come together in the power of the Holy Ghost, and solemnly to hand a man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. The case before us is that of a believer who has fallen into flagrant sin, and in order that it may go no further, and that he may no longer be permitted to dishonour the Lord, the apostle said, "Come together in the name of the Lord, and solemnly hand him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh."

What does that mean? Read the book of Job: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." The devil knew that that hedge which God had put about Job could not be broken down,—for he had tried it. He could not get at Job so long as that hedge was about him. You remember how the Lord allowed him to afflict Job with boils, to take away his sons and daughters and all that he had. God said to Satan, "I will lengthen your chain a little bit, I will let you touch him—but do not dare to take his life."

There is a scripture which says that Jesus Christ came to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil". Do you know that the devil has the power of death, and that he would kill every Christian if God did not prevent it? "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." That is a reality. I believe this, and I give it to you as my conviction: personally I do not believe I could live until to-morrow morning if the angel of the Lord did not look after me. I am perfectly healthy so far as I know, but if God did not put a hedge about me, the devil would kill me. And he would kill you too, every one of you called Christian—and you who are not Christians. He has the power of death, save only as it is limited by divine grace. Do you not see it? If God were to-night to say to your adversary, the devil, "I will let you have him", if God were to say to the angel that guards you, "Stand aside, let the enemy have him", there is not one of us who would live until morning, not one. Think of that.

You say, "Is that really true?" I believe that is true, I believe that is the teaching of Scripture. You say, "What am I living for?" Just that God may give you a chance to repent. Is that the meaning of to-morrow, of January sixteenth, nineteen-twenty-eight? It means that God is giving you one more chance, and I do not know what that is. But it may come—and it will come, that last chance; and if God gives you up, there is nothing but hell awaiting you. Unless a man is saved through the blood and by the redeeming grace of God, he must be eternally lost.

Oh, the mercy of it, that we are still here! There ought to be a great shout of praise in our hearts to God, not that we value life, perhaps, but that we are still in

a place where through His mercy we may be prepared for that unending life that is beyond.

My brother, you may be a man of big business, but if you have not settled this piece of business, you are not a wise man, and you had better settle it to-night. You may be wise in many other things, but if you have not come into right relationship with God through Jesus Christ the Lord, you are of all men most foolish.

There is an old story which I have read a dozen times or more, and which I heard told when I was a boy. I do not think I ever told it, for the simple reason that I should fear I should be telling a story that everybody had heard. Yet we are in a day when we are facing a new generation, and perhaps there may be some to whom its message may apply. There was a certain king who had a professional jester, a man who was employed to make fun for the king; he came before the king and played the clown. One day the king gave him a valuable staff, and said to him, "I want you to keep that until you find a man who is a bigger fool than yourself. When you find a bigger fool than yourself, give him the king's staff." The jester thanked him and took the staff. Years passed by until the king lay dying, and the jester came to see him. He asked him whither he was going. The king said, "I am going on a long journey." "How long will you be gone, my master?" He replied, "I shall be gone for ever. I am never coming back again." "That is a long journey; and I suppose, sire, you have made every necessary preparation for the journey?" The king replied, "No, I have made no preparation for the journey at all. I am wholly unprepared." Said the jester in amazement, "You are going on the one and endless journey, you are never coming back again, and yet you have made no preparation for your going?" "None at all", was the king's reply. "Then", said the jester, "I must return to your majesty the staff you gave me years ago, when you bade me give it to the man whom I might meet who should be a bigger fool than I; for of all folly I have ever heard of, yours, sire, is the greatest."

Whatever your wisdom in other respects, to go from this house to-night without absolute assurance that your sins are forgiven, and that you are adopted into the divine family, is to be guilty of the greatest possible folly, and the greatest possible sin.

Let us now bow in prayer, and if you have never prayed it before, let us pray it together to-night, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

O Lord our God, in Thy holy presence we would this evening set aside all considerations of earthly interests, of earthly profits, of earthly honour and preferment. We would remind ourselves that we are sinners every one, and that the one great matter of importance to every one of us is the relationship of our souls to Thee. We thank Thee for the Cross; we thank Thee that though we have nothing in the past, or in the present, or in the future, of our own resources and abilities that can give us any hope, yet through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ we have a glimpse of the glory; and we thank Thee that even the greatest of sinners may be washed in the blood, and may come into the presence of Thine infinite holiness without fear, but with gladness and rejoicing. Bring us everyone into the light. We pray for every unconverted man or woman here this evening now as we are bowed in Thy presence. Help them to remember Thy word, and to act upon it, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Help every unconverted man to cry, God be merciful to me a sinner. And may he or she know at this moment that the great transaction is done, that they are thine for ever. Oh, move through this congregation to-night, Spirit of light, of truth, of righteousness, and of power. In every pew do Thy work, and especially in the heart of every man and woman who is not an avowed follower of the Lord Jesus Christ; bring such an one to instant and complete decision. May there be a full surrender. Help the man who has postponed it for twenty years at last to say,

"I will", to God. Grant, we beseech Thee, that many who have been waiting for others, may this evening act for himself or herself. Bring the children if they are here, the husband, wife, father, mother, friend, or neighbour, to Christ. Touch everybody; make every man and every woman without Christ afraid to leave this place without yielding wholly to Him. May this be a night of decision for a great company of people, that Thy name may be glorified in the salvation of souls. We ask it for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

(Many responded to the invitation.)

## How Modernistic Sympathizers Do It

We have recently had an example of the fine "spirit" and admirable "methods" of Modernists and near-Modernists in Oklahoma. Perhaps we ought not to call them Modernists: they might more accurately be called Indifferentists. One of the greatest champions of orthodoxy in the Southland has been Dr. C. P. Stealey, Editor of *The Baptist Messenger*, of Oklahoma. It was Dr. Stealey who brought in the minority anti-evolution report at the Memphis Convention. He was defeated at Memphis, but his principle triumphed the next year at Houston by the adoption by the Southern Convention of the McDaniel anti-evolution statement. At Houston also a resolution was passed requiring all theological seminaries and other Southern organizations to sign the McDaniel anti-evolution statement.

The Southern Theological Seminary refused to do this, on the ground that it was superfluous. Editor Stealey led the Oklahoma Baptists in the proposal to refuse support of such institutions as refused to sign. Speakers were imported into Oklahoma from other states, in order to create sentiment against Dr. Stealey. But the Oklahoma State Convention supported Dr. Stealey's policy by a vote of five to one. Immediately thereafter, however, the Board of *The Baptist Messenger* met and hurriedly removed Dr. Stealey from the editorial chair. There was not the shadow of a doubt as to his policy's being supported by the Convention five to one. Notwithstanding, the Board, mustering a majority of Modernists and Indifferents, decapitated the Editor.

But it takes more than a Board to kill a man like Dr. Stealey! Men of his calibre cannot be killed with an axe. We are happy therefore to hear that Dr. Stealey is publishing an independent paper known as *The Southern Baptist Trumpet*. This will be one of the trumpets that will not give an uncertain sound. We have received a circular signed by Editor Stealey which we gladly publish:

January 2, 1928.

Dear Trustee of the Gospel:

As you know most of the Baptist papers are owned by Conventions and directed by Boards. Dissatisfaction with this policy is justly increasing throughout the south. THIS POLICY readily lends support to the increasing tendency toward oligarchy, that is, government by the few. It seems to many of us that the hour has struck for a south wide independent Baptist paper, true to Baptist fundamentals, supporting every missionary cause within the commission and all Truth-conserving Institutions, ever recognizing the independence as well as the co-operative privileges of Christ's Churches and combating in no uncertain way the trend toward domination of the churches by the Institutions and Boards.

The place providentially indicated for the beginning is Oklahoma. The recent demonstration of disregard on the part of a Board, of the clearly expressed will of the Churches by their recorded vote in annual convention at Tulsa, demands immediate action if we would retain our Baptist liberty. The test at Tulsa was a real one, the combined influence of Southern Baptist leaders and institutions linked with a few men in Oklahoma subject to their wishes, sought to modify or annul, the policy adopted by the convention, and supported by *The Baptist Messenger*, resulted in a 5 to 1 vote sustaining the Oklahoma position. But designing persons on and off of the Board determined to violate the wish of the Convention by eliminating the editor, who is the uncompromising defender of its position, but in this act they over-reached themselves, setting us free to co-operate with Bible-believing Baptists in Oklahoma and the South in "contending for the faith" and judging from numerous conferences, multitudes of communications, resolutions, etc., our people are ready to support

"THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST TRUMPET."

The first issue will be out shortly. It will be a loyal, fearless weekly medium, speaking the truth in love, though many may not love the truth it declares. *The Trumpet* is for warning, it sounds a loud, clear call to arms, it will have correspondents throughout the South who will speak the word God gives them.

ARE YOU FOR IT?

You know it will take money to establish and sustain such a testimony. Personally, I am willing to get along on very little, but I WANT THE PAPER TO GO BIG. Several have said they will put some money in it. We honestly believe Missionary money cannot be spent more wisely at this time. We hope God will lead many to send from five dollars to five hundred or more. Groups, societies, and even Churches might support it. Every dollar will be dispensed for HIS glory under the direction of two or three trusted men who will be named by the group favoring this movement, AND THE BOOKS WILL BE OPEN.

Again, if you do not feel like making a contribution, possibly you will feel like sending this paper to a number of persons, thus helping in the start. At least, we trust you will be sufficiently interested in the movement to send us your personal subscription, \$1.50.

Will you pray that His will may be done? Will you not pray before answering and send us a check according to His will? Hoping to hear from you at once, I am,

Yours desperately in earnest,

(Signed) C. P. STEALEY,  
Editor.

We commend this publication to our readers, and hope they will be able to include it in the list of their periodicals. Dr. Stealey's editorials always put iron into the blood.

Incidentally this Oklahoma incident raises the question as to the usefulness of a denominationally-owned paper. Invariably it becomes a bulletin of the Boards. The man who toadies to the powers that be, though he may have an empty church, will be likely to have a sermon published on the front page of the paper. In Canada we have observed that when *The Gospel Witness* gently suggests that perfection does not reside in certain of the brethren, within a week or two the said brethren are honoured by having one of their sermons published in *The Canadian Baptist*. A denominationally-owned paper becomes a dispenser of honey and chocolate to all the good little boys of the Denomination. We are glad Oklahoma is to retain the services of Dr. Stealey, and we have no doubt that his *Trumpet* blasts will serve to keep the Modernists, the indifferentists, the compromisers, the peace-at-any-pricers, the position seekers, the ministerial jelly fishes, the would-be presidents—in a word, the ecclesiastical “pork and beans” (soldiers in the late war who served in France will know what that means), from sleeping too soundly.

#### PRAYER FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE BATTLE.

In Ontario and Quebec it will be necessary to press the battle for the Book with renewed zeal. If we are asked, Why continue the contention? our answer is that the great majority of our people are still in ignorance of the issues involved. McMaster University has conducted a campaign of personal abuse and misrepresentation for about eight years. Until *The Gospel Witness* came into being we had no means whatever of combating it; and even since that time the printed page cannot do what a large company of travelling men can accomplish. The fact is, the people of the Baptist churches of Ontario and Quebec are not even yet awake to the perils of the hour. The enemy used the late Dr. Farmer's known reputation for orthodoxy to the utmost. They argued everywhere that there could not be anything very wrong so long as it was tolerated by a man like Dr. Farmer. They will not be able longer to depend upon that defense. We must therefore press the battle to the gate, and by some means or another carry the information to the last church in the Convention.

#### CHURCH PRAYER MEETINGS.

A great many people have testified to blessings received at prayer meetings held in the church by which this paper is published; and not a few have enquired how it is possible to maintain five prayer meetings a week—two on Sunday, and three on week evenings—for a period of seven years. We write on this subject with some hesitation, lest any should suppose we speak as those who have attained. We would assure our readers that we write in no such spirit, but simply with an earnest desire to share with others such blessings as we have received.

We added to the regular weekly prayer meeting two other meetings seven years ago. During that time we have passed through strange experiences, some of them being the Lord's strange ways of answering our prayers.

But we write now to answer the enquiry as to how it is done. In the first place, it must be recognized that a prayer meeting is for prayer. When people come together to pray, they should be allowed to pray. If for a while silence should reign, let it be remembered that God can hear the unuttered prayer, and let it be assumed that the people assembled are praying. Many a prayer-meeting

is spoiled by the leader's impatience; if there is a pause after somebody's prayer, it is too often assumed that something else must be done; and a hymn is announced or an address given. Somewhere we have read that when anthracite coal was first discovered, the discoverers were long in learning how to use it. They put it in the fire-grate and poked it incessantly—and it refused to burn. When at last in despair they left the coal alone, they discovered in a little while an intensely hot fire. Thus some leaders put out the fire at prayer meeting by too much poking. Why not be quiet until the wind of the Spirit fans the embers into a blaze? Silence should never be awkward where people have gathered together in the name of the Lord to pray.

It is well, further, that we should recognize that God is present and talk to Him.

“We may not climb the heavenly steeps,  
To bring the Lord Christ down;  
In vain we search the lowest deeps,  
For Him no depths can drown:  
But warm, sweet, tender, even yet  
A present help is He:  
And faith has still its Olivet,  
And love its Galilee.”

We have precisely the same reason for believing that God is present where two or three are gathered in His name, that we have for believing we are Christ's, namely, God has promised. We should therefore quietly talk with Him, and His presence will manifest itself in the midst of the people.

We do well to bear in mind that there can be no true prayer apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is the breath of God in the soul: it is, in fact, the utterance of the Holy Ghost. And as we depend upon the precious blood to wash away our sins, so should we deliberately depend upon the grace of the Holy Spirit to enable us to pray. Mere wires stretched from pole to pole do not make a telephone. Unless the electric current passes through the wire conveying our speech, we shall not be heard at the other end. And so prayer without the Holy Spirit is an absolute impossibility.

It may further be remarked that many a prayer meeting is spoiled by a long and elaborate address. Surely there should be a time and a place in the church's life for prayer, as there is a place for preaching. The prayer meeting is not a place for an extended address, however excellent it may be. We shall not build up a prayer meeting by talking about it. It will grow just as we allow the prayer meeting to be what it is intended to be—a meeting for prayer. Let people pray until they have finished, and then go home. If they have finished in twenty minutes, let the meeting be closed, and not stretch it out for an hour by substituting other things for prayer. As people learn, however, the luxury of prayer, it will be found invariably that the time is all too short: that one hour will be extended to two,—and then the half will not have been told.

It should also be said that in the place of prayer there should be no respect of persons. The chief attraction is the presence of the Lord; let Him be spoken to. The prayer meeting is sometimes spoiled by the presence of some important person. Because he is there, it is assumed that he ought to be asked to speak, and that people may pray at another time when they have nothing else to do. Thus the Lord is dishonoured. His people have come together to talk with Him; and because of the presence in



the assembly of some one of His creatures who is supposed to be rather important, the people are deprived of an opportunity to talk to the Lord of glory. It is well to make it a rule that the prayer meeting is devoted exclusively to prayer, and to permit nothing to interfere with that holy exercise.

The blessings which flow from such exercises are of inestimable value. What wonders might be accomplished in all our churches if we could all agree to subordinate everything else to the one business of waiting upon God in the spirit of the ancient wrestler!—"I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Prayer is absolutely essential to the health of the body, and no amount of organization will avail as a substitute. In the church from which this simple message goes, we count not ourselves to have apprehended; but blessings innumerable and undeserved have been showered upon us. We can give but one explanation of it all, which is, that we have learned in some small measure to come empty-handed to the Throne of Grace, and to recognize that what we need can be obtained from no other storehouse; and therefore to wait until our prayers are answered. If only we all would now resolve to shut ourselves up absolutely to God; to cry, "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him"; and if thus all the churches of the Denomination would put prayer before preaching, and before everything else, what miracles we should see, what wonders of redeeming grace we should witness! May we humbly suggest to the pastors who read these words that the solution of all our church problems is to be found before the Mercy Seat.

### LAST SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET.

From many quarters we receive communications which tell us that many of our readers are disappointed if they do not read at least a brief report of Sunday's services in Jarvis Street.

We may begin with Friday night, when the Pastor's Bible Class and Miss Whitelock's Mothers' Class held their annual meeting. The Lecture Hall was crowded, and the programme was of a fine spiritual tone throughout. Deacon George Greenway, who always conducts the opening exercises of the Pastor's class, and who for six years continuously has opened the week-night prayer meetings, and, in the Pastor's absence, conducted them throughout, was in the Chair. Toward the conclusion of the programme the Pastor spoke, expressing his great appreciation of the splendid fidelity of Deacon Greenway, as a man who is always punctual and could always be depended upon to be in his place. The Pastor told the class that with his many duties, and the difficulty of finding time for all the work pressing upon him, the services of Deacon Greenway as leader of the prayer meetings and of the class had been to him invaluable. The class then presented Mr. Greenway with a magnificent arm chair, upholstered all over; and Mrs. Greenway with a bouquet.

On Sunday the total attendance at the School was 1,083. The Young People's Department reached the high water mark with an attendance of 219. There was a large congregation at the morning service, and another great congregation at night. The Pastor preached the sermon appearing in this issue, and ten or twelve responded to the invitation to confess Christ; three young men were baptized.

## SANCTIFICATION

### THE WAY, THE NEED, THE POWER.

A Sermon preached in St. John's Church, Harborne, in the Diocese of Birmingham,

by the

Rev. C. Fisher, M.A., Vicar, and sent to the Lord Bishop of Birmingham.

"A vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use."

II. *Timothy ii. 21.*

Some may ask, "Why introduce such a subject in a Prayer Book Revision Series? Do not we all agree about the necessity of sanctification? And, after all, that is not the question at issue in the Bishops' Proposals for Revision." No, perhaps it is not but Revision is being undertaken under the plea of bringing the services of the Church more into keeping with modern needs and methods of worship, and the only justification for altering the Book of Common Prayer is to enable the Church of England to be better fitted to set forth God's truth to, and maintain His standards before, the people of this country.

The writer is a Protestant to the very backbone. But his protestantism is positive, not negative; it is spiritual, not political; if he feels compelled to oppose the Bishops' Proposals to the very limit, and, if they are passed into law to resign his benefice, it is for no other reason than that his Lord's honour and the trustworthiness of God's Word are far more precious to him than silver and gold, for he is prepared "to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Such a step, he thinks, enables him to speak boldly on the matter of Sanctification; and it may be that the step that he has taken will cause some to read his sermons out of curiosity, to see what makes him take such a definite stand; a careful study of this sermon, which is simply the teaching that he has been giving for the past 15 years, may help to persuade the nominal Christian—who is quite satisfied with his more

or less regular attendance at Church, and thinks that thus he is doing all that is necessary—that the sacrifice of the Infinite Son of God on the cross of Calvary deserves a better response than the modern church is giving it.

The Bishops' Proposals for Prayer Book Revision have caused much bitter controversy, and there is great danger lest the main work for which the church exists should be overlooked; it is because he feels that the present proposals, introduced in large measure to "please men," dishonour his Lord, and rob Him of the full glory which He deserves because of the wondrous Redemption which He wrought out on Calvary, that the writer must speak out, and call all who will listen to a life of sanctification, so that they may be "vessels unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use." It is His Glory, His Kingdom, His Gospel that are at stake; and it is because there is a very great danger lest "a compromised Church" should be unable to "deliver the goods," that is, "to preach the Gospel to every creature," that the writer sends forth this message to those who "know their Lord" to ask them to "prepare themselves unto their Lord," that there may come a revival of true religion in our land, which alone can save it from complete religious chaos.

### SANCTIFICATION: THE WAY.

The only truly holy life that this world has ever seen was that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only could He challenge His opponents with the word, "which of you convinceth me of sin?" and silence them with the challenge;

not only did His intimate disciples bear witness to the fact of His sinlessness (see Sermon 4, p. 10); but He said Himself: "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." (John viii. 29.)

The argument which He was using then was to the effect that obedience to the will of God was the guarantee of God's continued guidance, and the fact that He not only "came to do God's will" but that He did it, enabled Him to say at the end of His course, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do," and, as He breathed out His Spirit to the Father from the Cross of Calvary, "It is finished." With this concrete instance of a life of true holiness (or sanctification) before us, let us "consider Him," for if there is anywhere in the whole world that we may hope to find help in such a matter surely it is from Him "who was in all points tried like as we are, yet without sin."

#### THE WORD OF GOD WAS HIS STANDARD OF APPEAL.

At the very beginning of His public ministry it was necessary for Him to settle the policy to be pursued, and to fix the plan of Campaign, (to put the matter from a purely human point of view: we do well to give full expression to His true humanity, and to recognize that He had to face problems and make decisions in exactly the same way as we do, and with no other help than that which is available for us; His perfect humanity demands that). He had come to win this world back to God: He was conscious of His Godhead, and yet He was to be truly man. If we follow Him into the wilderness, and overhear the suggestions of Satan, we shall discover that Satan, at any rate, thought He was very human! He was hungry: he was almost at the point of collapse because of the need of nourishment: how reasonable to use His (undoubted) powers to satisfy His needs, so as to keep His body fit for the work that lay ahead! But did He do so? Straight to His standard of appeal He went; "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He had come to do God's will: He was a man: other men could not turn loaves into bread to meet their necessities, so neither would He, because it was God's will for Him to live a human life, subject to the same limitations as His "brethren"!

A similar exposition could be given of the second temptation (to follow Matthew's order, chap. iv.), but because of time we must pass to the third. "You have come to win this world back to God. Here you can see the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. They are mine, but they are yours for the asking. There is no need for sacrifice (the vision of the Cross was already clearly seen); there is no need for controversy, opposition, struggle, hardship; what have you come for? Isn't it to win this world for God, and that as quickly as possible? I've come to help you. Just acknowledge my rights in a nominal way,—it wouldn't matter, nobody would see it—and after all think of the end in view."

May I digress for a moment, for these Sermons are for a purpose? We are dealing with Prayer Book Revision and the Bishops' Proposals. There appeared the following passages in a long communication to "The Record" of February 24th.

"Suppose this new book rejected—turned down by Parliament—and largely through our action; what then? Think of the scorn of the irreligious but by no means uninterested onlooker at this new manifestation of incurable antipathies among those who make definite profession of the faith of Christ. Think of the stupefaction of countless men of good will—who have seen at a glance that the new book would have provided much which the Church of England has desperately needed for many years past, and provided it worthily. Think of the impoverishment of our worship as we are forced back upon the forms which served the former generation well, but do not suffice to meet our new conditions, and thus lose the greater enrichments that the Church has so long desiderated and so nearly obtained. Think of the renewal, probably for many years to come, of mutual recriminations and acrimonious controversy in place of an increasing sense of underlying fellowship and unity between those who as yet cannot see eye to eye. Think of almost certain disestablishment and disruption, and the inevitable sequel of a set-back to the spiritual forces at work in our

country and a corresponding increase of secularism and unbelief. Think last and most of the indefinite postponement of the Church's response to the World Call. Upon that response, not yet made, depend the hopes if not the very existence of promising young Churches in Africa, in Moslem lands, in India, in the Far East. A hungry world eagerly awaits it. And it will simply not be made unless we can settle and settle quickly this Prayer Book Complex.

"These are some of the losses which the cause of Christ is going to suffer if through our action this book is set aside. And with what gain, which we may put on the other side of the account? Is any man going to say in excuse for precipitating such wholesale disaster, 'I shall not have compromised; I shall have saved my own soul!' Saved your soul! At the cost of a rent and dishevelled Church, of a secularised England, of a betrayed trust towards nations calling to us for a supreme and immediate effort to deliver and uplift them! Is it worth it? Is it the spirit of St. Paul when he declared himself ready to be anathema from Christ if thereby he might save his brethren. Rather let us believe that if we fight for our own cause we shall lose it, but if we are ready to jeopardise our distinctive existence for the sake of the larger whole we shall in the end save it for ourselves and for the rest also."

Then there follows the other alternative, to 'courageously accept the book, in its final form' (with all its unscriptural and God-dishonouring proposals), 'though attempting to secure certain definite modifications in the Bishops' final revision of it.' People differ in the Church, and they will continue to differ. We have no right to expect that these concessions will lead to further concessions; open the dock gates just a few inches, but don't expect the whole tide to come in! Wait and see! "It is quite likely that with the granting of these new forms the craving of hopes long deferred will be satisfied, and a sane and spiritual swing of the pendulum commence in the direction of Evangelical simplicity. But we can expect neither sanity nor spiritual revival if we overturn the patient and prayerful efforts of the last twenty years and plunge the Church of our fathers in a turmoil of renewed embitterment. Rather let us turn from controversy over matters on which we can never wholly agree and unite to undertake seriously the great enterprise for which the Church exists, offering ourselves willingly in this day of God's power among the nations."

That communication was sent to *The Record* by the late Secretary of the largest Evangelical Missionary Society in the world, who added the following covering appeal: "May I urge all those who are about to engage in further controversy over the Revision of the Prayer Book to weigh well my friend's wise words, which surely have an application not confined to those who hold his particular views. Why should we not all of us, after quietly and prayerfully giving any suggestions we have for further revision, leave the final revision quite confidently with our Bishops and get on with the work of winning for Christ a desperately needy world?"

Let us now go back to the study of our Lord's temptation and see His method of settling all matters of policy. Straight to the Word of God He went, and said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord Thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." If He had listened to the appeal, similar in many ways to, in fact almost identical with, the appeal contained in the quotations given above, He would have betrayed His trust, He would have lost His kingdom, He would have handed over this world to the permanent over-lordship of Satan! But, thank God, He was the Truth: and He had come to do God's will: the revelation of God's will was enshrined for Him in the Holy Writings, and with that "sword of the Spirit" he exposed the falsity of Satan's deadly suggestion, and set out to win this world back to God by doing God's will. May the Holy Spirit, given to guide the church into all truth, expose the dangers of the subtle appeal referred to above, and bring the church to see that anyone who counsels compromise over God's Word is no friend of the Truth!

#### CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

Not only did Christ "leave us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I. Peter, ii. 21) with regard to suffering for the truth's sake, but He was our perfect pattern in all things. The foregoing lengthy discussion was by no means beside the mark: it was to show that in His life of holiness—of obedience to the Father's will—the very secret of its

success was that He was guided at every point by God's Word Written! It is an interesting and profitable study to trace through the Gospels how this was His passion: "I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do." And it is equally true that the will of God was for Him bound up with the Holy Writings; "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (may He do it afresh for the leaders of His Church to-day!), "and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, etc." I hope I have made it clear, that in the case of the only real example of holiness or sanctification that this world has ever seen, the Written Word of God was the absolute standard of appeal at all times.

#### SANCTIFICATION: THE NEED.

Now that the foundation has been laid, I trust that the superstructure may develop rapidly. God needs men to-day to carry on the work of the Church which His Son came to establish, and to spread the news of His great Redemption "wherever man is found." The Gospel of the Grace of God is an universal message; it is good news for all men, because sin is a reality amongst all, and there is no means of getting rid of it, or overcoming it, except through Christ. But God has revealed that "they that bear the vessels of the Lord must be clean"; the whole symbolism of the Levitical priesthood, with its white garments and ceremonial cleansings was to show this; and the phrase "spiritual men for spiritual work" is in perfect keeping with the mind of scripture.

"Emptied that Thou shouldst fill me,  
A clean vessel in Thine hand;  
With no power but as Thou givest  
Graciously with each command.

"Channels only, blessed Master,  
But with all Thy wondrous power.  
Flowing through us, Thou canst use us  
Every day and every hour."

There is an overwhelming need to-day for men whom God can use because they are usable! A piston is only effective as it moves freely, without friction, in its appointed groove. It does its work, because it transmits almost all the power that it receives. May it be reverently said that that is why Jesus Christ was so effective in His service: His will was so submissive to the will of God, that He was a perfect instrument to accomplish God's purposes.

I am sure that this idea of Sanctification as a guarantee of "directivity," of getting through to the end, has not been sufficiently recognized. "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said I am the Son of God?" The sanctification guaranteed the message and aim and purpose of the "sent one." He was conscious of it; a "divine necessity" was laid upon Him. And, perhaps in lesser degree, the same thing is true of Paul. "If that I may apprehend that for which I also have been apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do....I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Like an arrow to the target; like an electric current insulated so as to get to its destined point; like an engine confined to the rails so as to move freely and quickly; like a rifle bullet enclosed in the barrel to get direction and poise, all these metaphors help to bring out the supreme idea of Sanctification. It is no mere sentimentalism; it is no pious emotionalism—however sincere—expressing itself in monasticism, or its Anglo-catholic counterpart, "devotions"; Scriptural Sanctification is an absolute loyalty to God, whose will and character have been fixed in the God-inspired pages of Holy Writ. Any "religious power" which is not confined within, and guided by, the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, is like dynamite in a bomb rather than powder in a shell. All power comes from God; the explosive power of Christ's resurrection (Paul calls it *Dunamis*—dynamite!) has shaken the world; but for it to carry its power to the point of

attack—the human heart, it must be directed along the well-defined channel of loyalty to God's Word. Any human being whom God can use as an instrument for transmitting His power, is a "sanctified vessel, meet for the Master's use."

The pent-up energy in the heart of God is available for the needs of the whole world: the God who conceived the plan of Redemption through the Cross of Christ, and whose power raised Jesus Christ from the dead, is not baffled by the world-problems of to-day. They are big and overwhelming to us, but He is infinite in power and wisdom, and has eternal resources in Christ for His sorely tried Church. What is needed is that men should so enter into the knowledge "of the untrackable wealth of the Christ" (Eph. iii. 8), that they will be full to overflowing with a message of the grandeur and glory and power of God's Christ, and say: "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

#### "God Is a Jealous God."

But God is very jealous of His honour, and His power. "I am the Lord: that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another." How often God's ministering servants claim some of the credit to themselves: how often they are lifted up with pride and vain-glory if success attends their work! The great Apostle of the Gentiles whose growth in meekness was as remarkable as his growth in grace (perhaps the two terms are synonymous!), had an experience that was very wonderful and yet might have been very dangerous. He was caught up to the third heaven (see II. Cor. xii. 1-11), a wonderful privilege that might easily have made him elated and proud. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the Revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. . . . Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me!"

#### The Price of Power.

This characteristic example gives a wonderful insight into "the price of power." Probably the visions and revelations were given to Paul as a proof of divine favour (it is thought that they came when Paul had been stoned and was left for dead at Lystra: Acts xiv.), to encourage him to go forward in his witness. But even so, they were fraught with very great dangers. Might he not think that it was because of his special holiness? Was he not favoured above the rest of men because he was prepared to suffer and dare more than they? He had sacrificed willingly, at a stroke, his national hopes, his friends, his prospects, everything that makes life worth while to most people: could he not expect something special from God? And God gave him something to assure him of His favour and approval, but also "a thorn in the flesh—lest he should be exalted above measure"! Paul was the *δουλος χριστι* (*doulos Christi*); he was (in some measure) like "the servant of the Lord," the suffering Messiah; and just as Jesus Christ could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth," so the Lord wanted Paul to remain a usable vessel, not one that absorbed the glory that belonged to God. He was, therefore, "tethered down to mundane things"; he had perfect freedom within a narrow sphere; he was as free as a piston to travel in its groove; he could say, "Most gladly therefore will I boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

My point is simply this, that this great Jew, this Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee of the deepest dye, was so enamoured of God's glory and the need to obtain power from Christ to set forth that glory, that he would gladly accept pain and suffering (or whatever the "thorn in the flesh" may mean), rather than be cut off from that power. Paul (next to our Lord himself, and the Holy Spirit), was the greatest asset the Gospel has ever had. But he was that solely because he was willing to surrender self, in order to be an instrument which the Master could use. When the risen Lord laid hold of him, He said to Ananias who doubted the wisdom of having anything to do with such a man: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name. . . . For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts ix. 15, 16.) Paul was prepared to pay the price. Would to God that there were more men like him to-day. He was meek; he was submissive to the discipline

that God found necessary to impose; but he was fearless in his denunciation of error, nay, he would risk everything for the truth's sake! Sanctification apart from the idea of doing God's will is an unscriptural idea.

#### Paul as an Example.

In the passage quoted above from "The Record," reference is made to the example of St. Paul, to justify a compromise of God's truth at this time of crisis, rather than rend the church. Never was there a more misleading appeal.

"Is it worth it? Is it the spirit of St. Paul when he declared himself ready to be anathema from Christ if thereby he might save his brethren?"

May I point out that there, even in that extremest of expressions of personal sacrifice, the Lord's glory was in view? for he wanted his brethren, the Jews, to come to their Messiah, and thus enhance His glory. But that is not the parallel here. Turn with me to another illustration of St. Paul. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed . . . when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all," etc. It was only a "small matter of ritual"; it was only a question of sitting at different tables; it wasn't anything worth bothering about! What? There was one of the greatest principles of the Gospel at stake. If the dubious policy of Peter had been tolerated and accepted, the Christian Church would have been wrecked, and would have perished in the first century! What did Paul do? He stood up, publicly—"before them all,"—and withstood Peter to the face. He risked rending the Church in order to keep it pure. He staked everything on "the truth of the Gospel," and trusted the God who gave the gospel to vindicate His own truth, and give him the victory. Yes, and years afterwards he wrote the incident down; (no hush policy there! Peter was still alive, but God's truth was more important than Peter's feelings, more important than Paul's reputation in the eyes of those who thought Apostles must back one another up! All honour to the Bishop of Norwich who refused to sit with the rest of the bishops while they were busy re-introducing unscriptural, God-dishonouring practices into our most sacred Communion Service).

I do not know the author of that suggestion that for the sake of the Gospel in the world evangelicals ought to be "ready to jeopardize their distinctive existence for the sake of the larger whole," and therefore I cannot be accused of a personal attack, but I do say this: that if his suggestion carries weight, and that policy is followed, the Christianity which Christ founded, and which Paul preached, will be foreign to the message that such a compromised church would send out to the heathen world! The Bible Union of China sent an appeal, some four years ago, to all the great Missionary Societies of England and America, begging them to refuse to send out any more modernist Missionaries, "as the very existence of the Christian Church in China was threatened by Modernism"; and a hybrid gospel, the necessary outcome of a surrender of scriptural truth, would be a similar danger in the Mission Field to-day. It may be that the present chaos in China is part of God's greater plan (the idea is not my own, but comes from one whose relatives are missionaries out there now!), to eliminate by bitter discipline and sore trials the unworthy elements that Modernism has introduced into the Chinese Church.

But let me again point out that the most "sanctified" servant of Christ that this world has seen, was sanctified because he was loyal to God's truth, and that he put that first under all circumstances. He was thus "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use."

#### Sanctification: The Power.

The message is burning in my own heart, and therefore it is not surprising that it is warm when it comes out! But now, thank God, I am free to deal with the subject which next to preaching the Gospel of God's Redeeming love, is the joy of my life. I want to speak about the power of sanctification. There is a little pamphlet, "The Life that Wins," (obtainable in England from Scripture Gift Mission, Slater Street, Liverpool) which opened my eyes some years ago to the possibility of a life of Victory in Christ. In it the author, Mr. C. G. Trumbull, editor of the American Sunday School Times, tells of an experience of his at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910. His Christian life had been

like that of most Christians, "sometimes up and sometimes down." It had recently been a "down" time with him; he had been living "on a low level"; he had been experiencing defeat, where once he had had victory; and he was conscious that things were far from right in his own heart, though he had long been a Christian, yea, a Christian worker, the Editor of the best Sunday School newspaper in the world (as many believe the American Sunday School Times to be). When he came to Edinburgh he saw one of the foremost preachers billed to speak on "The Resources of the Christian Life." That was what he wanted to know more about, so he went, expecting to hear of rules for Bible-reading, prayer, habits of the devotional life, etc. The first words the great preacher said were, "Friends, the resources of the Christian life are simply Jesus!" The power of Sanctification—is simply Jesus! But He lived it Himself, and He (not "it") is available in all His fulness for every believer to-day.

#### The Indwelling Christ.

There is no need for me to dwell any further upon the sanctification of Christ; that is obvious and accepted. What we want to know is how we may obtain like power in our own hearts. There is no other way, but by having Him there! When He was on earth, in the flesh, He had the same limitations that you and I have: He was localized; He could only be in one place at once. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." But when He rose victorious from the grave, that limitation was for ever gone. While He went back with His glorified body to heaven (scripture teaches that, and it is very essential that we should hold firmly to it), yet by the Holy Spirit He can come and dwell in the hearts of all believers. It was the great Apostle Paul to whom was given the privilege of unfolding this great mystery, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Not only Christ as an example; or as a Saviour, whose atoning death at Calvary completely secured our forgiveness; but Christ as "a living, bright reality" dwelling in the heart. "I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

#### Christ the Same, Yesterday, To-day, and Forever.

Now the Lord Jesus Christ is eternally the same; He does not change. And when He comes into the heart in all His fulness, He who lived the life of Sanctification when on earth, must necessarily do the same again in our lives to-day! This is no figment of the imagination: it is no mysterious metaphor that psychologists would explain away by some reference to the sub-conscious mind. It is a new creation: "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." And when the Christian knows the complementary truth; not only that he is in Christ, but that Christ is in him, then the power of Sanctification is revealed to him. Ethical teachers in the Christian Church have been setting the splendid ideal before their hearers, of "hitching their wagon to a star," but they haven't provided the step-ladder to reach it, or the rope that was long enough! But the Christ who lived in Paul the Apostle is just the same to-day; He is just as concerned for the souls of men to-day as He was when He sent that burning soul on his great missionary journeys, and taught him how to suffer, "to spend and be spent," that the Gospel might be preached throughout the whole world. The writer makes no claims to special knowledge along these lines: he only speaks of what he has come to know by believing God's word: he has proved that a life "other than his own life," a Person "other than himself" has come into his life and that life has become new, and directed to an end! If the foregoing exposition of Sanctification, in the experience of the Son of Man and in the life of Paul, is according to the mind of Scripture, then he feels that he has come to understand in some measure what the Apostle meant when he said, "for me to live is Christ."

"What then? . . . Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. . . . According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. i. 18-21.) A sanctified Christian, is a Christ-indwelt Christian; and as Jesus Christ does not change, Sanctification drives a man along the line of God's will, just as He had that idea as His master-passion.

# Coals for the Altar Fire

By Rev. T. I. Stockley, Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

## "BE OF GOOD CHEER."

Sunday, January 22nd.

"Rise, He Calleth Thee".—

Mark x:46-52

The invitation is so large, and there is this to be noted concerning it. No one was ever refused yet. There is a well-known institution in London which bears across the front of it, "No destitute boy ever refused." Well may we put this over Christ's great house of mercy—"No destitute soul ever refused." I can imagine two boys standing on the pavement in front of Dr. Barnardo's institution, and one saying to the other, "Can we go in there?" "Yes," says the other, "I should rather think we could. We are destitute, aren't we? Look here, my clothes are all in rags, and I have not a penny in the world, and no father and no mother. I slept under a dry arch last night. I am a destitute boy, and no mistake." I can only suppose that the other might boastfully say, "I ain't destitute, not I. I can earn my living any day, and I have got a half-crown in my pocket." Now, that fellow has no claim to be admitted, because he is not destitute; but the boy who is hungry and ragged and homeless is sure to be welcomed. As he reads those lines, "No destitute boy ever refused," he says, "There is hope for me then." Now, then, destitute soul, Jesus Christ never refused one like you yet. If you have a store of merit of your own, if you believe you can be saved by your good works, you do not come under the head of "destitute". "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." But if you are stripped of all boasting, if you are brought to bankruptcy as to personal merit, if you have come down to absolute poverty as to any hope in yourself, then, as no destitute soul ever was rejected or ever shall be, come to Jesus at once! Come at once, I say. "Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee."

C. H. Spurgeon.

Monday, January 23rd.

"Thy sins be forgiven thee".—

Matt. ix:1-13

"Son, be of good cheer", said He to that poor palsied sufferer lying there upon the little light bed in front of Him. He had been brought to Christ to be cured of his palsy. Our Lord seems to offer him a very irrelevant blessing when, instead of the healing of his limbs, He offers him the forgiveness of his sins. That was possibly not what he wanted most, certainly it was not what the friends who had brought him wanted for him, but Jesus knew better than they what the man suffered most from and most needed to have cured. They would have said, "Palsy". He said, "Yes! but palsy that comes from sin." For, no doubt, the sick man's disease was "a sin of flesh avenged in kind," and so Christ went to the fountain-head when He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." He therein implied, not only that the man was longing for something more than his four kindly but ignorant bearers there knew, but also that the root of his disease was extirpated when his sins were forgiven. "Son, be of good cheer. Lift up thy head. Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Alexander MacLaren, D.D.

Tuesday, January 24th.

"Thy faith hath saved thee".—

Matt. ix:18-26

"Daughter," said He to the poor woman with the issue of blood, "be of good cheer. Thy faith hath saved thee." The consciousness of a living union with God through Christ by faith, which results in the present possession of a real, though it may be a partial, salvation, is indispensable to the temper of equable cheerfulness of which I have been speaking. Apart from that consciousness, you may have plenty of excitement, but no lasting calm. The contrast between the drugged and effervescent potion which the world gives as a cup of gladness, and the pure tonic which Jesus Christ administers for the same purpose, is infinite. He says to us, "I forgive thy

sins; by thy faith I save thee; go in peace." Then the burdened heart is freed from its oppression, and the down-cast face is lifted up, and all things around change, as when the sunshine comes out on the wintry landscape, and the very snow sparkles into diamonds. So much, then, for the first of the instances of the use of this phrase.

Alexander MacLaren, D.D.

Wednesday, January 25th.

"It is I; be not afraid".—

Matt. xiv:22-36

You remember the scene—our Lord alone on the mountain in prayer, the darkness coming down upon the little boat, the storm rising as the darkness fell, the wind howling down the gorges of the mountains, the crew "tolling in rowing, for the wind was contrary." And then, all at once something is seen moving, and it comes nearer; and the waves become solid beneath that light and noiseless foot, as steadily nearer He comes. Jesus Christ uses the billows as the pavement over which He approaches His servants, and the storms which beat on us are His occasion for drawing very near. Then they think Him a spirit, and cry out with voices that were heard amidst the howling of the tempest. They cry out with a shriek of terror—because Jesus Christ is coming to them in so strange a fashion! Have we never shrieked and groaned, and passionately wept aloud for the same reason; and mistake the Lord of love and consolation for some spectre? When He comes it is with the old word on His lips, "Be of good cheer. It is I." Surely that is enough. The Companion in the storm is the Calmer of the terror. He who recognizes Jesus Christ as drawing near to his heart over wild billows may well "be of good cheer," since the storm but brings the truest treasure to him.

Alexander MacLaren, D.D.

Thursday, January 26th.

"I have overcome the world".—

John xvi:20-33

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Of course "the world" which He overcame is the whole aggregate of things and persons considered as separated from God, and as being the great Antagonist and counter power to a holy life of obedience and filial devotion. At that last moment when, according to all outward seeming and the estimate of things which sense would make, He was utterly and hopelessly and all but ignominiously beaten, He says, "I have overcome the world." What! Thou! within four-and-twenty hours of Thy Cross? Is that victory? Yes! For he conquers the world who uses all its opposition as well as its real good to help him, absolutely and utterly, to do the will of God. And he is conquered by the world who lets it, by its glowing sweetness and flatteries, or by its knitted brows and frowning eyes and threatening hand, hinder him from the path of perfect consecration and entire conformity to the Father's will. Christ has conquered. What does that matter to us? Why, it matters this, that we may have the Spirit of Jesus Christ in our hearts to make us also victorious in the same fight.

Alexander MacLaren, D.D.

Friday, January 27th.

"Thou must bear witness also at Rome".— Acts xxiii:1-11

This word was spoken by Christ's voice from heaven (Acts xxiii:11). It was the voice which was heard by the Apostle Paul after he had been almost torn in pieces by the crowd in the Temple, and had been bestowed for security, by the half-contemptuous protection of the Roman governor, in the castle, and was looking onward into a very doubtful future, not knowing how many hours' purchase his life might be worth. That same night the Lord appeared to him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of Me in

Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also in Rome." That is to say, "No man can touch you until I let him, and nobody shall touch you until you have done your work and spoken out your testimony. Jerusalem is a little sphere; Rome is a great one. The tools to the hand that can use them. The reward for work is more work, and work in a larger sphere. So cheer up! for I have much for you to do yet." And the spirit of that encouragement may go with us all, breeding in us the quiet confidence that no matter who may thwart or hinder, no matter what dangers or evils may seem to ring us round, the Master who bids us "Be of good cheer" will give us a charmed life.

Alexander MacLaren, D.D.

Saturday, January 28th.

"For I believe God"—

Acts xvii:14-26

Be of good cheer for "I believe God". Ah, that is a grand thing—to believe God when the winds are out,—to believe God when the waves howl like so many wild beasts, and follow one upon another like a pack of wolves all seeking to devour you. "I believe God." This is the genuine breed of faith—this which can brave a tempest. The common run of men's faith is fair-weather faith, faith which loves to see its

beautiful image mirrored in the glassy wave, but is far away when the storm clouds are marshalling the battle. The faith of God's elect is the faith that can see in the dark, the faith that is calm in the tumult, the faith that can sing in the midst of sorrow, the faith that is brightest when everything around her is black as midnight. "I believe God," said he, when he had nothing else to believe in. "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him." Say thou, O my soul, "Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, yet will we not fear, for God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

"God liveth still!

Trust, my soul, and fear no ill;  
Heaven's huge vault may cleave asunder,  
Earth's round globe in ruins burst;  
Devil's fellest rage may thunder,  
Death and hell may spend their worst;  
Then will God keep safe and surely  
Those who trust in Him securely:  
Wherefore then, my soul, despair?  
Mid the shipwreck, God is there."

C. H. Spurgeon.

## FOREIGN MISSION ENTERPRISE of the UNION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

By Rev. W. E. Atkinson.

A meeting of the Board of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec was held in Toronto on January 12th and 13th, at which there were representatives from Montreal, Ottawa, and other Eastern points; also from Essex, Wheatley, London, and other points in Western Ontario.

One of the most important matters of business that was dealt with was the selection of a field for Foreign Mission activity. After much prayer and deliberation it was the unanimous opinion that work should be opened immediately in Liberia, West Africa. While this coast is known to be a very treacherous place, and a difficult one in which to labour, yet it affords an opportunity of service under a properly constituted Government which few unevangelized African territories now offer. Recently great developments have taken place in this territory under the direction of the Firestone Rubber Company. It is understood they are developing one of the largest rubber plantations in the world in this very field. While commercial interests are awake respecting economic conditions, the church of the Living God is slow to follow up the possibilities of service in respect to the natives' spiritual welfare. Surely we cannot ignore the "Go ye" of our Saviour.

Following is the resolution passed by the Board:

WHEREAS, the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec has come into being as a protest against a tendency among people called Baptists to regard lightly the rejection of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible, and of its central truth, the expiatory efficacy of the blood of Christ;

AND WHEREAS, this departure from the faith is defended and put forward by organizations embodying principles of ecclesiastical authority which are foreign to the time-honoured fundamental Baptist principles of the freedom of the individual believer, and the complete autonomy of the local church;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we recognize the necessity of the churches' so ordering their work, and this Union's so relating itself to the churches, and so ordering all its missionary and educational enterprises, as to avoid even the appearance of infringement upon the liberty either of the local church, or of

the individual believer, and in full recognition of the sovereign Lordship of Jesus Christ; and the administrative presence of the Holy Spirit;

AND WHEREAS, it is the obligation of the churches of Christ to preach the gospel in all the world, and to every creature;

AND WHEREAS, a considerable number of our Baptist people have had the need of the Continent of Africa laid upon their hearts;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that as our special field of foreign missionary effort we undertake mission work in Liberia, with a possible extension or effort into a part of Africa known as the French Ivory Coast, West Africa;

AND THAT, the Executive of the Board be instructed to take such steps as may be necessary to obtain and disseminate the fullest information respecting these countries;

AND BE IT RESOLVED FURTHER, that while undertaking work in the said country of Liberia as our special sphere of foreign missionary endeavour, we also earnestly recommend to our churches that they consider, and as the Spirit of God may lead them, support, the worthy work being conducted by Pastor Dubarry and his associates in France, and that of the Russian Missionary Society; of which Pastor Wm. Fetler is the General Director.

Following will be found an article entitled, "A John the Baptist of the Ivory Coast", which appeared in the October 1st issue of *The Sunday School Times*. This will be found particularly illuminating in view of the Board's decision.

We would urge our people everywhere to consecrate themselves afresh in view of this new and great task which we have undertaken of carrying the gospel to Africa's untouched millions. Later we shall be able to give more information in this connection, but in the meantime we earnestly covet your prayers, and solicit your consecrated gifts for the advancement of Christ's kingdom among men.

## A JOHN THE BAPTIST OF THE IVORY COAST

During the last ten years or so, astonishing and almost incredible stories have been circulating on the west coast of Africa. There were rumors of scores of churches, and thousands of Christian people were said to exist away in the bush of the Ivory Coast hinterland.

They were reputed to be the result of the preaching of one man who started his "mission" as a free lance. Men shook their heads gravely—such "missions" had great dangers to both state and church.

But the World War was on, and nothing could be done by way of investigation. When the war ended, however, the rumors still continued to circulate, and occasionally messages came down to the coast pleading for teachers and preachers.

So in 1924 Rev. W. J. Platt, a Wesleyan missionary, determined to inquire into the matter. When he arrived at Grand Bassan, where the Wesleyans had a church until 1922, his interest was quickened. In fact, he was amazed at what he heard.

Yes, a native missionary had indeed been preaching Christ, with marvelous power and extraordinary results. Nothing like it had ever been heard before.

William Wadé Harris, an untutored black man from Liberia, had stirred up the whole country around, and after ten years the work still remained. Even the Roman Catholic priests were impressed.

"This man Harris", said they, "did more in three months in French West Africa than a host of missionaries could do in a hundred years."

An English trader who cared little about missions said, "I was in Fresco in 1912 and I saw Harris coming along there; and from a debased fetishism that man changed this town into one of nominal Christianity in three days."

A lawyer upon whom Mr. Platt called said to him, "I am not interested in religion, but I cannot see what you missionaries have been doing in the last ten years. Here you have hundreds of people, and many churches built, and the people singing hymns and praying to God, and yet folks do not come!" We are not surprised that Mr. Platt at once arranged to make an extended tour of investigation.

We must quote his own words from an amazing address he gave in London last May.

"I arrived at Abijeon in 1924, ten years after the passage of the 'prophet' Harris (they had not seen him since) and I found three hundred people waiting for me. I passed on from there and went up country and I found one hundred people who had walked ten miles to come and salute me. All along the railway line, wherever the train stopped,—and African trains stop often,—there were little crowds of people just hoping they could get a glimpse of the missionary who had at last come.

"Then from there we went along to Dabu, the great centre of our Ivory Coast work. I cannot describe the scene of enthusiasm that greeted the messenger of Christ. Flags were draped across the streets, and there was bunting of all descriptions. There were people singing, singing. There were Ford cars that had come from all directions. We were told that if we would only go to this village or that village there was a canoe waiting here, or a car there.

"In one village we even had a brass band to greet us.

"Beneath all this was the great yearning of these people after God.

"From there we went to another town thirteen hours by canoe. We did not expect, at midnight, to find any of the people *en fete*. We did not even know that there was a Protestant church in that town. We arrived there to change our canoemen at midnight; and we discovered a huge procession waiting for us with torches and hymn singing. They took us into a long church—I shall never forget it—lighted by a few hurricane lamps. Then the catechist, the 'preacher,' said to me:

"Please, sir, I ask you to take over this church (it was crowded with people) and nine other churches around about us, numbering two thousand people. Please take them. The only thing I ask for is a catechist." I said:

"I think you are going rather quickly. You know very well that if the Methodist Church comes here you will have to

subscribe a lot of money to pay expenses. And we may have something to say about discipline in the church.' He replied at once:

"Please, sir, we have thought about this for a long time. We came to this decision years ago. We ask you to take us over. *Give us light*. Give us the Gospel. These Bibles—we see them, but we cannot understand them. Open these Bibles to us.' One old man at the back of the church stood up and said:

"Please, sir, before you go—since our prophet left us we have committed many faults. Pray for us that God will forgive us the sins we have committed in our ignorance."

"My friends, with deep emotion I tried to pray for these poor folk, and I asked myself whose was the responsibility. They had done everything humanly possible, yet they had waited for ten long years. Then they sang. These were the words:

Massa, speak, Thy servant heareth,  
Waiting for Thy gracious word,  
Waiting for the voice that cheereth  
Massa, let it now be heard.

"It was enough to make strong men weep to see those people."

And so the story goes. Now *who* was Harris? Why did he preach? What did he preach? Where is he? Such are the questions that surge through our minds. For that "a notable miracle hath been done" in those regions none can doubt.

This modern "John the Baptist" was born in a tiny village in the bush in Liberia. He belongs to the Grebo tribe. His uncle was a pastor of the American Methodist Church and he was brought up under the influence of that church.

At the age of twenty-one he was soundly converted. He says: "I felt the Holy Spirit come upon me."

He at once began preaching. God called him to it. He thundered out God's condemnation of all idolatrous practices,—all sin. His favorite text was: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. . . I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

Persecution arose. His own people flung him into prison. At length, in 1913, he crossed the frontier from Liberia into the Ivory Coast.

In the fifty thousand square miles of forest land there, villages small and great abound. Christianity was practically unknown. The people were kept in bondage by crafty and cruel heathen priests. Only those of us who have lived in West Africa know what this means. On all sides shrines, devil-houses, fetishes, ju-jus, and blood-stained idols were to be seen. And the sinister priests, like incarnate demons, lurked around—and woe betide any man who offends them!

Suddenly the "prophet" Harris appeared—a simple old black man, well beyond middle age, a man of little education and no special training, except that greatest of all training, —a thorough knowledge of the Bible. Here was a man whom no missionary society would have accepted and no church would have ordained or commissioned. He went alone, with no body of praying people behind him, no funds to finance him; yet in three months he won more people for Christ than probably any missionary who ever fared forth. Certainly more than one hundred thousand people were brought into the fold of Christ through his brief ministry.

He preached with tremendous earnestness and with deep conviction. His powerful voice proclaimed the holiness, and jealousy, and love of God.

His message was that there was *one* God and *one* Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord. He called upon the people, not to think over his message, but to act upon it.

"Break up your devil-houses and shrines, drive out the priests from your midst; burn up your ju-jus and your fetishes; do away with your heathen dances, ceremonies, and feasts, and turn to the living God." He sometimes threatened to call down fire from heaven on those who disobeyed.

He knew his Bible, and impressed upon all its great value.

He proceeded to baptize his converts. He bade them kneel before him in little groups. He passed along laying his Bible on every head, saying,

"This is God's Book. You must obey it." Then he sprinkled water upon them and baptized them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

His fame spread like-wildfire. People tramped long distances through the forest to hear him. He would accept no money, but he lived in their houses and ate what food was necessary. On he went from village to village, and from town to town.

He seemed to have but one sermon which—like Paul Kanamori—he preached everywhere. It was a sermon so simple, so direct, so sincere, so convincing that it stirred the hearts, and changed the lives of tens of thousands. Probably no missionary ever met with such sudden and striking success. His intense earnestness, and his love for his Saviour, made his message well-nigh irresistible.

Whole villages renounced their heathenism, and destroyed everything connected with it. They repented of their sins, looked in faith to Christ, and were immediately baptized. Then the "prophet" Harris went on his way. The reality of these conversions is seen in the fact that they are enduring. For ten years the people have stood fast. The "prophet" said to them:

"Build a house of God. Buy a Bible to put in it. Sing hymns. And wait for the coming of the white man." It is computed that hundreds of churches were built and over one hundred thousand people were baptized by William Harris.

And this the work of three months of preaching. Think of it—an untutored, poorly equipped old man of God, penniless and homeless, tramping through the forests with nothing to call his own except his Bible and his staff—yet a man filled with the Spirit of God!

During the first twelve months following Mr. Platt's visit 160 churches were handed over to his society with the names of thirty-two thousand converts.

But why did not the "prophet" continue his marvelous work? Well, the war was on. The French government became apprehensive. What if this "prophet" organized a great campaign against war or against the government? During such times no risk could be taken. So Harris was sent out of the country. The governor said to him:

"I find no fault with you. We have had secret service men looking after you all over the country. You take no money. We believe that you are simply interested in preaching the Gospel. We are very sorry, but we must ask you to leave the country." And he did. It was the way they treated our blessed Lord. "I find no fault in him." "Let him be crucified."

But what of his converts? Mr. Platt said: "I wonder whether you can think for a moment of the situation of those people after the departure of Harris. They had burnt their fetishes. The traditions of a hundred years had gone; the realities, the things to which they had attached their faith, their protectors from evil spirits, had been burned. They were in ashes under their feet, and the God they wanted to worship was miles above their heads, and Harris was gone." Yet for ten years they kept together, steadfast, and waited for God's messengers.

Harris laid good foundations. In each village twelve disciples, or apostles, were chosen, and they selected a preacher. In every church a Bible was to be placed. He told them that wherever they found a Bible, there was sacred ground. He defined a church as a place where the Bible rested. "The church where there is no Bible," said he, "is not worthy of the name." So after Harris had gone, the people met Sunday by Sunday to worship God and to gaze upon the Bible which was placed on a table in the center of every church. "To them it was like a mighty charm, a locked treasure. There was no man to declare it unto them."

When over-zealous officials pulled down some of the churches after the "prophet" was sent out of the country, the people promptly rebuilt them. Some of the churches are in solid granite. One is worth \$10,000.

For ten long years those people worshipped and waited and prayed—with no teacher and no outside encouragement.

The Rev. F. Deaville Walker, who was sent out from England to see something of this wonderful work, said on his return:

"Can it be called a mass movement? It was rather an avalanche! Never before has a missionary society had such a task suddenly thrown upon it. These multitudes literally threw themselves into our arms. And their one cry was,

'Teach us about God—the God we have for ten years been trying to serve!' Never have I seen places of worship so crowded. The reverence and the earnestness amazed me. . . . All their eagerness flows out in song. I shall always think of them as a singing people."

Naturally the missionaries were eager to discover William Wadé Harris. Where had he gone? Was he still alive? Rumor said yes. M. Benoit, a French missionary, set out to find him in his old home. They discovered his humble dwelling—a half-ruined cottage with a big hole in the walls. The door was opened. It looked as if it was never closed. The place was almost destitute of furniture. Everything betokened poverty, loneliness, and neglect. This was the abode of the wonderful old man whose passionate message had swept scores of thousands into the kingdom! But the "prophet" they found not.

The neighbors said he had gone an hour or two before to Cape Palmas. There M. Bedoit found him, sitting by the roadside, wearing his long white gown and the stole-like ribbon and the familiar cross-shaped staff lying beside him.

He is an aged man now, possibly seventy years old. But he still wanders about the country of Liberia preaching, although he does not make as many converts as he did on the Ivory Coast.

It was a thrilling moment when the "prophet" and the missionary met. They were both overcome with emotion. One can compare it only with the meeting of Stanley and Livingstone. The old "prophet" longs to get back across the forbidden frontier. His one desire is to preach Christ. "The time is short," he repeated again and again; and lest M. Bedoit had any doubt about it, he turned over the leaves of his well-worn Bible and made him read the very words, "*The time is short.*"

William Harris knew all about Mr. Platt's visit. He even had a religious paper (in English) telling about the work! But he resolutely refused to talk about himself. The one thing laid upon his heart was the great compelling thought "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." Is he not an example to us all? Is he not an inspiration to all who read these words?

His great work is done. But it is not *his* work. It is that of the Holy Spirit who laid hold upon this untutored man whose one desire was to do His will. And He will lay hold on us, if we are fully yielded to Him. May God fill us all with the Holy Spirit and with power from on high.

God bless William Wadé Harris, the black man "sent from God."—From the *Sunday School Times*, October 1st, 1927.

#### OMISSION OF BIBLE SCHOOL LESSON.

The Editor's absence necessitates the omission of the Bible School Lesson Outline this week. One, probably two, will appear in next week's issue.

## TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

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