

Radio Sermon, January 18th—See Page 5

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES AND
IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c. Per Single Copy.

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

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Vol. 9. No. 36

TORONTO, JANUARY 22nd, 1931.

Whole No. 453

FRIENDSHIP FOR THE CHURCH

By the Late Dr. Russell H. Conwell.

In the early church fathers we find many references to the Christian character Christ was supposed to create. They speak of the sevenfold strand which makes up the cord of Christian character, and mention that the strongest thread is that of loyalty to one's friends.

The strands of Christian character include Christ's noble characteristic of loyalty to one's friends. Christ has declared that: "Whosoever layeth down his life for his friend exhibits the noblest trait of character, for greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend."

There are two classes of people found in every church, and have been ever since the time of Christ, and it is into one of these divisions we all go. There are a great many people in every church who are weak and sickly, and who sleep. They are not unchristian, they are not unbelievers, they are not heretics, but they are acquiescent; they are latent, they are not active in the cause of the church. We should not seek to be in that class of latent believers, but to belong to the other class of watching believers. There are just as many martyr-like spirits to-day as ever in the world, perhaps a great many more. A great many men would go up to the stake, deliberately, to be tied there and burned to death, if they had the same excitement, or the same cause, or the same purpose which characterized the martyrs of old. I think there are many people belonging to every church who show no disposition to take any part in its work, who, if there came an extreme call like that to the early martyrs, would immediately be found in the front rank. It is a surprising thing to find how many noble characters there are buried underneath the folds of society, how many grand martyrs who have never been called upon, seemingly, to make a sacrifice.

Cranmer, who was burned at the stake in England, and who was one of the chief advisers of Henry VIII, was a very vacillating man, a cowardly man, seemingly. He was full of all kinds of subtlety and assisted the king in a great many of his divorce cases, his quar-

rels with the Pope, with the people of England, and with the officials, in ways that are subject to severe criticism, and some even to utter condemnation. For my part I think Cranmer must have been a very faulty individual, a public official who did not understand his duty, or was untrue to the people. Yet that man, with all his faulty history, with all his vacillating character, when the time came for him to decide whether he would retract what he believed and what he had said, or be burned at the stake, said: "I will go to the stake." The offer was made repeatedly, that if he would take back his declaration of what he believed concerning the Church of Christ, he could not only go free but hold official position under the queen; but he still resisted and went so far as to put out his hand into the blazing fire because it had once signed a document that he felt was untrue, and he burned to his death with all the stolid bravery of the noblest of the martyrs of the middle ages. There are in the church to-day men who seem to be vacillating, whose characters are full of inconsistencies, who, if the call was actually made as a question of life or death, would go to the stake as bravely as Cranmer did.

But the thought that I wish to urge upon you is that it is a mistake, if not a great sin, to belong to the uncertain class of people. The church is divided into an active membership and an inactive membership. All churches throughout the world have a list of both inactive and active members which they print for public observation. But I am speaking of a spiritual division of the church into active and inactive members, and not of matters recorded in the books of the church.

Loyalty to one's friends is an indication of true friendship, and that loyalty is displayed in its very best form with reference to the Church of Christ. We read in the writings of David: "How happy are they that are loyal to Jerusalem. If I forget thee, oh Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." To be loyal to one's friends is to be loyal to one's city, to one's nation, to one's God, and it is represented by the

church fathers as the very best evidence of salvation and as the highest tribute to the spirit which Christ gives to man. Oftentimes we find this in very practical illustrations in life. It has occurred scores of times that men writing concerning some member of the church whom they desire to employ have said: "Is he loyal to his church?" They want to know if that is in his character, if that is part of his make-up, if when he promises to do a thing he does it. Industrial companies seek that information. It is in the printed blanks of three of the largest of the great commercial firms of Philadelphia: "Is he loyal to his church?" It is all because that character commands the respect of business men, and secures the confidence of those carrying on great enterprises. Recently a young lady wrote to me concerning a member of the church, "Is he loyal to his church?" She said: "I want to know more about him than I know now. He is keeping company with me and I desire to be sure that his character is upright and trustworthy. Is he loyal to his church?"—one of the most proper and natural questions to ask if she wishes to ascertain the real character of the person with whom she is associating. Only a short time ago the War Department at Washington wrote to me concerning a member of this church. He was in Panama, and had applied for an official position of considerable prominence, and the Assistant-Secretary of War wrote to me asking the same question: "Does he keep up his church duties?" In his application they had read that he was a member of this church. So among high and low everywhere, this loyalty of a person to his word, to his friends, to his church, or his city, or his nation, is considered to be one of the best traits of human living.

To be loyal to Jesus Christ we ought to be loyal to the church, and it requires more than a mere nominal connection with it. To be loyal, even though the principles to which we are loyal are different from those in which others believe, is often evidence of a high character. There came into my house last week a lady from North Carolina, from the town where I was stationed in the great Civil War. In that town there lived an old man, a native of North Carolina, and his house was respected by officers who frequently visited there. I went in often to read in his library. The soldiers did not rob or destroy, and that man was known to be loyal to the state of North Carolina and disloyal, in that sense, to the Union of the States. But he was so upright about it, his character was so established, that he was respected by the enemies of his people, and we went back and forth with the fair understanding that we knew his position. Should I meet him, if he is living now, I would have a profound respect for the loyalty of the man to his state, to his people and to his city. It is a characteristic which in itself commands the admiration of mankind and the favour of God.

When Frederick IV died in 1861 and William I came in, the new emperor was told of Bismarck, who was then the national representative at the court of Russia, and the emperor said: "I dislike that man. He does not advocate the cause in which I believe. He has nothing about him that seems congenial to me; I want nothing to do with him." But one of his counsellors said to him: "You dislike him because he is so

loyal to your predecessor. He is known everywhere as being in favour of the emperor who is dead. Would not it be of value for you to have a friend like that? Would not Bismarck be of great use to you if he were to be as loyal to you as he is to your predecessor?" "But," said William I, "he is too loyal to him to be loyal to me." "No," said the counsellor, "a man having that open disposition and that iron character can be loyal to more than one, and you can make him loyal to you." William I sent for Bismarck; sat down and had a free talk with him; told him he did not believe in many of the things he did, but said he: "I admire your loyalty to your friend." That won Bismarck over to William I. He became the great leader of Germany. He united Germany. He won in the great battles against France; and William I became the emperor of all Germany, because he had been wise enough to take into his counsel a man who was loyal to some one else, and who, being loyal to some one else, would be loyal to him. When William II came in and refused to do the same thing, he made the great mistake of his imperial life.

A man who owned a mine suddenly thought of the old folks at home, and his first thought was to send them a sum of money. Then he decided to go on to look over the ground himself and get for them the things they needed. He went with the money and expended it himself, raised the old home-stead, covered it with new shingles, laid out the ground in front of the house, supplied all that was needed, and restored the old furniture they had used for fifty years. He put himself into that active list of loyal sons who give themselves with their money. There are so many people who give their money and don't give themselves—who do not give their prayers, or their time, or their personal attention to it. They belong to this class that are asleep, to those who are weak and sickly in the church. So it is important before we sit at the Lord's table that we all take into mind this very important exhortation of the apostle, that we get out of that class of the sickly, of the weak and those who are asleep, and that we put ourselves into the active class of loyal members of the church who find some work to do and enter upon it with all their heart. They are of more use to the church than the mere added name upon the church list.

To find work to do is really a Christian trait—to find something to do for those in need—not waiting to be called upon, but seeking out places and opportunities. This is a characteristic of success in men and women in any line of life, but especially is it so in the church. In a great church with many members, it is very easy to be lost, very easy to be overlooked, to get into the background and sink from society, unless one has the determination to be loyal to the church in its activities, to be loyal to Christ and to keep all His commandments. Christ says unto all: "Watch." "Again I say unto you, watch." "Work for the night is coming." The church should be a help to those who desire to be of service to the Master, and so I say, Get out of the class of those who sleep. Leave the class of the sickly and the weak and find something to do for Christ in connection with the church. Only when you are in the active list can you derive the benefits which the church is intended to confer. A full, happy

life as a Christian, is a life of positive activity, where there is plenty to do. Oh, so much is left undone! No person need be without Christian work, and if he will but set himself about it he will not only serve the Lord in accordance with God's commandments, but find in himself a well of joy springing up into the beauty of a fountain of everlasting life. Blessed it is to belong to the church if one is an active member, living a loyal life every day, seeking out something to do for the church. That means that humanity, through the opportunities which the church furnishes, will be blessed. No man can live as devoutly outside the church as he can on the inside. There are no opportunities to-day in the world such as there are in the church; and it is easier to love, easier to do and much more can be accomplished if one is a member of the church than if he is not. If he be a sinner, let him seek the church and its activities, for it is dangerous to come into the church and do nothing. It is dangerous to be merely a nominal member of the organization; but to get into it and find something to do and set one's self at it and be found doing it, or to be ready when Christ comes and be found engaged in His work, to be on the watch when the Master appears, is the highest ambition of a poor and righteous Christian soul.

THE VOICE OF GOD.

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

Most of the Lord's people have seasons in their life when they are conscious of hearing distinctly the voice of God. The Bible has many instances of this, and the story of church history would supply many, many more.

A good many years since the writer was labouring in the beautiful Island of Ceylon, "*Lanka the resplendent*"; the "*pearl-drop on the brow of India*". While labouring in that field he came into very close fellowship with a number of godly tea planters. As concerning the family of one of these, the writer now wishes to tell an interesting story. We will call the parents Mr. and Mrs. X.

These were very godly people, and their witness for Christ was clear and strong in the home and everywhere. They had a beautiful daughter, of whom they were naturally very fond. Under the influence of the home, and the character of her parents, she professed definite conversion, and came out openly for Christ.

To the great sorrow of the parents, it was discovered after a while that this daughter had become clandestinely engaged to an ungodly young planter who lived in the district. When the parents discovered this, they were deeply distressed. They were asked to give their sanction; and after a while the mother reluctantly gave a partial sanction. But the father could not be persuaded to do so. He stood firmly in his disapproval of this engagement.

The parents pleaded with the daughter on the ground that she was a professing Christian, and the young man was an utter stranger to the things of God. Then, to their astonishment, the daughter openly declared that her profession of Christ was unreal, and that she had no more vital godliness than the young man to

whom she was engaged. This took away the ground from underneath the feet of the parents so far as argument with the daughter was concerned. So they gave themselves unceasingly to prayer.

Some time later the daughter went away for a holiday, and very soon was compelled to return home with Typhoid Fever, and complications. She became very seriously ill, and was watched with great care by doctors and nurses.

The writer, sending a message of sympathy to the father, received in reply a very encouraging letter to the effect that the daughter had definitely returned to the Lord Jesus Christ, and had given a "clear ringing testimony" of her faith in Christ. This was very soon followed by a long period of unconsciousness, during which period she was watched for death continually.

Another letter was sent by the writer to the mother, expressing sympathy and assurance of prayer, to which a reply was received later in which the mother said that she could "not see the hand of the Lord in this affliction". She seemed to be moving in the dark. In reply to which letter the writer told her there were times when the Lord led His people on in the dark. They were not asked to see His hand, but to trust Him calmly in the mystery.

A few days later, in the course of reading, the writer came across a passage of Scripture that struck him as exceedingly appropriate for this lady in her present sorrow. Taking a letter-card from his drawer, he wrote out this text, and mailed it to the lady. Not many days after, he received a very encouraging reply, in which the mother said she thanked the writer much for the passage of Scripture which had been sent, and made this remark, "You do not know how God-given your message was." Then she told the following story.

On a certain night she had watched her daughter through till four o'clock in the morning. And then at four o'clock she went out into the garden. It was a beautiful moonlight morning. Looking up to the Lord, she begged Him once more to spare the life of her daughter. The answer came ringing through her heart, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" She looked up and said, "Lord, I do believe", and went back to the house and lay down and had refreshing sleep.

On awaking, her husband came in from the tea plantation, and said, "Wife, I have got a message for you this morning. I feel it is a word straight from the Lord." "Indeed", she said, "What is it, may I ask?" He said, "These are the words, 'Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?'" "Well!" she said, "that is remarkable. The Lord gave me that Himself when I was in prayer at four o'clock this morning!"

Later she took up her Bible, and read her daily portion. That portion brought her again to John, chapter eleven, verse forty, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" That was the third time the same message came to her that morning.

A little later in the morning another godly planter called at the home. He said, "Mrs. X., I have been in prayer for you and your daughter most of the night; indeed, I have scarcely been able to sleep all night

through. And this morning I have a scripture which I feel I must pass on to you." She said, "What is it?" He said, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" "Why", she said, "that is extraordinary. I received that word this morning directly from the Lord at four o'clock, and then through my husband later, then during my morning reading, and now from you. God is surely speaking to us." A little later that same morning the writer's letter-card was delivered. On opening it, the same words of Scripture were found, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

So through five different channels that same word of Scripture was brought home to that lady's heart that day. She said, "Surely this is the voice of God. How near He must be! How solemn life is! He is distinctly speaking to me."

Then the nurse came to her and said, "Mrs. X., I would like you to see your daughter." She went into the room and stood at the end of the bed. Her daughter had returned to consciousness. "Yes", said the mother, "it is a resurrection", according to John, chapter eleven.

From that hour the young lady began to improve, and to the astonishment of nurse and doctors, she passed on to convalescence.

When she was capable of receiving visitors, the young man to whom she was engaged, desired to see her. He was allowed to come. Sitting by her bedside, and taking awhile, they very soon discovered that they now had nothing in common. The young lady was now a rejoicing, restful, Christian. The young man was a total stranger to the things of God. "Oh", she said, "we have nothing in common, we had better separate!" And so the engagement, which had been a sorrow to the parents, came to an end; their cry to God was heard.

When the young lady was fully restored, her father saw the leading medical man, and asked him for his bill. He said, "Mr. X., my charges should be so and so, ordinarily; but your daughter has not been raised up to health as the result of any skill of mine. Her recovery is entirely in answer to your own prayers, and although I am not a Christian myself, I am obliged to acknowledge that the hand of God is in this restoration of your daughter."

The father took the money which the doctor would not receive, and distributed it among various sections of Christian work in the Island, and the writer had the privilege one day of receiving a portion of the doctor's fee for the Lord's work in Colombo.

It has been thought that a story like this should not be lost, but should be passed on for the encouragement of the people of God. The facts were exactly as the writer has recorded them, and he trusts that the Lord will be pleased to use the record to His praise, and the blessing of some of His troubled people.

FROM OUR RADIO READERS.

Letters continue to reach us telling of blessing received through the radio messages, many of them enclosing offerings to help bear the expense of this ministry. Many of our *Witness* friends who are unable

to "pick up" our services are sending gifts, believing it to be a real missionary enterprise,—send in your gift at once.

We print below some of the letters received:

"Dear Dr. Shields: Athens, Penn., Jan. 13, 1931.

I enclose cheque for Twenty dollars to be used in your radio work.

Mrs..... and I are hearing you every Sunday night. We are shut in, and your service is very much appreciated.

The Lord placed in our hand a small fund, and we are dividing it with you.

Fraternally yours,
(Signed) _____"

"Providence, Rhode Island, Jan. 8, 1931.

"Dear Sir and Brother:

It was a week ago Sunday, was it not, that you preached on the Unpardonable Sin? I heard that sermon clearly, away down here in Providence; and rejoiced that you made it so clear and forceful and scriptural. I wish you would have it printed. It would be a great blessing to many.

(Signed) _____"

"Dear Pastor of the Jarvis St. Baptist Church, Toronto, Ont. Stratford, Conn., Jan. 15, 1931.

I have been listening in to your church services for the past three Sunday evenings, and to my way of thinking it is the best of all. Your singing of the fine old gospel hymns is very inspiring indeed, and I join with you. The first I caught from you was the night your people sang, "Forever with the Lord". It was wonderful. I hope to hear it soon again. Give to your singers my sincere thanks. And your wonderful sermons! How they do lift one, and send him on his way with new courage, full of inspiration, and full of confidence that God lives and all is well. May God bless you in your broadcasting!

I want you to know that I am a Christian worker, and I also broadcast, and have for nearly two years. And what wonderful letters I receive, so encouraging! And as I hear from you and your beautiful singers, I want you to know of your good work.

(Signed) _____"

"Dear Dr. Shields: Weston, Ont., Jan. 12, 1931.

Enclosed please find \$7.00 toward radio expenses. We enjoy listening to your splendid expounding of the gospel, and sincerely hope you are spared to continue. Your reward will be not of this world. God grant you that peace which passeth all understanding.

(Signed) _____"

"Dear Dr. Shields: Quaker City, Ohio.

My daughter and my little granddaughter and I listened on the night of January 18th. You preached from the text, "I will make thy grave, for thou art vile." I want to tell you I haven't heard such a sermon since I was a girl, and I am now seventy years old. You quoted some as saying, "Why don't you preach love?" I am of the opinion there are too many such sermons preached now. I think many are depending upon His mercy, and think He will not punish.

I want to congratulate you on that sermon, and that excellent prayer, and hope you will preach many more of the same kind.

If I had a radio I surely would tune in Toronto, Canada, often.

May the grace of God rest and abide with you forever.

(Signed) _____"

"Dear Sir: Hamilton, Ont.

Enclosed \$2.00 toward your Radio Fund, as I promised in December last. I am an eager listener to the Word of God from Jarvis Street Baptist Church. My soul doth rejoice in the Lord's salvation. This is the best two hours of the week. I love the singing, and the preaching.

Yours,
(Signed) _____"

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

GOD DIGGING THE SINNER'S GRAVE.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 18th, 1931.

Broadcast from Station CKGW, 690 k.c. 434.8 metres. Short Wave VE9GW. 6095 k.c. 49.22 metres.

(Stenographically Reported.)

"And the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile."—Nahum 1:14.

Prayer Before the Sermon.

O Lord, we lift not alone our voices, but our hearts, to Thee in prayer and adoration, for what Thou art, for Thou art God, and beside Thee there is none else.

We draw near to Thee because Thou hast appointed a place where Thou wilt meet with us. Thou hast devised means that Thy banished be not expelled from Thee. We come by way of the Blood, by way of the Cross, to pray. We thank Thee that the Babel builders' dream has been realized—though not by human effort; though men have not succeeded in building a stairway to the skies, it has pleased Thee to send forth Thy Son, and the prophecy of our Lord Himself has been fulfilled: by faith we have seen heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

We thank Thee that for poor, lost, men there is a way home. We bless Thee that when, in our blindness and folly, we have put such a distance between ourselves and the Father's house, Thou dost in the infinitude of Thy grace seek after us and find us. We thank Thee for the Good Shepherd Who gave His life for the sheep, Who left the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness and went out after the lost, until He found it. We thank Thee that so many of us have been found of Thee, that so many of us can sing,—

"I was lost; but Jesus found me—
Found the sheep that went astray;
Threw His loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way."

Blessed be Thy name for ever for Thy matchless love, for Thy sovereign grace, for the salvation that had its origin in the heart of God.

O Lord, we pray that this evening many within these walls may be led to repentance and faith. We mourn our sin; we sorrow for it, many of us, with a deep sorrow. We pray that Thou wilt make us to see how heinous a thing it is, how utterly abhorrent, how alien to Thy holy nature, how impossible it is for Thee to look upon it, or to tolerate it in Thy presence! O Lord, work in us, we pray Thee, that repentance which is the gift of God, which can result only from the illumination of Thy Spirit, as He reveals to us the nature of sin, and how opposed it is to all that is of God.

Then lead us to the cleansing blood. Help us, O Lord, that we may have wisdom, if we have not done it before, to do as Naaman did when he plunged in Jordan seven times, and his flesh became like the flesh of a little child. So purge us with hyssop, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow.

We thank Thee for the many people who share this service with us over the air, the thousands who know the joyful sound, who rejoice in an experience of Thy salvation. Bless all Thy dear people this evening.

There are many who hear who have not yet found Jesus, but who know the plague of their own hearts, who have discovered their own impotency in the face of their spiritual adversary, and who know not where to turn for relief. May they find it in Christ! O Lord, be pleased this evening solemnly to warn us all. Forbid that any should trifle with these matters of great moment, or sin away the day of grace.

Then, Lord, bless us and give us understanding in spiritual things this evening, that Thy name may be glorified in the salvation of souls.

Some whom Thou lovest are sick, in hospitals, in sanatoria, in their own homes. Minister to them, we pray Thee, as they hear this evening message. Some hear who are travelling; some perhaps will hear by the wayside—in restaurants or hotels. There may be careless hearers. There may be some who have no desire toward God. Yet Thy Word can reach them. May Thine arrows be sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under Thee. Thou conquering Saviour, gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, the sword that pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Discover us, we pray Thee, everyone to ourselves. Make us to understand what we are like in Thy holy light. So may we flee to Jesus Christ, everyone, and find salvation in Him. We ask it for Thy glory's sake, Amen.

The evening text will be found in Nahum's prophecy, the first chapter, and part of the fourteenth verse: "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile." The subject of the text is Sennacherib who described himself as "that great king, the king of Assyria."

As we study the picture here drawn by the pen of inspiration you will see that sometimes the figure of Sennacherib is merged into a representation of Ninevah, the capital city, that great city to which Jonah the prophet was sent with a message of warning. And again, on closer inspection, you will find it takes on the colour and proportions of the whole wide Assyrian empire which was, at that time, the greatest power in the world. And when Sennacherib was reigning in power, and his kingdom was the envy of all nations, and his wealth and prestige were unequalled among the monarchs of the earth, the Lord, by the voice of His prophet, thus addressed him: "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile."

The principles involved in this story apply to individuals as well as to nations. The great truth here set forth is that there is in God's universe a law of moral sanitation which decrees that every vile thing at last shall be buried out of sight. Let us look at this text with its historical background, that we may learn therefrom some lessons that must have application to all of us in our day.

If I had a still larger audience than this, and could command a hearing among statesmen and world-rulers, I think I might, without immodesty, suggest that there is not a nation on earth to-day, nor a ruler who wields a sceptre anywhere, who may not with profit consider the solemn lesson here set forth, that God is in His heaven, that He sits on no precarious throne, nor borrows leave to be; and that He judges men and nations and institutions for their sins, and when any one of them becomes at last a menace, He buries it out of sight. He

removes it from view, He gives commandment concerning it that none of its seed be sown. He issues this order, "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile."

I.

Let us look at this picture. It is a description of ONE WHO WAS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GREATEST POWER AND THE GREATEST WEALTH OF THE WORLD, Sennacherib, the great king of the Assyrian empire, and God addresses him, saying, "I will bury thee because thou art vile."

The Holy Ghost never uses superfluous language. The Spirit of God never employs superlative speech—where words of lesser dimensions would do. And when God calls a thing "vile", He does so because it is vile, because it is vile in His sight. I remind you at the outset that the teaching of our context is that *God is not concerned with the outward appearance, but that He is looking at the heart of the empire, at the heart of the king*, and He says, "There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellor." God does not wait until the germ of evil is fully developed. He does not diagnose a disease by means of a post mortem examination. He is equal to a keener penetration than that which resides in the X-ray. He can discern even the thoughts and intents of the heart. And here He is describing a great and prosperous people, and particularly a conspicuously successful monarch, a man who passes among his fellows as the greatest man of his time; and yet God says he is vile at heart.

Sennacherib was a cedar in Lebanon, his top was among the highest trees, he was envied of all the trees in the garden of God; yet there was a worm at the heart, there was rotteness at the core. Notwithstanding his widespread branches, he was vile and all but ready to be buried.

When shall we learn that God does not look upon outward appearances, but looks upon the heart? When shall we learn that if we would dwell with Him we must dwell in the presence of One to Whose eyes all things are open and naked, and from Whom no secrets are hid? No garments of our devising, no disguise of our contrivance, however ingeniously constructed, can possibly hide the heart from the omnivident gaze of God. He sees us as we are; He deals with motives and purposes; He knows what is in the heart of man.

How terrible was that analysis made by our Lord Jesus when speaking to a company of very respectable people, Scribes and Pharisees, people who robed themselves in religious garb, when He said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." He turned His divine microscope on that putrid stream and said he could see in it all manner of evil, that "those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man". It is because of what God sees in man, the heart deceitful above all things, the conscience defiled, the memory stored with things that are horrible in His sight, like the chamber of imagery in Ezekiel's vision when he went through the hole in the wall and saw upon the walls of the chamber "creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel"—it is because of that God pronounces His judgments.

We cannot hide our native, natural, vileness from the holy view of the Holy One. If we know our hearts at all, if, indeed, we have come into the light that shines in

the face of Jesus Christ, we shall know the meaning of that hymn we sing,—

"Just and holy is Thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
Vile, and full of sin, I am,
Thou art full of truth and grace."

I call your attention to the fact that, according to the record, the analogy which the history behind the text suggests is that *utter vileness may sometimes obtain when there is apparent outward vigour*. Assyria was a mighty nation at this time, and we do well to remember that the Assyrian Empire maintained its identity—and for a large part of the time in full flower and flood—for twelve centuries. The Assyrian Empire was older at this time by many centuries than the British Empire now is. We sometimes boast that we are called to fulfil a special mission, but we shall be wise to remember that other empires have passed. I tremble now for the British Empire, and for England the heart of it, when I observe that the Word of God is displaced everywhere, and instead of being a place as once she was where God was honoured, and His Word was believed, and His gospel was preached, it is a place where infidelity is rampant to-day. I think we need to sing Kipling's Recessional still,—

"Far-called, our navies melt away,
On dune and headland sinks the fire,—
So, all our pomp of yesterday,
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget!"

We may be outwardly, as a nation, as vigorous as was Nineveh, and yet be corrupt at heart, with no God at the centre of our life; and any nation of which that is true is in dire peril.

At this time, Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. Assyria was the greatest world power, hence Nineveh was the metropolis of the world. It was the seat of the government of Sennacherib; here lived and reigned "that great king, the king of Assyria". He had reached the topmost pinnacle of fame, his strongholds were untaken by the enemy, the number of his subjects was undiminished, his national strength was unimpaired. Nineveh, it was said, was like a pool of water; the spoil of silver and of gold were there. She was envied of all nations because of her outward vigour and her apparent prosperity; notwithstanding, at the very time when she boasted she was at the zenith of her power, God said, "Thou art vile".

So may a man appear to be strong, so may one robe his inward corruption even with a religious profession, so may one pass among his fellows as a man who seems to enjoy the special favour of God, and yet at the same time, be vile at heart and all but ready for burial.

Then, it would appear, that *inward vileness does not always militate against outward victory*. Sennacherib was unusually successful in his wars against other nations. You will remember that when he sent a letter by the hand of his commander-in-chief to Hezekiah, king of Judah, when the army of Assyria encompassed the holy city, he said to him, "Which of the gods of the nations have been able at all to deliver his land out of the hand of the great king, the king of Assyria?" He warned the people of

Judah not to allow Hezekiah to persuade them to put their trust in their God, for, said Sennacherib, "There is no God that can deliver his land out of the hand of the great king, the king of Assyria." So invulnerable, so invincible, so invariably victorious had he been, that he imagined defeat was an impossibility, and he flung his challenge to all the powers of earth and heaven, and bade them do their worst.

But there was another King Who saw to the heart of things, and He said, "Thou art vile". Do not be proud of your progress. Do not point to your widespread power and say, "I am as a cedar in Lebanon. Who shall break me down?" There is a Greater than thou Who seeth the hearts of men, and He will by no means acquit the wicked: He will bring every secret thing into judgment, and men shall be judged according to the things that are written in the Book.

How terrible thus to be described by the God of heaven! Naaman, the Syrian—not the Assyrian, but the Syrian—"Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable". By his hand, providentially, great victories had been wrought. And yet beneath all his splendid robes, beneath all his military decorations, and all the honour which his monarch had put upon him, there was a leprosy, there was a plague in his blood which made him, in his own sight, as he had come to know himself, even as he must have been known of God, a leper, unclean. Thus was it in the case of the Assyrian king.

I wonder if you could walk down the streets of Toronto to-morrow, if you could enter into business places, if you could inspect its banking-houses, if you could go into the haunts of men who buy and sell and get gain,—if it were possible for any of us thus to inspect human life in all its aspects with the eye of God, how utterly vile, how loathsome would human life appear! It is covered up, hidden from view—but not from the view of God. It is with Him, at last, everyone of us must deal; and we had better face it now that we may learn the lessons he would teach.

Sennacherib was very religious. He was slain at last in the house of his god when he went into the temple of his god. There are many people who have their idols, who are yet called Christians. There is much that passes by the name of Christianity which has not a regnant Christ at its heart. In many a temple something else is worshipped rather than God. And it is possible for a man to be very religious and very vile at the same time. Surely the records of human life abound with instances of that terrible truth, that many a man has been bold in his religious profession, bold in his religious leadership, and yet, at the same time, had a heart uncleansed, and unfit for the view of God.

Let us make sure work of it, dear friends, from the preacher to the last man in this great congregation. If we have never sought the cleansing Fountain, let us seek it now. If there be a shadow of a doubt about it, let us plunge into the Fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins. If there be trust in anything else than in the blood that flowed from the heart of Incarnate Deity, let us separate ourselves

from everything false, and turn to the only One Who can wash us and make us clean. Do not trust in outward seeming, do not put your confidence in any works of righteousness which you may do, or in any apparent evidence of the divine favour. Successful as you may be, there may be something at the heart that God will deal with by and by.

There is an extraordinary thing said in the chapter I read to you this evening, that "all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him"; "The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty"—as though he were a man who, when compared with religious professors, outwardly, was of greater stature, of better proportions, of more symmetrical development, of higher moral beauty. So he appeared, and yet in spite of it there was this deadly vileness at the heart of the king and of the nation.

It may be possible for us to pass among our fellows as a little above the average stature, so that even the trees in the garden of God cannot hide us, or to be taller than the topmost boughs of the cedars, as was said of Sennacherib, yet, because exalted so high, greater at last must be the fall. Beware of that which would bring us down!

I have not time to trace the analogy through to its conclusion, to elaborate upon the text, but only to name some of the principles growing out of it.

Nineveh was described as a "rejoicing city". Nineveh was never happier than when God said; "Thou art vile." Is it true that you are getting some sweetness out of life? Is it true that you would tell me mockingly, scornfully, "Mr. Preacher, I have tabulated the list of pleasures. I know where to find the streams of pure joy. I am as the rejoicing city. Life, to me, is but a happy summer day." That may all be true,—so was Nineveh but a short time before her decease and funeral.

It was said also of Nineveh, "Thou dwellest carelessly." Nineveh supposed she was invulnerable. She was so strong, so wealthy, so influential, and so powerful, that she could see no enemy anywhere competent to challenge her will, or to bring her down to defeat. She did not care for anybody: She dwelt "carelessly."

Alas! there are many like that to-day. They smile at us, sometimes ironically, and sometimes half pityingly, as though we were hopelessly deluded in believing these old truths of the gospel. They say, "I could listen to a sermon like that every day, and it would not disturb me at all. I have no care about these matters in the least. I have no anxiety. I sleep soundly. My conscience never troubles me. I simply do not care about the future." That may be your folly, but that does not prove that you ought not to be concerned. I may be speaking to someone to-night somewhere a thousand miles away who has not been in church for twenty years. I may be speaking to someone who would not go to church, who has turned his back upon religion, and upon the institutions of religion, and who boasts of his hardness of heart and superiority of intellect, and says, "I care nothing for these things." That

may be true of you, but God is taking your measure, and, careless as you are, He says, "Thou art vile", unless you have been washed in the Blood.

Then *this city was particularly proud*, for, said Nineveh, "I am, and there is none beside me." She was the acme of civilization. She was the last product of human genius. She was great as no other city had ever been great up to that hour. She said. "There is nobody like me", and yet she was vile.

Are you proud? We, none of us, have anything of which to be proud, could we but see ourselves. But we are sometimes foolishly proud. May God humble us that we may be exalted.

May I remind you that a *superficial refinement may sometimes consist with an inward corruption*. I know there are some who say, if you send the school master abroad you will solve all problems. But that is not true. Everybody knows that a sharpened intellect but fits a man for a more subtle sin. A man of disciplined intellectual powers, unless subject to control, is a far greater menace to society than is his less favoured brother. Our penitentiaries are full of educated men.

What was Nineveh? It was the centre of the world's intellectual life. Sennacherib was the embodiment of education, and the inspiration of the arts and sciences. Layard dug from the ruins of Nineveh his great library of ten thousand indestructible clay tablets that are preserved to-day in the British Museum. Nineveh was the centre of refinement. I spoke last Sunday evening of Athens and Corinth, the centres respectively of Grecian culture and commerce. But long before their day Nineveh had reached the position of mistress of the world, the centre of the world's highest intellectual culture; and yet beneath all that varnish of civilization there was vileness of heart.

You will not get to heaven necessarily by way of the university. Go to university, by all means. Cultivate your powers to the utmost. A man of education, other things being equal, has a great advantage over the man whose powers are untrained. But let nobody suppose the way to heaven is to be found there. The greatest scoundrels the world has ever known have been educated men. Look at the master genius whose name stands out even to this day, as being without a peer, as a masterful, commanding, irresistible, personality, Napoleon. What powers, what marvellous powers, that man possessed! Yet he made Europe's rivers red with blood, and it was his wont to boast, "The lives of a million of men are nothing to me." Education will not touch the heart, however it may discipline the mind. With all that in view, the man may be vile at heart.

II.

WHAT WILL GOD DO? He says, "I will make thy grave"; "I will bury thee." That is my subject, "God Digging the Sinner's Grave." And that is what He does. "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile."

Historically, that is literally true. That is exactly what God did for Nineveh. Great as it was, He removed for centuries the last trace of its existence. He buried Nineveh so deep that for centuries it could not be found,—an empire lost, buried by the hand of God.

And He can do it still. Have we not lived in days ourselves where we have seen what God can do with nations? Look at mighty Russia; see what was wrought there. Look at many of the nations to-day,

Spain, and others of the European powers. Look at Turkey, for instance. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." You are not a thoughtful man at all if you have no concern about present-day conditions. You are not thinking very deeply if you are not asking yourself, "What next?" I know people are talking about the end of hard times. May they come if God wills it so! There have been hard times before, but when—oh, when, since you have had opportunity to observe, or when, within the scope of your reading, have you ever known a time when the entire world was in the condition it is in to-day? There is something wrong somewhere. Who knows what will happen on the morrow?

It is but a few years ago that the exile of Doorn was accustomed to rattle his sword in its scabbard. I remember when a certain battleship was launched, and the then Kaiser's brother, Prince Henry, was put in charge, a great banquet was given in his honour. The Kaiser delivered one of his characteristic speeches in which he instructed his brother to shake his mailed fist in the face of the world, and to teach men to respect German power. And while he said it God said, "I will make thy grave." To-day he is eking out a living death. He might better have been buried, so far as his body is concerned; he would have suffered less. I say, it is historically true so far as Nineveh is concerned.

It makes very little difference what spade God uses to do it. You remember how the hosts of Assyria encompassed the city, and Hezekiah prayed to his God. And the Word says, "The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

"The angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe, as he passed;
The eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their breasts but once heaved and for ever
grew still."

Some of the commentators say there was nothing supernatural about the destruction of Sennacherib's host, that there was nothing superhuman about it; that it was merely the result of the deadly simoon. I believe it was supernatural. I believe that one hundred and eighty-five thousand men were stricken of God—but what of it? What if there was nothing supernatural in it? It was still God making a grave by natural law. You gain nothing by denying the supernatural, but much by believing it. "Who maketh the clouds his chariots, and rideth upon the wings of the wind." All things are His messengers to do His will. When He would punish Egypt He said, "I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and I will put my sword in his hand . . . and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt." He is at no loss to find instruments to do His will. When the Lord God goes forth to war, there are plenty of weapons in his armoury; and when He wills to dig the sinner's grave He will never want for implements to accomplish His purposes.

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?
or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day

of battle and war? By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? Who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth where no man is; on the wilderness, where in there is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?"

God can fight His battles by natural powers if He wills. Victor Hugo says that a few drops of rain, more or less, which in the early morning made the roads unfit for the movement of artillery, lost the day for Napoleon at Waterloo. God has only to look upon a man, and let His rain fall.

When Napoleon determined to subdue Russia, General Winter caused his defeat. "By the breath of God frost is given." Have you seen that great picture of Napoleon in his retreat from Moscow?—riding upon his white horse, dejected, his hand in his cloak, and his head bowed, with straggling soldiers coming behind him. No human hand stopped his advance: he was breathed upon by God Himself.

You ask the reason for hard times? I am not a financier, I am not an expert. It is beyond me. I cannot trace these things to their human source. But I am positive of this, that over and above it all, God is speaking to the world. The hearts of men are vile. They are out of harmony with God. God is not in many of our institutions, in the councils of the nations; there is no room for Him.

And He can bury them. He can deal with any one of us. A man said one morning as he was reading his newspaper at the breakfast table, "I see that Mr. So-and-So died suddenly last evening", naming a certain business acquaintance, "but as for me, I am too busy to die; I have not time." He pushed his chair back from the table a few minutes later, and as he stooped to throw off his slippers and put on his shoes, he fell forward—and never spoke again.

You will have to take time to die. God will see to it that you have time to die. And it will not take long when God decrees that the time for the digging of the grave has come. No doctor will stop the process, no man of science will interfere with the providence of God.

What is the picture? That *Nineveh, in the view of God was already dead*—dead—dead, and ready for burial; and He ordered the grave.

I read of some who are "dead in trespasses and in sin". And you know what happens when one is dead? The boy has been away from home for a long time, but he is expected to return. Then word comes that he has passed away, and they have buried him. Thenceforth there is no place kept at the table for him. There is no room reserved upstairs where he may rest now. There is no portion of the father's estate designated for him in the will now. He is dead, and is reckoned out of the family. How terrible when the souls of men before God are dead, when they have no place in the many mansions, no branch of palm awaiting them, no gates of pearl swinging wide for

their welcome, no provision for them at all in the Father's house! Dead! Get the grave ready!

And will you hear me in this? Some of you will say, "But, sir, do you not think you ought to preach the love of God, that you ought to emphasize the love of God?" I do preach the love of God, I do proclaim the love of God,—and never more so than to-night.

Did you ever dig a grave? Alas! alas! we all have. You say, "Yes, sir, I have." *Were you cruel when you dug it?* Did you dig it in vengeance? Did you dig it in malice? Did you dig it because you wanted to? Why did you dig that grave? "Oh, sir", you say, "*that was the last thing that love could do!*" It was the last thing I could do for my loved one. I did not want to, but I had to dig it." Why did you not keep the loved form with you? "Do not be absurd, sir. You know the precious body would soon lose its loveliness of form. You know that after life has departed, very, very soon, that tabernacle would become a heap of corruption, a thing of vileness. I had to dig a grave."

That is a significant word of Abraham's when he bought the field in Machpelah. He said, "If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you." Why? Because it was the last thing he could do for Sarah. It was the last thing that Isaac could do for Rebecca. It is the last thing that any of us can do for one we love.

When our Lord came to Bethlehem and found the weeping sisters he said, "Where have ye laid him?" Why did He say that? Why did He not say, "Show Me the room where he is lying"? He knew he had been dead four days. When they went to the grave one of the sisters said—let me shock you by quoting it from the Book: "Lord by this time he stinketh. The stench of death is upon him. Let us remember him as we last saw him. He is vile. Leave him there."

Of course. There is nothing else to do with that which is vile: it must be buried out of sight.

It has its moral and spiritual parallel. You tell me there is no future judgment, that there is no cleansing of this world? If I had to believe that I should have to deny God. I could not believe in a moral government of the universe, I could not believe in a moral centre whence radiates all moral laws, if I had to believe that God will let sin go without punishing it. If men are not cleansed and saved from their vileness, He must make their grave. His holiness will compel Him so to do.

How terrible that will be! *How deep that grave will be*—to bury something out of the sight of God! I have often wondered at that phrase in the Scripture, "bottomless pit". I do not know what it means,—a pit that has no bottom, where room is provided for an everlasting descent, that whatever is cast into it may go down, and down, and down, and down, and keep on going down for ever: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust the more; he that is filthy, let him be filthy yet more"—"I will make thy grave."

And when God undertakes to bury moral corruption and vileness out of His sight, He will bury it, so deep,

that there will never be a resurrection. When God digs the grave, when God seals it, when men are cast into the grave of His digging, there will be no opening of the prison doors; there will be no coming back again of that which is vile.

Why do you lock your doors at night? Why do you bolt your windows? Why do you have your valuables—if you have any—in the safety deposit vault at the bank? Why do you lock your things up like that? Because there are thieves abroad. I read of the Holy City, "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." They shall not enter into it. Why? Will somebody keep the door? Will the doors be bolted? No! "The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." The gates of the foursquare city are twelve: on the east, three gates; on the west, three gates; on the north, three gates; and on the south, three gates. There are plenty of entrances, but nothing vile will ever enter into the city. Why? Because it will all be buried. It is all

under divine custody. It is put where it can never offend again. And God will be all and in all.

Is there any remedy? Oh yes, blessed be God, there is. Hear me: "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." He died for me—I know He did. He went into the outer darkness for me—I am sure of it. He went into the grave for me—I know He did. He came up out of the grave that I might never be buried out of His sight! That is the gospel. I point you to the Cross, and remind you that—

"There lies beneath its shadow
But on the farther side,
The darkness of an awful grave
That gapes both deep and wide.
And there between us stands the cross,
Two arms outstretched to save,
Like a watchman set to guard the way
From that eternal grave."

Do not pass by the Cross! If you do, you must stumble into that "awful grave".

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

First in a Series of Week-Evening Lectures on the Doctrines of Grace.

By Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Thursday Evening, January 15th, 1931.

(Stenographically Reported)

I shall not take a particular text this evening, but read to you a verse or two from the fourth chapter of Daniel:

"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

We can know nothing of spiritual truth apart from God. Religion—not Christianity, but religion—is universally prevalent. All men are at some time, and in some measure, religious, in the sense that they recognize another life than this, and that there is somewhere, unknown to them perhaps, a supreme Person, a Will which exercises itself in the universe, and manifests itself in the lives of men; but who and what God is, no man can ever discover for himself: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?"

When the Apostle Paul came to Athens his spirit was moved within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. He later referred to that which he had observed, for he said, "As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." That

there was a God they believed, but who and what and where He was they had no means whatever of discovering.

The very idea of God precludes the possibility of His discovery by the finite mind. If God—how shall I put it?—if God were discoverable to the finite mind, He would cease to be God; because the very idea of God postulates infinity, something that is beyond us entirely, something above us, something that out-reaches our utmost understanding. Therefore I say, it must be so, in the very nature of the case, that the Infinite cannot be discovered by the finite.

You cannot measure the ocean with a teacup. You cannot fathom its depths, nor ascertain the area of its surface, with a foot-rule. It is too big for you. You say see it, and wonder at it, and admire it, and fear it, and perhaps, in some of its moods, love it; but you cannot measure it, nor adequately understand it.

But it is often so that the thing which is beyond the capacity of our understanding is, by our little minds, reduced to the meagre measure of our own comprehension. How easily people can make up a story! What little capacities some people require to understand matters which humble, when they do not actually humiliate, the expert. So, though men cannot order their own affairs, nor wrest the veil aside to peer even into to-morrow, yet they presume to sketch for themselves a picture of God, commensurate with the dimensions of their own understandings, and so set up for themselves standards by which they propose God Himself shall be regulated!

Have you not observed that a man's inability to manage his own affairs almost invariably, in his estimation, qualifies him to be adviser-in-chief to every-

body else? Have you noticed that? If a man cannot run a little corner store, but leads it into bankruptcy, he is likely to be put up for alderman next year,—for if a man who has failed himself is not qualified to be the adviser of half a million people, and to decide how their money to the tune of millions is to be spent, then where in the world shall we get a competent administrator! But you have seen that again and again, have you not? And is it not true that those who make so signal a failure of the business of living, as we all have done, and effect such a tangle of life that we have no skill to disentangle the skein, though we cannot exercise our will over the limited area of our little merry-go-round of existence, nor wisely plan within the limits of our own vision, yet full often sit in judgment upon God, and presume to tell Him what He ought to do!

That, indeed, is the sin of this age. That is the error that lies at the base of what we call Modernism, and of all heretical and erroneous cults. In fact, the foundation of all evil is a misapprehension of God. In the beginning—if we accept this as the inspired record, as we do—in the beginning, the tempter laboured to effect in the minds of his victims a misunderstanding of God. He misrepresented God in order that they might misunderstand Him, and, misunderstanding Him, might be led into rebellion against Him.

So to-day men try to interpret God by what they see of His works. I may look upon a magnificent piece of architecture like St. Paul's Cathedral, and gaze upon that brass inscription under the dome which tells us, if we would see the monument of Sir Christopher Wren, to look around. It is a marvellous building. As you walk about it you cannot be other than impressed with its magnificence. Yet if you think a little, you will say, Sir Christopher Wren must have been a wonderful man to create this, but surely he was bigger than any of the works of his hand; and nothing he ever did could adequately represent him. It could offer a suggestion as to his greatness, but the architect must be greater than the building.

Thus as we scan the works of God, those that are immediate, to which we have direct access, upon which we can put our glass and magnify them to within the range of our vision and understanding, or span the ethereal spaces and bring those distant worlds, or whatever they are, near—we may do all that, and by years of investigation and experimentation, discover the operation of principles which we call law, and observe the manner in which certain natural forces ordinarily work. But when one has spent a lifetime at it, he will be able to say, "It is a wonderful building. It is marvellously designed, and beautiful in its proportions and in its furnishings." But whether you view the distant, the great and magnificent, or inspect a snowflake under a microscope (and of the countless billions of flakes there are no two alike, and yet every one of them is a work of art, of matchless, incomparable, beauty)—I say, look at it all, and you may exclaim, "God must be wonderful."

But you have not seen God! God is greater than that. It is not to be wondered at therefore that the Bible says, "No man hath seen God at any time"; "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world

are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." We can see enough for our condemnation, but the fact that God is infinite involves the necessity that He shall reveal Himself in order to be known.

But I am to speak this evening of the sovereignty of God. That is a doctrine that is much hated by the natural man. By "sovereignty" we do not mean any particular quality of Deity, any attribute, that is, any quality attributed to Him—not that. We mean the rule of God in the universe—that it is unlimited, unrestricted, and cannot successfully be opposed. We mean, indeed, what Nebuchadnezzar learned at last. As he walked on the terrace in the palace of Babylon, and looked over the great city, he exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty." What a great man he was! He was a magnified little Jack Horner! The world is full of little Jack Horners, sitting in corners, eating their Christmas pie. They stick in a thumb, and pull out a plum, and say—if not, What a good boy, then, "What a great boy am I"!

Nebuchadnezzar thought he was great until he was made to eat grass like oxen, and his nails grew like birds' claws, and his hair like eagles' feathers. Then by and by, his understanding returned to him, and when it did, he said, "I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever."

No man's understanding returns to him until in his thinking he gets God in the right place, or, rather, gets himself in right relation to God.

What did Nebuchadnezzar discover? That the inhabitants of the earth before the most High were reputed to be nothing, and that "He (God) doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doeth thou?" He is sovereignly independent of every one and of every thing, of all conditions, of every sort of circumstance; He dwells apart and alone in splendid isolation, in unique and solitary grandeur. He is God, and "beside him there is none else".

Your professor must not try to stretch his little rule upon the divine sceptre. He must not assume that his little reason is competent to write a constitution which is to control the Lord of all worlds. It is folly to try to form a human parliament to which the King of kings shall be subject. He laughs at it all! He is above it all! He is God!

We need an adequate idea of God. How can we form an adequate idea of God? By such knowledge of God as they may have who yield heart and mind to the revelation God makes of Himself. The important thing for us to know and to rejoice in is the truth of that hymn we were singing just now. I am glad Brother Greenway selected that hymn. I think we will appoint him Professor of Hymnology at the Seminary, because I notice if you leave it to him, he selects a hymn with sound doctrine in it, something to get your soul's teeth on. You are not fed on bran muffins, or a soda biscuit. Who can become enthusiastic about the singing of religious piffle? But when you sing a

hymn like this, there is something in it to inspire you to sing. What a word this is!—

"Thou sweet beloved will of God,
My anchor ground, my fortress hill,
My spirit's silent fair abode,
In Thee I hide me, and am still.

"O will, that willest good alone,
Lead thou the way, thou guidest best:
A little child, I follow on,
And trusting, lean upon thy breast.

"Thy beautiful sweet will, my God,
Holds fast in its sublime embrace
My captive will, a gladsome bird,
Prisoned in such a realm of grace.

"Within this place of certain good
Love evermore expands her wings,
Or nestling in Thy perfect choice,
Abides content with what it brings.

"Oh, lightest burden, sweetest yoke!
It lifts, it bears my happy soul,
It giveth wings to this poor heart;
My freedom in Thy grand control.

"Upon God's will I lay me down,
As child upon its mother's breast;
No silken couch, nor softest bed,
Could ever give me such deep rest.

"Thy wonderful grand will, my God,
With triumph now I make it mine;
And faith shall cry a joyous, Yes!
To every dear command of Thine."

Who would not live in a prison like that? Would you not like to be shut up in a palace, forbidden to go beyond the limit of God's care?

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

What lies back of the truth of divine sovereignty, that God has His way, that He has always had His way, that He is having His way now even when we do not know it? What underlies that? We shall see later some manifestations of that sovereignty, but what—what shall I call it?—I do not want to be technical, or confound you with theological technicalities, but what is the moral philosophy of it? What is the moral reason for it? What is the ethical justification for divine sovereignty? You cannot safely invest a man with full sovereignty. I know there are some that are reputed to be very "autocratic"! But the day of the unlimited monarchy, of the political despot, is over. Of course, a naughty little boy thinks his father is very despotic when he takes him out to the woodshed—but even that is a limited sort of monarchy!

The idea that Jack is as good as his master has invaded the religious realm. That is the defect of our modern theology: people want to drag God down to human standards, and shut Him up to the dimensions of their own understanding. That is impossible. If God could

dwell in temples made with hands, He would cease to be God. It is impossible to build a house big enough for God. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One."

What is the reason for it? I do not know whether I shall put you to sleep before time to-night. What time do you usually go to sleep? I remember once going to a doctor to try to persuade him to come to church. His wife asked me to do so. He had many excuses to offer, but I said, "Doctor, when you have a patient whose sleeplessness defies all your narcotics, all your efforts to make the patient sleep, come to church and find out how I do it!" But I do not want to put you to sleep before your time this evening.

There is a word that many play with as though it were a tennis ball. They do not know what it means. I have known people upon whose tongue it dwells continually. When they are asked, "Are you sure?" The answer is, "Absolutely". "That is quite correct, is it?" "Absolutely"! Did you ever meet Mr. Absolutely? or Mrs. Absolutely?

That word "absolute" is an immeasurable word. It is a word of infinite dimensions. You cannot measure it. And, properly speaking, it is a word that cannot define qualities that may be included in any category of human values. The absolute is God. That is the Last, the Final, the Utmost, the Ultimate, the Infinite. There is nothing more beyond that. And there is but One in Whose nature anything can be found in the absolute degree. The end of all perfection, of all estimation, of all computation, is absolute. You may stagger people with the astronomers' figures. You may astonish them with the light years of the stellar specialist—and the evolutionist comes a close second with his computation of millions, and hundreds of millions of years, until one grows dizzy with trying to think it out,—but roll them altogether, and then you have not the infinite or the absolute: Infinite and Absolute are terms which labour to denote the essence of Deity.

Very well, then, we can understand the Infinite less than we can understand the sun, or measure the seas. *God ought to be God because He is eternal.* There never was a time when God was not: there never will be a time when He will cease to be. "From everlasting"—whenever that was—"to everlasting" He is God. Such a conception is beyond us.

But what little shadows we see of Deity sometimes, little intimations of principles which find their ultimate in God! Why is the father superior to his children? He was there first. He is older. Why, what they call legally "the right of primogeniture", the right of the eldest son to inherit? Because he came first.

With whom do these rights dwell in their absolute degree? With God, for He was first; because He has always been. Before the worlds were made, before time was reckoned, before the angels sang, before there were cherubim or seraphim, before there was any creation, or any created thing, God was—and He will always be.

If we could conceive of God as the infinite, we should probably not try to shut Him up to our little spelling-book, to our multiplication table, or to such standards as the human mind can comprehend. In respect to that something which we call "time",—what is it? What are the rise and set of sun? What is it? Why does time register with us,—can you tell me? You reply, "I shall be old at three score years and ten." But what do you

mean by "years"? "It is a point of time. It is a span. It is a period. It is a measure." One says, "There is plenty of time." Yes, there is plenty of time—but not for you, but there is *plenty of time*. There is something in us that limits our views, that limits the possibilities of life, that makes time a factor with us. It is not so with God. He is independent of all these conditions. Eternity is with Him.

Another thing. *Goodness is with Him*. I use that term because it will serve. If you break it up into its constituents, if you do like a chemist and resolve it into its elements, you will find many things in it. There are truth, and faithfulness, and righteousness, and justice, mercy, love. Gather them all together and call the compilation goodness, or moral wholeness, moral perfection,—holiness, if you like, for wholeness is another word for holiness; but it is only in God. It is nowhere else.

Goodness, with us, is a relative term. You say, "He is a good man." He might have been better? "Oh yes. I do not say he is altogether what he might be, but he is a good man." It is a relative term, it is ever literally in the comparative degree, but it is not the absolute; but the divine Goodness is Absolute. Goodness in absolute measure dwells with Him. And because of that, He must reign.

One says that sin bringeth forth death, that it does not pay to be other than good. That is all true, but He Who is Himself the Source, the Spring, the Fountain, and infinite Reservoir of all goodness, is God. Who else should rule, I should like to know, but God? You had an election the other day. You went to the polls and marked your ballot to the best of your judgment. You said, "I think that man is fairly good. I will vote for him." Yet sometimes after you vote you wish you had not, because you can not know what is in a man until he is proved. But if you knew of a man in Toronto who was good all through, if you knew of a man who could be identified as the best man, you would say, "Tell me who he is, and I will vote for him." Why? "Because", you say, "the best man ought to be elected in the general interest of the public."

If we had any enlightenment of intellect at all, we should all agree that God should be on the throne. If sin had not blinded our eyes, if we could know what goodness is, even if God gave all His creatures the franchise, and put Himself up as a candidate for election, He would be elected by acclamation! Why? Because Goodness ought to reign. It must reign. It does reign. "It" shall reign?—No! He shall reign and nobody shall dispute His right.

So I could go on to speak of His wisdom. God, being without limit as to life, or His existence without limit as to duration—"from everlasting to everlasting"—and being without imperfection of any sort in the moral sense, being goodness with all its constituents, or holiness—to use the larger, fuller term—dwelling absolutely in Him, then He ought to reign. And wisdom is with Him absolute also; therefore He should, He must, He does, and shall for ever reign.

I cannot go into that fully: it is only a suggestion I give you. But God never makes a mistake. He is never limited in His vision. He sees the end from the beginning. To Him there are no temporal boundaries, there is no boundary of time at all. A million years hence all that has occurred will be as present to the view of God as we

are to each other at this moment. Nothing is ever hidden from His view. There is no physical boundaries, as there are no temporal boundaries. You cannot localize God. You cannot shut Him up to a given place, or to a given time. He is everywhere, all the time. Therefore He cannot make a mistake.

The mother looks at that little child in the cradle and says, "I wonder what he will be? Will he be a good boy? Will he grow up to be a blessing to me? or will he break my heart? Shall I always thank God for him, or is it possible that I may live to see the day when I could almost wish he had never been born?" We know not what a day, nor an hour, may bring forth. We cannot peer into the future. But there is no future with God. There is no past with God. There is just one eternal now, and His infinite wisdom can order everything aright. He reigns because He must; He is the infinitely good, the infinitely wise.

I will say but this one further thing to-night: He is *the infinitely mighty*. He does what He wills, "and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" You say, "If that be so, what of my will?" Yes, I wonder? How often you hear it now,—men boasting that they are the captains of their souls, that they are master of their fate. If we are, we are making a bad job of our captaincy! "I am not going to surrender my will", is the proud boast. Why not, I should like to know. "I am not going to surrender my judgment." Why not? Is it so excellent as all that? I wonder why any one of us should want to have his own way? I wonder why anybody in his senses should pit his judgment against the judgment of God and say, "I know." You poor, ignorant, dunce, what do you know? What do you know? What does anybody know? Democracy, the rule of Demas, the people! If one hundred people are only one hundred simpletons, if the hundred are put together, are you likely to have much more wisdom than in the singular. What a lot of simpletons we are anyhow! We are all a little bit "off". It is only a merciful Providence that shuts the door of the asylum and leaves us outside. You know that is true. You have said it yourself. You did not say it out loud, but you have said, "How foolish I am!" And for once, at least, you told the truth.

Do you not think you need somebody else's judgment instead of yours? When you are sick, you use the doctor's skill; and if you have a legal matter to decide, you employ a lawyer's mind. When you go riding on a train, you leave the piloting of the engine to the engineer. When you go on a ship, you leave it to the trained navigators to pilot you across the ocean. Yet we cannot leave anything with God! You say, "I am a man, and I am going to play a man's part. I am going to play the man." I wonder what sort of man we should be, any of us? How foolish! Little midgets that we are! And how great God is! The only time a man shows he has any sense at all is when he acknowledges he has none! That is a paradox, but it is true. A man never begins to be dignified until he humbles himself before God and confesses that he does not even desire to live. The only time Nebuchadnezzar was ever really great was when he bowed himself before the Most High.

After all, the doctrine of divine sovereignty means that we are under a paternal Despot. Our Father is just that. He will have His way. He will do His will. But blessed be His name, through Him Whom He sent as a Revelation.

of His Person—and of that more by and by—we have salvation.' He it is Who said of the Father, "He is far off there where you cannot see Him. You do not know Him, and you wonder what He is like. You wish you could pray to Him, but you do not know how to address Him. I know Him, and I will tell you how. When ye pray, say, 'Our Father which art in heaven'."

Are you not glad your Father is on the throne? That is true, if you are a Christian. I cannot go into that this

evening. I have been trying to lay the foundation for later lectures, just thinking out loud with you; but we shall see next week how He came out of the unknown and robed Himself in our flesh, and came speaking to us in our language, and touching us with a human touch, saving us at last by the washing away of our sins with His own precious blood.

Let us worship God by singing hymn Number Four,—
"The God of Abraham Praise."

The Union Baptist Witness

These pages, 14 and 15, are the official organ of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Send all news items and announcements to the office Secretary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Canada.

CONFERENCE BLESSING.

The Pastors' and People's Conferences held monthly have been greatly blessed and the one held on Tuesday, January 13th, in the Stanley Avenue Baptist Church, Hamilton, when the Hamilton and Brantford District Pastors and people gathered in fellowship, was an outstanding day of blessing and fellowship.

The morning session opened at 10.30 with a good attendance and this increased as the day went on. At the evening meeting the church was well filled. There was a splendid representation from the churches of the district and the program throughout the day was generally helpful. As is the custom, the morning session was devoted principally to prayer and many were the requests handed in. All of these were definitely remembered. The address was given by Rev. W. H. Dynes of St. Thomas and was based on the life of Peter.

In the afternoon, Rev. T. L. White, of Scotland, Ontario, gave a Bible study on the Book of Colossians and the evening session, after the song service, was given over to Rev. Clifford J. Loney and Rev. Anthony Zeoli. Mr. Zeoli brought the message of the evening taking as his subject "The Apostasy". It will long be remembered. Messages in song by Mrs. Kendal of Guelph and Mrs. Zeoli were greatly enjoyed.

Those who have the privilege and opportunity of attending the Pastors' and People's Conferences should not miss them. For information regarding the Hamilton-Brantford district Conference communicate with the President, Rev. H. W. Bower, 106 High Street, Hamilton, or the Secretary, Rev. W. T. Farr, R.R. 1, Hagersville, Ontario.

WALSH FAREWELLS MR BOOMER.

The Annual Christmas entertainment of the Faith Regular Baptist Bible School and Church, Walsh, was held on the evening of December 30th at the home of Mr. E. Smith. The meeting also took the form of a farewell to Rev. Oscar Boomer and his family. At the close of the program of songs and recitations, Deacon Pursley, in a few fitting words, expressed the regret of the people in losing Mr. Boomer, but assured him of their best wishes and prayers for God's blessing on his work in the new field of labor, Miner's Bay. Deacon Smith on behalf of the Church then presented Mr.

Boomer with a Bible, an expression of gratitude on the part of his people for his faithful ministry and service in their midst during the past two years.

WORK AMONG THE INDIANS.

An Urgent Need.

Many of the Indians on the Reserve where Rev. Melchie Henry ministers are almost destitute this winter, and articles of clothing are urgently needed. Help will be greatly appreciated. Parcels may be addressed to Rev. Melchie Henry, R.R. 6, Hagersville, Ontario, and all garments sent will be wisely distributed among the needy.

COURTLAND.

The Courtland Regular Baptist Church will entertain the next meeting of the Hamilton District Pastors' and People's Conference, on Tuesday, February 10th. The morning session will begin at 10.30 and Rev. T. E. Summers of Hespeler will be the speaker. Rev. H. S. Bennett of Hamilton will bring the afternoon message and Rev. Clifford J. Loney will speak in the evening. An invitation is extended to all, but representatives of the churches of the district are particularly urged to be present.

BOSTON REPORTS SPLENDID YEAR.

"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad", is the testimony of the Boston Regular Church reviewing the blessing of the year 1930. The annual meeting held on Wednesday, January 14th, was one of the most successful in the history of the church. Dinner was served in the Sunday School room by the ladies, after which the company adjourned to the church auditorium.

Rev. A. J. Loveday opened the business meeting with brief devotional exercises and the reports were presented by the clerk, Mr. J. Barber. On request, Mr. Barber also read the Articles of Faith and Practice of the church as drawn up when the church was organized on October 21st, 1804. The Financial Report was given by Mr. Duff Nelles, the treasurer, and showed that over \$2,500.00 had been raised for all purposes, \$336.00 being sent to Missions. Excellent reports were presented by all departments. Twenty-six baptisms were reported for the year, making a total of one hundred during Mr. Loveday's pastorate of seven and a half years. A net gain of nineteen was reported in the membership which now stands at two hundred and eighty-one.

Other causes for thanksgiving were then named, the interest in the prayer meeting held before the Sunday evening service, increasing attendance and interest in the Sunday services, the attendance at the weekly prayer meeting, an average of forty-two, the interest in the work of the Young People and so forth. The election of officers followed.

Deacon Merritt Miles moved a resolution expressing appreciation of the faithful ministry of Pastor and Mrs. Loveday and this was carried unanimously. In replying Pastor Loveday voiced the desire of Mrs. Loveday and himself that this year Pastor and people should walk humbly with the Lord. The meeting closed with prayer by the two newly elected deacons, Mr. Charles Petheram and Mr. M. Price.

Reported by Joseph W. Roche.

LINDSAY.

Pastor J. M. Fleming reports that the Lindsay Church is enjoying a time of real blessing. "The Lord is wonderfully present in all services. The very spirit of revival, joy, unity and praise is present and the spiritual uplift that marked and has followed the Convention meetings is truly with us."

BENEFICIENT.

Word from Beneficient French Church tells us that the Sunday evening services are well attended by a good number of Roman Catholics eager to learn of the Good News of the Gospel of our Lord. Often Pastor Danthony has to stay until midnight answering their questions. The Lord is blessing and there have been many conversions. At present there is

THURSDAY and FRIDAY

February 5th and 6th

PASTORS' CONFERENCE

Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec

Jarvis Street Baptist Church TORONTO

a class of those desiring to be baptized who are being instructed. Pray for this splendid work. Not far from the Mission Hall is a large Catholic Church and recently one of the priests has denounced the work of Mr. Danthony, claiming that the missionary is an agent and tool of Satan. The people are terrified no longer and such threats by the priests are often good advertisements for the Mission.

SPECIAL MEETINGS.

Rev. W. F. Mesley of Zorra will conduct two weeks of services with the Boston Church beginning Sunday, January 25th. Witness readers are asked to fellowship in prayer that these meetings will be honored by the salvation of souls.

EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION.

From a veteran Pastor—"We are thankful to see from this week's *Gospel Witness* that Dr. Shields' stand re the W.M.S. is already leading out for a wider work, hitherto the source of supply having been restricted and the whole work cramped."

From a Western city—"Our sympathies are entirely with Dr. Shields in this last trouble, as we want to be able designate where every dollar of our mission funds should go. We rejoice to know that Dr. Shields stands always foursquare for the New Testament teaching regarding the Church."

From one of the oldest churches—"We express our appreciation of *The Gospel Witness* in its uncompromising stand for the inspired Word of God."

TRENTON.

Pastor Buchner is now holding regular services at Carrying Place, five miles south of Trenton. One man has already been saved and baptized and an unused church has now been put at their disposal.

ESSEX.

The Western Association Pastors' and People's Conference will be held on Thursday, January 29th, in the Essex Baptist Church. Rev. W. E. Smalley, of Wheatley, will speak in the morning. Rev. W. N. Charlton, of Chatham, will speak at the afternoon session, and Dr. Albert Johnson, Pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, will bring the evening message. The Conference will also be the occasion of the opening of the new Sunday School Hall at Essex.

GOOD TIMES AT SHENSTONE.

Shenstone Memorial Church, Brantford, received an outpouring of the blessing of the Lord on Sunday, January 11th, when Rev. W. E. Atkinson was the special speaker. The day began at ten o'clock when Mr. Atkinson gave a very interesting talk to the Bible School, his subject being "How God Gets His Missionaries for the Foreign Field." He spoke on his own experiences in West Africa and exhibited many articles of clothing made by the natives. Mr. Atkinson's message to the Church at the morning service was also greatly enjoyed. The subject being, "How God Gets His Work Done."

In the afternoon, Mr. Atkinson met with the women of the church and made

very clear the position of Regular Baptists and their responsibilities as such.

The evening message was used of God to convict and convert a father and mother who have long been prayed for by their children. Three others went to the enquiry room and were dealt with.

WESTBORO.

The Pastor of the Westboro Baptist Church, Ottawa, reports that the attendance at the two mid-week prayer meetings has been maintained over a period of six months and that Sunday, January 18th, saw a record attendance in their Bible School. New members have been received at the last five communion services and these additions have just doubled the membership of the church. The church has been very definitely praying for the conversion of five souls in their midst. The first of these was led to Christ recently.

As a Christmas gift the Westboro Church presented the Pastor and Mrs. Fraser with an electric range which was very much appreciated.

WITH OUR FOREIGN MISSIONARIES.
(Continued from Issue of January 15th)

While Messrs. Lewis and Davey occupied the rented house in the Bassa Village, work was carried on at the Mission site, first of all in the building of Mr. Lewis' house. It was necessary in this connection to hire helpers from the Coast and work was soon begun in real earnest. The missionaries wrote that while they had had experience in other parts of Africa, that they still found they had much to learn about the customs of the people, for in Liberia "things are different." The workers had to be encouraged continually, and it was necessary for our missionaries to entertain them while they worked. The entertainment usually took the form of singing and, while in other parts of Africa the workers encouraged themselves in this respect, it was not so here and at the end of the day Mr. Davey and Mr. Lewis found themselves pretty hoarse from the vocal efforts.

- (1) Sawyers at work on Mr. Lewis' house.
- (2) Boys carrying water.
- (3) Rev. A. J. Lewis at Language Study.
- (4) Rev. H. L. Davey at Language Study.

On completion of his house, Mr. Lewis took up residence on the Mission site and work was begun on clearing the hill in preparation for other buildings. Mr. Davey remained at the village house and awaited the coming of Mrs. Davey to begin on the second building.

Our First Lady Missionary
(Picture of Mrs. H. L. Davey)

As soon as Mr. Lewis' house was ready for occupancy, a cable was sent by Mr. Davey asking that Mrs. Davey come as soon as possible to Liberia. Arrangements were, therefore, facilitated, and on the 12th of July, 1929, Mrs. Davey left on the S.S. "Letitia," bound for the distant land to which she had so long been looking forward. (Mrs. Davey leaving Canada).

It was with much concern and only after much consideration that the Executive Board of the Union consented to Mrs. Davey's going forward alone, as

advice from England was to the effect that there were very few boats sailing from Liverpool upon which unaccompanied lady passengers could be taken; unless other women also booked passage; that there were no sailings direct to Grand Bassa, but that all boats went direct to Monrovia. Much prayer was offered and our God undertook in a marvelous way in that the first sailing was cancelled and advice by cable was to the effect that new arrangements had been made and that the boat would call at Grand Bassa. Furthermore, accommodation would be accepted for the lady missionary travelling alone.

The significance of this change may not be appreciated unless it is explained that had the boat gone directly to Monrovia it would have been necessary for Mr. Davey to remain in that city possibly for a week or so awaiting the arrival of the boat, and as there was very little accommodation there for white people, and any accommodation is extremely expensive, it was a matter of consideration. Added to this the missionaries may have had to wait two or three weeks before there was a sailing from Monrovia to Grand Bassa, although it is not a great many miles up the Coast. Mrs. Davey was able to make the trip in record time and her equipment arrived in good order.

Arrival of Mrs. Davey in Liberia
(Mrs. Davey on shore shortly after her arrival).

Our first lady missionary's introduction to Liberia was via the surf boat and carriers. She was deposited safely upon the shore, but her poor husband, who was in gala attire for the reception of his wife, was deposited in a big wave and thoroughly soaked, although his ardour, we are advised, was not dampened, even so.

Mrs. Davey's Reception

The many friends that the missionaries had made came to the coast to meet Mrs. Davey. (Group meeting Mrs. Davey). The trek to the village where the small rented house was located was made with these friends carrying boxes and equipment (picture showing how loads are carried in Liberia). It was necessary to cross a river or two and this was facilitated through the native ferries as shown in the pictures. It will be noticed that the vine which grows so profusely throughout the country is put to service in drawing a raft across.

Mrs. Davey's Welcome in Her New Home

It will be remembered that shortly after Mr. Davey's arrival in Liberia, he was presented by one of the then Paramount Chiefs of the district, with his little boy. This was indeed a compliment which Mr. Davey could not refuse and so Gear Ba was firmly established as one of the Davey family (picture of Gear Ba and dog), which consisted of a very active dog, a one-eyed parrot, a monkey and the missionary horse (picture of Bill, Speed King). We do not know if Bill thought that Mrs. Davey was an accomplished horsewoman who would be giving him strenuous exercise each morning along a bridle path, but the fact is that he became discouraged and died shortly after Mrs. Davey reached the field.

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 6 No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 6 February 8th, 1931.
FIRST QUARTER.

JACOB AND JEHOVAH.

Lesson Text: Gen. 35, 36.

Golden Text: "And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins." 35:11.

I. ON THE WAY TO BETHEL, (vs. 1-5).

After his sad and trying experience at Shalem Jacob was directed by God to proceed to Bethel where on his outward journey Jehovah had revealed Himself, and had given him the comforting assurance of His protection, (28:15). He was no doubt desirous of leaving the vicinity of so much sorrow; the crime of his sons shocked him: it placed them all in danger from the vengeance of surrounding tribes; and he could no longer remain there in security. Just at that time God intervened and gave the necessary direction, much to the relief, undoubtedly, of Jacob. The help of God is always given at the right time. It may be, however, that God did not mean Jacob to tarry so long in that neighbourhood. Perhaps he should have gone directly to Bethel. If so, the Lord was but reminding him of that which he ought to have done previously. Tarrying by the way generally leads to trouble. The best course is the straight one. Obey God wholly, and if perchance backsliding has taken place, get back to Bethel at the very earliest moment.

Jacob was instructed to "go up to Bethel and dwell there. The command is clear and definite, and is significant in a spiritual sense. "Bethel" means "house of God." It was the place where God had specially revealed Himself to Jacob, and where the patriarch had met Him for the first time. It was the place of supernatural manifestation, of spiritual worship, of first real experience of divine things, and of precious memory. It was, indeed, the house of God. As such it is significant of contact with God, not necessarily in any particular place, although there are buildings set apart for this purpose, but contact anywhere, for God is not limited to a place. He may be met with anywhere. It is possible, however, that we each may have a place somewhere dear to us because we met with God for the first time. Whether this be so or not, the experience itself is necessary, and is possible for all.

Jacob was enjoined to dwell at Bethel. Note the significance of dwelling in the place of God's revelation, in the place of fellowship with Him; and the probable effect upon Jacob of dwelling in such a place. He was also instructed to "make there an altar unto God". This implies worship based upon sacrifice. Apart from the sacrifice of Christ there can be no real worship. This is taught in type in the Old Testament, as well as directly in the New Testament. Explanation may be made of the prominence of the altar in the Scriptures, and the

need for the family altar in our homes. In preparation for their going up to Bethel Jacob commanded the members of his household to cleanse themselves of all defilement. He instructed them to "put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments." His servants were probably natives of Mesopotamia, among whom heathen practices prevailed; and his own family may not have been untouched in the matter, (31:34). Obedience was given to the command, and the gods were handed over with the earrings which were associated with their heathen incantations, and all were hid "under the oak which was by Shechem". Note the implications of this preparation. Everything must be put away that is displeasing to God if we are to worship Him. There is a lesson here also for Lord's Day worship. It is only too often the case that persons come to the house of God without due preparation, with the result that they are not in a fit condition to worship God. There should be preparation of heart, mind, will, spirit, and action. God is particular in these matters. So ought we to be. Note further the protecting care of God: "The terror of God, was upon the cities that were roundabout them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." God is faithful in fulfilling His word. This is an encouragement to them to trust Him more implicitly.

II. AT BETHEL (vs. 6-15).

The significance of Bethel has been mentioned, but the effect upon Jacob consequent upon his arrival at that place may here be noted. Several things occurred at Bethel, called Luz by the Canaanites. First, Jacob built there an altar, and called the place "El-Bethel", meaning God of Bethel "because there God appeared unto him when he fled from the face of his brother." In this there is acknowledgment of Jacob's past experiences with Him. The second occurrence was the death of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse. She died and was "buried beneath Bethel under an oak, and the name of it was called Allonbachuth, meaning the "oak of weeping".

The third occurrence is the appearance of God. He blessed Jacob and renewed the covenant blessing, (vs. 9-13). There is a reference to Jacob's change of name. "And he called his name Israel". This is the second time the change is referred to; the first being at Peniel where its significance is stated, (32:28). God ascribes to Himself the title "God Almighty", and directs Jacob to be fruitful and multiply. As the Almighty One God is able to do all that He desires, and no promise ever fails through inability to fulfil it. A statement follows concerning the greatness of Jacob's descendants, in number, position, influence, "A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins." The history of Israel furnishes a remarkable testimony to the fulfilment of this prediction. A further prediction is given concerning the land, which is also noted in history. "And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him." Note the significance of the covenant blessing in relation to Israel and to our Lord, its revelation of God's purpose, and His plan of salvation; also the nature and

purpose of the Old Testament appearances of God.

The fourth and last thing of note relating to Bethel is the setting up of the pillar of remembrance by the patriarch, "Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with Him, even a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering thereon", (v. 14), thus definitely marking and dedicating the place unto God, a ceremony similar to the one which he performed on his outward journey, (28:18). Bethel was a holy place to Jacob, his communion with God was face to face, and he would ever remember it with awe and affection. Explanation may be made of the nature and blessedness of present day divine fellowship.

III. ON THE WAY TO EPHRATH, (vs. 16-20).

Two things occurred on the way to Ephrath, the first was the birth of Benjamin, the second the death of Rachel his mother who passed away in childbirth. The death of his favorite wife must have been a sad blow to Jacob. He had loved her at first sight, and to gain her as his wife he had served seven years, and his affection for her remained despite the fact of Leah being placed in his household against his will. Death is no respecter of persons: it enters every home, and takes the loved ones away, leaving sorrowing hearts behind. Note the names given the babe, and their significance in relation to sorrow and expectancy; also the certainty and consequences of death.

IV. THE ARRIVAL AT MAMRE, (vs. 21-29)

Jacob left Bethel and went on toward his father's abode on the plains of Mamre. While on the way Reuben committed a most serious offence, (v. 22), manifesting thus a defect in character, and possibly also in training. The sin stated is great, and is most clearly and emphatically condemned in Scripture. In these days of loose morals purity requires emphasis, and warning is needed concerning sin. The names of Jacob's sons are given, followed by a brief statement relating to the arrival of the patriarch at the home of his childhood, and the death and burial of his father Isaac, whose age is given as "One hundred and fourscore years", (v. 28) "And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him", (v. 29). In a previous chapter we are informed of the reconciliation of these two brethren, and here we are given another proof of it.

V. THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU (36:1-43).

"These are the generations of Esau, who is Edom", (v. 1), called thus on account of his love for red pottage, (25:30), possibly also because of his appearance. His wives are mentioned, different names being given them in the previous reference, (26:34), but such change of name was not unusual at that time. Esau's wealth is then referred to: this was so great that the two brothers could not dwell together, and Esau removed from Canaan, leaving Jacob in the land of promise. The Edomites then took up their abode in Mount Seir, being separated from the covenant people, and out of the way of the future possession of the land by them, although they became most bitter enemies. Note the sovereignty of God in the carrying out of His plans.