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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE LOVE TRANSCENDENT.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 16th, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported—Broadcast over CFRB, 690 k.c.)

"And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

II Samuel 18:33.

Prayer before the Sermon.

O Lord our God, we recognize and acknowledge that we are commanded and commissioned to speak of those things which are beyond the comprehension of the natural mind. Thou dwellest in light which no man can approach unto. No man hath seen Thee, nor can see. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. No science can discover it; no school can teach it; no effort of the human mind can unveil, discover, or discern, the glory of the Lord. Only as Thou dost unveil Thy beauty to our view, only when Thou dost open the human heart, enabling it to attend to the things which are spoken in Thy holy Word, from heaven itself—only then can any of us understand.

But we do rejoice that those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, God is pleased to reveal unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. O God, how terribly men have been deceived by the tempter! What falsehoods he has issued against Thy character, against Thy holy name! How blind men are to the realities of the spiritual world! How foolishly have we all set our affections on things below! Wilt Thou not condescend to open our blind eyes this evening. Open our understandings that we may understand the things which the Spirit of God shall speak to us.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to give to every one in this place a sense of Thy presence, of Thy nearness, of Thy reality. We have no concern as to what men shall think of us, or of this place, if only they may be induced to think of God, to return to God, to believe God, to serve God, and to love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength. Come to us, we pray Thee, in this place. Visit every pew, and every person in every pew, so that we may know this is none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven.

This we pray also for those who hear this evening whom we do not see. Little groups are gathered here and there. Some have been brought together by some zealous servant of Thine, in hope and expectation that the word of salvation may be heard and believed by some who hitherto have closed their hearts against Jesus Christ. May some of our radio hearers this evening—yea, may many of them—be soundly converted to God. Visit the solitary hearer, the one who is

in pain. Visit, we pray Thee, the secret hearer, the one who hears, and would be unwilling to let it be known he hears. May the Lord's arrows be sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies whereby the people fall under Thee. Wound, Thou conquering Christ, that Thou mayest heal; kill, we beseech Thee, that Thou mayest make alive again. Oh, that many may be convicted of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. May the gospel of Thy grace prove to every hearer the power of God unto salvation.

A like blessing we pray upon the testimony of Thy word everywhere, whoever shall preach it, wherever it may be preached; whether to the great congregation, or to but two or three; where the mother talks with her child this evening, ere the little one is sent to bed, about the things of Jesus Christ; bless the Bible story she tells; bless her as she teaches the little one to pray. May Thy word find entrance to the heart, so that it shall never be forgotten.

So we pray that the blessing of salvation for time and for eternity, the blessing of the Lord which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow thereto, may be the portion of all who bow in Thy presence this night. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The story of Absalom is one of the most pathetic, one of the most tragic, to be found in the Word of God—or, indeed, I think, to be found in any literature. Absalom was a particularly attractive man. It is said of him, "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him."

The first great tragedy that entered into the life of Absalom was when, at a feast which he himself provided, by his own instruction, his brother Amnon was treacherously slain. Having thus dipped his hand in his brother's blood, he anticipated the wrath of the king, and immediately he took himself to the neighbouring kingdom of Geshur where he found refuge from the king's anger. There he remained for some time. During his absence we are told that "the soul of king David longed to go forth

unto Absalom". But he restrained himself, and permitted Absalom to remain in the far country.

Some time later, through the joint intercession of Joab, and the woman of Tekoah who prayed by Joab's inspiration, the king gave permission for Absalom to return. He stipulated, however, that he must live in his own house, that he should not see the king's face. So Absalom returned to Jerusalem, and lived in his own house; and for two years, though in his father's country, never came into his father's presence, nor saw the king's face. At the end of the two years he petitioned Joab again to intercede in his behalf, to which request Joab at last reluctantly responded. Absalom was permitted to come into the presence of the king. A reconciliation was effected, and the king kissed Absalom.

Then Absalom took up his station at the gate of the city, and whenever he found anybody who had a grievance, anybody who was out of sorts with the government of the day, he made friends with him—as traitors always do. He said to them, "Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!" Thus little by little he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. When thus he had wrought seditiously over a considerable period of time, and when he had reason to hope that the harvest of traitors would be sufficiently large to justify an open revolt, he commissioned certain men to go to Hebron, instructing them that when they should hear the sound of the trumpet, they should cry, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." "And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing." They were dupes of the traitor; they assisted him in his fell purpose.

When the trumpet sounded the rebellion began, and day after day men forsook the standard of David. Ahithophel, the king's counsellor, proved to be a traitor. Many of those upon whom David had depended, forsook him, and went over to the enemy's camp. It looked for a while as though David's day were done, for it was reported to him that "all the people" were going after Absalom.

At last David gathered a few trusted friends about him, and went out of his city. He went up Mount Olivet, weeping as he went up, like a Greater than he at a later day. He left his capital city behind him, and went out once again into the wilderness, despised and rejected of men. But Joab sounded the trumpet, and the king gave permission to number the men of Israel, and to set the battle in array. Those who were faithful to David went out under the command of Joab to do battle against Absalom and his fellow-traitors.

The battle was joined in the wood of Ephraim, and that day the wood of Ephraim devoured more than the sword; and when Absalom, riding upon his mule, was passing under the branch of an oak of the forest, his splendid locks, of which he was so proud, waving in the air, wrapped themselves about the branches, the beast from under him went away, and Absalom was left suspended in the oak. When Joab heard it he took darts in his hand, and, finding the rebel helpless, he pierced him to the heart and slew him.

Then two men set out to tell David the result of the battle. The one who came first had no particulars to give, and he was made to stand aside while Cushy told his tale. Before Joab went out to battle, David had commanded him, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. I know he is a traitor. I know he is a bad man. But he is my son. Deal as gently as you can

with him." When David knew that the battle was being fought, he went up to the tower over the gate eagerly to await the news of the day. When this messenger came he asked not whether Joab had been successful or not, nor whether the rebellion was quelled and his throne made once more secure: one question leaped to his lips, for it was the uppermost longing of his heart. He said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" As though he would say, "I care not much about the issue of the battle. Tell me, Is Absalom safe?" Cushy, thinking to give good news, said, "The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." When David heard it he went up to the chamber over the gate, crying his heart out: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Surely one cannot read that story without being impressed with the strength, the wealth, the almost immortality of a father's love. And yet it has in it elements of pathos and of tragedy. I use it as an illustration, first, that I may show you *wherein the love of David resembles the love of God*, and then that I may show you *wherein the love of God transcends all human affection*.

I.

I say, there is A CLOSE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE LOVE OF DAVID AND THE LOVE OF GOD.

His love was lavished upon a *wilful and wayward soul*. Absalom desired to be a law unto himself. He wanted to have his own way, to do his own will, to indulge his own pleasure. He was determined upon his own course, and, though his father's son, apparently he had made no contribution whatever to the weal of the kingdom. He had never been a dutiful subject of the king: he had been from the beginning—and was to the end—a rebel at heart. But in spite of his rebellion, in spite of his manifest antagonism to David and all the interests of his kingdom, his father, strangely enough, loved him. His love survived that tremendous test.

That is parallel to the conditions which obtain in the spiritual realm; for men are natively, opposed to God, enemies in their minds by wicked works; their carnal minds are "enmity against God: for (they) are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be". We are amazed sometimes when we read, not only of the anti-Christian attitude of Russia, but of its antagonism toward, and its utter hatred of, the very idea of God, its desire to elbow God out of the world, and to reign in His stead. But the "old man" in every one of us is a Bolshevik. Bolshevism is not new: it is native to the human heart. The "old man" of whom Paul speaks, is an anarchist. It is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Can you love people of that sort? Playfully the Irishman says he is "agin" the government. He may be a very admirable soul, and his opposition may be only theoretical. But this thing that hates all governments, and that insists upon being a law unto itself—what is it? You call it Bolshevism? You call it Communism? You call it Anarchy? Atheism? The Bible calls it by one name: it is simply sin. Sin in a pronounced expression perhaps, but that is what sin is, rebellion against God. And we have all rebelled against Him. "We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Why should God love any of us? But He does, in spite of our wilfulness.

The love of David *was not turned aside by blood-guiltiness*. Absalom had blood on his hands. He had been

responsible for the death of his half-brother. His half-brother was not a good man, but instead of his being brought to judgment by due process of law, he had been treacherously slain. He had died at the hand of a murderer, and Absalom had instigated the murder.

Sin has death at its heart always. Sin kills. Sometimes you read in the paper of a young man who has done some dreadful thing, and has brought himself under the condemnation of the law. Everybody knows that he is bound to pay the penalty for his crime. People begin to wonder then what sort of home he came from, and who his mother and father were. They are not content until they have found some woman somewhere brokenhearted, cut to the heart by somebody's sin.

Sin always does that. It is but an illustration of its great crime, its capital offence, for I tell you, my friends, sin never stops until it comes to the place called Golgotha, which, being interpreted, is the place of a skull. It always drives its spear to the heart of Incarnate Deity. Sin is a bloody, damnable thing. Away with the damnable heresy of evolution, that which leads people to believe that they are to be excused for their fiendishness! No! Sin has made murderers of us all. We have admitted to our hearts the very thing that drove the nails through the hands of Jesus Christ, and put the crown of thorns upon His brow. Do not dress it up. Look at it for what it is; and never cease to wonder that the love of God is not turned aside even from the murderers of His own Son. "Ye killed the Prince of life," said Peter, "ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead."

How could anyone love people like that? But that is your portrait, and it is mine. I say, the matchless marvel of the gospel is that it is the disclosure of a love that can survive a guilt like that.

The love of David was *a love that suffered long, and was kind, and was not easily provoked*. What a terrible man Absalom had been, with all his external, his outward, beauty! What an infamous liar he was! What a deceiver! There was no truth or honour in him. He actually kissed the king—as Judas kissed Jesus of Nazareth. He professed loyalty, while in his heart he was planning and plotting the overthrow of his government.

What a bad lot we are! A little while ago people were telling us human nature was rather a fine thing. There are many of the "fine things" getting into penitentiary nowadays! Much of this last product of evolution is unmasking itself. There is nothing lovely in human nature of itself, in its quintessence. There is not one of you who is not at heart a deceiver. You have deceived yourself. You have deceived others. There are men and women here who do not even deal frankly with God—and God knows they do not. The religious profession of multitudes of people is nothing but a sham—as was Absalom's. When he went to Hebron he said to the king, his father, "Let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron."

This unmitigated scoundrel, this criminal of all criminals, this traitor of all traitors, *went to Hebron professing to worship God*, while really intending to overthrow the king's dominion.

I venture to say a daring thing, but I believe it is true—and it is no discount upon organized religion, nor is it uncomplimentary to the church. Properly understood, it is a high compliment. But you will find the sharpest,

shrewdest, and most unprincipled men in the world among those who profess the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many Absaloms.

Can anybody respect them? Can anybody feel any liking for them? I do not know. Perhaps it is a good thing for our mutual peace of mind that we none of us know each other thoroughly. But I do know this, that in spite of all the evil of Absalom's heart, the love of his father never failed. He loved him in spite of it all.

I would remind you, too, that the love of David was like the love of God in this, that *it was not lacking in discernment or discipline*. It was not a maudlin sentimentality. I grow weary of the people who say, "We want more love", while their eyes flash, and their fists are clenched. I do not want you to love me with your fists! I do not want you to love me with your tongue either. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

David loved Absalom, and when he went yonder to Geshur, his heart would fain have followed him: "The soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom." But he was the head of the nation, and he said, "I must not. I must recognize his sin. I must make him feel it. I dare not call him back with blood upon his hands. Let him stay." It was only by the intercession and interposition of another that at last David gave permission for him to return.

The love of God, my friends, is not a mere soft sentimentalism. The wonder of it all is that while God recognizes our unworthiness, and recognizes our sin, and never for a moment condones it, but always deals with us as sinners, yet He loves us,—

"He saw me ruined by the fall,
Yet loved me notwithstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate;
His loving-kindness, O how great!"

The love of David was *a love that wept at the prostitution of great powers*. What a great man Absalom was! He was a born leader of men. He was not a weakling; he was a strong man. He was a man of dominating, forceful, personality. Wherever he sat was the head of the table in any company. In appearance, and in the potentialities of that marvellous personality, Absalom was a prince. What a servant of the king he might have been! What a comfort to his father he might have been! What a contribution he could have made to the welfare of the state had all his great powers been consecrated to his father's service! But instead of that, they were all exercised in his own interests, even though it involved the destruction of the very kingdom itself.

And yet, although David must have been terribly disappointed in him, and looked back to the day when he was growing from boyhood to young manhood, when no doubt he said to himself, "What a tower of strength this young man will be when he grows up! How I shall be able to lean on him! How he will reinforce me in all the interests of my kingdom", he loved him still. Absalom turned out to be the worst enemy that David ever had, bitterer than Saul himself. But in spite of it David loved him.

I shall not discount the capacity of human nature. I go all the way with the principles which those vain-glorious orators voice when they delight to discourse upon such a text as this, "What is man?"—they usually take that, and leave the rest of the verse. I heard a man

preach from that text. How he glorified man! How he pictured him as a superman! How he spread his wings and soared away to heaven! Man is such a clever fellow altogether. So he is! It would be foolish to discount human achievement. There are many Absaloms, men of incalculable potentialities. When I read of a man's building an empire of commerce, when I read of a man's heading a great concern with a capitalization of two billions of dollars or more, when I see him governing that empire as a village school master looks after his little school, I cannot help saying, "What a man!" If a man of these powers could have consecrated all his abilities to human service, and to the glory of God, what a public servant he could have been!

How many men there are to-day who might have been conspicuous before all the world for their distinguished service to their fellows, and to God above them! Instead of that, they have been like Absalom: they have lived for themselves. Some of them have come crashing down to ruin, others have not fallen yet; but I tell you the Absaloms who live for themselves, and who have no care for anybody but themselves, are not particularly praiseworthy. The powers of most of us may be very limited, but what we have we have used against God. We cannot throw stones at other people, because we have done the same thing ourselves. What a wicked lot we are!—

"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

"Tone that down", says someone, "man is not vile." Is he not? You must give me another adjective then—but a stronger one—properly to describe human nature in its last development. You and I know that these hearts of ours, that were made to be the dwelling-places of God, with a capacity for all the enjoyment of heaven, have been so prostituted by the devil that they have fallen to the lowest levels of hell.

Read the newspaper if you do not believe it. Take it to your modernistic theological professor and say, "What do you think of that? Do you tell me human nature is not depraved? Do you tell me that it has not got hell at the heart of it?" The worst sinner of all is the man or woman who cloaks his or her selfishness with religion. I do not understand it, but David's love for Absalom still remained, even as God loves us in spite of our sin.

David's love *survived an attempt to destroy it*, for when Absalom went forth to the battle, he instructed his officers to smite the king only. That is what Absalom was bent upon, and that is what sin is. It aims at the overthrow of the throne in the heavens. It aims, when it is finished, at the dethronement of God. And yet God loves us. One might have supposed that a thing like that would be enough to extinguish even the love of God. "But many waters cannot quench love", and the love that God has for us survives this barrier of our unworthiness, even as David's love survived the treachery and murderous intent of Absalom.

II.

Very briefly let me try now to show you WHEREIN THE LOVE OF GOD TRANSCENDS ALL HUMAN LOVE.

For a long time David did not know what was in Absalom, and when Absalom came and kissed the king, I doubt not that David hoped Absalom had come to repentance, that his heart was changed, and that now he would become a dutiful son and subject. If he had known how base he was at heart, could he have loved him still?

Another came to kiss another King. And do you remember that that other King had predicted His coming, and had said, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me"? And when the disciples asked, "Lord, is it I? Is it I?" and John leaning upon His breast asked, "Lord, who is it?" He said, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." And Judas went out into the night to accomplish his purpose. When by and by they met Him in the garden, and Judas had given a sign to those who would apprehend Jesus of Nazareth, saying, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast", and when Judas came saying, "Hail master", and kissed him, Jesus Christ was not surprised. He did not call him by any bitter name, but redeeming love made its last appeal to him. He said, "Friend! Friend! Friend! Wherefore are thou come . . . Betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss? I have known all the time, Judas."

My friends, the wonder to me is that a love that is not blind, a love that can see us through and through, a love that is joined to perfect knowledge, the love of Him from Whose eyes no secrets are hid—that a love like that can look into your heart and mine, know how base we are, how utterly ungodlike we are, how ungrateful, and love us in spite of it all. But He does. You cannot tell Him anything: He knows all about you before you begin.

I have told you the story before, but it crosses my mind at the moment, and I will tell it again because it illustrates my thought. Many years ago I heard a preacher tell of a man in the Southland who came of one of England's noble houses, who set his heart's love upon some lady of the South, the daughter of a wealthy planter. Ultimately they were betrothed, and the day of the marriage set. When it had gone as far as that, an old coloured mammy that waited upon her mistress, who had known the family for many years, and held a secret that was known to but few, decided she must apprise her mistress of the fact. She knew the Southern prejudice against all taint of coloured blood, and she took this young lady aside and told her that two or three generations back a dash of coloured blood had entered into her family, and that she had coloured blood, negro blood, in her veins.

The young woman was overwhelmed by the revelation, and brokenhearted with disappointment. She sent for her lover, and when he came she kept him at a distance. She had gathered together all his presents, and then, taking the betrothal ring from her finger, handed them all to him, saying, "I have sent to tell you that we can never be one, that the marriage cannot take place." "But why?" he asked. "I cannot tell you; it is a family secret, but there is an insurmountable barrier between my family and yours. I release you, and you must release me. Take all your presents back, and especially this ring." But this splendid young man was a regular Lochinvar, and was not easily dissuaded. He insisted on hearing the story. Expecting him to rush from her presence, she told him the secret which her nurse had told her the night before, and concluded, "It would be impossible for my family to be united to yours." He smiled, took the ring from the table and replaced it on her hand with a gentle violence and said, "That will stay there." "But it cannot." "Is that all you have to tell me?" he enquired. "All! It is enough, is it not?" "Perhaps so," he replied, "but I knew that long ago, before I ever asked you to be mine."

Sometimes the believer discovers depths within his own nature that fill him with alarm, and he says, "Surely,

surely, the Lord Jesus could not have loved me had He known that." But when we come to Him confessing our sins He always says, "It is nothing new to me: I knew it long ago."

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed
through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost:
Out in the desert He heard its cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die."

And He went after it. *His was a seeking love*: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." David did not go to Geshur: he waited until Absalom came to him. If God had waited for you and me to come to Him, we never should have come. "We love him, because he first loved us." That is the philosophy of it. How great is the love of God!

With this word I have done. The love of God for us is a love that overcomes all obstacles, removes all barriers in the way of our reconciliation. David said, "Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! I wish I had died myself instead of Absalom, that he might have lived." No plaintive, tragic, "It might have been", ever escaped the lips of the omnipotent God: "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

You read sometimes of terrible crimes of which men are guilty. With all the evidence in the newspaper as clearly set out as it could be in a court of law, yet you know there will be a trial. Everything will be done in perfect order. But you say, "It is a foregone conclusion. The man is guilty. He is bound to die. No power in the world can save him. No wealth can purchase his redemption. No influence of any sort can effect his release. The man is as good as dead already." How helpless are his best friends! A mother's love, a father's love, a wife's love, anybody's love—everybody's love—is impotent!

But such was the situation God faced. We were under the condemnation of the holy law of God, and neither seraphim, nor cherubim, nor angels, nor archangels, could effect our deliverance. But you remember how Joab put in the mouth of the woman of Tekoah, "Neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him." He has found a way to do it. He has found a way whereby He can be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth on Jesus.

"Oh, for this love, let rocks and rills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak."

"And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a cry to the gate of heaven,
'Rejoice! I have found My sheep!'
And the angels echoed around the throne,
'Rejoice! for the Lord brings back His own!'"

There is no other love like that! That is the love I offer you in the name of my Master. I can say no other than this, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Let us pray:

O Spirit of God, we beseech Thee by Thy gracious ministry to heart and conscience, to the human will, to quicken us all in Thy fear, and save us every one from the folly of rejecting a love like Thine. Constrain many to come to Him Who is the Lover of their souls, Amen.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Tuesday Evening, October 13th, 1932.

Second in a Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on
*Biblical Theology, which is included in the
Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary.*

(Stenographically Reported)

Lecture Text: The Book of Joshua.

We begin this evening the study of the book of Joshua. It will, perhaps, help us if I outline at the outset the ground we shall cover. First, *the book of Joshua as a record of supernatural events*; secondly, *the book of Joshua as the biography of a great man*; thirdly, *the book of Joshua as a revelation of the divine government*; fourthly, *the book of Joshua, the history of a great conquest*; and fifthly, *the record of the establishment of an economically and ethically ideal state.*

For your assistance in study I call your attention to the fact that the first twelve chapters of Joshua contain *the historical account of the conquest of Canaan*; the thirteenth chapter outlines *the remaining land to be possessed*; the fourteenth to the twenty-second, *the establishment of the state*; and the concluding chapters, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth, may be gathered up under the title, *evening and morning in the life of Joshua.*

I.

I do not know how much we shall cover of that this evening, but we shall begin with this: the book of Joshua as A RECORD OF SUPERNATURAL EVENTS.

What you see in any person will depend very largely upon the attitude of mind in which you approach that person. If you are kindly disposed, you will be ready to form the most charitable judgments—even of his or her defects. If you are, at heart, antagonistic, you are likely to become critical, even of their outstanding virtues. There is much in the old proverb, "Convince a man against his will, he's of the same opinion still." It is with the heart man believeth anything. That is why people of one political stripe, let us say, liberal, believe everything they read in their paper, and refuse to believe anything that is in the opposition paper. On the other hand, it explains why some people believe everything they read in a paper that is known as conservative, while they insist that whatever appears in the paper of the opposite party is nothing but lies. That is why some people do not believe what they read in THE GOSPEL WITNESS! It is not because it is not true; but because they do not like it.

"I do not like you, Dr. Fell,
The reason why, I cannot tell;
But this I know—I know it well—
I do not like you, Dr. Fell."

You cannot do very much with any man who approaches a subject in that attitude. Hence the carnal mind, being enmity against God, "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be". It follows as a matter of course that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

To recognize that principle at the outset would save us from much difficulty in our understanding of the Bible. Some people come to the Bible in order that they may misunderstand and misinterpret it. They do not like it. They are determined to find fault with it, no matter what it says. We must enquire of ourselves first of all as to what our approach toward the Bible is. What do we expect to find in it?

I do not say that a strong and good man may not, in time, overcome the prejudices of people who do not like him—but it is difficult. There are a few people who are amenable to reason, and they may be convinced. I do not say that the Bible does not make friends of its enemies: it does. God sovereignly opens the minds and the hearts of men, so that they come to believe the truth, even though the truth slays them. The grace of God accomplishes that miracle.

I am speaking now particularly of those who are Christians, and asking the question, What ought to be your mental attitude toward the book—the Book as a whole, but particularly toward this book of Joshua?

I say, we may as well recognize at the outset that it is a record of supernatural events, and unless you can believe in the supernatural, you cannot believe the book of Joshua. Unless you accept the principle of supernaturalism, you will derive no profit from a study of this book, because it is a record of the supernatural, and rejecting that, you will find in the book itself that which, of necessity, invalidates its history. If its record of the supernatural be not true, it is all folly to say, as some of the critics say, that you can tear the Bible—or any part of it—to pieces, and reject its science and its history and its record of the supernatural, and then by some strange process get out of it its "religious message".

The man who is a liar, a deceiver, an ignoramus, is not competent to give me any religious message. And when men tell me that the Bible cannot be believed historically, scientifically, geographically, ethically, and I know not in what other particular, but that if you sift it out you may get the religious residue from it, it would do me no good. My mind is so constituted that unless I can accept the Book as a whole, if I cannot accept its supernaturalism, its law, its ethical teaching, its history, I cannot believe anything else. The man who tells me a half dozen patent lies in the morning cannot talk with me about anything in the afternoon. If the Bible is so unreliable as people say it is, let us throw it in the fire and be done with it.

The book of Joshua is a record of the supernatural. That means that Joshua, as every other part of the Bible, postulates God. It takes God for granted. If you can believe in God, if you have learned to take God for granted, where you find God in this book, everything else is believable. "If God is there", you say, "I should expect such miracles." Of course, if you have no God, or if your god be a blind force, an abstract, intangible, indefinite, force, who works some way that is above and beyond your understanding, whom it is not possible to address, a person who can neither hear nor respond to

your cry,—if that be your conception of God, you will be at home with the evolutionists, and will exclude a personal God, the God of intelligence, and will, and affection, Who operates in the lives of men. If you have any intelligence left after you have spent it on that, you will say, "I shall have to abandon this book, for I cannot accept it." But once you believe God, what we call the supernatural is but the unveiling of the operation of God's Spirit, showing how God does things, and nothing is impossible of belief if once we postulate God.

Do not misunderstand, however. Supernaturalism, as a fact, is always open to examination, investigation, and criticism. Take the supernaturalism of spiritism, as an example. It claims to have a supernatural element in it that works in the dark, that requires one to believe without seeing, and without thinking. That is not the supernaturalism of the Bible. I want you to distinguish in your estimate of these things between the fact and the reason for the fact, or the method of the fact.

In New Testament times real miracles were wrought. Let us assume that, for the sake of argument, at least, without calling it in question. But those who were thus miraculously healed were open to inspection. When Peter and John had healed the lame man at the gate of the temple called Beautiful, the miracle was known to all that dwelt at Jerusalem, and even the unbelievers said "we cannot deny it." They could not explain it—that is another matter—but they had to accept the inexplicable because the fact of it was indisputable.

The supernaturalism of the Bible, as matters of fact, may well be investigated, and the evidence for and against carefully sifted. If the miracle is genuine, then there is evidence to support its genuineness. But as to how it is accomplished, the method by which the divine power operates, is an entirely different matter. The very fact that it is supernatural places it beyond the realm of the understanding of finite minds. But when I say that our attitude of mind will determine very largely the profitableness of our study of a book like the book of Joshua, I do not want you to suppose that such matters as are related as facts are not subject to investigation or criticism. The miracle is to be examined as such, to find out whether it is true.

The resurrection was a miracle, and Jesus Christ bade the disciples to handle Him and see, for He said, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." He did not explain the resurrection, He did not tell them how it had come to pass, but He did bid them examine the facts: "Come and see for yourselves whether these things are true." Where this Book records a supernatural event as a fact, you are quite within your province, as men and women of faith, in examining that matter as a fact, to ascertain whether it is a fact. But the *how* of it is entirely different.

You remember how Jesus Christ dealt with that when he said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again", and, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said, "How can these things be?—Explain the miracle, if you please." But our Lord did not explain it. He insisted upon the reality of it, the necessity for it: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

The application of that principle will, I think, help you in a study of this book.

There are *three conspicuous, outstanding, miracles recorded in the book of Joshua*. First, the crossing of

Jordan. That cannot be explained on any other ground than that it was a supernatural event, that God did actually, by the exercise of His sovereign power upon the material world, do that which could not be done by the operation of natural law. Next, the fall of Jericho. You cannot explain the fall of Jericho on any other ground. The walls of those ancient cities were not like our walls, two or three bricks thick, that could be blown over. I was telling my class on Monday night that I have walked on the walls of Derry. A wall that is built of solid masonry like that could fall down flat only when there was some kind of earthquake. The Israelites had no battering-rams, no artillery of any sort. They blew with the trumpets, and the walls fell down flat; and they went up every man before him and took possession of the city.

The capture of Jericho was a miracle. The falling of the walls was a miracle that cannot be accounted for on any other ground.

Then, the standing still of the sun and of the moon was a miracle—not an illusion, much less a delusion, but the record of it is an historic fact, and the fact was of a miraculous character. God interposed, and a miracle was wrought.

But while these three miracles are the conspicuous miracles of the book of Joshua, once they are understood, and we recognize God in the book, and that the book itself is a record of divine operation, and interposition, and a revelation of things divine, you will find that these three are not the only miracles. There are miracles which are conspicuous, open, and outstanding; and if I may so say, the miraculous element is sometimes so diffused in the life of the believer that he may come to take the supernatural for granted, almost forgetting that it is supernatural.

The conquest of Canaan in so short a time, by a company of people who were untrained and unaccustomed to war, was a miracle. These men were not mighty men of war: they were a great mob who had been wandering around in the wilderness. Their only taste of war had been with Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites. The earlier generation had died off, and this younger generation knew practically nothing of war. And yet the southern part of Canaan was conquered apparently within the space of a few weeks. Nothing could stand before them, and it was not long before the northern part was also subdued, for Joshua drove a wedge right into the centre, and defeated the enemy in detail, like the skilled general he was. But his skill was divinely imparted.

Study the evidence of God's dwelling in the lives of His people, and you will see that it was in itself supernatural. So is it in the life of the believer. We know that the new birth is a reality, we know that we have been the subject of it, we know that we have been radically changed—we know it. And is our life subsequent to that event a natural one? Have you students not had some supernatural elements in your life since you came to the Seminary? Every answer to prayer is supernatural. You did something, and unbelieving men would say it was susceptible of explanation on the natural plane. But you know that if your own energy and ability had not been supplemented by the Divine, you could not have done it. Can you not say, "I believe in the supernatural because I am a supernatural person. I was supernaturally born, and I live a supernatural life, a life that is supernaturally sustained. "God has helped me in a thousand ways." Some things you can tell, but some others you would not

divulge: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." If you are a Christian, you have had many a secret between you and your Beloved, some of them too sacred to communicate to others. You say, "That is one of the little things that the Lord did for me when no eye but His was there, for the confirmation of my faith."

Life is very much like this chapter. Here and there is a conspicuous miracle. You look back and say, "There is Jordan, there is Jericho, and then, while the sun did not stand still, there were twenty-four hours which meant a month to me. I know it was a divine interposition in my life." You can name certain outstanding miraculous events. But when you read your own history as you read the book of Joshua, in retrospect, you must say, "There was a day I did not understand at the time, but God was with me from morning till night"—and it was no less supernatural than the more conspicuous event. Thus as we come to understand God's supernatural presence in the lives of His people every day—the man who sits in his office, the man who works at the bank, the man who works with machinery, the teacher in the class-room, the student in his class, the Sunday School teacher in his class, the earnest worker knocking at the door to invite someone to come to church—we may not always be able to write it down as a crossing of Jordan at the flood, or the taking of Jericho, but as we go on with God we are constrained to say, "I begin to understand what He meant when He said, 'Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age.'" When thus you come to the Bible in the light of your own experience you will find it to be a page from your own history, and that there are many parallels in the sacred Scripture to experiences you have had yourself.

Consonant with that, you will find the book of Joshua a record of the fulfilment of prophecy, and that it is tied up to Deuteronomy, to Numbers, to Leviticus, to Exodus. To find the explanation of Joshua you will have to go back to Genesis—and before you have finished with it you will have to go through to Revelation.

That is the wonder of the Book: you can take no part out of it without rending it all. The unity of the Book shows that it is the word of God "that liveth and abideth for ever".

As we view this book as a record of history, we shall find that every word that God promised to Abraham, He fulfilled. We shall hear Joshua saying that not one word of all His good promises has failed.

So of your life, for just as truly as God fulfilled His promises to Abraham, He will fulfil His promise to you. I believe there is nothing that will tend more certainly to a confirmation of faith than a diligent study of the fulfilment of the prophetic scriptures. There are many prophecies in the Word of God yet to be fulfilled. But if anyone can show me that certain of the prophecies of Scripture have been fulfilled already, I shall not feel that they have deprived me of a treasure: but rather that they have ministered to the confirmation of my faith. Joshua is a record of the fulfilment of prophecy.

II.

I think I may take my second point, and conclude with that for this evening. The second point is that the book of Joshua is THE BIOGRAPHY OF A GREAT MAN. A large part of the Bible is biographical. Genesis is largely so, and diffused through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and

Deuteronomy are the biographies of Moses and of some others. But it is very interesting to note—and I call your attention to this principle, and ask you to take it down in your minds—the emphasis and importance which the Bible attaches to human personality. The tendency in our day is to lose sight of the individual. There was a time when you saw the name of a man outside some big establishment, but now it is a company: the man's name is not there. There are men in it, and somewhere behind it all, whatever the company, there is a man, but he is more or less obscured by and merged in the mass. The corporation largely takes the place of the man.

That is a modern tendency. It is a tendency in business, it is a tendency obviously in religious life everywhere. I heard some years ago a discussion of the report of the Committee on Union in the Toronto Conference of the Methodist Church. I sat in the gallery and listened to the brethren discuss the problems of Church Union. The man who had charge of the report was a very astute man. Certain persons objected. They said, in effect, "This report runs counter to some of the most cherished beliefs of Methodism, and how are we, as Methodists, believing what we believe, to vote for the Committee's report? We should have to stultify ourselves to subscribe to that report." The gentleman who was handling the report, after the discussion was over, in making his final speech before the vote was taken, said something to this effect: "It is true that we shall all have to give up something. The Union must, of necessity, be effected on the basis of compromise. We cannot all have our way. We cannot form a great church that will be made up of people of all beliefs if everybody is determined to hold to what he has always believed. We must surrender some things." In other words he said, "Our business is to build a big institution, and we want you to help us, for if we are to build this big institution we shall have to consent to compromise."

The religion of the Bible is designed to make men. Divine grace renders it possible for every man to come up to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". That is why we Baptists are individualists. That is why we will not be part of any organization that would crib, cabin, and confine, either our conscience or our intelligence, or forbid our exercising our souls toward God, or our believing the things that are taught in His Holy Word. It was God's plan from the beginning to save men, not by an institution, not even by the church which is His body. It was His plan from the beginning to save men through a human Personality, joined with the divine.

The Bible therefore is replete with ~~some~~ of great personalities. You can summarize the book of Genesis by naming the mountain peaks of personality. What is it? Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. Nothing is omitted. These are the mountain peaks, and around these personalities the history of their time gathers.

In Exodus there are Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and here and there, Bezaleel, Aholiab, and others; but they all die down until there are only two conspicuous personalities left, Caleb and Joshua. Leaving the lesser peaks behind you, you come upon this towering name, "Joshua the son of Nun." They used to call him "Moses' minister," but before God puts him to sleep, he too will be called Joshua, "the servant of God."

This is the biography of a great man, *great in character*. What a man Joshua was! No man was ever in more difficult circumstances than he. He had been a slave in

Egypt. He came through the Red sea, and was one of the spies sent to spy out the land of Canaan. With Caleb he brought back a minority report, and because they were outvoted they had to stay in the wilderness forty years. Joshua kept sweet for forty years! Can you do it? Anybody can do it if he is in the majority, but can you be kept out of the promised land forty years, and yet whistle and sing, and keep happy before the Lord? That is a miracle. Joshua himself was a miracle. Circumstances were all against him.

Some man says, "I have no help, in my church, my family, among my friends—I have no help anywhere." Neither had Joshua. Difficult circumstances will either make or break you. I have seen some people go down under the pressure, and I have seen others grow like the giant oak on the mountain top where winds were howling. The storms that passed over, and made it bow its head, at the same time made it strike its roots more deeply into the soil.

That is what happened to Joshua. I do not suppose Joshua would have been half the man he was if he had gone into the promised land immediately. It was the discipline of forty years in the wilderness which made him a man to match the mountains.

Let me give you students a word. Moses was a great man to begin with. He was born great. He had it in him. Then his lot was cast amid favourable circumstances, and he became "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds". I suppose Moses, to bring it up to modern times, had all the degrees that the universities could give him! He was not an untutored man. He was a learned man. Then he was called to his task, and he hastened to begin. His first efforts failed, and the Lord sent him back into the wilderness for forty years to take a post-graduate course. Again he hoped to do his work at once; instead of that he spent forty more years wandering in the wilderness, and died without entering the promised land.

Joshua had forty years of training at the feet of Moses—and I rather think Moses was somewhat of a professor. To keep company with Moses for forty years was a high privilege. There are always some compensations when you are kept out of the promised land, in the wilderness. God will see to it that you have company. Do not be in undue haste. Joshua was great in character because he lived above his circumstances.

Napoleon used to boast that he made circumstances. Strong men do. Weak, namby-pamby, sissy-like, gentlemen never accomplish anything. But there are many of them in the world. When I meet some men I have the greatest difficulty in refraining from addressing them as "Miss". I would in some cases, only I should have to apologize to the ladies! One does not know quite where to put them. They are like Rueben, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." There are many people like water: you can pour them into any mould, and they will take its shape—round mould, square mould, cherry mould, apple mould, pear mould, any mould.

Your circumstances will make you if you are *blanc mange* people, if you are "wibbly-wobbly;" but if you have in you the material that Joshua was made of you will shape your circumstances. If you have no church, you have a Bible. If there is no church in the wilderness, you have God; draw your strength from Him, without the aid of a pastor. Learn to survive all circumstances. I hope, as you go out to preach, you will find the toughest

places possible. I mean it, every word,—and that is one wish I expect to see fully realized!

Joshua was not only great in character, but in *achievement*. He was great as a soldier. If you examine carefully the tactics of Joshua, you will discover that his military strategy will bear careful study. If possible, study this book with a map of Palestine before you.

He was great as a statesman. Read carefully the twenty-second chapter that records the division of the land by lot. Talk about Washington's being "the father of his country"! Joshua was as great—far greater—than any of the men who set their signatures to the Declaration of Independence.

But above all, Joshua was great as a servant of God. He lived his life right through to the end without a stain, without a blemish. What an achievement, to finish up at the end of the road as he began in the morning!

At this point he is a type of the Greatest of men, Joshua means saviour. His name is carried forward into the New Testament, and translated, Jesus. We read in the epistle to the Hebrews, "If Jesus had given them rest"—it is literally, "Joshua". Joshua is a type of the Lord Jesus, and singularly illustrates His life and work. He shared the experience of the people in the wilderness: "He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." We are on New Testament ground in so regarding Joshua. The epistle to the Hebrews is our authority.

Moses brought the people out of Egypt, into the wilderness, but not into the land of promise. Joshua brought them into Canaan. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified"; "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Moses will never lead us into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus: we shall come by grace, in the power of the gospel, to that place where we wrestle against principalities and powers. Joshua obtained an inheritance for the people by leading them to conquest.

I should not like to stress this, but I came upon it in my reading. It is suggested that as Joshua went into the promised land he led the nation through Jordan, and they emerged into a new life on the other side of Jordan. Joshua then instructed them to take twelve stones from the bed of the river, and to pile them up as a memorial, so that when their children should say, "What mean ye by these stones?" they should point to them as a memorial of a nation's resurrection, when they went into Jordan, and emerged into a new life. This author suggested that our Lord selected twelve disciples, that they might be with Him, quoting His saying, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The names of the twelve apostles are perpetuated, even in the celestial city. Joshua was a type of Him Who brings His people out of Egypt, into the promised land.

I have offered these suggestions: Joshua as a record of supernatural events, and as the biography of a great man. Two weeks from this evening we shall look at the book in this same broad way, before examining it in detail, as a record of the divine government.

THE INTOLERANCE OF FAITH.

We are hearing a great deal nowadays about the virtue of toleration and the value to society of broadmindedness. In some quarters there seems to be a special conviction that a peculiar quality of divine inspiration and authority belongs to the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians. (Any adequate interpretation of that chapter, however, we fear would appreciably affect its popularity among those who profess to be so devoted to its principles. For instance, love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth".)

We know a great many ministers who excel in the virtue of toleration. They tell us they preach the gospel and nothing but the gospel; and that they preach it because they believe it. But they believe it to be a Christian duty to make large allowances for the views of other people. We heard a brother say recently that while he had no doubt whatever, personally, in respect to the virgin birth of Christ, he was prepared to be very generous toward the man who found it difficult to find language in which to express his belief on that subject. Thus it comes to pass that some professedly orthodox preachers are able to walk in step, not only in church membership, but in official relationship as pastor to deacon, with men whose views are openly and avowedly anti-supernatural.

In wider denominational relationships we find men who never cease to declare their orthodoxy, who yet serve on boards and support institutions whose teaching is subversive of evangelical faith. Invariably these amiable and tolerant brethren tell us that the gentlemen who deny the faith are among the loveliest characters in the world; and that if only we knew Dr. So-and-So, all our antagonism to his views would be at an end. When we hear these things—and we hear them often, even to the point of weariness—we wonder sometimes whether a certain type of minister's mind has suffered some sort of mental paralysis; or whether only one lobe of the brain is working, causing these brethren to forget how to reason or how to think; or whether, for some reason, a distinct line of cleavage between the intellectual and the moral and spiritual has been effected, so that a man's views of truth no longer have any relation to his conduct. We hear it said, "Dr. So-and-So is a man of winsome personality; he believes the gospel, too, but evidently conceives it to be his duty to have no contention with men of contrary opinions."

The question we ask in this article is this: Is that professed belief of the truth which is complacently tolerant of error really evangelical faith? For an answer to that question we must go back to the Book itself, for herein is the truth upon which evangelical faith rests. What of the Person Who is the object of our faith? Was He doubtful about His own mission? Did He believe in the absolute finality of the divine revelation made to men through Himself? Did He make any distinction between light and darkness, between truth and error, between righteousness and unrighteousness? A volume could be written in support of an affirmative answer to these questions. He believed in the uniqueness of His own personality, in the divine authority of His message, and of the fullness and finality of that divine revelation of truth of which He was Himself the incarnation. A few passages are sufficient to establish this contention: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"; "He that believeth on him is

not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil"; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."; "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"; "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

But was He tolerant of those who differed from Him? Knowing Himself the truth, could He lightly regard error? Let Him speak for Himself: "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

But now, what of the disciples of the apostolic day in whom the faith of Christ resided? In his sermon on Pentecost, Peter made no excuse for those who by wicked hands had slain the Just One; but required of all repentance as the only way of life. Nor did his preaching consist in mildly setting forth the truth, avoiding all contrast with error, as for example: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. That is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

If we take the human author of the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians as an example of tolerance, what has he to say? "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Or again, when Elymas the sorcerer "withstood them" (Barnabas and Saul), "seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all

righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

Again: hear what the beloved John has to say: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

What if the principle proposed for our guidance in our attitude toward religious error were applied to other realms, where would it lead us? Why insist upon absolute accuracy, even to a single cent, in the teller's cage in the bank? He is dealing only in material values. Are these matters of greater importance than that heavenly currency in which, by special divine revelation, spiritual values are expressed? Why not be tolerant in the matter of dollars and cents? Why not be charitable when a man is wrong in his accounts a few hundred dollars? Why insist in the bank and in business that everything be standardized by a fixed and invariable multiplication table? Why not modify it and introduce a little tolerance into the auditor's department?

What if the rule were applied in the chemical laboratory? Or, to be very simple, when you take your physician's prescription to the druggist, if he should say that certain of the ingredients prescribed by your doctor are not in stock, why not say to him, "I am very broad-minded: I do not believe in being over-exact. I preach and practice tolerance everywhere. You have many bottles on your shelves; make up the prescription of something else"? That, of course, is absurd; because the life of the body is at stake. But is the life of the body of greater moment than the life of the soul? If a druggist may not take liberty with a prescription issued by a physician who is a fellow-mortal and fallible like himself, why should it be insisted that we should be tolerant toward those who would change the prescription of the divine Physician, when He tells us specifically that there is but one Way of life?

Why not apply the principle in travel? Why insist upon the accuracy of a railway guide? Why take pains to ascertain what train you must take in order to arrive at a given destination? Everyone knows the answer. The truth is, this so-called tolerance is but another name for indifference to truth. Faith is the response of a divinely enlightened soul to truth divinely revealed in the only begotten Son of God. True faith knows beyond all peradventure that there is but one way of salvation, which is repentance toward God as the One against Whom we have sinned, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ Who "died for our sins according to the scriptures."

We challenge a contradiction of the statement, that a faith that is deliberately and knowingly tolerant of error, of that which would subvert the gospel of Christ, is only a faith so-called. True faith, in the nature of the case, must be intolerant—even as righteousness is intolerant of unrighteousness, and light is intolerant of darkness, and Christ is intolerant of Belial.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

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FOURTH QUARTER.

JOSHUA AND THE GIBEONITES.

Lesson Text: Joshua, chapters 9 and 10.

Golden Text: "And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight."—Joshua 10:25.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—2 John 1-13.

Tuesday—Is. 54:1-10.

Wednesday—Is. 54:11-17.

Thursday—Ps. 83:1-18.

Friday—2 John 1-14.

Saturday—Acts 4:23-31.

1. THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS (vs. 1, 2).

In this section there is a record of a league of nations formed against Israel for the purpose of defeating the plan of the Lord's people respecting the conquest of the land. It was quite obvious to those heathen people that God was fighting on behalf of His own, and it was equally clear that should their victories continue it would not be long before the land would be completely in their possession, and its inhabitants either be driven out or slain. The people of Jericho could not stand before the invaders and the inhabitants of Ai had most crushing defeat. It was therefore clear that no single power could stand against Israel. The league of nations, or tribes, was therefore formed to give united resistance to the Israelites with the hope of halting their victorious progress. These tribes were not united in other matters; the land at that time being in an unsettled state, but they were willing to agree to act together in their opposition to the children of God. The same is true in all ages. The world is divided on many questions, but it is united in its antagonism to God, (Rom. 8:7). Note the union of mutual enemies against our Lord, in the persons of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, (Matt. 22:15-46), and the power behind all in the spirit realm, (Eph. 6:12). We need not wonder therefore when enemies of divers sorts unite to hinder us in our Lord's service.

II. THE SCHEME OF THE GIBEONITES, (vs. 3-24).

While the tribes referred to in the previous section united to fight against Israel, the Gibeonites followed another plan, possibly changing their original plan to do so, thereby forsaking the league of nations. They became convinced of the futility of resistance, and sought in a wily manner to come to terms with the victorious army of the people of God. Their cities were situated some eighteen or twenty miles from the camp of Israel, not far from Jerusalem, and in the territory given to Israel for an inheritance. They were, therefore, doomed to destruction, the only means of salvation being by compromise based on deception. The plan concocted therefore was to deceive the Israelites by sending a deputation of their people dressed as if they had come from a long distance to enter into a friendly league

with them, (vs. 3-13). On the arrival of the deputation the plan was carried out as arranged, false information being given concerning the journey, the provisions, and the location of their cities. In relation to this scheme several things are worthy of note. First, it was planned for the purpose of saving the lives of the Gibeonites, that they might be permitted to live peaceably in the midst of the Lord's people. Secondly, it made a pretension of friendship for Israel, and thirdly, it made a religious plea, referring to the work of God on behalf of His people. In the spiritual realm of the present day enemies are liable to adopt similar tactics, entering our churches as friends with praise of God on their lips, and with expressions of desire for fellowship with us, but with the hearts of Gibeonites, seeking the Lord's people only that they might fulfil their own purposes. There can be no true fellowship with them; they are not right at heart; they are only a vexation of spirit, and one must constantly be on guard against them.

The Gibeonites were successful in their scheme, for the men of Israel "took their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord, but Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them", (vs. 14, 15). The decision of the leaders of Israel was based purely on circumstantial evidence; they made the serious mistake of not consulting the Lord in the matter. Things are not always what they seem, and the words of some who take the Lord's name on their lips are not always true. From this we may learn the importance of taking counsel with God in all the affairs of God, and of not being hasty in reaching our conclusions, especially in relation to matters of consequence. Note the possibility of the very best being deceived, the evil consequences which are liable to ensue therefrom, the presence in the religious world of deceivers (2 Pet. 2:1), and the necessity of testing the teaching and claims of all people by the revealed will of God.

Three days after the league had been made with Gibeon the Israelites discovered the deception which had been practised upon them, but it was then too late to alter their decision. Their solemn pledge had been given to the people, and this could not be broken. Their promise was secured, therefore they were bound to spare their enemies. But it was necessary to take some action in order to manifest their relative positions as victors and vanquished, and to prevent intermingling on an equality basis of Israelites and heathen, the plan was put into effect of making the Gibeonites bondmen, hewers of wood, and drawers of water unto Israel, (vs. 16-27). Note the embarrassment caused Israel in the hasty pledging of their word, when if they had known the real circumstances they would have acted otherwise, the lesson being that we should thoroughly understand the particulars before committing ourselves to a decision, seeking the guidance of God therein. Note also the sacredness attached to one's pledged word. If any people ever had justification for breaking their word the Israelites had on this occasion, but they did not take advantage of their circumstances. They faithfully adhered to their

promise. Christians ought also to be particular in such a matter. It may also be profitable to notice that the Gibeonites did not escape the evil consequences of their deception. They became the servants of Israel. Respecting the solemnity of one's pledged word and the consequences resulting from disregarding the same, see the judgment of God manifested on account of this in the case of Saul and the Gibeonites, (2 Sam. 21:1).

III. THE DELIVERANCE OF THE GIBEONITES, (10:1-43).

In pledging their word to Gibeon the Israelites assumed certain obligations which they were speedily called upon to perform. By the other members of the league of nations the Gibeonites were no doubt looked upon as traitors in making peace with Israel, and forsaking the national cause. They were also a menace to them, in the aid which they would give Israel in their menial capacity. We can readily understand therefore the desire of the others to overthrow them before meeting the Israelites, the king of Jerusalem being the nearest to them, and probably the most powerful of the chiefs taking the lead in the matter, (v. 1). His actuating motive was that of fear, engendered by the victories of Israel, and by the fact that so powerful a people as the Gibeonites should make peace with them, (v. 2). Calling upon the other kings to come with him, he went up against Gibeon, (vs. 3-5). Learning of this combined action, which they no doubt expected, the Gibeonites sent word to Joshua to come to their assistance, which he did immediately, ascending from Gilgal by a forced march, and all the people of war and mighty men with him, (vs. 6, 7).

Before proceeding against those mountain kings it would seem that Joshua prayed unto God, for he received the divine promise to "fear them not, for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee", (v. 8). In this he was exercising due care concerning this people lest he again be deceived by them; a very necessary precaution. Being encouraged by this sense of the divine approval, and assurance of victory, he advanced upon the enemy and came upon them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, the Israelites chasing them for many miles, and the Lord casting down hailstones upon them, (vs. 9-11), completely overthrowing them, (vs. 12-27). The record is then given of the conquering of places in the southern part of Canaan, (vs. 28-43), manifesting the power of God in the arms of His people. They were invincible because He was with them. Two things are of particular interest respecting this conflict. First, the miraculous lengthening of the day of battle at the request of Joshua, (vs. 12-14). Note regarding this the staying of time, the standing still, or silence, of the sun, implying possibly that while it continued to shine, its heat was hidden behind a cloud, and the storm of hailstones so unusual at that time of the year, which affected the enemy only. The explanation of all is that the Lord was fighting for Israel, and the marvellous thing, that He should do this in answer to the prayer of a man. The second thing relates to the symbolical action of Joshua in requesting his captains to put their feet upon the necks of their enemies, thus increasing their confidence in victory and stimulating their courage.

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NO MORE SUFFERING.

The little Bassa boy in whom we have been much interested, through Miss Lane's letters and through excerpts from the letters of the other missionaries on the New Cess Station, suffers no longer from those terrible burns.

In a letter from Miss Lane, dated September 4th, she says—"I have tried to write for nearly a week but my dear wee baby has taken all my attention and I have been unable to do what I wanted. Never once did he cry during the whole three weeks and two days that I had him, although he suffered agony. He was the only native that ever called me by my Christian name and he always called me 'Mi-ni'. His burns were healing beautifully but the poison in his wee face could not be stopped and on Friday afternoon at 2.45, he went to be with the Lord while he was asleep."

It was a shock for us to hear of the baby's death for our love had gone out to him, but to Miss Lane it was a real loss for she had tended the little fellow day after day and loved him dearly. We know that it is "far better" and that the Lord had some wonderful purpose in sending the little one to Miss Lane, but we can understand how she will miss her little patient.

Miss Lane, in her letter, tells us that the baby was fixed as usual in the morning and he seemed no worse other than he appeared to be a little dopey, but as she held him on her lap while his bed was being made, he played in his baby way shutting his eyes tightly. In the afternoon, two of the women visited Miss Lane and chatted with her while she was sewing and at intervals the baby was looked after but after he had been given some water, he fell asleep. The women were anxious to see him, but Miss Lane told them that he was sleeping and must not be disturbed and kept them from going in until they were going home. The first woman went in and when Miss Lane looked at the little one she saw that his spirit had fled. She felt that she dare not tell the women and so she just let them see the baby and go right out again. "I don't know how I kept my courage for the shock was great", writes Miss Lane, and continues, "The baby was mine and it was dead. The mother had gone for a walk. I shut the doors and sent for Mrs. Hancox and then I could be brave no longer. I could just say, 'Oh, my precious little lamb'. He was such a dear and I did so hope that God would be pleased to spare him."

Mr. Hancox made a little wooden coffin for the little body, and Mrs. Hancox and Miss Lane lined it with cheese-cloth and their loving hands put his little head upon a pillow and in his folded hands a rose. His neck, head, and part of his face had to be bandaged, but the little features that showed were sweet indeed to those who had loved him much. Miss Lane says, "He taught me such lessons during the time I had him. He was

so patient. God has been good to let me have him and one more little lamb is walking now the streets of gold."

After days and nights of watching and nursing the baby, one does not wonder that Miss Lane's strength was spent and that when there was no more need for her constant care she felt lost. She tells us that at every sound she turns expecting to wait on him.

The baby is buried at the Mission and his grave is covered with flowers from the garden.

We are told that his mother listens to the gospel message and says that she never heard such things as Miss Lane has told her; that she too wants to follow Jesus, but the light has not shone into her poor heart as yet, and prayers are asked that she may believe and receive everlasting life.

Hard Hearts Touched.

We remember Mrs. Davey saying on one occasion that when she first went to Africa she often looked at the native women hoping to find one face with a softened expression, but that it was useless, the faces were all marred by sin and presented a rather threatening appearance. We remember this as we read that the love which was showered upon the little baby touched the hearts of many of the natives among whom our missionaries are working and they came to thank Miss Lane for what she had done for the baby and to sympathize with her in her loss. The people speak of her now as the best nurse.

Evidence of New Life.

Further news comes to us of the changed life of the woman of whom Miss Lane told us some time ago, the woman who stood out so courageously during her illness and would not have the country medicine used. Such a stand is the supreme test of sincerity and the missionary rejoices that she has been a witness to her new found, and confessed faith. Another evidence of her growth is seen in the discarding of the supposedly effective charm to keep illness away. This is a small article, containing country medicine. It is worn on a string like a scapular.

Then one day this woman came to the Mission Station hill smoking and Miss Lane asked her why she had not put her pipe away. She said that she did not know that it was wrong to smoke and she begged Miss Lane to forgive her and said that she would never use the pipe again.

No wonder Miss Lane writes, "Is not this work worth while?" and says that this new convert wept with her in sympathy over the loss of the babe, although they sorrowed not as those who know not the comfort of an all-wise Father's care.

From the Bush Station

where Rev. and Mrs. Mellish and Miss Florence Stacey are carrying on a work

among a people in a long neglected district, we have interesting mail. Part of Miss Stacey's letter of August 9th, reads—

"For a time we had fairly nice weather but these last few days have been dull and we have had much rain, but this is the rainy season so what can we expect? The poor little children suffer much at this time of the year and we do feel so sorry for them. You see, the rain makes it very cold at times and these little one have no clothes to protect them, and rice is hard to get and many of them have to go without and it is very sad to see and hear them cry for food. How thankful we are that the Lord has supplied our need and for our tribe also. We know that we have a Heavenly Father who cares for us and has He not promised in His Word to supply all our needs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Our hearts are filled with praise because of the great privilege that is ours as we work in this needy place."

"While we are out here, we often wonder just what is taking place at home and do not know until the news has ceased to be news with you. How we love to get 'The Gospel Witness' and 'The Bulletin'. Every bit of news is of interest to us and we have some great talks about the work at home.

"Speaking of 'The Gospel Witness' reminds me to tell you that they are coming through fine now and every Wednesday evening we read the Doctor's sermon and find it a great help and a blessing. Sometimes Lafayette comes and listens too. We have especially enjoyed the series of lectures on the 'Second Coming'.

"The other day we visited our dear old Dabbo's farm. While we were there, two of the Gri Gri Bush girls came. They both profess to be Christians and come to all our meetings and take a great interest in everything. They want to be baptized when they are free from all this Gri-Gri Bush palaver. After spending quite a little time visiting with them and trying to get some Bassa and speak a word for the Master, we thought of going, for we had stayed longer than we intended and so prepared to leave hastily. We were just going when our dear old Christian woman rebuked us by saying, 'What about praying?' We were in such a hurry that we had forgotten and she reminded us of it. We had our little prayer meeting then in her little hut out in the rice farm. We each one prayed and she thanked us for coming and for praying."