

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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GREAT FAITH.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 30th, 1932.

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"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

"But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

"But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

"Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

"But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

"And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."—Matt. 15:21-28.

Prayer by Rev. W. Gordon Brown.

O Lord, Thou art God; Thou art the God of all the earth. There is one God, and all things are from Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whom we are. Therefore do we bless Thee for the many ways which Thou hast used to bring us knowledge of Thyself. We thank Thee for the open book of nature, for sunset and evening star, for sunrise and bright noon, and for all the things which teach us of Thine eternal power and Godhead. We thank Thee for that other Book where we may read Thy name in fairer lines, in clearer accents may hear Thy voice, even the Bible which is Thy word. We thank Thee that there Thou hast made known Thy ways unto Moses, Thine acts unto the children of Israel; that there Thou hast recorded the story of Him Who went about doing good, and Who died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

We bless Thee for the ways in which Thou hast impressed this message of life upon so many of us: for the homes where we first heard the name of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ; where we lisped our first prayer, and learned to sing, "Yes, Jesus loves me"; for the Bible Schools where the story of redemption was taught to us, and where our minds were stored with the great promises of life; for the Christian pulpits where Thy word was read; for all the experiences of life which Thou dost sanctify to an understanding of Thy word, that we may find Thy message tried and proven in our lives.

We come to Thee, then, to-night that Thou wouldst make this an holy hour; that Thou wouldst sanctify memory, and imagination, and reason, and affection; that our souls in their

entirety may go out toward God. We bless Thee that it is true of the Lord Jesus that

"All the words He ever spake
Still to us He speaketh;
All the bread He ever brake
Still to us He breaketh."

O Christ, speak the word to us to-night, and break the bread that our souls may be satisfied.

Bless those who hear Thy word over the air. Sanctify their radios to be mouthpieces of the Almighty this night, that the word of God may come to them and prove very life to their souls. Bring comfort to those who are sad, and the wiping away of tears to those who are sorrowful, and the message of salvation to those who have not yet received the Lord Jesus as their own personal Saviour.

So come in all Thy grace, dear Lord, and encompass us round with Thy Spirit. Let us see the very place filled with the horses and chariots of Israel, the presence of our God, the power of His cross, the conviction of His Spirit, and all the help and all the hope that our sinful, weary, hearts need, since we ask it in the Saviour's name, Amen.

Two weeks ago I spoke to you of the love that transcends all human love, the love that is manifested in the death and resurrection, in the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. A week ago I spoke to you of the fall of the mighty, and the perishing of the weapons of war; of life's miscarriages, of its failures, of sin as a

failure to realize the divine plan and purpose in life. This evening I shall try to make clear to you what is involved in taking full advantage of that transcendent love, of what it really means to trust God, in order that such calamities as that to which we gave our thought last Sunday evening may, by the abounding grace of God, be made impossible.

Our Lord, in the story before us, is accosted by a woman of Canaan, a remnant of that accursed race which Israel had been commanded to blot out on their entrance into the promised land. This woman cried for mercy, and her plea was that her daughter was "vexed with a devil". We have grown too respectable in our day to believe in the existence of evil spirits; but I have, myself, met with not a few whose character and conduct could be accounted for on no other hypothesis than that evil spirits are realities, and that it is still possible for mortal men and women to be dominated by a spirit that plans their destruction. This woman cried out to the Master, and apparently she repeated her prayer again and again. But He went on His way without even noticing her: He made her no answer. Her persevering petition became the occasion of great annoyance to His disciples, and at last they besought Him that He should send her away. But she was not so easily to be turned aside, and still, in one of the briefest prayers on record, she begged mercy of the Lord of grace: "Lord, help me." That was a real prayer. When we pray after that fashion we pray indeed. To that prayer He replied, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Yet even that did not discourage her. She acquiesced in the principle; she offered no complaint at the designation; she said, in effect, "Call me a dog if you will, but even the dogs are permitted to eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. May I not have at least a crumb of mercy? A crumb of mercy from Thy hand would be sufficient to meet my urgent need." And then the One Who knoweth the hearts of men, the great Master Himself—I had almost said, paid her a high compliment; at least He recognized the attitude of a bleeding heart as He said, "O woman, great is thy faith. You have your request. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Let us study this story this evening if may hap, by the blessing of God, some may learn to pray who hitherto never have really sent a message to the Skies.

I.

I begin with this observation, that TRUE FAITH FREQUENTLY SPRINGS UP IN MOST UNEXPECTED PLACES.

This woman was a Canaanite; she had received but little instruction in the things of God. One might have expected those who had been taught in the holy scripture, and who had long expected the coming of Messiah, to welcome Him on His appearance, and readily to respond to the claims which He made upon heart and intellect. But, on the contrary, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He was not welcomed in the temple which was dedicated to His worship; He received but scant courtesy in the synagogues which were set apart for the reading and exposition of His own word. But here was a woman who came of an irreligious stock, or at least what religion she had was the very opposite of that which was revealed from heaven. She was not only a Gentile, but she was one of the most despised of all Gentiles: she was nothing less than a Gentile dog. And

yet she believed with a mighty faith, a faith that would not be denied.

Is it not still true, dear friends, that in the places where faith might be expected to flourish we find instead very often the most blatant unbelief; while in places, where little faith might be anticipated, we find a faith like that of this Canaanitish woman?

There are, for example, universities which were founded by men of great faith, which were endowed by men who believed God; and they were established in order that men might be instructed in the word of God; that its mysteries might be expounded; that they might be trained to believe that which was written, and being made, in the true sense, intellectually and spiritually, scholars, disciples of Jesus Christ, they might go forth to proclaim His word. Instead of that the majority of these institutions are now busily engaged in teaching all who come to them that the Bible is not true; that it is not the word of God, that Jesus Christ did not die for sinners; that He was not born of a virgin; that He is not, in any true sense, or in any unique sense, let me rather say, the Son of God. Many of these institutions of learning, designed to be institutions of Christian learning, where revealed religion should be regnant, have become hotbeds of unbelief. In how many places this evening in this city will men be led to put a question mark after everything that is written in the word of God! With what delight professed ministers of the gospel pour contempt upon that which is written, and appear to take a special pleasure in setting at discount these great verities of the faith which were so surely believed by our fathers before us! Go to a great church, erected at great cost, maintained at a great expense, and you would expect that a house thus dedicated to the worship of God would be used for His glory. Instead of that, thousands of people in this city this evening will come from just such temples saying in their hearts, "I do not know what to believe, or whether to believe anything at all."

Look at the people—to say nothing of the building—who thus assemble, who are members of churches, who call themselves Christians; do they believe, do they in any real practical way lean upon God? Are their lives in any sense exemplifications of true evangelical faith? On the contrary, their religion is a thing only of Sunday in many instances. It brings them no comfort; it affords them no inspiration; it is not a regulating principle in their lives. Religious they are, but men and women without faith.

There is someone here who hears me to-night, who says, "I have not had the advantages to which Mr. Brown referred in his prayer." And what advantages they are! God be praised for Christian homes, and for an early Christian training when, at our mother's knee, we were taught to lisp the name of Jesus. We can never be too thankful for such holy influences as those which were thrown about us in our early childhood. They entail, of course, very heavy responsibility, and for these things must we all some day give account to God. But I speak to some this evening whose lot was not cast among the religious, a man who was never taught to pray, who has but a most meagre knowledge of the Bible. He may be a college graduate; he may be a distinguished alumnus of some great university, but all that he knows of the Bible is that it is something to be mocked at, and to be disbelieved; and he hears me to-night in the seclusion of his own home, perhaps half ashamed to be listening to any religious message.

And yet, in the providence of God, it may be that the Lord has brought him within hearing of my simple word, and he would say to me, could he speak, "Half of my life is gone, sir; I have lived irreligiously; I have lived without God. I thought that this world could satisfy that which was deepest in my nature, but I am beginning to discover that there is something within that is crying out for something which all the springs of earth, wealth and pleasure, cannot possibly satisfy. But I suppose it is too late for a man in middle life, or past the meridian, to begin to believe. It would be such an unusual thing, such an extraordinary thing for such an irreligious man as I to begin to believe God." Oh but, my brother, it is not impossible. Many, by the sovereign grace of God, have thus been snatched as brands from the burning. Ah yes, we sometimes sing:

"Ah, grace! into unlikeliest hearts
It is Thy boast to come;
The glory of Thy light to find
In darkest spots a home."

Faith, when it comes, is the divine gift with which God, in sovereign mercy, is pleased to enrich the impoverished soul into which He comes, that He may work in you that motion of the soul, that outgoing of all the soul's capacities toward God, that will enable you at last to trust Him and become a believer.

This Canaanitish woman is a type, a representative, of the irreligious, the godless, multitudes, who have lived as though there were no God at all; and yet in one of life's emergencies, by divine mercy, is driven to the feet of Him Who is the only Helper of needy men. Do not despair, my friends, though as yet you have not believed. Faith sprung up in the heart of this Canaanitish woman, and it was a faith of an unusual order, of an unusual vigor. So may it be with you.

II.

Then I may further say that FAITH VERY OFTEN OWES ITS ORIGIN TO THE PRESSURE OF AN URGENT NEED. I suppose very few come to God for any other reason than to find help. I suppose there are very few when the summer sun is shining, and the birds are singing, and all of life presents the aspect of a beautiful June morning, there are comparatively few who in such circumstances, come humbly to the feet of the Saviour. But oh, we shall not have fared far along the highway of life until we shall find ourselves footsore and weary; we shall not have lived very many of life's days without discovering that life is not always summer, golden, bright, and glad. There are the cloudy and dark days; there are the days of difficulty, the day of burden-bearing, the days of many besetments, of many assaults; there are days when everything seems to go awry, and life becomes a tangled skein which we cannot unravel. It comes to us through our business and through our social relations, sometimes as a matter of physical health, and sometimes into the family circle, so that one has to cry like this woman that someone is grievously vexed with a devil.

I do not know who it is that disturbs the family circle if it is not the devil. Somebody does. Somebody manages to get into the home who has not been given a latch key. How he gets there I cannot tell. How many there are who hear me to-night, whose chief burden, notwithstanding the depression, is not in the business realm; it is not in that sphere where people have to consider the

matter of making ends meet—the question, as we sometimes say, of bread and butter. I remember speaking to a woman of large wealth—she may be listening to me to-night, I do not know. When I spoke to her of these things she said to me, "O Mr. Shields, money is nothing; it has no value when these deeper experiences touch the soul." When a daughter or son, or a wife or husband, is grievously vexed with a devil, when someone gets beyond the reach of reason, when you cannot argue, when you can do nothing at all to restore the peace of the domestic realm, what a hell on earth it becomes for mother or father, or husband or wife, or children, as the case may be! But very often just such emergencies drive men to the feet of Christ. When every other resource has failed then do men bethink them of the One so often despised and rejected, and wonder whether after all there may be some help found in God.

Thus when the storm breaks at sea, and the ship seems likely to founder, when men are far from all possibilities of rescue, do godless men take the name of God upon their lips and cry out in their extremity for mercy and for help. Thus, too, sometimes, when men have proved the failure and vanity of all things under the sun, like the preacher of Ecclesiastes, they can say Amen to his pessimism: "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity." Do not laugh at that too lightly; do not say that the man was not speaking the truth. You may come there after you have planted gardens, and have had all manner of instruments of music. You remember how the preacher recites what he had accomplished with his silver and his gold, with his wealth, with his army of servants, with his beautiful surroundings—when he had measured all that the world could give, he passed judgment upon it all, and said, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

It may be that some people are more easily touched by the loss of possessions than even by their domestic tragedies. It may be that a new-made grave in the cemetery does not trouble you so much as a deficit in the bank. God help you if that is the sort of man you are! But even you may find mercy if only you are brought to the feet of Christ. If some man who has lived for this world finds that the world has slipped away from him, and he is all but stripped of his possessions—and what thousands there are in this day reduced to the direst need, perhaps—Oh, I wonder are you going to learn to pray?

"When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

Whatever your need, you may come to God. It is well that we should come from high and holy motives, I know; it is well that we should set our desires upon a life of holiness. But I fear—nay, I do not fear: I know that if that were the prime condition, if that were the *sine qua non* of our acceptance with God, there would not be one of us here a Christian to-night:

"I can but perish if I go
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away I know
I must forever die."

"An unworthy motive", you say? Yes; but never mind, I do not care what the motive, neither does God if only you will come: "Him that cometh to me", said He, "I will in no wise cast out." If you have a worthy motive, let it bring you; but I greatly suspect that there is no such motion within you driving you Godward; but if your

motive be of the meanest order, if you would come for no other purpose than just to find some sort of relief; if your choice is between the vexatious assaults of the devil on the one hand and the mercy of a holy God on the other, then I beg you, run from the devil to God! That was the case here. This woman came because her choice, after all, in the last analysis, was between God and the devil; and she chose God. Praise be to His name! She came, driven by her urgent need; but she came to Jesus.

III.

What is faith? FAITH INVOLVES A CERTAIN SPIRITUAL INTUITION. We attempt very often to define things that cannot be defined, things which defy definition. When you get home to-night take a pen and paper and try to define this subtle something which we call electricity. Tell me what it is. And then submit your definition to experts and see if they approve. Perhaps some expert listens to me to-night, who knows all about electricity. He knows so much about it that he has at last reached the conclusion that he does not know anything—and he is making real advancement when he arrives at that decision. What do we know about faith? What do we, who are believers, know about faith? We do not know anything about it. We know when we have it. Let me say this to you: do not allow yourself to be shut up by legalistic minds to exact definitions of things. I am not averse to definitions. A man's ability to define the terms he uses very often indicates the degree of the clarity of his own thinking. Many people use terms they do not understand. When we speak of faith we know in part what it means. We know specially from the word of God what it means in part, and we know from our own experience what it means. But faith is something that is wrought in the soul by God: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Faith is vastly more than—well, a rational thing, than something that can be reasoned from premise to conclusion. Salvation does not lie, nor deliverance of any kind, at the end of a syllogism. There is nothing that so disturbs and distresses me as a doctrinaire, a mere theorist, somebody who thinks that everything there is in the Christian religion can be shut up to a mathematical definition, who would come to me with square and compass and say, "Unless you subscribe to this or that or the other thing, you do not believe." I say to you that we may subscribe to a thousand things that are perfectly orthodox, and perfectly evangelical, and yet not believe.

Faith in its ultimate out-working brings the very light of heaven into the soul, even as faith is born of the light and illuminating power of the Spirit of God. But faith is something vastly more than a principle which may be shut up to an exact verbal definition. If you had asked this woman why she believed in Christ, she could not have told you. If you had asked her clearly to expound this thing that was in her, that led her to pray, she could not have told you. But she was a believer of the truest kind. She had never been to Sunday School—there were none. I suppose she had never been to a synagogue,—I do not suppose they would have let her in. She had never been inside the temple; but she believed God with a faith that could match the faith of Abraham. What was it? It was something that was kindled in her soul by the touch of the Spirit of God.

Oh you Calvinists! Do you know what Calvinism means? I do not care whether you do or not. But you who say you believe in the total depravity of human nature, for instance,—I have been forced to believe in that so far as I myself am concerned, and I fear you are not much better. Any man who can be a Pastor of a Christian church over a term of years, and not be convinced that human nature is a pretty bad thing—well, he must be deficient in intellectual capacity, at least; and utterly untrained in the faculty of observation. There is abundant proof of that doctrine. But do you not see what its inevitable corollary is? If it be so, that we are like that Canaanitish woman, dead, with no religion, naturally—we shall never have any until God puts it in us. I believe in the divine spark—after God has kindled it! ("Amen!") But I do not believe there is any divine spark until He has kindled it.

This apparently indifferent Prophet of Nazareth knew what was in that woman's heart, and He knew that she would persist until she got her prayer answered; He was not in any doubt about it. I am sure that the moment that cry smote upon His ear, "O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil", He knew that that was the illustration of what the Psalmist said long ago: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord". I have heard that they can broadcast from the depths of the sea; I have heard that they can hear a message shut up in a submarine. I know this, that the human soul cannot sink to so low a depth that it cannot cry out, and make its voice to be heard in heaven, God's dwelling place.

This woman had heard of Jesus, and mark this, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." But faith is something more than hearing, for thousands hear who never have faith. A judge upon the bench listens to the evidence submitted in a difficult case. On one side there may be a dozen witnesses, and they all tell the same tale. They are all positive; they are so exact that it sounds as though they had agreed together, though perhaps it is demonstrated that they have not, and that there is no collusion. But they tell their story. And there is one lone witness on the other side, and the judge, with his experience of men, believes the one, or the two, against the dozen. What is it? I know men may be mistaken, but what is it that leads you to believe in a man? A dear brother came to me the other day to tell me something about himself. I did not know him; and he took out of his pocket a lot of credentials. I said, "My dear fellow, credentials are of no value; they do not mean anything." A lot of people come to me with pockets full, and I don't read them. It is a good thing to know that a man has been faithful in a certain position for so long, but a man might be faithful for twenty years in one position, and be a scoundrel notwithstanding. No; faith is not born of credentials. I have no doubt this Canaanitish woman had heard much about Jesus; I have no doubt she had heard about His helping and blessing a great many people. But that was not wholly why she believed. She came just to see Him; and—mark you—it was not until she saw Him, it was not until she came into His presence that she really prayed. What she had heard of Jesus led her to come to Him; but what she learned of Him in His own immediate presence led her to pray to Him. I tell you, if only a man will come to Christ, I do not care how he comes, I do not care why he comes, what motive brings him, or what urgent need

drives him, if only he will come, the Lord will look after him when he comes. If he will actually come, if he will say in his heart, "I am going to get through to God; I am going to God", if only he will come to Christ, the Lord will work in Him that faith that will bring the blessing, if he has faith enough to lead him to come, that is all.

I shall not discount correct opinion, I shall not discount the value of precise theories. I think there is a science of theology, as well as a philosophy; I think there are some things which may be defined in part. But you remember what the Apostle said, We "know in part"; but, blessed be God, we *know* in part. We do not know as we shall know; we cannot define our faith at the moment, and this is not a definition: it is only an attempt at it, and only as God the Spirit awakens the sleeping soul will you be able to say, Amen, to it—about as near to a definition of faith as I have been able to get is this: Faith is the response of an illuminated, quickened, soul to God's disclosure of Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ. ("Amen!")

I have heard of a man, but I do not know much about him, except by the hearing of the ear. But I meet him, and I talk with him, and there is something in the personality of the man; there is something beyond his speech, beyond the glance of his eye, beyond his physical appearance, beyond his record, beyond all that I have ever heard of him—when I see him there is something in that personality that communicates itself to me, and I trust him, or I do not trust him; or perhaps he is a bit of an enigma, and I say, "In spite of all the evidence I am forced to the conclusion that all the doors are not open, and that there is more in that man than has been communicated. I had better keep him at a distance." But my friends, when the naked soul does actually come into the presence of God as this woman came into the presence of Jesus Christ, her heart crying out for help, all of life put into that one anguished cry of a bleeding soul—when she came into the presence of Him Who was Incarnate Deity, she felt what she could not say: "I have come to the right place"; just as did Nathaniel when he said to Jesus, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

Gladly, if I could, would I help you to an understanding of the way of salvation! Gladly, if I could, would I explain more perfectly what it is to believe. But the principle I am trying to emphasize this evening is this, that no soul is really saved, or really delivered by the mighty power of God, until that soul does actually come to God and prays for himself or herself. And to come into the divine presence really will mean that God will work faith in the soul.

IV.

What discouragements this woman had! Her's was A FAITH THAT SURVIVED THE NIGHT OF DIVINE SILENCE! "He answered her not a word." He did not argue with her; He did not rebuke her: He just went on as though He had not heard her; made absolutely no response. Do you know what it is to pray like that? Do you know what it is to register your prayer before God for some needed deliverance, and to have in your soul the conviction that it has entered into the ear of the Lord God of Sabaoth? You know that He heard you. Some people in prayer meeting say, "Thou art the hearer and answerer of prayer". The Bible does not say that

in so many words; and it is quite superfluous. What the Psalmist said was, "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." Never mind the answer; leave that to God. Make sure that your prayer is heard on high. That is what you need. This woman had no doubt that Jesus had heard her. I am sure of that. She followed on after Him though He made no answer.

Do you know what it is thus to trust God, just to pray in His presence, and to say, "Sometime, out of the silence, I shall hear Him; some day, some how, He will make bare His arm for my deliverance." How often must we pray when there is no answer! I remember reading a story of the great George Muller of Bristol. In an address delivered by himself he told a company of his brethren, when he himself was then past ninety years of age, that he had just that day had a wonderful answer to prayer. He said that more than sixty years before he began to pray for the conversion of two men, and he had offered that prayer daily for sixty years, and had seen no indication whatever of their turning to God. But only that day he received word that one of them had been soundly converted—an old man, after sixty years of waiting while in respect to that matter Jesus gave him no answer. Then I read later that when the body of George Muller was laid in the grave, among those who stood about that grave was the other old man for whom George Muller had prayed. And as he saw the casket of that godly man lowered into its dark bed, his heart broke, and he, too, yielded himself to Jesus Christ.

"He answered her not a word." Will you stop praying because you did not receive an answer to-day, or because you have not received it for a longer time than that? I remember a woman who prayed for her husband for thirty years, and the Lord had never answered her. He did not even go to church with her. I tried to offer her some encouragement. But I lived to see the day when that man did come to church, and when, by the mighty power of God, his heart was broken. He was an ex-hotel keeper, and one of the worst men in the neighbourhood; but he did really come to the feet of Christ, and God had mercy upon him.

But there is another thing that is far more trying than the silence of God, and that is *the speech of His disciples*. The disciples were there, and they said to Jesus, "Send her away." Now you who hear me to-night, not only in this building but over the air, bear me witness if this be not true. Many church members there are who listen to-night, in whose life prayer is not really a vital factor; great churches in this city counting their membership by thousands, and not a handful go to the prayer meeting. There are thousands of people in this city who are members of churches who never join in the collective ministry of intercession.

I do not know whether it is true or not, but I heard a story a few years ago of a particular church in the city. When the pastor made the announcements, having completed the list he resumed his seat, and as the ushers were moving down the aisles to take the collection, he rose again and said, "There is another announcement I had almost forgotten, the janitor and I will hold our usual prayer meeting on Wednesday evening!" That is better than some churches do, because they do not even require the presence of the janitor, or the minister, Wednesday, or any other evening.

Oh, how conventional religion has perverted the religion of Jesus Christ! How many there are who would

be greatly disturbed if a woman this evening were to go into some respectable church assembly and, wringing her hands, stand in the aisle and cry, "Oh, preacher, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil! Won't you all pray for her?" Some polite usher would walk down the aisle, take her by the arm, and show her the door! And perhaps the minister would ask, "Is there a doctor present?" or, "Is there a nurse here who will look after this poor demented soul?" Why, my dear friends, the doing of the very things that men and women did when Christ was here in the days of His flesh, is looked upon to-day as an evidence of fanaticism. God be thanked for the depression, or for anything else that drives men to the feet of Christ, and teaches the professed disciples of Jesus that that is what He came for!

"Send her away; for she crieth after us." You have heard the story of the coloured man up in the gallery of a church, who, when the preacher waxed warm, occasionally ejaculated, "Hallelujah"; "Amen"; "Praise the Lord!" Somebody went up to him, and said, "What are you doing here? You must not make a noise like that. What is the matter with you?" "Why," said the coloured man, "Praise the Lord, I am getting religion." "Well," said the man, "get out of this. This is no place to get religion." And that is true in many churches to-day. You may have culture; you may have learning; but you cannot point a poor bankrupt, ruined soul the way to a God Who will listen to the cry of the needy. Away with you, you professed disciples of Jesus! Do not stand in the way of the earnest suppliant. Do not say a word, or do a thing, to prevent a needy soul from coming to Christ.

True faith will not be discouraged by divine rebukes. What a story this is! There are people who hear me to-night who went to church with a great sorrow in your heart. You went last Sunday somewhere, and you came home, and said, "I am not going any more." Your wife said, "Why not?" "I got no help. I do not know what the man talked about, but apparently he did not know there were needy people anywhere. I did not hear a word that would help me to come, even limping, to the place where mercy can be found. I do not think it is of any use to go." Do not become cynical, my friend, because the disciples have sent you away. I have known, oh so many who have gone to their minister when their souls have been bleeding, when their hearts have been broken. The minister ought to have been able to quote to them that precious passage: "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise"; instead of that he said, "Oh well, I think you are unnecessarily troubled. If I were you I would find some diversion. Just go and play a bit; try to forget it." There are many people who have reached the conclusion that there is nothing in religion. And there is not if the Spirit of God has not touched you. But if the Spirit of God has touched you, you will push your way past the disciples. When the disciples said, "Send her away; for she crieth after us", she cried, "Lord, help me!" Then at last the Master broke His silence, and He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

A minister told me of his difficulties only last week in a certain place, and of how one of the officials in the church said he had never preached on anything but sin since he had gone to them, and they did not like that. I do not suppose they did, although I dare say they needed it, as most people do. But to be called a dog! Who wants to be called a dog? That is not polite, you know.

But she was one of the Gentile dogs, according to the view of this specially religious race, and she heard Jesus say, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That is My special mission". And here is one who is outside the pale, just one of the dogs. She said in effect: "Lord, I do not care what Thou dost call me. Call me a dog. I expect I am, and worse than that. Call me a sinner; I have no doubt I am, and worse than that. Call me anything Thou wilt, but oh, is it not true that the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table? Canst Thou not give me just a little crumb? I may not be as highly privileged as these, Thy disciples; I may not know as much about Thy holy word; I may not live as becomingly as they have lived; but I am in desperate need. My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil, and if Thou art what they say Thou art, the Son of God, the Son of David, I cannot believe that Thou wilt deny me at least a crumb."

That is your trouble, my friend. You are too much like Naaman about whom I spoke a few weeks ago, who said, "I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. I did not think he would send out a servant to me; and tell me what to do, and never even say, 'How do you do?'"

Some years ago when we had a campaign in Massey Hall there was a certain business man of the city there. I can see him now, a very important man, with his waxed moustache. Someone was seeking Christ, and this "business man" turned to this person of humble position, and said to him, "If I, a business man, occupying my position, can come to Christ, do you not think you ought to do so?" Then to me he said, "Do you not think so, Mr. Shields?" I said, "No; I do not. The Lord does not care tuppence about your being a business man. The only kind of man he receives is a poor, guilty, hell-deserving sinner. If you are that I expect you have accepted Christ: if you are not, what does Heaven care about a business man?"

That is the trouble with some of you who hear me to-night. You would not come to Jarvis Street Church because we do not pay sufficient deference to business men. Within these walls we make no difference between the man of millions, and the one who has not a cent. This church exists to proclaim Jesus Christ to anyone and everyone. If you will come as sinners you will find the Saviour. And true faith will accept that. Can you stand it? Can you take what the Bible says, that all your name, all your influence, all your splendid character, all your almsgiving, all your religious profession, all your saying of prayers, every good thing that you have ever thought or done from the beginning of your life until now, are all weighed in the balances, and are not only vanity, but worse than vanity—just filthy rags? Do you know what ought to be done with them? Put them in the furnace. You are a poor ragged, hell-deserving sinner, sitting yonder in your comfortable home listening to me to-night, and if you put all the millions of Ford and Rockefeller and all the rest of them together, they are not worth a penny; nothing but the blood of Jesus can avail to cancel your soul's indebtedness. Will you come to Him? If you will come like this woman you shall have this greatest of all rewards: "Great is thy faith; be it, unto thee even as thou wilt." Your soul shall be saved even from this hour, and you shall go out possessed of the gift of eternal life. "And they shall never

perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Let us ask Him:

O Lord, we beseech Thee, bless this simple meditation this evening. Bless these elementary things to our soul's good. Thou art God, and beside Thee there is none else. Shine into the hearts of men as Thou didst shine out of darkness in the beginning: as Thou didst command the light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. May many who have heard this service by radio this evening bow in humble submission at the feet of Jesus Christ. O save the needy souls of men for Thy glory's sake, Amen.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA AS A REVELATION OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, October 27th, 1932.

Third 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.

In these Thursday evening lectures I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to avoid the discussion of theological technicalities. I do not want to weary you with matters that may perhaps, to some of you, seem to be relatively unimportant. But I must keep in mind that I am speaking on these Thursday evenings to men and women who some time are going to be Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries.

Anybody can administer a dose of medicine: take the bottle and pour it out, following the directions on the bottle of so many teaspoonfuls before or after meals—and be sure to shake before using! It does not require a very high degree of intelligence to follow such directions. If the medicine is administered by one who does not know what it is all about it may be just as effective, but the doctor who prescribes the medicine must know what is in it, and he must know why he prescribes it, and why he prescribes that instead of something else.

I grant you that we may do many things effectively without knowing why we do them. I heard the other day the story of a railroad superintendent who, assuming the duties of his position, looked over the list of men under his charge. He came upon the name of one man who had rather a remarkable record. It showed that he had never missed a single day in twenty years, and that he had never once been a moment late. The superintendent thought it was an extraordinarily fine record, and decided to send for the man. He sent for him and said, "You are Mr. So-and-So?" "Yes, sir." "I see by our records that you have not missed one day's work in twenty years." "I think that is correct, sir." "And the record also shows that you have not once been late in twenty years. Is that so?" "I think that is true too, sir." "What is your work?" "When the trains come in I go along with a hammer and knock the wheels." "What do you do that for?" The man shrugged his shoulders and said, "I do not know, sir!"

It is quite possible to drive a motor-car without knowing what happens when you move the gears, without knowing what happens when you pull out the clutch. Thousands of people drive motor-cars without the remotest idea of what takes place in the mechanism of the

engine or the transmission. But you would drive your car much better if you knew what does happen—and if you did, perhaps some things would not happen quite so frequently.

It is necessary therefore sometimes to go into the philosophy of things to know why certain things are done and said.

This evening my subject is the book of Joshua as a revelation of the divine government. I shall not take it verse by verse, but take a view of the book as a whole.

Nothing commands such general and perennial interest among men as human personality. Pick up your newspaper and you will see any evening portraits of men and women. Sometimes you wonder why they are published, for frequently there is no aesthetic reason apparent. But they are simply the portraits of men and women, representations of human personality. People are not primarily interested in things. Nor are they particularly interested in principles in the abstract. They do not care a great deal about buildings and institutions, banks and so on, but they are interested in the people who are behind all these things, and who operate them. But for the human element in all these institutions they would soon decline and pass away.

There is food for thought in that. We do not speak of the beast creation as having personality. They have individuality—if you doubt it, try to drive a particular donkey, and you will find out, or a particular horse. They are not all alike, by any means: they have individuality, they are different one from the other; but they have no personality.

When God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness", He surely did not refer to man's physical form, for God is without such form. "God is a spirit." You cannot see a spirit. From the Old Testament we learn prophetically, and from the New Testament historically, that God was pleased to manifest Himself. He manifested His power, His wisdom, certain qualities of His being in the works of His hands; but He manifested Himself in a human Personality.

I suppose we should not be wrong in saying that it was not possible for a personality to communicate himself to another personality save through the medium of a personality. So God was manifest in the flesh: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." The Old Testament anticipates the fuller revelation of the New Testament. We are concerned in our study, primarily, with learning, so far as it is possible for us to learn, what the Bible teaches about God. In general, the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, teaches that God cannot be discovered. You cannot find Him through the medium of a test-tube in a chemical laboratory. You cannot discover Him by telescope or microscope. "No man hath seen God at any time."

The challenging question is asked in the book of Job, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" That is a general statement. I have not time to quote many passages in support of it, but it is on every page of the Bible either explicitly declared or implied that you cannot find God for yourself, that God can be known only as He is pleased to disclose Himself, to reveal Himself. Heaven can communicate with earth: earth cannot, save by divine grace, communicate with Heaven. Man cannot discover God, but God can—and does—disclose Himself to man.

In earlier lectures I have asked you clearly to distinguish between Revelation and Inspiration. Revelation is that which God is pleased to reveal. By *inspiration* we mean the operation of the Spirit of God on the minds of men, by which they are divinely inspired inerrantly to record that which is revealed. Revelation has to do with the substance of that which is revealed; inspiration, with the record of the revelation.

It is at this point the whole battle between what has been called, Fundamentalism—I prefer to define it by the old term, Evangelicalism—and Modernism is joined. The question is, whether God is discoverable, and whether we may learn through science more about God and His ways than we can learn through the Bible, the divine revelation. You remember how Professor Marshall said that if the Bible and science should be in conflict, he would prefer to be guided by science; which would imply that science, even in matters relating to God, may be more authoritative than the Bible—and is only another way of saying that man can of himself more accurately discover God than God can reveal Himself to man.

In the last analysis the conflict is over the principle of revelation. The attack is made upon inspiration, upon the validity, the reliability, of the inspired record, as to whether the record is actually inspired, or is merely a human record, full of all the defects which belong to things human; or whether God did so take possession of the writers of this Book as to use them as His instruments to preserve an infallible record of that which He was pleased to reveal. But the attack upon inspiration invariably leads to an attack upon revelation, and upon the principle of revelation, upon what—I shall use, for the sake of fairness, a subjunctive form of speech for the moment, assuming we have not yet established our point,—purports to be a divine revelation. The attack is made upon the record of that which is revealed. The record is examined, and the substance of—again let me say, the alleged revelation, is called in question. Of course it is a revelation to us, but at this stage of the argument let me say, the “alleged” revelation—the attack is made on the record, on the ground of the substance of the revelation. The critics profess to find some things in the Bible which they say are incompatible with the assumption that God is thus and so.

The book of Joshua, I think, provides us with a fair field for an analysis of these principles. Let me remark, to put it in a sentence, that the fundamental difference between Evangelicals and Modernists is the difference between Revelationists and Rationalists. Evangelicals are Revelationists. We base our convictions of truth upon what God has been pleased to reveal of Himself, in what we believe to be a divinely inspired, and therefore infallible, record of that revelation. We accept it as the word of God revealed to us through holy men of God who spake “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”. Whereas Modernists say there may be much truth in the Bible, but that the standard, the norm, of all that the Bible contains is to be measured and weighed by our own reason. That which seems to be reasonably true, or which may by a rational process be demonstrated to be true, they will accept, but that which does not appeal to their reason, or—which is largely the same thing in another realm—to their moral consciousness, they reject as being untrue.

Very well. I repeat, if once you accept the principle of revelation, if once you are able to accept the principle that God can communicate Himself to His creatures, that

He can withdraw the veil, that He can make manifest to us things which we cannot discover for ourselves by any rational process, there is not much difficulty with the principle of inspiration; for if I can believe that God has revealed something which is indispensable to my moral welfare, it is not inconceivable that God should move men, by His Spirit, to write a perfectly reliable record of that which He has revealed. With these things we have to deal this evening.

Inspiration is attacked on the ground of the contents of revelation. Sometimes the critics wrap their objections in learned language, and almost smother us with their technicalities, until we get the idea that they must be very great. The philosophy of it is very simple. I have observed that comparatively few people read books to learn: they read books to find something that is in agreement with their own preconceptions. Comparatively few people listen to sermons, or any other kind of address, in order to learn something new: they listen to find confirmation of their own views. If you analyze one man's estimate of another, you discover very often that Mr. A. says, “Mr. B. is a wonderfully intelligent man, a well informed man. Mr. B. is, although not recognized as such, a great man. He thinks the same as I do!” What better credential can any man have than that he thinks the same as I do?

The Rationalist opens the Bible and says, “This is a great verse because it states what I believe.” That is not why I believe the Bible. On the contrary, I believe the Bible to be the word of God because it does not think as I do. It is manifestly the word of the Infinite because it is leagues removed from my highest thought. It says to me, “What can you, with your puny intellect, think about?” If you go to the Bible for confirmation of your own views on any subject, you will never become, in any true sense, a student; you will never learn. We must come that the Bible may speak to us.

There is an illustration of the principle in the sixty-eighth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. There is a prophecy of a time when the people of Israel will be brought into Egypt in ships. Some of the critics, examining Joshua and Deuteronomy, incline to the belief that both books were largely written by the same hand, as the style is that of the Deuteronomist. But they date Deuteronomy about the time of Manasseh, because certain prophetic verses describe conditions of about that time.

What does it involve? The denial of the possibility of prophecy. “I find conditions described in Deuteronomy which did not obtain until centuries after, therefore it could not possibly have been written at the early date ascribed to it”, says the critic. But for us who believe the Bible, we do not find it difficult of belief if Deuteronomy described conditions which obtain even in our own day.

I propose to glance at this from three points of view. I said that to-night I would speak of the book of Joshua as a revelation of the divine government. I take three elements as manifestly subject to divine authority. I pointed out to you two weeks ago—and purposely avoided going into particulars—that the book of Joshua is a *record of the fulfilment of prophecy*. The fulfilment of prophecy, in itself, is a revelation of the sovereignty of God over all human elements. God says long in advance of the time, “I will do certain things.” In order to fulfil that prophecy men and nations must be subject to Him. When His appointed time comes we find Him doing ex-

actly what He says, and we learn that men are subject to Him.

We considered in our last lecture the book of Joshua as a record of supernatural events. One of the great objections of the critics is to this prophetic element. Another is to the miraculous element. The miraculous element shows only that God, in the realm of nature, is sovereign; and that He is Governor of the material universe quite apart from His human creatures.

Another pet objection to the book of Joshua is that the record of events is a record of the operation of principles which are, in themselves, unethical; that the book of Joshua, if it be true, impugns the moral government of things; and that God could not possibly give orders that the Canaanites and other nations should be exterminated. Therefore it cannot be that this is an inspired record.

I.

Let us glance for a moment at THE FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY AS A REVELATION OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN POWER OVER MEN. Look at *the time element revealed here*. The prophecies here fulfilled are more than four hundred years old, now approaching perhaps the five hundred mark. You will remember how God made promise to Abraham, and that an horror of thick darkness came over Abraham which he could not explain. But God told him that his seed should be in bondage four hundred years, strangers in a strange land. The reason given was—and mark it well, for it belongs to another aspect of this matter we are considering—the reason was that the “iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full”. In advance God says, “It will be four hundred years before I shall begin to fulfil this prophecy which I now make to you.” And yet we find here that Joshua is divinely directed in the successful conquest of Canaan. He goes into the promised land, and at last he tells the people that not one word of all that God had spoken had failed of accomplishment.

Let me read you two or three verses, that I may give you the exact passage: “And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers, and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.” (Joshua 21:43-45).

Look at the fourteenth verse of the twenty-third chapter: “And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.” Language surely could not possibly be more explicit than that. The promise made to Abraham was fulfilled to the letter up to this time. But that is another subject which is beyond my present province.

But you will observe how this book of Joshua reveals God as a transcendent Personality upon Whom time has no effect, Who sees the end from the beginning, Who is able to speak of that which shall come to pass four hundred years hence as authoritatively as of the present, Who is able to abide His time, and Who is at last able to fulfil to the letter everything He has promised to His people. Where, outside of the Bible, can you find such a conception of God?

There is a *geographical element here*. Paul, speaking to the pagan philosophers at Athens in his marvellous address recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Acts, tried to teach them how they ought to think of God. They were not to think of Him in terms of their own limitations: “We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device”, but as One who “dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said.”

“The bounds of their habitation”, I venture to believe, refers not only to our three score years and ten, nor to the earlier span of one hundred and twenty years, but also to location. It is no accident that you are in Canada, nor that you are in this house to-night. This God is the God of all the earth. To Abraham He said, “There is a piece of land that belongs to me. I will give it to you by and by. Somebody else occupies it just now, but it is mine.” Our God is the Landlord. He is the God of all the earth. There is no ground for the idea that Israel conceived of God as being limited in interest to their own tribe. Everywhere He reveals Himself as the absolute and universal Sovereign. Hence He will bring them into the land, that they may possess it.

Observe the different nations: Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and others. They are all subject to Him. He promises the land and ultimately fulfils His word. “Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain; forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.” God is revealed as the King of nations.

The rulers said, when Jesus Christ died, “Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.” And Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.” He is not only King of the Jews: He is that, but He is King of all nations, and sovereignly disposes of them according to His holy will.

Then observe *His power over the human will, in the individual, or in the aggregate*. Go back over the years, and you see the ten spies returning from Canaan. With them are Joshua and Caleb, who say, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able.” But the remaining spies said, “We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we . . . we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.” But the Lord had said, “That is the very land I will give you, the land occupied by giants.” It seemed utterly invulnerable, and therefore invincible—but not to Him. He drove them out. He gave Israel power to possess the land, so that when Joshua was old he said, “The God Whom I trusted has not failed in one particular. He has done exactly as He said He would do.”

There is nothing that will inspire you to trust in God like reading the record of fulfilled prophecy. I know there is much in the Bible that is not yet fulfilled. I know there is a prophetic element here; but it will help you to believe in the ultimate fulfilment of even unfulfilled prophecy if you diligently study the record of prophecy already fulfilled. Here it is in Joshua, and I say, What a revelation of God is involved in that fact!

II.

Now, more briefly: GOD IS REVEALED AS SOVEREIGN OVER NATURE. In the realm of science, of course, we are laughed to scorn. We are 'old fogies', and I know not what else, if we believe in the miraculous. Of course they tell us that the literature of all peoples has legends which tell of extraordinary doings on the part of their great men, and that the Bible is only on a par with all the rest of them; that these wonders were ascribed to Moses and Joshua in order that they might be magnified in the view of the people.

The Bible is different from all other books. It recognizes the reign of law everywhere. At your leisure, when you have not a sermon to prepare, go back to Leviticus and study those laws, the hygienic system there laid down, and you will find much of it that is abreast with the most recent discoveries of science. I do not say that science is final, but there are many things in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which were far in advance of their time. And the poor creatures, when they come upon these things, say, "Somebody must have written that at a later time. People did not think like that in those days. They did not know enough to write like that in those days. They had not arrived at that stage of development. The Bible is subject to this universal law of evolution. These wonderful things that you find in the Pentateuch belong to a period years later. Give me my microscope. Joshua did not write it. Moses did not." They bring us up until after the exile.

I should believe that, too, if I did not first of all believe God. For the life of me I cannot tell you why Moses should be abreast with this day, nineteen hundred and thirty-two. I only know that he would not have been had we not a God Who, in nineteen hundred and thirty-two, is the same as when this was written. He sees all things: "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." This Book was written by One Who was contemporary with all ages. The Bible is always up-to-date. That principle later voiced in the epistle to the Galatians, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap", while not stated in so many words, is everywhere set out in the Pentateuch. No natural barriers can prevent the fulfilment of God's purposes. If Jordan at the flood is in the way, if fortified Jericho is in the way, they must be vanquished. If the day is too short for Joshua to execute judgment upon his enemies, God will give him another hour. God is at no loss to fulfil His purposes. He knows how to do it.

Here He is revealed, not in the Pantheistic sense in which God is immanent in everything, but as a personal God Who is over and above the things He has created. He dries up Jordan, He destroys Jericho, He rains hailstones on His enemies, He commands the sun to stand still. I do not know whether it is apocryphal or not, but it is said that on the field of Waterloo, on

the one side Wellington longed for the descent of night, and that on the other side Napoleon said to the sun, "What would I not give for the power of Joshua this day to retard thy march for one short hour!" But the sun went down, and for the want of "one short hour" Napoleon lost his empire. But Joshua, because the day's work was not done, by divine direction commanded the sun to stand still.

I am not an astronomer. I cannot tell you how it was done. If a miracle were explicable it would cease to be a miracle. If it is a miracle it belongs to the realm where God works without taking you and me into His confidence. The record is there, and it shows God to be above all.

Incidentally, I call your attention to a principle. When you come to a study of other religions with their alleged miracles, you will find that *the miracles of the Bible are different from any such legendary wonders*. Neither in the Old Testament nor the New did God work a miracle for the sake of doing it. You have seen boys playing, showing what they can do. God never thus plays: He always has an end in view. Why did He dry up the Jordan? Because it barred the passage of His people. Why did He destroy Jericho? For the same reason. Why did He make the sun and the moon to stand still? For exactly the same reason. God's power is exercised always for the good of His people and the glory of His own name.

III.

Then this word: the book of Joshua is A REVELATION OF THE MORAL CHARACTER OF GOD. There are those who say, I cannot accept the book of Joshua because it is unethical. There you find Joshua, allegedly by divine command, destroying men, women, and children,—allowing nobody to live. Surely the God we worship would not do that?"

Let me call your attention to the fact to which I referred a moment ago, that this consummation was predicted more than four hundred years before, and that God said, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." God revealed Himself as a longsuffering God, infinitely patient, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance". Do you know why the Lord Jesus has not come back again? We are waiting for Him, are we not? We love His appearing, do we not? If that be so, and if His coming is to bring blessing to His people, why does He not come? Peter tells us why: for the reason that He is "not willing that any should perish". He knows that His coming will be the end of all human probation, and that judgment will fall upon a wicked world. It is not that He does not want to come for us, but He delays His coming for the same reason that God postponed the entrance of Israel into Canaan. He said, "I will give them another four hundred years, until their iniquity is full. Then I will visit them."

God is not revealed in Joshua as an absolutely ruthless despot, but as a longsuffering God. With the book before you, Joshua himself being a type of the Lord Jesus, the revelation of the Old Testament is in agreement with the revelation of the New: He is a longsuffering and infinitely patient God.

I remind you of two or three historical examples of the same principle. Look at the Antediluvian world. What does the New Testament say about that? That was a

terrible judgment, when everybody was destroyed but eight souls, who were saved by water. Challenge the morality of that if you will. What does the New Testament say about it? "The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." Why did not the Lord prepare the ark over night? He could have commanded, and it would have been done. Why take one hundred and twenty years to do it? He was longsuffering. He said, "You will be in plenty of time, Noah, if you have the ark ready one hundred and twenty years from now. I will wait a little longer."

The other example is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Angel Who tarried at Abraham's tent actually went down into Sodom itself, confiding in Abraham, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." It is a story too terrible to relate, but it is but a prediction and prophecy of the Cross, for God wrapped Himself in flesh and came down to see whether sin was the hellish thing it seemed to be. And when God was manifest in the flesh, sin killed Him. That is what sin is, a protest against the divine government, against the moral order of things.

Who is to reign? What is this but a revelation of God's taking to Himself His great power and exercising it? And though later history, in the biblical record itself, reveals it to be true, an enlightened mind will discern that as God visited the enemies in Canaan, He will visit the enemies of men. And the Lord Jesus, our Joshua, the Lamb, shall make war with them, and shall overcome them.

There is a parallel in nature. There is a marvellous balance in nature. Men would upset it if they could, but they have not learned to do it yet. They have tried it. They have imported to some country an animal that did not belong to it—and wished they had not, like the rabbits in Australia. Left where they are, they maintain their own balance.

The Lord said to the children of Israel, "The Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little; thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee." It is a parable of life. God always does that.

You have Canaan at last as a moral plague spot. Read Leviticus, and see how God prepared His people morally for the land to which they were going, how He warned them not to fall into the habits of the people whom He would drive out before them. Somewhere there is a smallpox scare, and the city is put under strict quarantine. You cannot go into the place, nor leave it, without being vaccinated. There is much in this antitoxin principle. Read the book of Leviticus. It is a sort of moral vaccination clinic, where these principles are being injected into the people, as though God would say, "Take that, so that it will make you proof against these evils into which you are going." What a terrible land it was!

You do not call a surgeon cruel when he cuts off a gangrenous foot, do you? Years ago I was in a surgeon's office, a kindly man but gruff, a marvellously skilful man. The nurse called him to the telephone, and I heard one end of the conversation. "No, John. I cannot do it to-day . . . I know . . . I know it is urgent, but I cannot do

it to-day, John." Afterward he said to me—and do not be shocked—"Some poor devil wants me to chop his leg off." "What do you mean?" I enquired. "He must have an amputation." It was a Chinaman, by the way. Why did he want a leg off? Because he had one too many? No! Because one would be better than none! He wanted one off to save the other, and his life as well.

God looks out upon the world, not in little geographical circles, saying, "I must look after Palestine." God has regard for the whole world. Nor can He choose your particular day and generation. You have heard the definition of an optimist, have you not? He is a man who does not care what happens so long as it does not happen to him! And a pessimist is a man who has lived too long with an optimist! There are people who say, "What do we care for posterity? We shall not be here. We care nothing for the future so long as we escape the plague, and get along. If we and our children are safe, why worry about the future?"

I heard of a township council holding the last meeting before election. One member of the council, when a particular subject was under discussion—rather an ignorant man, as you will readily recognize—said, "I move that we leave this matter to our ancestors"! What he really meant was that they would pass it on to their successors.

That is the way some people do. That is the way some earthly governments govern. They say, "We shall be here for only a little while. We will make the best of it while here, and let our successors clear up what we leave behind."

Not thus does this Governor of the universe. He is not limited to time, nor locality. He is a King for ever. Therefore He must rule the world with due regard to its moral welfare, not for a little while, but for all time. Seeing a plague spot like this, the divine Surgeon determined upon an operation, and He used Israel as the instrument to perform it, saying, "Go and blot it out." "Women and children?" Why not? "Oh, but the women!" Are all women angels? "And the children?" Yes! It is not given to you or me to decide: we have not judgment enough for that. Deny the principle of divine revelation, and it would all be wrong. But assuming God to have spoken to Joshua, he does exactly what God told him. Then it was eminently right.

I told the class Monday night of reading a report given by an expert criminologist, who traced the history of certain criminals back to one pair of parents. It was established that between five and six hundred criminals, with jail records, many of whom had been hanged for capital offences, had been the direct progeny of one man and one woman.

Thus does evil propagate itself. So God cut that out of the body—I will not say, out of the body politic, out of a particular nation, but out of the world, by sending Israel in with a new principle.

The curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary is designed to assist you in an understanding of God's Word, and in your study of history you will find that the men of the Bible, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, were all men who lived in advance of their time because of the principles divinely communicated to them.

I have spoken much too long—but I will not look at my watch if you will not look at yours.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

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Lesson 46

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FOURTH QUARTER.

THE SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF ISRAEL.

Lesson Text: Joshua 11, 13, Deut. 27.

Golden Text: "But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: The Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them."—Joshua 13:33.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—2 Sam. 8:1-13.

Tuesday—Ex. 23:26-33.

Wednesday—Ps. 82:1-8.

Thursday—1 John 3:1-10.

Friday—2 Pet. 1:1-11.

Saturday—2 Tim. 4:1-8.

I. THE LAND CONQUERED, (11:1-23).

In their advance into the land of Canaan in a northerly direction the Israelites were again confronted with a league of nations, formed for the purpose of staying their progress and bringing defeat to their arms. This league was more powerful than the former one, and better equipped for battle. Its numbers, according to Josephus, amounted to three hundred thousand infantry, ten thousand cavalry, and twenty thousand war chariots. This was no mean force with which to contend, and possibly the Israelites would be somewhat affected by their power, particularly at the thought of the horses and chariots. They had no means of combatting these on an equal footing, and their enemies were encamped at the waters of Merom, or Lake Huleh, where they would be able to use them freely and with telling effect. It would seem as if the enemy possessed the advantage in equipment and position; and generally this is the case when the Lord's people are engaged in conflict. But this need not discourage those who are serving God, for victory depends not on human resources, but on the power of God. It is not by man's might but by the Spirit of God, (Zech. 4:6).

Whether the Israelites became discouraged by the power arrayed against them we know not, but it is significant that the Lord gave Joshua a most encouraging message, (v. 6). First, instructing him not to be afraid because of those enemies. The fear of man bringeth a snare, (Prov. 9:25) dissipating courage, and weakening resistance to evil, and such a condition is inimical to the proper carrying on of the Lord's work. It was quite easily understood therefore that He should seek to dispel fear with its paralyzing effects, and instil trust with its encouraging stimulus. (Is. 12:2; Prov. 3:5, 6). It should be noted that the children of God have no reason to fear anyone. God is for them, and no one can stand against them, (Rom. 8:31), and in Him they are more than conquerors, (Rom. 8:37). The lesson would therefore be to trust Him more. No matter how powerful the opposing forces may be they are as nothing in the sight of God, and will speedily be cut down before Him. Such a victory was promised to Israel, the enemy would

be delivered up, slain before them, and they were instructed to hough their horses, cutting the sinews and arteries of their rear legs, and burn their chariots with fire. It is clear, therefore, that the victory was not to be due to their own prowess, but to the power of God. Without Him the issue would be in grave doubt, with disaster staring them in the face, but with Him the result was sure, just as in the case of the Christian who without Christ can do nothing, (John 15:5), but who through Him can do all things, (Phil. 4:13).

The victory promised Israel through Joshua was of a complete nature, entailing the slaughter of their enemies, but it was conditioned on obedience to the divine commands. The Israelites must march against the foe and take part in the battle. There are many these days who expect the Lord to give the victory in their absence. They decline to suffer in His cause, or even to be inconvenienced thereby, and yet they complain about the slow progress of the work. It should be noted that conflict, either of a physical or spiritual nature, entails self-sacrifice, suffering, hardship, danger, and diligent and faithful work. The Lord desires persons to work with Him who will deny self, take up the cross and follow Him, (Matt. 16:24), persons who without fear of consequences will wholeheartedly cooperate with Him, (2 Cor. 6:1), in the great conflict with evil. For such there is a reward here in the fellowship and blessing of God, and hereafter in the crown which will adorn their brow to the glory of God, (2 Tim. 4:8).

II. THE NAMES OF THE KINGS OVERCOME BY ISRAEL, (12:1-24).

It is helpful at times to review the victories gained in order that we may be encouraged to continue our efforts for further victory. The Israelites had gained many victories, and much territory had come into their possession, and a list of their conquered enemies is given in this chapter, first, of those overcome under the leadership of Moses, (vs. 1-6), followed by the thirty-one smitten by Joshua, (vs. 7-24). It must have been encouraging to the people of God to know that these enemies were of the past, that their power was broken and their territory in possession of Israel. Where the way was rough and the fighting tough and somewhat discouraging, it would give them confidence in God concerning their future success, and impress them with the fact that progress had been made. It is helpful these days to note the victories gained, the enemies overcome, and the territory possessed. We are so apt to dwell on the difficulties of the way, and the enemies we have yet to meet. Let us count our blessings and not our troubles, and go forward to greater victories trusting in God. If the way is somewhat difficult at present, let us not become discouraged, difficulties are but stimulants to brave men, while hindrances to cowards, and are to be expected in times of conflict. Victory as assured to those who trust in God, and obey His will, therefore let us press on with Him.

III. THE LAND YET TO BE

POSSESSED, (13:1-33).

Notwithstanding the fact that Israel had fought hard and long, and that much

territory had been taken from the enemy, there remained much land yet to be possessed. A description of this land is given, (vs. 1-6), and Joshua is instructed to divide it along with that in their possession, (vs. 7-33). The land yet to be possessed was the whole country of the Philistines, extending about sixty miles along the Mediterranean coast, that of the Geshurites to the south of it, (1 Sam. 27:8), and in the north, part of the mountainous region of Upper Galilee from Sidon to the Lebanons. This was quite an extent of territory yet to be possessed, but owing to the disobedience of Israel the enemy was never fully driven therefrom, although becoming subject later, and for a time, to Israel's rulers. It is worthy of note to observe that Israel's possession of the land depended on their obedience to the commands of God, (Deut. 11:22-32). They brought much misery upon themselves by their disobedience, and lost power thereby, being from time to time set aside by God in manifestation of His disapproval, their enemies gaining the victory over them, and bringing them into bondage, (Judges 2:14, 15), just as in these days God makes known His disapproval of His children on account of their sin, by depriving them of power in His service, (1 Cor. 9:27).

It is worthy of further note that the Israelites were compelled to fight practically every inch of the way in their conquest of Canaan. With the exception of the Gibeonites the enemy did not submit tamely to be overcome by the invaders. Every spot the sole of their foot tread upon became the possession of Israel, but it meant real conflict for them. And in these days the enemy is equally stubborn and more powerful, and for continuous conflict we must be prepared. This need not worry or discourage us however, as victory is assured and possession of the spiritual territory keeps pace with the victories gained. The church has made progress through conflict, first with the Jews, then with the Romans, and afterwards with other enemies, religious and secular. In these days the fight is with erroneous teaching and wrong living and each faithful child of God will not hesitate to take a part in the struggle. Individually there is also a conflict, with the world, the flesh, and the devil being in the opposition.

The teaching concerning the land yet to be possessed may be applied individually and collectively. To the children of God there has been given a great possession, entered into by faith, but enjoyed only as possessed. They are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (Eph. 1:3), and in Him they are seated in those places, (Eph. 2:6). The full import of these statements cannot be comprehended by the finite mind, but they at least signify great blessing, in this life, as well as in that to come. How much of such blessing do we now enjoy? There is surely much ground yet to be possessed. Collectively it may be applied to the work of the churches world-wide, or to that of the local church, both aspects emphasizing the same thought of much land yet to be possessed. Note the need for advance and for true soldiers of the cross, (2 Tim. 3, 4).