

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c. Per Single Copy.

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

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Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 11. No. 36

TORONTO, JANUARY 19, 1933

Whole No. 557

Rev. Wm. Fraser on the Oxford Group

(The following article is taken from the Border Cities Star, Windsor, of the 4th of January, 1933. Rev. Wm. Fraser is well known to many of our readers, as he was associated with the Editor of this paper as Secretary-Assistant for nine years. We have had no opportunity of discussing the Oxford Movement with Mr. Fraser, but were delighted with his able criticism of the teachings of the Oxford Group. The Editor of this paper is announced to speak on the subject of the Oxford Group teachings in Jarvis Street Church this evening, and the address will appear in next week's "Gospel Witness." Ed. G.W.)

The recent invasion of Canada by a new religious movement, operating under the name of the "Oxford Group", has attracted widespread interest on the part of the public, the press, and the Christian Church, resulting in much discussion and confusion concerning the respective merits or demerits of the said movement. Multitudes of Christian people are rather at a loss to know what to think of it; and large numbers are inquiring for enlightenment and counsel as to what attitude should be adopted by the churches toward the Oxford Movement.

Since it is the distinctive function, as well as the peculiar prerogative of the Christian minister carefully to examine the claims and teachings of religious leaders and movements which appeal directly or indirectly to the members of the Christian church, in order that he may properly safeguard them from the scourge of false teachers and the ravages of wolves in sheep's clothing who are ever attempting to "creep in unawares" and "speak perverse things to draw away disciples after them", we therefore desire to discharge our duty in this particular as it relates to the principles and practices of this new movement.

The scriptures warn us in many places that the last days are to be specially characterized by ever-increasing efforts within and without the church, on the part of false teachers, false prophets, and seducing spirits. They also predict that such efforts and movements will meet with considerable success as "many shall follow their pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." We are also told that "Satan himself will be transformed into an angel of light, and therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also are transformed as ministers of righteousness."

In view of these scriptural predictions and warnings, let no one say we are raising unnecessary fears or sounding false alarms because we have these things in mind, and keep a sharp lookout and exercise a constant vigilance against their first approach, that we may be able faithfully

to warn the flock "over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers" against these subtle and destructive forces.

Two things must be recognized as fundamental and axiomatic in the examination of any religious teacher or movement. First, we must accept the scriptures as the final court of appeal in all matters of faith and practice. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20). Secondly, the gospel of the grace of God as revealed in Christ Jesus is absolutely final and authoritative, and we are admonished to hold it so firmly that "if even an angel from heaven preached any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8).

We have accordingly given ourselves impartially and conscientiously to a careful and comprehensive study of the principles and practices of the Oxford Movement on the occasion of its recent visit to Detroit, hoping all the while that it might prove to be the instrument of God to bring about the spiritual awakening and revival that are so urgently needed, and for which thousands of Christian people the world over are earnestly praying.

We attended a number of their meetings for the public, for ministers, and for business men. We also obtained and carefully studied a number of their official publications, and engaged in several lengthy conversations with a number of their leaders, with the express purpose of ascertaining as accurately as possible a thorough appreciation and understanding of the movement.

Having thus studied the movement, we feel reasonably sure of being in a position fairly to appraise its aims and purposes, and therefore desire to give to the members of our church, and any others who may be interested, the benefits of our findings as to the real character of this new movement.

We propose to give ten reasons to show why the "Oxford Group" is unscriptural, unsound, and unsafe.

1—It is pre-eminently a class movement which discriminates against the poor and caters particularly to the rich. In fact, there is little or no room for the poor at their "house parties", where the initial efforts are made to secure most of their converts.

Some will immediately seek to defend this partiality, by citing similar efforts peculiarly designed to reach the poor such as the Salvation Army and the various rescue missions. In no sense, however, can it be said that the rich were discriminated against by these, as many of the richest and most cultured people have taken active part in such movements, as well as being reached by their ministry. We have said it is unscriptural, and therefore cite the proof as found in James 2:1-9.

"My brethren, have not the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs to the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

2—"Sharing" as taught and practised by the Group is not only without Scriptural warrant, but on the contrary is definitely forbidden in Scripture.

In a pamphlet issued by the Oxford Group, and written by J. P. Thornton Duesbery, fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on the subject of "Sharing" we find an interpretation of First John 1:3, which is made the basis of this fundamental doctrine and practice of the Oxford Group. While admitting it to be cleverly written and also most ingenious, it is, nevertheless, one of the most subtle forms of false teaching, and flagrant violations of every sound principle of Biblical exegesis, we have ever read, resulting in a grotesque and perverted view of the passage which it undertakes to expound. The passage of Scripture in question reads:

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3).

The writer goes on to state that "John makes abundantly plain in the chapter we have just quoted, such power and fellowship are only possible after an honest dealing with sin has issued in repentance and forgiveness." At this point the subtlety of the movement is detected, for the writer goes on in a desperate but futile effort to prove that the fellowship referred to in this passage is a fellowship based on our mutual confession of past sins and wickedness, one to the other.

Not by the wildest stretch of imagination does John lay down a basis for fellowship in the mutual confession of our sins and wickedness, but as is clearly stated in the two preceding verses, this fellowship is the result of our mutual knowledge and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, thus making it a fellowship of light, whereas the other is a fellowship of darkness. Our Scripture proof which forbids "sharing" as practised by the Oxford Group is found in Ephesians 5:3-12.

"But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you as becometh saints. . . . Be not ye partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: Walk as children of light; For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."

On the other hand the Scriptures teach that "if we confess our sins (to God) he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It is clearly seen from this verse that confession is made to God direct, but not to one another, as no one but God can cleanse us.

One of the outstanding confessions of sin in the Bible is that of David the Psalmist, recorded in the 51st Psalm. While the sin referred to here involved him in lying, adultery, and murder, the Psalmist says: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."

In another passage in James we are told to confess our faults one to another, which is clearly understood in the light of Matt. 5:23, 24, that if we have wronged others we should go to them and put matters right between them and ourselves; but not to go around "sharing" or having fellowship with others by rehearsing our sins.

3—"Guidance" as practised by the Oxford Group is another most dangerous feature of this movement, and encourages the letting down of all barriers for the incoming of every evil and vagrant spirit, and reduces Christianity to the low levels and abuses of Spiritism with all its mutterings and inner voices mistaken for the voice of God.

The weird and ridiculous messages, such as are mentioned in an official publication of the Group, and written by Eleanor Napier Ford, where she tells of a three-year-old child receiving the "Guidance" from God when He is alleged to have said to her, "You must eat more porridge in the morning", and again when a convert publicly testified that while seeking "Guidance" she got the message "Sausages", by which she took it that God wanted her to get sausages for dinner that day. Without doubt this feature of the Oxford Movement is positively dangerous, and utterly at variance with the scriptural doctrine of prayer and guidance.

4—No Bible doctrines preached or taught as the basis of their subjective experiences.

Here lies one of the greatest dangers of this new movement. While much is said about the new life, repentance and confession, little or no reference is made to the blood of Christ, and the physical resurrection of Christ, without either of which salvation is impossible.

Many of the Oxford Group with whom I talked have not the remotest idea of the divine plan of redemption, and apart from their subjective experiences, can give no reason for the hope they profess to have. The following Scriptures are quite clear about the divine plan of Redemption, and the method of receiving it.

"And without shedding of blood is no remission."

—Heb. 9:22.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."

—Heb. 11:6.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."—Eph. 2:8-9.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—Romans 10:17.

"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"—Romans 10:14.

(Continued on page 10)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ONCE MORE—"THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST."

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 15th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported—Broadcast over CFRB, 690 k.c., as is every Sunday evening service of Jarvis Street Church, from 7 to 9 o'clock Eastern Standard Time)

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

"Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."—1 Peter 1:18-21.

This chapter begins with an announcement of the security of the believer and his inheritance, and upon that there is based an argument for holiness of life. It is a word addressed particularly to believers. We are admonished to be holy: "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." The great principle upon which that argument is based is found in the character of the salvation provided: you ought to be holy because you know that you were not redeemed from the old life to a new life by "corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Let us examine this text for our profit this evening. There is involved in it a principle which is particularly applicable to the thought of the time.

I.

We are here told that DELIVERANCE FROM AN OLD LIFE INTO A NEW NECESSITATES SOME KIND OF REDEMPTION: "Ye were redeemed from your vain conversation", or, your manner of life, the way you lived, which was handed down to you from your fathers; the entail of a depraved human nature expressing itself in the life that is lived, in the manner of living. We are told that a man cannot change his life from an old life to a new without being redeemed: Ye were redeemed from the old life to a new life.

Very well, then, what is that old life, the manner of life that is natural to every one of us? A life that is lived in the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. By which we do not mean in any gross or sensual sense, but merely the natural mind. It may find many expressions.

By nature, we live as our father did. You are all "chips off the old block". You are no better than your fathers. As they did, so do you. You do not need to be a theologian to recognize that. You see it in the earliest years of infancy. How naturally the child walks in his father's footsteps! Thus it is written, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"; "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." I suppose I need not argue that point. The fact that we do not find moral perfection in human nature must be abundantly evident to everybody. The manner of life that is common to all mankind is a manner of life from which God is excluded, from which considerations of the will of God, the good pleasure of God, the glory of God, are entirely absent.

It is summed up as being characteristic of the old life in these words, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." As once upon a time men were without God, without the fear of God, without any desire toward God, or any striving after His holiness, so now believers are changed to an entirely new life, as we observed this evening in the ordinance of baptism. But they do not pass from that old life to the new without being redeemed from their manner of life.

That perhaps involves a principle which is a little difficult of understanding. Why cannot a man be permitted to turn over a new leaf? Why cannot a man resolve that he will abandon his old practices, and live an entirely new life? Why can he not set up a certain standard before him, and resolve that he will endeavour to be honest, pure, unselfish, and loving, and be permitted to go on in pursuit of these new and higher ideals?

We read recently of a man in one of the penal institutions of this country who is a notorious criminal; who had a black record of crime to his credit, and who was sentenced to the penitentiary for life. It was said he had entirely reformed, that he was a new man, that he now desired to do that which is right. On the ground of his alleged reformation—I trust it is true,—an appeal was made to the Minister of Justice to commute his sentence, or to liberate him on parole. But I read only last night of the decision handed down, that the sentence must abide.

You may not open the prison-doors to every man who suddenly makes up his mind to live a new life. There are certain moral considerations involved; there are certain principles of justice and equity at stake. There is the necessity of the maintenance of law and order in a realm where men naturally would be lawless, and therefore disorderly. So the law must be observed, and the sentence of the court carried out until the penalty is paid.

The fact is, a man's natural manner of life leads him into all kinds of violations of the divine law. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" We are all forming habits. Men, of themselves, build their own prisonhouses. Their manner of life makes them slaves to their habitual way of living.

By that principle men imprison themselves within jails of their own building. They cannot get out. The doors cannot be opened to them through the payment of a price of silver or gold. There is no power available to such men, of themselves, that can deliver them from this manner of life.

It is only the fifteenth of January, and most of you have broken all your New Year's resolutions already—you broke them, I doubt not, within twenty-four hours of their making. Why did you do it? You resolved that you would do thus and so, and yet you discovered that you had no power within yourself to overcome the defects of character your resolutions were designed to correct.

The problem is, How are we to find a key to open the jail door? Where are we to find a power that can change men radically, at the very heart of their being, and launch them on a new life?

It is not within the power of man—in the human will, or in any kind of human institution. The power to release men, to deliver men, to make them free, is a power that can not be purchased with silver or gold. I said just now that we purchase the power to broadcast this service. We purchase the power by which this church is illuminated, by which the organ is operated, by which the electric motors in the basement are driven by which the church is heated. It is not particularly cold outside to-night, but let us suppose it to be a zero night. You have been redeemed from that condition to a condition of warmth and comfort within by the payment of a price—but it is by the payment of silver and gold.

Not by the payment of such a price can men be morally liberated, so as to live a life that is well pleasing to God. "Ye were redeemed", said the Apostle Peter, "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." I call your attention to the fact that there is no real "change" of life—there can be no regeneration of heart and transformation of character—that is not effected by this principle, by a power that has been released for human emancipation by the shedding of the blood of Christ.

Into the philosophy of that, for the moment, I shall not enter. I merely state the fact, as the text asserts it, that we are redeemed from one life to another; and that the radical change involved in the passage from one life to another, is made possible only by the precious blood of Christ. That is the fact as stated here, whether we understand it or not.

II.

That is a commonplace I know, but the text contains a very striking statement. We are told that **THE PROVISION FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE OLD LIFE TO A NEW WAS MADE BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.**

I remember how once that principle offered a little difficulty to my mind. I wondered how my redemption could be effected by the shedding of blood before I was born, how my need could be anticipated and provided for even before my sin had been committed, and how, therefore, I was related to the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it seems perfectly clear to me now, that only by such a divine provision could any of us have been saved.

Let me remark that *the redemption which is in Christ Jesus is not an afterthought.* It antedates the foundation of the world. There is no room for the operation of the evolutionary principle here. It is not true that the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament, and the doctrine of salvation by blood in the New, are of pagan origin, and that the Hebrews copied them from the practices of the pagan world about them. This text tells us that this principle of redemption was wrought out by the foreordaining wisdom of God before the foundation of the world.

That is worth thinking about. Provision was made for our salvation before we needed it. Hence *we have a salvation that is founded in the nature of things*, as I shall show you presently. It is not something that is superimposed upon human experience, but something provided from the very foundation of the world, and therefore is related to the nature of things as they are.

I know that analogies are not proof, but they are interesting, and sometimes make that plain which otherwise would be somewhat difficult to understand. I therefore call your attention to some interesting analogies.

I remember when I was a little boy the first time I heard of anyone's breaking an arm. I did not know it could be mended: I supposed it was snapped off like a pipe-stem. I did not know that the bones could be brought together, nor how they could be kept together. I later learned that there are certain recuperative powers within the human body that heal broken bones, and cause them to knit together and become as strong as they were before they were broken. If you break a piece of china you will need some kind of cement to fasten it together—and then perhaps you will not fasten it very securely. But if you break your arm, if the fractured bone is properly set, it will knit of itself. There is something in your physical constitution, a provision divinely made before you broke your arm, by a God Who knew you might break it, whereby, when the bones are put in place, they knit together—and the doctor will tell you you are as good as new.

Had I a more thorough knowledge of the human body than I possess, I have no doubt I could find many illustrations which would go to prove my thesis that nearly every accident that can occur, nearly every injury that can be inflicted upon the human body, has been anticipated. All that the doctor does is to remove obstacles out of the way so that nature may have a chance to work, that so these divine provisions may apply themselves to make us whole again. Next time you talk to your doctor, tell him what the preacher said, and ask him if it is true. I think he will tell you that he does not take any kind of glue around with him, that all he does is to endeavour to remove obstacles so that the recuperative powers of nature may have a chance to work, to make men whole again.

Who put these powers in the human body? Who made us as we are, equipped for every possible contingency of life, making it possible for the sick to be restored to health again?

I wonder why trees grew? This desk is made of wood. There is much of that in the construction of this building. What do we do when we build houses to live in? We make use of materials provided for our need. How do we heat our homes? We go down into the cellar and find that the God of nature, Who knew our needs, stored the cellars of the world with fuel before He put man in his human habitation.

I could, I think, press that illustrative principle in many directions, and show you that each climate provides certain fruits and vegetables, certain kinds of food, which the particular climate makes a necessity to the human body. God has provided for His creatures in the world about him.

So of electricity. It was here in the days of Abraham—and before that. There is nothing new in the constitution of this material world. It was all here awaiting our employment. And it would be a strange thing if, having in mind the human creature which He was to

make, He planned the structure of his body—as the Bible says He did—if God had made no provision for our moral and spiritual necessities. He has done so. Hence in harmony with principle of divine prevision and provision, the atonement effected by our Lord Jesus was foreordained from before the foundation of the world. God made abundant provision for our spiritual necessities before He made us in His own image and likeness. In the divine purpose, therefore, the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

III.

But now note what this text says: "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, *but was manifest in these last times for you.*" The coal was foreordained from the foundation of the world, and so was the electricity, and all the water-powers by which electrical energy is generated. The constitution of our bodies was foreordained, in spite of all the evolutionists say, from before the foundation of the world. Nor have they changed. Similarly, the gospel, the plan of redemption, the power to release us from the old life, was foreordained from before the foundation of the world. The Lamb was slain. God planned it all. But He "was manifest in these last times for you." "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." God became manifest in the flesh. There was a time, a point in history, when Jesus Christ was born, when He lived a human life, when He died, was buried, and rose again. These are historic facts. They were necessitated by reason of the fact that it was necessary that God's plan should be revealed, or manifested.

The man of science examines our bodies. He wants to know how certain organs function, how certain diseases are caused, and how they may be overcome. Such knowledge is obtained by human research. God has given us a great world, and has said in effect, "Go and dig there. Make your microscopes and look at the infinitesimal; build your telescopes, and bring distant worlds within range. Find out what you can, and in the finding of it, develop yourselves and your treasures." I am glad that God has given us that privilege, but in respect to the spiritual, there is something we cannot discover for ourselves. We cannot read the mind of God. Sin has blinded men to the realities of the spiritual world. Hence, out of the unknown He came Who was Incarnate Wisdom, and He manifested Himself at Bethlehem, throughout His earthly life, at the cross, and at the open—and now, blessed be His name, empty grave, until He returned to the Father. That parenthesis in the existence of the Eternal Word, the Eternal Logos, was an outshining, a manifestation, of God's way of saving mankind. But behind the historic cross, if I may venture so to say without being misunderstood, there was the pre-historic atonement, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. I know that Jesus Christ suffered in the flesh, but surely He suffered more than that. The atonement effected by our Lord Jesus Christ, I at least believe, was not shut up to a few brief hours; but God took the burden of the world's sin upon His own heart, and made His soul "an offering for sin". The incarnation, death, and resurrection, of Christ, completed that atonement, and manifested God's plan and purpose to us.

Manifested for what? "For you, who by him do believe in God." How else could we know God? How else

could we discover God? "He that hath seen me," said Jesus, "hath seen the Father." We believe in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is God manifest in the flesh.

We believe in Him in this exercise of His redemptive purpose: "For you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." The whole purpose of God's disclosure of Himself in Christ is to teach us our own impotence, and the possibility of regeneration, of a radically changed, justified, sanctified, life in Christ Jesus.

We must, dear friends, keep the truth of the precious blood always in the central place if we are to understand the gospel of the grace of God. What a blessing it is that in spite of all our sin, our blunders, our mistakes, in spite of all the incompleteness of life, we may this evening come to Him Who is the Saviour of Sinners, and on the ground of His meritorious sacrifice receive into our own natures the power of the Holy Ghost to redeem us, and release us from the old manner of life, that we may go through the grave with Him, and rise to walk in newness of life. Let your faith be in Christ. Once more I say, not in self, or in any aggregation of other selves, but in Christ alone. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the abundant provision which Thou hast made for our soul's salvation. We thank Thee that as Joseph filled the storehouses, and when the years of dearth began to come, threw wide their doors for all the hungry of the earth, so hast Thou provisioned Thy storehouses for our need; and that in Christ Jesus, by His death and resurrection, Thou hast opened them that we may take full advantage of all that Thou hast laid up for us in Him. Give us by faith a glimpse of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Enable us to come this evening out of our poverty into His wealth, and to find in Him eternal life. We ask it in His name, Amen.

JEPHTHAH AND HIS DAUGHTER.

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, January 12th, 1933.

Tenth in a Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on "Biblical Theology (the seventh on the book of Judges) which is included in the Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: Judges, 11 and 12:1-7.

Our lesson text you will find in the eleventh chapter of Judges, and the first seven verses of the twelfth chapter. These verses contain the history of Jephthah. Very little is said of Jephthah's antecedents. He is introduced to use as "a mighty man of valour". He was a man of great strength of character, I suppose of brawn as well as of brain; and he was a man of valour, a man of courage. Wisdom is sometimes defined as the right use of knowledge. And courage perhaps may be defined as a right use of power. A man may be a mighty man without being a man of valour, or a man may sometimes be a man of valour without being a man of might. But when he has strength, and courage properly to employ it, he becomes

a factor in human affairs with whom his generation will have to reckon.

Jephthah was a man who began life under a great handicap: there was a shadow upon his birth. We cannot be too thankful for having our way made easy, or as easy as possible, at the beginning of life. We sometimes hear of under-privileged children. There are people who come into this world with some physical handicap: lame, or blind, or deaf, or dumb, wanting in some physical power; and yet who succeed in spite of all that.

Jephthah's whole history is summed up in the introductory sentence where he is described as "a mighty man of valour". That is the history of his life. Then immediately we are told, by implication, that he began life with everything against him. I suppose most people suffer from some sort of handicap. There are tall men who wish they were short, and there are short men who wish they were tall; lean men who wish they were not so lean, and men who can scarcely be so described who wish they were a little lighter.

This is the story of a man who overcame the initial handicaps of life, and who, in spite of unfavourable circumstances, and an opposing social attitude, won his way to distinction and renown. I am not sure whether I once related to you my experience with a blind man whom I met once when returning from England. He told me that his wife had been reading to him rather a pessimistic speech made by Lord Gray, formerly Sir Edward Gray, who was Minister of Foreign Affairs at the outbreak of the war. He had been told by an eye specialist that he would speedily lose his sight completely. His sight was not gone, but it was said that he would become blind. That was rather a gloomy prospect, and I suppose any of us would be somewhat cast down. This blind man said to me, "Do you suppose a man of such distinction as Lord Gray would be offended if I were to write him a letter?" I said, "I do not suppose he would. What would you write him about?" "About what my wife read to me today. No man ought to speak like that. I have been blind from the time I was a little boy, but there are compensations. I came to Montreal when but a lad. I had nothing, but I learned piano-tuning. Little by little I went into the music business, and now I have the largest music business in the city of Montreal. I have several stores, and a large number of men working for me. My wife and I have just completed a tour of all the important centres of Europe. We live comfortably, and are independent. All that has been done without the aid of eyes, and I feel like writing Lord Gray, admonishing him to be of good spirits, and not to permit this handicap to lessen his public usefulness."

I remember some years ago being in Chatham, and meeting the mayor of the city. He was a man who had been crippled from the time he was ten or eleven years of age, when he attempted to crawl into a circus tent, because he had not money to pay his way. Something fell on him, and he had never been able to walk afterward. He had a wheel chair with which he helped himself about the streets, and as I walked along beside his chair we came to an intersection. As we crossed the street, instead of an abrupt curb it was shelved down like those at the gas stations now, so he could go down and then up again without help. "Hundreds of mothers in Chatham who wheel their baby-carriages bless me for my infirmity," said the mayor.

Like other cities, Chatham had always made their curbs at right angles about six or eight inches above the street. People of dim sight stubbed their toes, and sometimes fell, but because this man could get about only in a wheel chair, he managed to get the Council of the city to make curbs in such a way that he could easily cross the streets. Other cities are now doing the same. Why should one go upstairs every time he crosses the street? That man had a large business, and had been elected mayor several times. He was looked upon as a man of strength and usefulness, although never since the age of eleven had he walked.

I have heard of stutterers becoming great orators. It is possible to overcome great handicaps.

Jephthah started with a great shadow upon his life from birth. He found the society in which he moved did not welcome him to their circle. His own brethren cast him out, and "Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him". He became, under those circumstances, a leader of men.

One is reminded of how David was driven out by the jealousy of Saul, of how he found a company of men in the cave of Adullam and became a captain over them, and of how he made them into a great army.

It was said of Cromwell in the beginning that he had no army, that his men were only tapsters, men of inferior grade, and that there was little prospect of their ever being able to make themselves felt against the gentlemen of honour who were on the Royalist side. Because of that, Cromwell subjected his men to the severest discipline, and they became one of the greatest fighting forces of all history.

It is a good thing to have to fight our way uphill; and even adverse circumstances may be turned to account if people have it in them to serve their own generation.

I say to you students, if you are really mighty men of valour you will not need to advertise it, you will not need to tell folk what extraordinary people you are. I hope you will be saved from that ministerial defect; for some of the most egotistical and vainglorious human peacocks I have ever known in my life have somehow or other hopped into the pulpit—if peacocks do hop! I have heard men talk—not only in the ministry but elsewhere—of their prowess, of their ability, until I have been led to marvel that they have been able to escape detection. How they have concealed themselves I do not know. I have in mind a great man—physically, about five feet three, but in every other respect in his own estimation the peer of any Goliath that ever lived. To him it is a constant wonder that he has never yet been recognized. My own opinion is that there is not much to recognize. But he does not agree with that.

Do not be afraid to dwell in the land of Tob. That is a great place to be a pastor, is it not? You do not want to go and bury yourself in some little village? "If I do that, nobody will find me out." They will if you are worth finding. A man of Jephthah's worth can never be buried, can never be hidden.

Jephthah's birth drove him away. Congratulate yourself if they can do without you at a tea party. I remember in the beginning of my ministry I was constantly bothered about that. I was never at home at garden parties, and other social functions, I always felt they were a sheer waste of time. If I could get away to my study and be by myself, I was much happier. Sometimes I half envied the social success of some of my brethren. I re-

member when I first came to Toronto one of the papers, I think it was *Toronto Saturday Night*, had an article devoted to the leading ministers of Toronto, and photographs of pastors and churches were displayed. That is ancient history, but you may be surprised when I tell you that I was included. I forget what they said about us here in this church, but I remember it was said of one minister that he was a "great social success", and that he was in great demand at all social functions, that he was an attractive figure on drawing-room occasions. A certain minister of Toronto, was described by another paper as having probably blessed more food than any other minister in the City!

That is all right, but I hope when you students enter upon your ministry you will find something more to do than ask blessing at the table. I hope you will be good for something more than to be an "interesting figure" at an afternoon tea. I have no objection to the tea, but there ought to be something masculine about a real minister.

If you get a call to the land of Tob—or, failing a call, if you get a kick that sends you there—do not be troubled about it. That is what happened to Jephthah.

There came a time when the children of Israel got into trouble. "The children of Ammon made war against Israel", and they looked about for a man. People usually look for a *man* when there is trouble. Do not be afraid of it. The elders of Israel cast about to find a man for the emergency. They could not find one, and so they sent to the land of Tob for the man whom they had expelled: they sent for Jephthah, saying, "Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not yet hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?"

Do not despise a church committee when they come and say to you, "We have a church in a certain place, and we have been thinking of you as pastor. The prospects are not very bright. We have a building—but not many people in it. There are a good many people outside, but not many inside. Our church has not a very good standing in the neighbourhood. All the important people go to other churches. We cannot pay you much salary—in fact, it is a question whether we can pay you any at all. But we are looking for a man who wants a hard job."

I remember getting a letter from a pastor who said he was going to preach in a small church near my home on a certain occasion, and asking whether he might stay at my house over night, and go on to his appointment the next day. I wrote him saying I should be glad to welcome him. On his arrival he told me of the great things he was going to do in that little church. He said, "It is my specialty to go to churches when they are down, and get them on their feet again." "Well, brother", I replied, "you are going to a place this time where there is a church after your own heart. If ever there was a church *down* that is the church you are going to." He came back on Tuesday or Wednesday, and said that the church was a little beyond his depth: he thought it was too far down! Needless to say, he did not accept the pastorate.

Pleasantry aside, that is what we are here for, to help people when they are in distress. When all the battles have been fought and all the victories won, when all the trees have been felled and houses erected, and the new Jerusalem has come down from God out of heaven, preachers will be out of a job. But as long as the Ammonites are storming the gates, and the majority of people

are afraid to lift up the standard against them, Jephthah will find his opportunity—even though he has been living in the land of Tob. You will not need to advertise. If there is anything in you, people will find it out—and if there is not, they will find it out too.

"And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us." Jephthah survived the scorn of his brethren.

You have perhaps heard the story of Lord Beaconsfield, when, as Benjamin Disraeli, he delivered his maiden speech in the House of Commons. It was a very lame attempt. He failed—and he knew that he failed. When he sat down the House indulged in ironical jeers. Whereupon he rose and said, in effect, "You laugh at me now, but the day will come when I shall make you hear me." And he became the greatest Prime Minister, I think, that England ever had. He was the favourite of Queen Victoria, and the one who, more than any other one man, laid the foundations of the British Empire. He bought up little islands all over the world from nations that did not want them. He endured the scorn of people who had not eyes to see what he saw. But the day came when the Empire—and the world at large—awoke to the fact that the seven seas were dotted with coaling stations for the British navy, making it possible for her to win the name, "Mistress of the seas"; and all because of the prescience of the man at whom the members of Parliament laughed when he made his first speech.

Do not allow yourselves to be put down too easily. I do not know whether you need the exhortation which Paul addressed to Timothy, or not. If you do, receive it, and make application to yourselves, "Let no man despise your youth." Not all youths need that exhortation.

Jephthah was a cautious man, and he bargained with the elders. He said, "You have sent for me. Now suppose I succeed, what then? Suppose I lead you to victory against the children of Ammon? Are you going to send me back to the land of Tob? Do you want me only when you are in distress, to get rid of me afterwards? Or do you still want me to be your captain?" "If you succeed," said they, "we will choose you as our leader."

Jephthah did not say that he was going to succeed—and I pass this word on to you young ministers. In the beginning of your career you must expect people to put a question-mark after your name. You have dwelt in the land of Tob. People do not know what is in you. They do not know whether you are a wise man or not. When you become pastor of a church, if it has a company of wise deacons they will not throw you the reins all at once and say, "Go ahead." There are some preachers who have wrecked themselves and their churches by attempting to take full leadership at once, when they have no record that would justify anybody's confidence in them.

Jephthah was too wise a man for that. He did not say, "Shall I be your king?" But rather, "If I accept your invitation and am successful, if I prove that I am qualified to lead you, shall I then be your leader? When I have a great victory to my credit, will you trust me then?" And the people said, "The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words."

Win your spurs first. Do not be impulsive and impatient, and demand that because you are pastor you should be commander-in-chief. If you have it in you, your church will be glad enough to let you lead, because that is what they want. But you must prove you can lead before you get their confidence. You may have years

of patient plodding before you. When you go to a little country church you will find men who are hard to persuade. They were deacons of that church before you were born. They may be stubborn, and awkward, and as slow as can be, hard to budge, hard to do anything with. You will find people who are conservative, and the reason for that attitude is not in themselves only: it is because they have had a succession of very unwise and stupid pastors. They have had so much trouble that they say, "We will wait until we see whether this man has it in him to lead us." Plod on, like Jephthah; and if you win a battle those men will mark it down and say, "The Pastor was right that time." Go on and win another, and when you have a series of victories to your credit, those same men will be your staunchest supporters; and after a while, when the Pastor speaks, they will say, "We are ready to follow the Pastor's leadership; We have proved him repeatedly, until now he has our complete confidence." But confidence of that sort is born only of experience of the leader's worthiness. That is how Jephthah won his way into the confidence of the men of Israel.

Then "Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, 'What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably.'"

Jephthah became a soldier, a man of war, but fortunately he was not ignorant of the history of his own people. Jephthah learned long before Shakespeare wrote it,

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked though lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."

Before he drew sword Jephthah made plain the historical roots of the trouble. Read from the fifteenth verse to the twenty-seventh of the eleventh chapter, Jephthah rehearsed a bit of history: "Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: but when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh; then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not consent: and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was the border of Moab." He reviewed their efforts to avoid conflict, showing that at last war was forced upon them. By divine decree the land was given to them; for said he, "So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. And now art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, while Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three

hundred years? Why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon."

We, too, must learn that lesson. We all need to learn it. We are constantly being brought face to face with situations which bristle with difficulties and problems which the wisdom of Solomon could scarcely solve. You will find them in your churches. You will go to a country church as pastor and presently discover there is something wrong, but you will find it difficult to discover what is the matter. You had better be careful. Do not touch it too quickly. I heard of a negro driver in the old days who was very proud of the way he could use his whip. He boasted that he could flip a fly off a horse's ear as he was driving, or cut a branch off a tree as he passed. One day he was driving a gentleman along the road, and as they neared a tree the passenger saw a ball-shaped nest hanging from one of the branches. Turning to the driver he said, "Hit that." "No! No! boss. I will not touch that." "But why not?" "Dey's organized!" It was a hornet's nest, and he knew enough to keep his whip off it.

You will come upon some things that will challenge you to show your dexterity, but if you are a wise man you will not do it. It may be a hornet's nest! You will often find in a country community that the man in the centre of things is related to this man and that man. When you get the family history of the village you will discover that you have inherited a trouble that has its roots in generations past, and you will need wisdom to meet the situation.

Jephthah knew the history of the case before he accepted the leadership. When a physician is called he wants to know the history of the case. He will ask questions about your mother and father, your grandmother and your grandfather. Before you attempt the solution of some church problems you had better find out who the church's great, great, grandfather was! Then you will discover the wisest way to deal with the children of Ammon.

Incidentally, I should like to reinforce Mr. Fleischer in his work as instructor of Church History. Some people are expert in prophecy. They know all about the future—and they know all about the future because, at least in some instances, they know little or nothing about the past. You may become an expert prophet with very little knowledge, but to become an accurate historian you must be a real scholar. Many of the religious problems of the day can be understood only in their relation to the history of the past. Many of the things which fill some people with alarm would be far less alarming if they had a sufficient knowledge of the past to recognize them as old heresies revamped, and that as they died down in impotence in years gone by, so will they die down in impotence again.

The children of Ammon seemed formidable for a while, but Jephthah knew their history, and on the basis of his knowledge he argued with them. His diplomacy failed—as it often will—and he had to resort to the sword, but in doing so, he knew that his cause was just.

Will you observe, to bring it into our own realm of thinking and activity, that Jephthah was "called". He was called by the elders of Israel: "The elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob." Nothing is said about divine sanction, or divine inspiration of any sort in the call. It was a very practical business proposal.

Israel was in dire distress, they needed a man to help them, and the only man in sight was Jephthah. He accepted their proposal, and, having accepted it, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah."

I think you are likely to find a divine anointing when you respond to a cry from somebody who is in need. I do not think you need any special heavenly visitation on that matter. By which I mean do not wait for a special supernatural visitation. God does call His servants supernaturally, but usually apparently in a perfectly natural way. If there is a job that needs to be done, go and do it, if you have the ability. If someone is in distress, and you have power to help him, go and help him. You do not need a special visitation from God to tell you that you should do your duty. If some hungry man comes to your door, you do not need to pray about it—give him bread, and then he and you pray afterwards. Give him his dinner first.

Jephthah accepted the call, and as he essayed the task, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead."

The thirtieth verse introduces a problem. We are not to suppose that the Bible, infallible Book as it is, is a history of infallible men. There is a theory abroad, a theory that is not new, but which was much emphasized a few years ago, that the writers of the Bible rather than their writings were inspired, that the Bible is the work of inspired men, but that the actual Scriptures themselves are not inspired. The reverse is true. The Scriptures, as an actual record of fact, are true; they represent an infallible record of truth. Therefore there is much in the Bible that is not true. Are you shocked at that? It tells the story of men who lied, and the fact that their lies are written in the Bible does not make them true: the record of their lying is true, but not their lies. Because men are deceitful and untruthful in life, the record of their deceitfulness is faithfully and accurately recorded.

The Bible tells of the failures of Abraham—because Abraham did fail, he did make mistakes. It tells of the defects of Jacob, of Moses, of David, of Solomon. The Bible does not withhold these facts. When good men do wrong, the Bible does not conceal or condone their wrongdoing.

The Spirit of God came upon Jephthah, but that did not make him infallible. He was an inspired man, energized by the divine Spirit, but not to the point of being incapable of error. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, was "filled with the Holy Ghost". He was divinely anointed. If ever a man preached in the power of the Holy Ghost, Peter did at Pentecost. He was one of the company who spent that long session in prayer before the Spirit came. Yet it was after that that Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed". The great Spirit-filled preacher of Pentecost made mistakes after that.

I trust that we as Christians, and as Christian workers, will seek the fulness of the Holy Ghost, but I hope also that it will make us humble, that we shall never be guilty of the folly of asking people to accept our dictum as though it were infallible. The Spirit that came upon Jephthah can come upon somebody else. As the Spirit leads you, the Spirit will lead other people to see that you are right, if you are right; but I do hope that you will ever be saved from that horrible—what shall I call it? Cant? I have no language with which adequately to express my loathing of the attitude which says, "I have prayed about this, so get out of my way; I am right."

Nothing is more contemptible. The most prayerful people in the world may make mistakes.

I believe Jephthah made a mistake. I believe his vow was wrong in principle, when he bargained with the Lord as he had bargained with the elders of Israel: "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." If ever a rash vow escaped the lips of man, Jephthah's was such a vow. I do not believe there is in Scripture warrant for bargaining with the Lord. Great and mighty man as Jephthah was, I believe he made a mistake. Byron sings the praises of Jephthah's daughter, and Tennyson also has a very fine poetical representation—not only of the daughter's submission and resignation, but of her delight in sacrificing herself for her country and her father. But I believe, in the light of the New Testament, it is wrong. We must remember that good men have false conceptions of God, and I believe Jephthah had on this occasion.

Never will you find in the Bible that God did ever command anybody to offer a human sacrifice. He did command Abraham, to test him, to offer Isaac; but he did not permit him to do it. People are warned in the Scripture against the practice of offering human sacrifices. Jephthah made a rash vow, which ought never to have been made; and, being made, ought, in my judgment, never to have been fulfilled.

He was successful, and as he came back "his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter"—what a tragedy his vow involved!—"and it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter; thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." The daughter acquiesced in what he said, but she prayed for time in which to mourn her maidenhood. At the end of the two months she returned, and was sacrificed. I know ingenuous attempts have been made to try to show that Jephthah did not actually carry out his vow, but the record says, he "did with her according to his vow which he had vowed." "And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year."

We had better try to do our duty as we see it, and trust God for results; to avoid that principle of bargaining with the Lord God Almighty, telling Him that if He will give us success we will do so-and-so. We are not under the law, but under grace. Let us serve Him with godly fear, and go with Him all the way.

Only a word, and I have done. "The men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire." The children of Ephraim were running "true to form". This is not the first time they said that. After Gideon had put the Midianites to flight, and they were in full rout, and Gideon was in pursuit, the children of Ephraim came in high dudgeon demanding an explanation for their not being asked to join in the battle.

There are many people who are ready to join the army after the enemy begins to run. Nothing succeeds like success. "I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered

me not out of their hands." "You had the same invitation," Jephthah might have said, "as I had; but you did not respond to it. You left us to fight the battle alone, and now that the victory is won, you blame us for not giving you a share in it."

You will find that is a parable of life. When the battle is over there will be plenty of people anxious to join in the grand review.

"And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?" Jephthah was reluctant to fight against his brethren, but inasmuch as they would have war, they had it! "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." But now and again you will find an Ephraimite with whom it is almost impossible for anybody to be at peace. You may still have to do a little fighting.

Then it became necessary to identify the Ephraimites. You have heard much about "Shibboleth" and "Sibboleth". We are denounced sometimes as Evangelicals, or Fundamentalists. Our critics say that unless everybody is willing to pronounce our Shibboleth we take them down to the brook and slay them. The children of Ephraim were not slain for their defective pronunciation: they were slain because their defective pronunciation established their identity. When we speak about the blood, they say that is our Shibboleth. If anyone cannot speak of the blood, if anyone omits that from the story of salvation, from the gospel, you will find he is not true to the gospel. We are not fighting about his theology, we are not demanding that he accept our creed: we are only identifying him as a man who rejects what God has revealed. It is a misuse of that historical incident, to identify it with the practice of striving about words to no profit.

"He could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand. And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite." He had not a very long judgeship, only six years. And yet he crowded into six years a great deal of useful service, and indelibly stamped his influence upon the history of his time.

So ends the story of Jephthah.

REV. WM. FRASER ON THE OXFORD GROUP.

(Continued from page 2)

5—It is rather a significant fact that the Oxford Group is being warmly and enthusiastically sponsored by some of the most notorious modernists of the country.

When religious leaders who deny almost every fundamental of the Christian Faith, and openly teach that the Bible is full of errors, pagan superstitions and unscientific myths, are the foremost sponsors and defenders of the Oxford Group, without in anywise altering their religious views, it provides one of the strongest reasons for true believers in Christ to avoid it.

When the enemies of the Cross of Christ can be so friendly and enthusiastic about it, we should remember the words of the Lord Himself: "If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" And again, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

6—The fact that there is not a single outstanding evangelist preacher or Bible teacher connected with this new

movement speaks volumes to those who are in any way desirous of ascertaining the truth about this group. As we have already shown, in the nature of the case, they could not possibly be made welcome, and be true to the great verities of the gospel.

7—The total results and claims of the Oxford movement thus far can be far surpassed by other cults and non-Christian religions.

Christian Science, Theosophy, and even Mahatma Gandhi, are "Life Changers" to a far greater extent than the Oxford Group. Let us keep this in mind when we are asked to account for the wonderful changes in the lives of those who have been "changed" by the influence of the Group.

8—The shameless exposures of nakedness on the part of many of the women members in their ultra-modern evening gowns at the public meetings in the hotel ball-rooms is, to say the least, very unbecoming on the part of those who profess to have been changed by the power of Christ. The following Scriptures makes this abundantly clear:

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but which becometh women professing godliness with good works."—1 Tim. 2:9-11.

9—The Oxford Movement is parasitical, for while it builds nothing, already it has caused serious divisions within the churches in several Canadian cities, and in time will cause not only division, but destruction within the various church organizations where a sharp lookout is not kept against its predatory and destructive character. In this particular it will find an agreeable ally in its elder brother and sympathetic sponsor, named Modernism.

10—Extremes of any kind are always dangerous, whether it be on the one hand to Modernism, with its cold intellectualism (so called); or on the other hand to ultra emotionalism. But when you find a combination of both in one movement, it impresses us at once as being the most dangerous form of error we have ever seen or heard, disguised in the form of Christianity; and our considered judgment to Christian people, and others who would avoid being caught in a dangerous error, is that they should keep as far away from it as possible, and give it neither room nor quarter within our Christian churches.

In conclusion, we have no hesitation whatever in saying it would be about as logical for the medical fraternities and established institutions of our cities to welcome to their midst a colony of "quack doctors" ranging in experience from six months to twenty-seven years, with the single experience in common that they had all failed in their previous pharmaceutical efforts, and had now discovered a cure for corns and colds by which they proposed to cure humanity of all its sickness and diseases, as it would be for our churches to welcome to our midst the principles and practices of the Oxford Group as they are seen in the light of Holy Scripture.

Or, to use another illustration: If some self-styled inventor were to announce to the world at this late date his amazing discovery of a tallow candle, and expect the Westinghouse, the Canadian General Electric, and all other established electrical companies, to scrap all their equipment and abandon all their knowledge in order to facilitate the distribution of this so-called discovery, it would be just about as unreasonable as to expect New Testament churches to retrogress to the sponsoring of this freak religious movement.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 6

February 5th, 1933

FIRST QUARTER**SAMSON.**

Lesson Text: Judges 13-16.

Golden Text: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

—Galatians 6:7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Numbers 6:1-12.

Tuesday—Numbers 6:13-21.

Wednesday—Proverbs 3:1-8.

Thursday—Micah 7:1-7.

Friday—Romans 6:1-11.

Saturday—Romans 6:12-23.

I. BIRTH OF SAMSON (13:1-25).

In the portion of Scripture assigned for our lesson we have a partial biography of Samson, the physically strong man who judged Israel twenty years (15:20). The Israelites, again doing evil in the sight of the Lord, were delivered "into the hand of the Philistines forty years". They were destined to have frequent trouble from these people in future years (1 Sam. 4:1), but from them they were delivered by the power of God. On this occasion Samson was the leader, later it was David. Concerning the birth of the former an interesting account is given of the divine interest in the event. An angel from heaven predicts the birth, and gives directions to the parents concerning the child. Several things may be noted in reference thereto. First, the prayers of the mother, the prediction concerning the birth, directions for the mother.

Following the directions there comes the statement relating to the character of the child. He would be a "Nazarite unto God." He would be separated unto the Lord for the whole period of his life, conforming to the directions given concerning the Nazarite vow (Num. 6:1-8). Note that God called him unto this, even as each child of God is chosen to live a separated life (1 Thes. 4:4; 2 Thes. 2:13). This means a divine call, a divine purpose, and a divine mission; and it also implies a divine interest and intervention in the affairs of men. After delivering his message, the angel disappears, and the woman informs her husband concerning the matter (vs. 6, 7). The husband prays for a return of the visitor (v. 8), the angel comes again (v. 9), and repeats his message (vs. 10-14). An offering is made unto the Lord, during which the angel disappears, and in due time

Samson is born (vs. 24, 25). Similar cases of heavenly prediction may be noted, as Isaac (Gen. 18:10), John the Baptist (Luke 1:11), and our Lord (Luke 1:26, 27).

II. SAMSON AND HIS RIDDLE (14:1-20).

Samson was chosen for the purpose of judging Israel, and dealing with the Philistines; but unlike previous judges who led armies against enemies, Samson's work was done largely single-handed. His first recorded contact with the Philistines was his visit to Timnath when he saw a woman whom he desired for his wife (vs. 1, 2). His parents protested against his decision to marry her (v. 3), but they did not know that "it was of the Lord that he sought an occasion against the Philistines." God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform. The slaying of the lion is then recorded, manifesting the great strength of Samson; and the honey eaten. This is followed by an account of the marriage feast at which Samson propounds his riddle (vs. 10-14). This was true to eastern custom, the feast lasting seven days, the riddle being given for the entertainment of the guests. Note the nature of the riddle.

The Philistines could not declare the riddle, and took unworthy means to understand it, constraining Samson's wife with threats to secure the necessary information for them (v. 15). She complied with their demand, secured the information, and at the time appointed they declared the riddle; but not without Samson's being aware of how the information was obtained (vs. 16-18). The use of such unworthy means really voided the agreement to pay the penalty, but Samson paid in accordance therewith, though the Philistines suffered loss of life thereby (vs. 19, 20). Note the guidance and strength Samson received through the Spirit of God, and emphasize the necessity for the Holy Spirit these days on the part of each child of God (Eph. 5:18).

III. SAMSON AND HIS FIRE BRANDS (15:1-20).

In this chapter there is recorded another experience of Samson's, leading to the punishment of the Philistines, this again occurring through his wife. After his previous experience he left her and returned to his father's house, and she was given to another man by her father (14:19, 20). Such procedure was not right, and when Samson learned of it on his visit to her home he was angry, and took vengeance on the Philistines in sending foxes or jackals into their grain fields and vineyards with firebrands tied to their tails (vs. 1-5). This being the dry season of the year when the harvest was in the field, great destruction followed. Note the ingenuity of the scheme, and the loss sustained by Israel's enemies. This was in the nature of a divine judgment.

The Philistines, infuriated by their loss, took vengeance on Samson's wife and father-in-law, burning them with fire (v. 6), a fit punishment for the way in which they had acted toward Samson. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall

he also reap." This stirred Samson further, and "he smote them hip and thigh", leading them to make a concerted effort to apprehend him and stop his depredations. In order to save his countrymen from their vengeance he permitted himself to be bound and handed over to his enemies (vs. 10-13), but when he came into their midst the "Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him", and burst his bonds asunder and slew a thousand men with "a new jawbone of an ass". Out of this bone he later received water. Note Samson's piety, faith, and prayer. God answered his prayer, and provided water; and Samson recognized his dependence upon Him. The power of God is therefore evident in this, as also in the slaying of the Philistines. God used one man here to smite many, just as He has used and continues to use individual men in the spiritual realm to smite the enemy forces, and secure many captives for righteousness.

IV. SAMSON AND DELILAH (16:1-31).

With his great strength Samson manifested great weakness. He evidently did not have his passions under complete control. This is notable throughout his experience in Gaza. But for his great strength it would have led to his death (vs. 1-3), and in the valley of Sorek where he fell in love with Delilah it did lead to disastrous consequences, eventuating in death—although in that destruction came upon the Philistines. Note the many who are brought low through lack of self-control. They give way to their passions, ruin their character, and spoil their usefulness. An explanation may be given of the way in which the old nature may be held in control (Matt. 16:24; Romans 6:11).

In the love of Samson for Delilah the Philistine lords saw an opportunity for overcoming their formidable antagonist, and they suggested to the woman that she should entice her lover and find out the secret of his great strength, promising her a reward for her services (vs. 4, 5). She immediately complied with their suggestions, and sought to gain knowledge of his secret—at first unsuccessfully, then meeting with success (vs. 6-20), leading to grave consequences for Samson. His weakness is clearly manifest in this record, and seems almost incredible; yet it has been duplicated in many an experience before and since. He made known the secret of his strength, and allowed himself to be deprived of the outward sign of his separation unto God (v. 19); after which he lost his great strength: "And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." In submitting to be shorn of his hair he had broken the Nazarite vow, and disobeyed God. He was called to a separated life, and failing here he lost the presence of God, also his great strength, his liberty, his sight, his enjoyment of life, and eventually life itself. Note his restoration to God's favour, resulting in retribution upon his enemies (vs. 22-30). Note also the Christian's call to separation (2 Cor. 6:14; 7:1), the mark of his separation (Eph. 1:4), the danger of God's disapprobation (1 Cor. 9:27), and the possibility of restoration to His favour (1 John 1:9).

The Union Baptist Witness

Is the Official Publication of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Send all communications to the Office Secretary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

The seventh issue of the third volume of The Missionary Bulletin is in the mails. The reception of this monthly pamphlet is gratifying and those who so thoughtfully write in, telling of some word of blessing it has taken to their hearts, make the service and the work it entails light.

The current issue of the Bulletin, we believe, can be widely used. An extra number of copies are being run so that those who wish to distribute it may be supplied. May we suggest that the Bulletin be used as an introduction of a discussion of those matters which have spiritual value. Who knows but the Lord may have a service for that copy left upon the street car; the one enclosed with a letter; the one which is pinned to the wall that its prayer requests may be ever before us.

Your missionary meeting is a means of using the Bulletin and distributing it; make the very most of the little messenger, it is edited that you may be kept in constant touch with the work and by your prayers support it. Again we state that the Bulletin is sent on request. There is no charge.

THOSE COMFORT BOXES.

To whomsoever the credit should go for naming those splendid boxes which are prepared and sent forward each year, we do not know, but if ever there was an appropriate name it is the one applied.

The women of our churches have nobly responded to the requests sent out from the Union office and many who have never had a share in preparing a box will this year enjoy it. Small churches may join, too, and why should we not enlarge even upon this and invite those who are separated from church fellowship, but are deeply interested in those who serve in hard places in the homeland, have a part? How much a pair of knitted socks would be appreciated by workers in the north country! Those quilts, what a comfort they are on cold winter nights and that muffler so soft and warm, how many colds it offends. Useful gifts, of course they are, but back of their usefulness and the comfort which they give, they bespeak an interest in the work.

RUNNYMEDE ROAD ANNIVERSARY SERVICES.

On Sunday, January 8th, the Runnymede Road Regular Baptist Church, Toronto, held anniversary services which marked not only periods in the church's history, but the Pastor's anniversary in that he had completed ten years as pastor of the church.

The day was a joyous one. At the morning service, Rev. David Alexander of the Waverley Road Church, Toronto, preached, and in the evening, Rev. Clifford J. Loney of the Stanley Avenue

Church, Hamilton, brought a stirring evangelistic message.

At both services, Pastor P. B. Loney briefly reviewed the church's history and it was interesting to note that from small beginnings the Lord had prospered the work and established it. Many souls have been born again in the Runnymede Road Church where from week to week the Gospel is proclaimed with no uncertain sound and it is with expectancy that Pastor and people go forward praying that an even greater service than has yet been experienced will be the church's portion during the coming year.

Throughout the day happy fellowship was enjoyed, and the special music by the choir, assisted in the morning by Miss May Walker of Waverley Road Church and in the evening by the Waverley Road Male Quartette, was much appreciated.

ATTENTION! CHURCH TREASURERS

will greatly help the work of the Union and the Executive Board if they will forward without delay all Mission monies designated for the Union Mission enterprises to the Secretary-Treasurer,

REV. W. E. ATKINSON,
337 Jarvis St., Toronto.

MISSIONARY PROGRAMS.

There is an abundance of material available for missionary programs both from the standpoint of our home and foreign work and it is, therefore, hard to understand why there should be any leader who finds it difficult to prepare interesting programs. It is true that our foreign work is but a few years old, but how the Lord has prospered it and how happy are we to be able to apprise ourselves of all the facts concerning the establishment of the Mission in Liberia.

It is well that we know as much as possible about the country which is in many respects a land of mystery. It is a privilege that we should appreciate to the greatest degree that we are intimately acquainted with those missionaries who represent us; that they are in a very peculiar sense our own people; those who have fought battles with us and have been tested and tried and have been found true to the Word of God. With what thankfulness, we should accept them and support them, knowing that they have gone forward as Messengers of the Cross with no other message than the message of the Book which they believe to be God's inspired message to a lost world.

The office of the Union is ready at all times to supply information and help those seeking to prepare programs.

We shall always be glad to receive reports of missionary meetings and will certainly record any hints which add to the effectiveness of presenting information that others may profit by them.

ANNUAL MEETING OF BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, ORILLIA.

All Departments in Healthy State and Funds Well Subscribed.

On Wednesday evening, January 4, Bethel Baptist church held its fifth annual business meeting. At 6.30 a large number of its members and adherents sat down to an excellent supper served by the ladies of the church. At 8.30 o'clock the meeting was called to order, and splendid reports were received from all departments of the church. Notwithstanding the world-wide financial depression and unemployment, all financial needs have been fully met. Besides this, approximately \$850 has been raised for missions and building fund.

A motion was moved and carried that the church fully and heartily support the interests of the "Union", educational and missionary. It was therefore resolved that the bi-monthly missionary meetings be devoted to the Seminary (2); Liberia (2); Home Missions (1); and French work (1).

As a church we consider it a high honour to be directly associated with such a magnanimous body of people as the Union of Regular Baptists.

The church was never in a more flourishing condition than at the present time. The membership is high, and all the Auxiliaries are full of life and good promise. The church has as devoted a Board of Officers and as consecrated band of workers as can anywhere be found, and there is abroad among them a spirit of expectation and high purpose. The congregation rejoices to see, and hear of definite decisions for Christ; sinners have been saved and backsliders restored. Two young members, Miss Sager and M. J. Addison, are studying in the Toronto Baptist Seminary, while Mrs. Gordon Smith is serving the Lord in French Indo-China. Others are preparing for definite study and service abroad.

The Bible School has made good progress during the year, and young and old have been instructed in the word of life by a faithful band of consecrated teachers.

The church also expressed high appreciation and profound thanks for the splendid service so graciously rendered by *The Packet and Times* in carrying out of their splendid church announcements.

We rejoice, also, that the matchless ministry of the "Gospel Witness" is finding a warm reception in the hearts and homes of the people. Mrs. Fred Hill, daughter of the Presbyterian minister, Bala, is our faithful and enthusiastic "Gospel Witness" agent.