

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. 12, No. 10

TORONTO, JULY 20, 1933

Whole Number 583

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"JONATHAN—WENT TO DAVID INTO THE WOOD"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, July 16th, 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 Daylight-saving Time.

"And Jonathan, Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God."—I. Samuel 23:16.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord, for this truth of which we have been singing. We thank Thee that Thou hast come to us, making Thyself known to us in the person of Thy Son. We remember that blind men enquired concerning the commotion that was about them, and were informed that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And though we do not see Thee with our natural eye, though Thou hast ascended into the heavens, yet we have found Thy promises true, that where Thy people assemble in Thy name Thou art in the midst. So in reality Thou art with us to-night. Thou art here in all the fulness of Thy saving power.

We pray that we may be given grace to call unto Thee as did the blind men; to touch Thee, as did the woman in the throng. We cannot do without Thee, Thou Saviour of the lost. Draw near to us this evening hour. Make everyone within these walls to know that God is here. There is nothing we need so much as this. May Thy presence this evening be so real to us that we shall become forgetful of all else save the nearness of God. Make this an hour of salvation to the unsaved, of comfort and encouragement to such as believe on the Lord.

Look upon all assemblies of the saints, we pray Thee. Manifest Thyself to Thy people everywhere. Be graciously near to those who hear this service by radio. May the power of the Holy Spirit accompany the word that is preached, and the word that is sung, that souls may be saved, and Thy name glorified. We ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

I suppose there is no portion of Scripture with which the majority of Christians are more familiar than the Psalms of David; and their general popularity is perhaps due to the fact that they so clearly mirror our ordinary everyday experiences. When we walk again the paths which the Psalmist walked, and come into the same experiences, we feel that he understands, and frequently we find inspiration and strength from consorting with him. But if you would appreciate the Psalms to the full you must study David's biography as contained in the

two books of Samuel and the first of Chronicles. And of all the thrilling chapters in David's history, of all the eloquent, vital, lovely pictures in the Davidic gallery of art, there is perhaps no chapter more beautiful and no picture with a stronger appeal than the chapter from which our text is taken, which pictures David being found by his friend in the wood.

David was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief", he was "a man of war from his youth". Troubles were multiplied continually to him. He seemed scarcely to emerge from one difficulty when he found himself thrust into some other situation almost intolerable. But for a part of his life he was helped and strengthened by the loyal and self-sacrificing friendship and fellowship of Jonathan, Saul's son. On this occasion, being sought by both the men of Keilah and Saul his jealous enemy, he takes refuge in a wood, that he may hide himself away from Saul.

"And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God." But as I have often said to you when studying these historical portions of Scripture, they are full of the gospel, full of the great doctrines of grace; and one cannot read this story without feeling that a Greater than Jonathan is here. It is of that other Jonathan I would speak to you. Look at the picture of this lonely man in the gloom of the wood, feeling that life was scarcely worth while, and write your own name under that picture; and then listen for the footsteps of One Who comes through the thicket, Who divides the branches, Who makes His way into the hiding-place of this lonely soul, and strengthens his hand in God.

This we shall do in two very simple considerations. First, the fact that *our Jonathan often finds us in the*

wood; and secondly I shall try to show you *how, finding us in such a situation, or such situations, He strengthens our hand in God.*

I.

OUR JONATHAN OFTEN FINDS US IN THE WOOD.

David on this occasion was hiding from the jealous rage of Saul. Saul was in hot pursuit of him, seeking his life to take it away. There is *an analogy, I think, between the condition of David and that of those who hide, not from a jealous and unrighteous king, but from the righteous anger of a holy God.* When man first sinned he sought to hide himself from God among the trees of the garden, that he might escape the divine presence; and the divine scrutiny. It was while he was in the wood that One came to him saying, "Where art thou?" God discovered him in his place of hiding, and instead of meeting him in anger, brought to him a gracious promise, and "strengthened his hand in God".

Who of us here has not found his way to the same thicket? Who of us has not endeavoured to hide himself from God? It is often a terrible reflection that we are under divine scrutiny, that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"; that from Him no secrets are hid, that in His flaming eye is the light of truth which penetrates all disguises, and sees us as we are.

We have hidden among the trees of God's planting, as though there we could conceal our identity, and escape the omnivident gaze of a holy God. We have all followed Adam's track into the wood: "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Indeed, we have wandered far into the wildwood. There was the giant oak of indifference, that scarcely bowed its head before the winds of wrath when the heavens were black with vengeance; but which nevertheless was shivered by the first bolt of justice. There was the poisonous upas of skepticism, deeply rooted in unbelief; and there was the verdant thick-bowed chestnut—and under the shade of the trees of the wood we thought to hide from God.

We deserved to have been discovered there as was Absalom in the oak of the wood of Ephraim by Joab with death-darts in his hand. But instead, there came into the wood, breaking through the thicket, the interlocking branches of indifference and unbelief and all excuses, not Joab with his darts, but Jonathan with His comfort. Our Lord Jesus found us in the wood, where sinners hide. And there He is still seeking the sinner in the wood. If you listen you will hear the rustling of the leaves as He moves among the trees. He is dividing the branches in His pursuit of those who would hide from Him.

Though He always comes in grace, not always does He come with gentleness: "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to be in pain, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory."

But, however, He comes, He comes, not to strengthen His hand against you, but to take your hand that has been strong to do evil, and weak to do well, and to "strengthen your hand in God". And in that wood where sinners hide Jesus is the only Friend Who has power to be a friend indeed.

Our Jonathan finds us in *the wood whither we are driven by the malice of the devil.* Saul, in some respects, illustrates the implacable hatred of the adversary of our souls. It was impossible for David to do anything to please him. Even when he played before him he was angry, and on one occasion had to escape out of his presence. How many of us have been driven like that! There are some here this evening who have found life to become more complicated after you made a profession of religion, after the anointing oil had been poured upon your head, after it had become known that you were of God's chosen. Like David, instead of being brought to the throne you were driven into the wood. After you professed faith in Christ you had a more difficult time than you ever had before—because Saul pursued you relentlessly, seeking to destroy you. How often have we been driven into the wilderness of temptation, and there "in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood," we have been hounded by the devil and his pack of hell-hounds. We heard their bark, and felt their hot breath upon our cheek; and we feared that the leader of the pack, the sin which did so easily beset us, would devour us. But He Whose angel shut the lions' mouths so that Daniel was unharmed, by mighty grace shut the mouths of sin's devouring beast of prey—our Jonathan came to us in the wood when we were tempted, and strengthened our hand in God.

We sang just now, "Jesus is passing by", and it is true that He may pass by any of us if we do not detain Him. But once you call to Him and arrest His attention, and signify your desires toward Him, He will never pass you by after that. The religion of the Lord Jesus consists in an abiding fellowship with Him. Not alone in the palace does he hold converse with us, but He seeks us out in the wood.

I have no doubt there are many here this evening, and many who hear me by radio, who can recall experiences when you were all but destroyed, when your adversary the devil as a roaring lion came after you in the wood. But Jonathan did not forsake you in that time of trial, but rather came to you in the wood, and "strengthened your hand in God".

I would remind you who are not Christians, who have not had experience as yet of divine fellowship, that salvation does not consist in an occasional meeting with the Lord. Salvation is not merely a Sunday experience. We do not meet the Lord as we meet some of our friends, only in the house of prayer. He meets us that He may go with us, to abide with us, to keep us company on the hard road, and even to follow us into the wood, there to minister to us of His grace.

Jonathan came to David into *the wood where friends were scarce.* David heard that the Philistines were fighting against Keilah, and robbing the threshing floors. He enquired of the Lord concerning His will, and in obedience to divine direction he went out against the Philistines, and routed them, and saved the city of Keilah with all the inhabitants thereof. He was their sole deliverer. To him they owed their lives, and all

that they had. News reached Saul that David was in Keilah, and Saul said, "The Lord hath delivered him into mine hand: for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars." The enemy thought he had David in a trap at last, that there he would be able to lay hold upon him. When again David heard that Saul was coming he sought divine guidance. He said, "O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant." And the Lord answered, "He will come down." Then David asked, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? Will they turn traitor? Is there anybody in this town whom I can trust, who will be my friend and helper, as I have sought to be their helper?" And the Lord said, "They will deliver thee up."

David then left Keilah, and "abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph . . . And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life; and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood."

Did you ever find yourself there? Did you ever spend yourself for other people, seeking by every means in your power to serve them, and really serve them, and then for some unaccountable reason which you have not yet been able to explain, find yourself betrayed, until you were half-inclined to agree with the Scotsman who, on reading the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm, where David acknowledges, "I said in my haste, All men are liars", said, "And had he lived in our day he would have said it at his leisure"!

Have you had experience of the fickleness of men, of their utter unreliability? Have you discovered that the spirit of Iscariot has found innumerable reincarnations, and that traitors abound in our day as in days of old? Sometimes you have fled into the wood feeling that you knew not what to do, that you scarcely knew whether there was anybody you could trust. You said, perhaps, "I have been betrayed so often that I do not know whether it is safe to trust anybody."

I must confess I have said it—said it again and again. I remember on one occasion a minister's wife saying to me, "You have a very poor opinion, apparently, Mr. Shields, of human nature?" I said, "It could not be worse. I think it is about as bad as it could be—my own particularly." We are, as Moody used to say, a bad lot. Who can trust us? Whom can we trust? Is there any lonely soul this evening in the wood, having run away from Keilah, feeling almost that death would be preferable to life? Listen for a little while, and you will hear a rustling among the trees, you will hear the quiet foot-fall, and by and by the tender touch of a wounded hand, as our Jonathan finds you out in the wood. He will come to you, and "strengthen your hand in God".

Then Jonathan came to David *while he was waiting in the wood for the time to come when he would enter into possession of his inheritance*. I suppose there was not much about David's appearance on this occasion that indicated the ultimate destiny of this man after God's own heart. There was not much to suggest that he was a prince, and that some day he was to become a king. Look at him hiding in the wood.

There is a suggestive word in Leviticus concerning those whose consciences are very tender: "I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth." I suppose at this time David was alarmed often by the sound of a shaken leaf. You would never have dreamed this was the man who had slain Goliath, of whom Israel's maidens had sung, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." He was now hiding away from Saul. Though the anointing oil had been poured upon his head, and though God had said, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him; with whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him;" although he was ordained to rule over a kingdom, now as a fugitive he hides in the wood.

Those of us who are Christians have a great prospect before us: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." We are heirs to a kingdom and a throne if we are really children of God. We do not look like it now,—nor do we feel like it very often. And sometimes possibly our conduct is scarcely worthy of such a prospect. But there it is. If we are really the Lord's there is awaiting us an inheritance "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us".

Sometimes we are inclined to complain at the extended period of our nonage; we wish we could suddenly become grown up, attain our spiritual majority, and enter into the possession of that which is ours. Do you feel within you the throbbing of immortality? Are you peering into and endeavouring to penetrate the darkness? Are you waiting for the day-dawn? Are you longing to ascend the steps of destiny which give entrance to the palace of the King? Meanwhile, we are beset with difficulties, and the waiting time is very wearisome. You remember in our lesson last Thursday evening we heard the Apostle Paul say, "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place." We have a hard time in the wood, do we not? It is not very comfortable under foot, not very light over head; and most of us have rather an eery feeling, especially after night-fall, when our ears are smitten by the myriad murmurs of the wood.

Did you ever go camping? Have you a good imagination? Is it fairly active at night? How many wild beasts you heard in that place where no wild beasts ever tread! It was not difficult to conjure up bears, and lions, and wolves—although perhaps it was only a squirrel you heard, something that was quite harmless. What a nervous time you had in the wood, when the sun was down!

Not thus is our common Christian experience. We are like little children, afraid of the voices of the night in the wood. We are nervous; saying, like David, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; I fear I shall

never come to the throne." But, alas, there is solid ground for our fears, for the snare of the fowler and the noisome pestilence, the terror by night, and the arrow that flieth by day, the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that walketh at noon-day, of which Mr. Whitcombe read this evening, are all terrible and deadly realities, but it is when we are in just such a situation our Jonathan comes to us in the wood, to strengthen our hand in God.

Changing the figure, the disciples were one time, not in the wood, but on the sea. The winds were boisterous, a great tempest was upon them. But in the night watches Jesus came to them, walking upon the very waves that threatened to destroy them. So does He come to us; so may we count upon His fellowship, depend upon His abiding friendship: "And Jonathan, Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God."

That is a fact to which every Christian here would readily and gratefully testify. You would acknowledge that again and again He has been your Succorer in time of trouble, "a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

II.

And now a word or two on HOW OUR JONATHAN STRENGTHENS OUR HAND IN GOD.

Jonathan *did not immediately lead David out of the wood*. The chapter tells us that David stayed for a while in the wood; he "abode in the wood". Sometimes the Lord leaves His people in the wood, leaves us in trouble. He does not immediately lift the cloud. It was not at the first watch of the night when the tempest was raging that Jesus Christ came: "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them." It was not until the night was far spent, "In the fourth watch of the night Jesus went into them, walking on the sea", and He brought the morning with Him. Joseph was destined for a throne, but the Lord let him go down into Egypt, allowed him to become a servant in the house of Potiphar, and later a captive in Potiphar's prison. As the weary years dragged on Joseph must often have enquired why he was permitted thus to suffer in the prison-house. But the Lord left him there—albeit he went to him in the prison. He did not take him out of the prison, but He blessed him *in the prison*.

Moses had a long time of training. It was not until he was eighty years of age that he really entered upon his life's work. Most men are retired before they reach that age. Moses was not a candidate for Dr. Osler's chloroform at forty years of age! At forty he went back into the wilderness to take a post-graduate course. How would you like to take an extra university course of forty years, and to be told you were useless until you had taken it? Forty years the Lord left him in the wood—but He did not leave him alone. He went to him in the wood.

Joshua had to serve an apprenticeship of a life time. His public, active, career as chief of Israel's hosts was relatively short. He was an old man before he became qualified to lead Israel into Canaan's land. Sometimes the Lord allows His people to stay in the wood.

Or, change the figure. He allows his people to go into the den of lions. The Lord did not shut the den of lions against Daniel, He only shut the lions' mouths. He

allowed the Hebrew children to go into the furnace of fire, but He went with them. He allowed Jeremiah to be cast into the dungeon, and to be carried to Babylon, but He went with him. The Lord often lets trouble come to us. He does not immediately save us out of our trouble. But remember, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." He will go to you into the wood, and though He may not immediately lead you out of it, He will strengthen you while you are there, and give you grace to behave as a child of God.

Let us now retrace our steps for a moment: How did Jonathan strengthen the hand of David?

First of all *he assured him of his ultimate possession of the kingdom*. He came to David when he was in a spirit of dejection and almost of despair, with a promise, "Thou shalt be king. There is no doubt about it, David, you shall be king some day." Thus he "strengthened his hand in God".

So does our gracious Lord assure us, by exceeding great and precious promises, of the ultimate triumph and coronation of all who do really believe. I rather fancy Simon Peter was in the wood, a little bit down-hearted, when he said to the Lord, "What shall we have therefore?" Jesus Christ said, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Our Lord assured Peter that though the waiting time might be long and painful, there was no doubt as to the ultimate issue.

What a blessing that is, when the clouds lift, and when the promises of God become real and precious to the devout soul, when we are able to dismiss our doubts, and look about in the gloom of the wood and say, "Some day I shall exchange it for a palace; some day I shall reign with Christ, even as He has promised!"

I would remind you too that Jonathan strengthened David in this, that *in the wood where friends were scarce he made a covenant of friendship*. There in the wood he covenanted with David, never to forsake him. He renewed the covenant which had been made between them before. What a blessing that must have been! I think we are never able to appreciate so fully the faithfulness of our covenant-keeping God as when we experience the faithlessness of men. But how often has our Jonathan come to us after this manner, renewing His covenant, vowing friendship to us!

I have heard you sing it; and you have sung it because you felt it at the time, and because you knew it was true:—

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,

I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;

That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,

I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

If there be any bitterness of spirit within you this evening because of the real or fancied fickleness and faithlessness of others, I remind you of One Whose

friendship is unvarying, and Whose faithfulness reaches even unto the clouds. He hath sworn that He will never leave us nor forsake us, and thus doth He strengthen our hands in God while in the wood: "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would no more be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee."

There was *one very remarkable word spoken by Jonathan to David*. While David was saying in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. I have escaped him many times, but one day he will prove himself superior, and I shall go down before him," Jonathan said to David, "Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel . . . and that also Saul my father knoweth."

If you only knew what your adversary says about you, you might be comforted even by his reflections. You remember how the Lord said to him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?—have you thought of him?" "Thought of him!" said the devil, "thought of him! Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Have I not tried to get at him these many years? But I have found that the angel of the Lord encampeth roundabout him, and delivereth him."

While we are complaining of our difficulties the devils "believe and tremble". While in the days of His flesh men wondered who Jesus was, the evil spirits said, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." They knew His power over them. They knew how impotent they were in His presence. And thus, my dear friends, even as the adversary of our souls goes about seeking whom he may devour, he knows that his chain is not long enough to reach us. He may growl, he may threaten us, he may fill us with fear; but while God lives there is no power in earth or hell that can snatch a saved soul out of His grasp. The devil himself knows that we shall come to the throne at last. So, very often, our Jonathan thus comes to us, making real the promises of God's Word, reminding us of the impotence of all enemies to do us serious injury, strengthening our hands in God: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

I have been assuming this evening that you have a real experience of commerce with God, that your religion is not a mere theory, that the Saviour you trust is not a character in a book, but that you have a living God, a living Christ, and that you are in constant touch with Him, and He with you. Has Jonathan come to you in the wood?

Then this last word. *How does He strengthen our hands in God while hiding from the wrath of a holy God? How is it possible for even Jesus to do that? That is*

the problem. There never was a greater miracle than that recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis, when God found the sinner hiding among the trees of the garden, and met him in grace instead of in judgment. What did Jonathan say? He came to David and said, "Evil is intended against thee by the king. He is determined upon thy destruction if it be possible. He had a javelin by his side ready to sheath it in your heart, and when I spoke in your behalf he hurled the javelin at me, but I escaped out of his presence. But the fact that he had the javelin, and that he threw it at me, proves that he has designs upon your life. Your only safety is to keep away from him. You had better stay in the wood. You had better hide from Saul, keep as far away from him as you possibly can." "And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David."

Not thus does our Jonathan come to us in the wood to strengthen our hand in God. He does come with the story of a javelin; he does come to tell us of the wrath of the King, to convince us of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. But this is His word to you:

"Jehovah bade His sword awake,
That sword awoke 'gainst Me;
My blood its flaming blade must slake,
My heart its sheath must be!
All for thy sake, thy peace to make,
Now sleeps that sword for thee."

Our Jonathan comes to tell us that there now is no javelin awaiting us, that there is no sword, that there is no danger, for those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent;
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods he came.

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last,
When out of the woods He came."

He died the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. He comes to us with the glorious gospel message once again, telling us that the storm is past, the penalty has been paid, the sword has done its work, and there is now nothing waiting us before God but a cordial welcome. "This man"—oh yes, it is for ever true "this man, this Jonathan, receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." May we all be received of Him this night, as He comes to us in the wood; and while we have His ear let us pray to Him:

"When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unshined spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown.

"Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
 Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
 O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
 Be Thou my strength and stay!

"Be near me when all else is from me drifting:
 Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and
 shine,
 And kindly faces to my own uplifting
 The love which answers mine.

"I have but Thee, my Father! let Thy spirit
 Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
 No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
 Nor street of shining gold.

"Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
 And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—
 I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
 Unto my fitting place.

"Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
 Some sheltering shade where sin and striving
 cease,
 And flows for ever through heaven's green expan-
 sions
 The river of Thy peace.

"There, from the music round about me stealing,
 I fain would learn the new and holy song,
 And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
 The life for which I long."

"FOR MY SAKE AND THE GOSPEL'S"

"I live constantly in a spirit of gratitude to God for Toronto Baptist Seminary. Gradually she is dotting the globe with faithful representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ." So writes Rev. O. T. Johnston, a graduate of 1930, from the sphere in Jamaica where he is pastor of some nine churches. And he is but one of some fourteen former students in nine foreign countries; thirty others hold home pastorates in most of the provinces of Canada; still others, for the summer recess, are student-pastors, assisting pastors, evangelists and colporteurs (thirteen men in 1933). All this in less than seven years.

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MONTREAL AND THE OTTAWA VALLEY

By W. S. Whitcombe

Pointing to the illuminated cross which is set on the highest point of Mount Royal, commanding the entire city of Montreal, I asked a friendly street-car conductor in French, "What is the meaning of that cross?" "That", he replied, "is to show that this is a Catholic city." For the members of the Seminary Quartette and myself, such a sign was superfluous, for the great church buildings, and the numerous black-robed priests and nuns that one sees everywhere in Montreal, were constant reminders to us that in this first city of Canada Rome is dominant. The people of Ontario may not realize that Quebec is French and Roman Catholic, but the churches of Montreal and the Ottawa Valley that we visited during our month's tour of that province are well aware of that fact, and something of the challenge that it

presents to our Union was brought home to me.

For two weeks we conducted special meetings with the Verdun Church, and in spite of a heat wave of almost tropical intensity the meetings in this great suburb of Montreal were well attended. Their success was in a large measure due to the splendid work of the "Seminary Four" in door-to-door visitation. These men distributed about one thousand printed invitations, and with each one gave a personal invitation to the meetings, and, whenever it was possible, engaged in conversation about spiritual things. These students will surely be visiting pastors when they graduate from the Seminary. The Verdun Church, under Pastor Roy Hisey, has one of the largest opportunities of any of our Union Churches, and is, I believe, entering into this open door that the Lord has set before it.

The Quartette visited the work at St. Paul's under Mr. Brodie Jamieson, and also had a time of fellowship with Messrs. St. James and Dantheny, our veteran French pastors. I must confess that when I saw the board outside the entrance to the upper room of the Beneficent Church with the word "Eglise Reguliere Baptiste Francaise" (French Regular Baptist Church) I experienced a thrill, for this work, together with that of Mr. St. James, represents the sole recognition on the part of our Union that we are debtors, not only to the Greeks and the Barbarians, but also to more than three millions of our own fellow-citizens of this Dominion who speak French. Here is a mission field at our doors, nay, within our gates, to which we must pay more attention in the days to come.

It was also my privilege to make arrangements for Messrs. Hall and Dallimore, two other students sent out this summer under the auspices of the Seminary, to work in co-operation with Pastor St. James. Since that time these two men, like the colporteurs whom we sent to Quebec last summer, have been arrested for no other offense than that of giving away "without money and without price" tracts and gospel portions in French. This experience, however, has fallen out to the furtherance of the Gospel for the men have been made bold to speak the word without fear, and they feel that they now have what amounts to police permission to go over the whole province of Quebec in this manner.

We spent a week visiting the churches between Montreal and Ottawa in the interests of the Seminary. The great body of our Union Churches is found in Central and Western Ontario, but like a chain of first line fortifications there are six churches spread at almost regular intervals along the Ottawa river between Montreal and Ottawa. It was a delight to have fellowship with the people of these churches, for they feel their remoteness from the other churches of the Union, and welcomed us all the more heartily as their representatives. Our first stop was at Lachute, about two hours' run from Montreal. Dr. Clark, who was visiting with Pastor and Mrs. Dyson, also took part in the meeting. In other days this district has produced Baptist stalwarts, and it is good to know that one young man from here contemplates entering the Seminary in the fall. May history repeat itself!

The next two days were spent with the St. Amedee and Gore Churches. The St. Amedee Church, nestling in a valley surrounded on every side by towering Laurentian Hills, was founded two generations ago when the "settlement" was entirely English. In the last twenty years, many French-speaking people have moved in, and now there are but ten English families in the Valley. As not all of these are Baptist, this work has a struggle to maintain its testimony. At the Gore Church we found that the revival that had visited the church under the Hisey brothers was still in progress. The value of the Seminary does not require to be argued with these people, for ever since the school started sending men out to preach, this church has looked to it for pastors. It was under the ministry of Seminary students that revival visited this church, and their present pastor, Mr. C. Hardie, is also a former student of the school. It is in churches such as this, that one realizes that the Seminary is indeed a missionary enterprise.

At Buckingham, P.Q., an hour's drive from Ottawa, a warm welcome awaited us with Pastor Doherty and his faithful people. The great majority of this town is French, and the same problem that threatens the existence of the St. Amedee Church is also found here in a more or less acute form, as it

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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.

ANNIVERSARY AND RECOGNITION

The first anniversary of Rev. R. D. Guthrie as Pastor of the Briscoe Street Regular Baptist Church, London, Ontario, was celebrated in a rather unusual way in that there were four days of services and the church was recognized as a member of the Convention known as the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec.

During Rev. Guthrie's ministry at Briscoe Street there has been much advancement. His services there began in June, 1932, and meetings were held in a tent located at the corner of Briscoe and Cathcart Streets, South London, and were greatly blessed. In the fall plans were made for a building and it was not long before construction was under way and the church family now occupies a commodious and convenient meeting place.

The special days of rejoicing were Sunday, June 18th, Monday, June 19th, Tuesday, June 20th and Wednesday, June 21st. The Sunday services were fruitful ones, the Pastor presiding and Rev. W. E. Atkinson preaching at both services and at the Open Session of the Bible School.

On Monday evening, there were two splendid messages dealing with the work which the Lord has given the churches of the Union. Professor W. Gordon Brown spoke on the work of the Toronto Baptist Seminary and the Secretary of the Union gave a lantern lecture dealing with the Home Base. It was a great Home Mission message and one much enjoyed.

The formal recognition service was held on Tuesday and delegates from churches of like faith and order met to hear the church reports and rejoice in the accomplishments of a group of people true to their convictions and standing for the things recorded in the Written Word which is to them God's infallible message to men. Dr. T. T. Shields preached the recognition sermon and again the church

was crowded although the heat was intense.

Again on Wednesday, there was a great service when the Liberian work was presented. The lantern slide pictures and Rev. W. E. Atkinson's story of the work were well received and very interesting, inspiring the church to greater endeavour on the behalf of Missions.

The Pastor and people of the Briscoe Street Church commence their second year together with confidence believing that God who has been their help in the past will sustain them and make them a blessing to those to whom they seek to minister.

MEDINA

Rev. Melchie Henry reports another glorious day on the Indian Reserve when the Lord gave him the joy of baptizing believers. On July 10th a goodly number witnessed a service when two followed the Lord through the waters of Baptism. In the evening the brethren in Christ met at the home of one of the newly baptized converts and had a time of blessed fellowship.

About two weeks ago visitors from Hamilton visited the Reserve and attended the church services and one of them was gloriously saved.

Keep praying for the testimony of the Medina Church asking that the Lord will raise up those who will take the place of His servants who have been called to higher service.

CALVARY CHURCH, OTTAWA

It is always a shock to hear of the passing of some beloved friend, for when the Lord calls one to himself, he provides a place of service, and while rejoicing that there is a sure and certain hope, the loss is keenly felt.

The Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec comprises a large family and what touches one member of

it affects the whole constituency. Recently we have heard of the loss by death of several members of our churches; had we authentic details we would make mention of the home-going of these saints whose work follow them, but at this time, we record with sorrow, expressing our sympathy to the bereaved family and to the Calvary Baptist Church, Ottawa, the death of Mrs. Margaret MacLean.

SUNDERLAND ASSOCIATION

The semi-annual meeting of the Sunderland Association of Regular Baptist Churches was held in the Fenelon Falls Baptist Church on Wednesday, June 28th. Rev. John Byers, Vice-Moderator, was in the chair in the absence of the Moderator, Mr. Ratcliff, of Stouffville, who was unable to be present.

After the devotional period the Vice-Moderator brought the large gathering an inspirational message. Following this address by Rev. John Byers, reports were presented by the various churches as the roll-call was read. Seven of the eleven churches responded and gave excellent account of the progress made during the year. All were in a flourishing and healthy condition.

The Secretary-Treasurer of the Union had been requested to present the work of the Toronto Baptist Seminary. He pointed out in the course of his address the uniqueness of this school over any others now in existence. It was unique in its inception, unique in its conception of Christian Education, unique in its message and unique in its type of graduates.

Supper was served in the basement of the church. The Fenelon Falls ladies provided the delegates with a bountiful supper.

The evening meeting was opened with

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is in almost all the churches in the province of Quebec. Sooner or later many of these churches will have to carry on their work in French or close their doors. But we cannot allow language to be a barrier to the preaching of the Gospel, and I am happy that already we have French classes in the Seminary with a view to meeting this very need.

Sunday morning at Calvary Church, Ottawa, was an enjoyable experience for us. The presence of our missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Davey, reminded us that the church takes its missionary obligations seriously, while a quota of splendid young men for the next school term ensured a hearty welcome for the Seminary. In spite of a very warm Sunday on a holiday week-end, the church was well filled. Depression, both financial and spiritual, is evidently kept on the outside of this church door.

The next week we spent in evangelistic meetings with the Westboro Church on the invitation of Pastor Lorne Hisey and bride, who chose this way of spending their honeymoon. There is a great work to be done in this beautiful suburb of Ottawa, and this church is well-equipped to do it. On the conclusion of these meetings the Quartette left for Westport with Pastor Hindry, from whence they went to Canning-

ton and Sunderland to work with Pastor R. Brackstone.

Two things stand out in my mind above all others in connection with the Province of Quebec. The first is the challenge that this French Roman Catholic constituency presents to our churches. The second is the place of Toronto Baptist Seminary in meeting that challenge. Already our men are taking up the work in Quebec—four out of nine pastors in Quebec are Seminary men—and soon we shall, I trust, be able to send men to Quebec to preach in both French and English.

THE EDITOR GOES TO ENGLAND

The Editor leaves Montreal by Cunard S.S. *Letitia*, Friday, July 21st, and expects to arrive in Liverpool July 28th, returning to Toronto in time to preach the second Sunday in September. His address in England will be care of Rev. Percy Hicks, Editor of *The Christian Herald*, 8 Tudor St., London.

During the period of Dr. Shields' absence the Jarvis St. pulpit will be supplied for the last two Sundays in July and the first Sunday in August, by Rev. W. Gordon Brown; the second and third Sundays in August, by the Rev. W. S. Whitcombe; and the last Sunday in August, and the first Sunday in September, by Rev. E. E. Shields, of Chicago, Ill.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 32

August 6th, 1933

THIRD QUARTER

THE SIN OF DAVID

Lesson Text: II Samuel, chapters 11 and 12; I Chronicles, chapter 20.

Golden Text: "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." II Samuel 12:13.

I. THE SIN OF DAVID (II Samuel, chapter 11).

The record of this chapter makes very sad reading. Hitherto the conduct of the king, while not free from blame, was in the main exemplary; and even when he failed there were generally extenuating circumstances. But in this case he cannot at all be excused. He is found acting in a similar manner to the ungodly despotic monarchs around him, and not as an enlightened ruler over the Lord's people. It was not the sin of innocence which he committed, for he betrays the consciousness of his guilt in his later actions, but rather the deliberate carrying out of the desire and suggestion of the passion of his lower nature. In thus surrendering to the same he violated the law of God, and brought evil consequences upon himself and others. The history of this sad affair is written for our learning, that we might abhor sin, and love righteousness. Sins of the flesh, looked upon so lightly by many, require strong condemnation. Self-control needs emphasis (I Cor. 9:27). The Lord of the body is the one who can aid us in controlling that body.

Several things are noticeable respecting this incident. First, it is well to observe that the action of David involved several persons. It affected Bathsheba in the besmirching of her character and the spoiling of her home. It affected the husband, in robbing him of the purity of his most prized possession, and eventually of his life. It affected Joab, in the slaying of Uriah by his command, at the direction of the king. It affected David in character and reputation. And, most important, it affected God, in that His direct commands were disobeyed (Ex. 20:14, 17). No one can sin unto himself; sooner or later someone is sure to be affected. Like the ripples caused by throwing a stone into a pool of water, the effects of sin go out from the original starting point and touch other parts, sometimes but indirectly connected therewith.

It may further be noted that while David only intended committing one act of selfishness, he was yet compelled by force of circumstances to the commission of several acts, because of his disinclination to repent of, and rectify, the wrong committed. It is better to confess our sin, and have matters put right (John 1:9), rather than to seek to cover the same, and suffer additional evil conse-

quences (Prov. 28:13). David committed the sin (vs. 2-5), sought to cover up his sin by strategy (vs. 5-13); and when this failed through the loyalty of Uriah to his country's cause he instructed Joab to put him in the most dangerous post of the army (vs. 14, 15). When this was done, and Uriah was slain, he was morally guilty of murder (vs. 16-25). The death of the husband cleared the way for the taking of Bathsheba to himself, but the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

One goes more easily and quickly down the hill than up. Whatever the world's judgment may be, God never condones sin, and the fact that He condemned the king shows that He respects no person in relation to this (Matt. 22:16; James 2:9). Note the steps in David's fall: the look, the desire, the enquiry, the request, the deed, and the consequences. The sin of covetousness respecting any object requires explanation, and the dangers inherent in such an attitude pointed out.

II. THE PUNISHMENT OF DAVID (II Samuel, chapter 12; I Chron., chapter 20).

The information concerning the divine displeasure at David's sin was conveyed to the king by Nathan, the prophet, first through the medium of a parable (vs. 1-6), then by clear statement (vs. 7-12). In the former, the mean and heinous nature of the sin is set forth in the story of the deprivation of the poor man of his land by the rich man, arousing the king's anger, and bringing forth his threat of vengeance. His honest indignation was aroused at the description of the sin of another, but he failed to see his own sin in its true light; and not until Nathan told him that he was the man did the full consciousness of his own guilt come home to him. It is easier generally to see sin in another than it is to see it in ourselves, and indignation is more easily aroused over the wrongs done by others than by those perpetrated by ourselves. We must take to heart frequently the statement uttered by Nathan, "Thou art the man." Note the need for divine reproof, and the means (II Tim. 3:6), purpose, and benefit of a wise attitude toward the same.

After the parabolic statement there came the specific charge indicative of David's offence, introduced by a word or two in emphasis of the privilege accorded David in being anointed king over Israel, and in receiving the bounty of God. The definite charge is then made that he had slain Uriah the Hittite, and the judgment is passed upon him that the sword would not depart from his house, and that evil would be raised up against him out of his own house which would manifest itself openly. One cannot sin and expect to escape the consequences. From the time of Adam until the present it has been true that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap (Gal. 6:7). Note the abiding attitude of God toward all sin, and the fact of judgment on sin here and hereafter.

Nathan's words were plain and unmistakable in their meaning, and David was not spared in their accusation; and in an equally frank manner the king acknowledged his guilt. He had not only wronged a wife and husband, but he had sinned against the Lord (v. 13). The confession

of sin brought the assurance that the Lord had put away his sin, and that he would not die. It is only when men plead guilty that God is able to forgive sin, and deliver from its guilt. Note the scriptural teaching concerning justification by faith, based on the redemptive work of Christ (Rom. 3:24). While David is assured of forgiveness for his sin, its evil effect on others is pointed out to him by Nathan. He had "given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme". Special emphasis requires to be laid on the necessity for carefulness in conduct on the part of the Lord's people. We require so to live that the cause of our Lord may not be brought into disrepute (II Cor. 6:3). God should be first, not self; and meditated actions should be weighed in the light of their probable effect on the work of God. Note the responsibility of the Christian in this respect, and his privilege in so living that the world will see the manifestation of the will of God in and through him.

The immediate judgment on David's sin was the death of the child which Uriah's wife bore him. This was an evidence to friend and foe of the divine disapproval of the evil deed of the King (v. 14). When the child was stricken of the Lord David became greatly concerned over its condition, and "fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth". In this we find David's realization that God could heal his child, and so earnest was he in his appeal for divine aid that he abstained from food for several days; but his action was of no avail, for on the seventh day the child died (v. 18). It might not be without profit to note the scriptural teaching concerning physical healing. God has manifested His power in the healing of the sick (II Kings 5:4; Matt. 8:16). The promise of healing is still ours (I Cor. 12:9; James 5:14-16), but His will must be our guide in the matter. Note David's contrition in his attitude: he was conscious of the fact that his sin was at the root of the trouble. Observe also the contrast in the behaviour of David before the death of his child, and after (vs. 16-20), and the assurance found in his statement of the future union of loved ones.

SUNDERLAND ASSOCIATION

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a devotional period led by the Vice-Moderator. Rev. J. M. Fleming reported for the Nominating Committee. Rev. J. Byers, of Orillia, was elected Moderator; Mr. Harvey, of Washago, Vice-Moderator, and Mr. F. L. Fawcett, of Cannington, Secretary-Treasurer.

A selection by the Bethel Baptist quartette of Orillia was greatly enjoyed, following which the speaker of the evening, Dr. T. T. Shields, was called upon.

After a careful survey of the necessity of a testimony such as Regular Baptists were maintaining, Dr. Shields pointed out in a very forceful manner the opportunities, responsibilities and scope of work for Regular Baptists in their Home and Foreign Mission fields, also urging upon the gathering the necessity of educating men for the work of the ministry. An offering was received for the work of the Toronto Baptist Seminary.