

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"LOVED WITH EVERLASTING LOVE"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, June 25th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported)

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."—Jeremiah 31:3.

Prayer before the Sermon.

With thanksgiving and the voice of praise, O Lord, we have come into Thy presence this morning. We rejoice at the unveiling of Thyself in the person of Christ. We thank Thee that in Him we have seen the Father, and through Him now we would come by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit that we may worship Thee, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou art ever the same, and that Thy years fail not. Look upon us, we beseech Thee, this morning in our need. We do not know each other's experiences; we do not know each other's dispositions; we cannot possibly know each other's need. But we thank Thee for One Who is our High Priest, Who has walked this earth, and Who has passed through the experiences to which we are all subject. He has carried our human nature with Him to the throne, and there He intercedes in our behalf, as a High Priest Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

We desire this morning, O Lord, to hear Thy word, that our minds may be instructed, that our hearts may be warmed anew toward Thee, that our wills may be empowered; that knowing Thy will we may find the happiness which belongs to those who do it.

Graciously draw near to us, and to all Thy people, to all the assemblies of the saints this morning. Glorify Thyself throughout the household of faith, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

God has always had an elect people. He is a timeless God. Not only are a thousand years with Him as a day, and a day as a thousand years, but with Him there is really no time. He sees the end from the beginning. All the provisions of grace are dated before the foundation of the world. Then, in the plan of God, the Lamb of God was slain. The gospel, bringing to us the good news of redemption, was never news of an afterthought. I have heard it said that no man did ever build a house who did not wish he could build at least one more, that in his second attempt he might correct the errors of the first. But God, Who is infinite in wisdom as in power,

has never been under the necessity of correcting a mistake, for the reason that He makes no mistakes. God is never surprised, never taken unawares. This verse which I have read, while it had application to God's ancient people, certainly includes His elect people of all dispensations. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

I.

There is the description of THE ABIDING ATTITUDE OF GOD TOWARD HIS PEOPLE: "I have loved thee". This is not a new thing, for *the Lord appeared of old, speaking this message*. This has always been God's attitude toward His people; He has always loved us. If you are a Christian, God loves you; but you are a Christian because He loved you first; He loved you before you believed. If you are not a Christian He still loves you, for this is His attitude toward His chosen.

Love may have a beginning with us; it can have no beginning with Him. This has always been true. It was true of Him before Jesus died at the place called Calvary. It was true before the prophets wrote of Him, or psalmists sung of Him. It was true before Moses appeared, or Aaron, before the world had heard of Joseph, or Jacob, or Abraham, or Noah, or Enoch, or Abel; before the garden of Eden was planted, before "He gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment". Before He threw a myriad stars into space, or ordained the sun to rule by day, or the moon by night, before the Spirit of God brooded upon the waters, or ever God said, "Let there be light", the love of God was a reality. This was His attitude: "I have loved thee". Just as the forests were packed away in the cup of an acorn, and the harvests of the earth in a kernel of wheat, so the whole scheme of redemption

slumbered in the mind of the Eternal or ever the worlds were made. This is an old, old story of Jesus and His love, very old in the telling of it, but older still in its origination; as old as God Himself. For just as truly as our parents loved us before we were born, so it has always been true of God, "I have loved thee".

This is not affected by our attitude toward God. What should we have to say were we to write the record of our attitude toward God? We should have to say, "I have forsaken Thee; I left the garden; I turned my back upon all the provisions of Thy love, and passed without, and explored the utmost reaches of the far country." To which He merely answers, "I know; but I have loved thee." Or, we may even have to say, "I have ignored Thee. I have lived as though there were no God. I have taken no account of Thy will, nor paid heed to Thy word, but have lived unto myself and for myself, utterly indifferent toward my responsibilities to God." But it still remains true that though we have ignored Him, He has loved us. We have rebelled against Him; the attitude of the human heart has been one of positive antagonism toward God. We have challenged the flood; we have hurled defiance at the skies; we have become enemies in our minds by wicked words, notwithstanding it remains true: "I have loved thee". "God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Forever the same, no matter what our attitude may be, God's attitude remains one of tender affection, one of abiding love. So then, I say, the love of God could not be other than it is, because He is God.

Nor can we ever know the love of God apart from a divine revelation. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Has it ever occurred to you that apart from this Book men have never even dreamed that God loves them? If you look into the philosophy of pagan religions you will find that they are all based on the assumption that God is angry and vindictive, and their only hope is that by some means or another, by their own efforts, they may be able to appease His wrath. You will never find in any literature, in the record of any religion, even the vaguest suggestion that the great God of all could love His creatures, apart from what is revealed in this Word. There are men who deny the authority of this Book. There are men who mock at much of its teaching, and talk much about the love of God, not knowing that the very idea of the love of God comes from this Book. If I had all the professors of comparative religions, of all the universities of the world here, I should challenge them to show me in any religion apart from this revealed religion any suggestion that God can and does love sinful men in spite of their sin, and loves them even while they are in their sin. There may be an idea of the love of God, but it will be found to be of a love that is based upon human merit. But nowhere do you find such a statement as this, issued to sinners: "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee."

When Jacob was dead his sons came to Joseph the governor, filled with fear, notwithstanding they had had an experience of many years of his grace. They feared that Joseph had shown them love and mercy for their father's sake; and when their father was gone they said, "He will surely visit us now with vengeance"; and they came cringing and creeping into his presence, praying his mercy, only to learn that Joseph loved them for their

own sakes, and not merely vicariously, and that he had no such thought as visiting them with vengeance. Poor Mephibosheth came limping into the presence of David, knowing that the blood of Saul was in his veins, and fearing that the king's anger would be shown him, only to discover that mercy awaited him.

We are shut up, dear friends, for a knowledge of the great truth of which we have been singing—

"O Love Divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by Thee?"—

to this Book. You would never have dreamed that; you could not by any means have imagined it, if God had not appeared, and appeared in the person of His Son, telling us this great truth that that is the divine attitude toward sinful men: "Yea, I have loved thee."

II.

But there is not only an attitude here described, but AN ATTRIBUTE MENTIONED. This love is part of God: it belongs to Him. It is not your nature to love anybody. We can hate as easily as we can love; and we can be indifferent as easily as we can be either. But "God is love"; it is not an external thing: it is of His very nature and essence. Love, all love, no matter where it comes from, though it be but a spark, love is of God, true love, always. There is no other source of it, for God is love, and whosoever really loveth, not whosoever professes to love, but whosoever really loveth, is born of God, for God is love. It is natural for water to spring from the mountain side, and for the river to run into the sea. And that is like the love of God. Love is a divine quality; it is part of God Himself. God has not to make an effort to love; He is love. Just as the ocean laps the shore of the farthest convict isle, and the shore of the summer resting-place, just as the sun floods the whole earth with life, and shines through iron bars, bringing light and hope even into a prison cell, just as the ether fills all space, you have but to open the windows and let it in—so the love of God fills everything.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

It is of the very nature of God to love; He cannot help it. He has but to let Himself be known, and He is known in love. There are severer aspects of the divine character. We speak of His justice, of His truth, of His righteousness, of His faithfulness, of His power; but these are but colours of the spectrum; these are but elements in the divine totality, making Him what He is. And in their fullest combination their name is love.

The surgeon's lancet, the physician's bitter draught seem to be unkind, and even cruel, but they are directed by a hand of love. The unkindest of all parents is the parent that knows no righteousness, and no truth, and no justice. The cruelest of all governments must be the government from whose administration these elements have been deleted. True love takes account of all the facts of life and deals with them; hence "all things work together for good to them that love God".

We are not to think of the love of God as an occasion, a spasmodic manifestation of His character; but we are to remember that He is the very foundation of it; and because God is what He is, He loves us. Hence He is

speaking out of the depths of His own nature when He says, "I have loved thee".

That being so, in the nature of the case *His love must be everlasting*. It is not a sudden impulse. This text is not speaking of an isolated act; it speaks of that which God is, and which is like God, part of God, and from everlasting to everlasting He is love, and therefore His love must be an everlasting love. Do you not see, dear friends, that we have no reason to fear that God will cease to love us?

I selected our lesson this morning mainly for the first verse: "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." God being what He is, He cannot change; He is always the same.

And if love be of the divine essence, then it must be like Himself, everlasting. This is a record, not only of an abiding attitude, but of an essential quality of deity. He always loved us. What a God we have! Just think for a moment what effects a change of love, or of an attitude of affection, as between two or more human beings. A person loves, and by and by the love dies down, and ceases to be. The love may even be changed to hate. Now where is the change? "Well", you say, "it is a change in the lover himself or herself. The love is not constant; it has ceased to radiate from that person." Why? "Because its object is changed. The man or woman, the person loved, was worthy, or supposed to be, and now some unworthiness has been discovered, and that affection has gradually diminished." Do you see what that argues? It argues a want of knowledge in the lover. He or she could not have known everything. But there is no lack of knowledge with God. You cannot come to Him after a hundred years and say, "I have discovered some new thing in myself that I am afraid God has not anticipated; did not know." He says, "I knew all about that." The brethren of Joseph, if I may refer to that history again, thought they had a tale to tell to the governor. They thought they had some information to give; but he knew all about it before they told him. Whatever depths of depravity we may discover in ourselves, whatever new element of unworthiness there may be latent in us, and at last revealed so that we may say to ourselves, "That is enough to dampen, if not to extinguish the love of God", it cannot do so because He knew all about it before you did, and His love is everlasting; it is not turned away because of any change in us. And of course it cannot be turned away because of any change in Him. He never gets tired loving us. He is never—strictly speaking—disappointed, because He sees the end from the beginning. A mother cannot see the whole career of her child, nor a father either; but God does. He sees the end from the beginning. Let us rejoice in that assurance that we have a God Who is unchanged by circumstances, or even by our own record, by anything we ever have done or can do. The love of God abides; it is like Himself.

He has loved us with an everlasting love. No other kind of love emanates from God. He does not change His mind. How disappointed we have been with people! How fickle, how changeable, and how disappointing! And other people have been disappointed in us, I dare say. It has been mutual. I remember hearing a man so describe another man years ago, and the phrase struck me at the time. He said, "So-and-So is a very disappointing man." He was not referring to a particular act

at the time, but he was speaking of his outward demeanour. It was so different from what he really was, and as people got to know him better they were continually being disappointed in new discoveries of his fickleness. That does not apply to any one man: it applies to us all. What a disappointing lot of people we are! Is there any man or woman here this morning who can stand up and say, "I never change; I never disappointed anyone. I am always the same, always pursue the same course. Other people have changed, but I never do." Is there anyone like that here? You had better not stand up and say so, because I am afraid I should have to tell you something if you did. We have all disappointed others. But God is always the same.

III.

And this attitude which is an expression of that essential quality, attribute, as I have called it, HAS ISSUED IN A PARTICULAR ACT: "Therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee". God cannot remain apart from His people. His love goes out after them. Love always does. Love does not stay at home. "Out of sight, out of mind". Not where there is true love, not by any means, because love finds its object even though it has to go to the end of the earth. And even so the love of God has gone out after us, and with lovingkindness He has drawn us.

Are you a Christian? Are you sure of it? I will tell you why if you are. It is not because, as perhaps you have sometimes said, you started out to serve the Lord: it is because God drew you to Himself. You see that doctrine in the first verse: "At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people"—not, if they behave themselves, not if—if—if: no; "they SHALL be". Our Lord Jesus said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." If you are a Christian it is not because you came to God of yourself, but because He drew you. You know the story of the little Scotch boy who, when interviewed for church membership, was asked what he had done toward his own salvation. He said "I kicked all I could, and the Lord did the rest." That is true. It is sovereign grace that has enlightened our understandings, and disposed our hearts and our wills toward God. And thus He has drawn us to Himself. You have nothing to boast about. That is the perpetual marvel to the believer.

I wonder if there is someone here who is not a Christian this morning, who will say, "That is rather difficult doctrine for me, sir, I am not a Christian. And I do not like to hear you talk about God as drawing people, because suppose He did not draw me? If I cannot save myself, and I am entirely dependent on God, what shall I do?" But you do not want to be saved, do you? You do not want God, do you? You do not care anything about the forgiveness of sins, do you? You are not concerned about a right relationship to God, are you? If your answer is in the negative, and you say, "No, I do not want God", then you have no ground for objection, have you? You do not want to be drawn. But if, in your heart, you say, "The reason I object is because I should like to be included. I really wish that were said of me: 'I have loved thee'. I wish I could be sure that I am included in that programme: 'With lovingkindness have I drawn thee'." You really wish that, do you? You

really have a heart toward God, and you are feeling out after Him? "Yes." Then, that is the first evidence that He is drawing you. If He had left you to yourself you never would care anything about Him. If, indeed, you have any interest in this matter, and any desire Godward, it is only a proof that God has first of all set His love upon you, and by His Spirit, in ways you do not understand, He is operating on your heart, and drawing you to Himself.

See *what a foundation for faith that is!* If my desire toward God were but an impulse, and if I had to say, "I really should like to be a Christian to-day. I really wish this matter were settled to-day"—if it were wholly a human desire, unrelated to the operation of the Spirit of God, I should have to say, "I am afraid of to-morrow. I do not know what I may be like to-morrow. I may not want God to-morrow." But when I have come to see that that desire within has been divinely created, that it is a bit of God's work, and that my heart has been warmed—you remember Wesley said, their hearts were "strangely warmed". You have turned on your radio to get something, and you got a station, but there was not a sound for a second, or perhaps a minute, until the radio was warmed, and then the vibrations of the ether poured in upon it, and it became articulate and you heard a voice from afar. Thus the heart is warmed by the Spirit of God; and if that be so, and you are conscious of that this morning, then that is the beginning of God's love in you. It is the beginning of a divine work of grace.

Did we not say just now that whatsoever God does is like Himself, and shall be for ever? "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever." And so if it be really God's work, God's grace in me drawing me, then I shall begin to understand the meaning of everlasting love.

How wonderfully God draws us! He draws us by *giving us an understanding*. There was a time when you did not understand; later truth came to you almost like the dawning of the day. First of all you began to see things in a shadow, even, perhaps, men like trees walking. But more and more the divine light poured upon your darkened understanding. You had not known your understanding was dark, but you said, "I think I understand", "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." You understand, do you? No teacher, no human teacher, ever made you understand. Only the Holy Ghost can do that. And if now you begin to understand, it is because God has set His love upon you, and loved you with an everlasting love, and said, "I love that man"; "I love that woman". Therefore He pours His light into your mind so that you may understand.

And then *He begins, too, to make you feel something of the nature of sin, the horror of it*. I remember dear Brother O'Brien, a nonagenarian, who used to come here Sunday evenings. He told me several times, not remembering that he had told it me before, a story that was very sweet to him. When working in a mission here in the City, one night after he had spoken, a man who was almost a reprobate, a poor wretched creature, came to him and said, "O, Mr. O'Brien, I should like to be a better man!" That is repentance;

that is the work of the Spirit of God, when He puts into our hearts a genuine desire to be better men, to turn away from evil, and to turn to God. And so our hearts are touched until we feel that we love, just a little first of all, the good, and hate, just a little first of all, the evil; but these emotions are intensified as the process of sanctification goes on. Then He touches our wills and makes us obedient to His call, He draws us with lovingkindness: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The man hears, perhaps, a sermon, or perhaps just a text of scripture, but the truth of scripture in any case; and hearing, he believes. And not knowing the origin of it, he says, "I heard so and so, and that led me to believe." No; no! not of itself, this is the philosophy of believing: "Therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

One of our brethren had a severe accident last week, and I was speaking to his wife last night. She said to me, "It was very trying, and very severe, but with it all we are both conscious that the Lord is drawing us closer to Himself by His providential dealings with us." By what He takes away, sometimes by afflictions, by adversities of many sorts, he draws us to Himself.

Have you come? Chiefly, and finally, *He draws us by giving us a view of Jesus Christ as the one Who died in our room and stead*. There is a scripture that I am inclined to think is partially misapplied, the scripture which says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." That is sometimes quoted as though it referred to the preaching of the gospel. It does not. It is true that as Christ is magnified in the preaching of the gospel God does use His word to draw men to Himself. But you remember that was when the Greeks came to Jesus, and when He refused to see them. And we are specifically told that He said these words, signifying by what death He would glorify God. It was His announcement that He was not going to die by the hand of an assassin, at the pleasure of men: but He would die in His own way, at His own time, and He would choose even the method of His death. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And He is going to hang on a tree, and He knows it. And He says, "When I die, I shall be lifted up from the earth, and if I be lifted up, by that fact, and by the power released by that uplifting, I will draw all men unto me."

It was by the death and resurrection of Christ, that consummation of His eternal plan of redemption, that the powers of grace were set free for God, the just, the righteous God, to draw all men unto Himself. And it is the Holy Spirit that leads the grown man with a disciplined mind, an enlightened understanding, a well-informed judgment, a thoroughly instructed man, to yield at last to the truth of this word. Is that how God draws? Yes; if such a man be the one whom He draws. And then there is the little child, only a little one, who says when you ask him, Are you a Christian? "Yes". What makes you think you are a Christian? Oh, I have had so many of these dear children say it to me,—"Because I love Jesus." You do? And why do you love Jesus? "Because He died for me." Not as clearly, perhaps, as the grown man, not as clearly as Saul of Tarsus, the great scholar so thoroughly instructed in the Old Testament scriptures, not as clearly at the first as he understood the cross, does

that little child understand it, but he does understand. All that store of knowledge in the mind of Saul of Tarsus was like a library in a dark room with no sunlight, and no light of any kind, volume upon volume, tome upon tome was there, but suddenly the light shone and all that was there could be read. So when the Apostle saw the light he understood why He died, and why He rose again. But the little child understands it too. And whoever finds his mind and heart open to the reception of this truth that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures", whoever yields to that experiences the gracious operation of the Spirit as recorded in this Book.

"With lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Are you glad you are a Christian? Perhaps you have not got very much. Perhaps you are having a hard time. If you are in business your customers are not running after you exactly, are they? You say, "No; these are hard times. Everything is awry." But let us forget that for a moment, and come back to my question, Are you a Christian? Are you sure of it? "Oh, yes." Do you know why? Because God drew you. And do you know why He drew you? Because He loves you, and because He has always loved you. "He that dwelleth in the secret of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Let us pray:

Bless our meditation, Lord, this morning. So minister Thy truth to our hearts and understandings that we may know the Lord Jesus a little better, that we may have a fuller experience of the Holy Spirit's power, and that our love for the Father may be greater.

O Lord, we beseech Thee to look upon us. We are poor scholars in Thy school, dullards and dunces, all of us. We wonder at Thy mercy, but we rejoice in it, and we thank Thee that Thou hast loved us, and that Thou dost love us still, Amen.

OUR MOST URGENT NEED

From year to year, since the founding of Toronto Baptist Seminary, we have dared to go forward without having a cent of capital. Hitherto our needs have been supplied through the generosity of God's people. Last year we were obliged to close our books showing a considerable deficit in our Seminary account. This, of course, puts us under a great financial handicap with which to begin this year.

At this writing the enrollment promises to exceed that of last year. Three students have already arrived from Vancouver, B.C., another is on his way from France. It appears likely we shall have a larger number of new students than for some years.

Our only lack is money. Many schools have had to close for want of funds. We cannot believe any such calamity awaits the Seminary. But we must have money. How many of our readers will come to our help? Every five, ten, or twenty-five dollar contribution will help. Shall we not have hundreds of them? Perhaps some could send us a hundred dollars, or even five hundred or a thousand? Where can a more deserving object be found?

Please do not wait, send us a donation at once.

NEXT SUNDAY

Dr. Shields will preach at all services. As the holiday season is over it is hoped there will be a great rally of the entire church family in School and Church on Sunday.

THE TRUTH ABOUT MUSSOLINI

(The following article is reproduced from "The Christian Herald" for the information of those of our readers who do not see that great paper. We especially commend it to the attention of those who have associated the name of Mussolini with Anti-Christ.—Ed. G.W.).

Well-Known Protestant Missionary's Personal Experiences with the Dictator

Widely differing opinions have been expressed as to the character of Signor Mussolini, "Il Duce," the Dictator of Italy. No one can speak on the subject with greater authority, or from a larger fund of first-hand information, than Cavalier the Rev. H. H. Pullen, general director of the Spezia Mission for Italy. Mr. Pullen delivered himself thus at a recent meeting, as recorded in the monthly magazine "The Protestant Woman".

I have come almost direct from the Italian Embassy, where I have been received as one of the most representative and best-known Protestants in Italy, with the utmost courtesy and consideration.

Times have changed in Italy. Most of you will know that things began to mend, and the light began to dawn, in Italy in 1870, when Garibaldi accomplished that great task of welding those broken, quarrelling little nations into one great modern Italy, bringing together the Republic of Venice and the Kingdom of Naples and the Duchy of Parma, and all the rest of them. He and his army marched against Rome, but were refused admittance at the Pious Gate, so they broke through the wall and the campaign brought the Pope to his knees, so to speak. They wrested from him the Papal States and the temporal power. The Papal States were beautiful central provinces, rich in cities and towns, and a fertile soil—the treasure of the whole land. Garibaldi took these from the Vatican, also the city of Rome. Since that time the Popes have sulked. Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X never left the Vatican from the time they were made Popes. If they needed medical care, they had to have it at the Vatican, and, when they died, they were buried there. They would have nothing to do with Italy. The Pope would receive no one officially who came from the King of Italy. Such visitors had to go back to the Embassy of their own country and get, officially, on to their own soil and from there they might go and see the Pope—the Pope would have no "truck" whatever with Italy.

Mussolini has changed all that. "I may give you some ideas a little different from those which you have held as to what this man is, but I perhaps know him more intimately than some other Englishmen, and anybody who knows me knows that I am a Protestant of the Protestants.

Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X all declared the King of Italy a usurper, who had no right in the city of Rome, but Mussolini is determined that that state of things shall be changed.

The Protestants, after a great deal of prayer, were enabled to get into his hands a copy of the New Testament. It was a beautiful copy, delicately prepared and bound in green leather, the favourite colour of Italy; and he accepted it. A great diplomat going to see him a little later saw the book on his table. "Your Excellency, you do not read that book, do you?" he asked.

In measured terms came the reply: "That is the best book in the world, and I read it every day."

You will remember that Mussolini called the Pope to a conference, but the Pope did not come. He, however, sent a plenipotentiary who had full power to act. No doubt there were frequent consultations between him and his master in the Vatican. The decision which was made at that conference is one of deep interest.

I will express my personal opinion about this, and I will give you facts. Mussolini has given the Pope the most tremendous defeat he has ever had since 1870. He has obtained from the Vatican and definitely restored to Italy the whole of the Papal States, 138,000 square miles of the finest territory of Italy. He has wrested from the Pope the city of Rome. He has obtained his signature to a renunciation of any claim for ever, on the part of either the Pope or the Vatican, to all that district and that splendid city. He has

insisted that the first article of the Statuto, the Magna Charta of Italy, shall be changed to favour more fully the Protestants. When Garibaldi did his wonderful work, a new Magna Charta of Italy came in under which we have lived in Italy, and which gave to us a larger measure of liberty than we possessed before. You who knew Italy then, knew that the government of the Popes in the Papal States was an evil one. Dirt and immorality were rife. It was possible for a man to be imprisoned for possessing a New Testament or for carrying on family worship. That is all changed now. The first article of the Statuto of 1870 reads thus: "The Roman Catholic religion is the religion of the Italian people; other religions may be tolerated." Mussolini read his New Testament, and he found, too, that we Protestants were loyal people and people to be trusted, and he has changed that first article to read as follows: "The Roman Catholic religion is the religion of the Italian people; other religions shall be recognized." He has told the Pope quite plainly that now he has no jurisdiction in Italy, except in the City of the Vatican, where he reigns over about a square mile. He has given up 138,000 square miles and the great city of Rome, and has instead about a square mile. There he reigns as king, but not beyond that region. The surrender of the Pope was signed on February 11th, 1929, and on March 11th Mussolini made a magnificent discourse on the new liberty. He has let it be known that every single Roman Catholic priest or bishop in Italy must swear loyalty to the King first. Moreover, he made it clear that we Protestant Christians now have the right of performing the marriage ceremony in our own buildings. If any of our young friends wanted to get married, we could not marry them before. If they did not wish the priests to marry them, they had to go to the municipality, and, after a tremendous amount of red tape and humiliating procedure, they could go through a mere secular ceremony there and then come back to us for a blessing on the marriage. "It will not do," said Mussolini, and he has given to us the right to authorize our own pastors and ministers to perform the marriage ceremony in our own buildings.

It is a matter of great interest to me that when Mussolini was ill a little while ago, a girl in the Spezia Mission Orphanage, entirely trained by us, nursed him. Her mother died in a lunatic asylum, and her father died from delirium tremens. When this little girl came to us, she was a poor little thing, but we nursed her and cared for her. Then when she grew up, a wicked aunt, who was associated with an authorized house of ill fame in Italy, tried to get hold of her, but we got the right to keep her, and we trained her well and efficiently. She is to-day a cultured lady, a true Protestant Christian, and would give her testimony for her Lord and Master anywhere.

Mussolini and those under him have been most gracious and considerate to our work and to me personally. He has shown complete confidence in us. He has given to us and to all our Protestant brethren a new liberty. We have never referred any case of injustice or unfairness to him without receiving the most fair and impartial study of the situation, and for myself I have profound respect for, and confidence in, the present Dictator of Italy. Mussolini has always been courteous and loyal to the King of Italy. Everybody loves the King of Italy, but, however bright a star may be, if the glorious morning sun rises over the mountains the star becomes somewhat obscured. So whenever the King and Mussolini went to State functions together, all honour was shown to the King, but for Mussolini there was a roar of cheers and tremendous enthusiasm. Now they generally attend separate State functions, and this arrangement works beautifully.

As for Mussolini himself, his personal life is upright and honourable. Some people have compared him with Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon brought his family and his friends to the capital and surrounded them with gorgeous and expensive luxuries. Mussolini has done nothing of the kind. His wife lives quite modestly, and the children have not in any way been accustomed to pomp and luxury. Mussolini has the money bags of the country in his own hands to-day, but realizes the tremendous responsibility for the wise and honest spending of the nation's money.

Mussolini believes, rightly, that one cannot deal with a fever-stricken patient in the same way as one would with a perfectly healthy person. Italy is, so to speak, a fever-stricken patient at the present time, needing special treat-

ment. The present system is not a permanent one. Mussolini himself said: "You do not want a second Mussolini." He has expressed his warm admiration of the British constitution. You must have patience with him whilst he is breaking down the Papal power and opening up new liberty for his people. He is giving liberty of worship and abundant opportunity for the spread of the truth as it is in Jesus.

The Spezia Mission for Italy commenced as quite a small undertaking in the then little city of Spezia in 1866, inhabited by only about 7,000 people. My beloved predecessor, the Rev. Edward Clarke, with his brave sister, gathered the children together and taught them the old, old story of Jesus and His love. If they got twelve children in the first days, they were pleased, and, if twenty, they thought it most encouraging. They were people of earnest prayer and of faith, and they builded better than they knew.

THE EDITOR AT HOME AGAIN

The Editor arrived in Toronto from England Sunday evening last. He was greeted at the station by several hundred Jarvis Street people. He fully appreciated their hearty welcome. It was rather unusual perhaps, and the great crowd waiting in the station seemed to make a great impression upon "the travelling public". Thank you, Jarvis Street, your kindly heartiness is cordially reciprocated.

THE SUMMER PREACHERS

The first three Sundays were taken by Rev. W. Gordon Brown, the next two by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, and the last three by the Rev. E. E. Shields, of Chicago. Of all the services we have heard most enthusiastic reports of the people's appreciation, and of the spiritual blessing received. At practically every service there were confessions of faith, and a good number were baptized. The congregations were uniformly large, and the open-air services following the evening service each Sunday were very largely attended.

THE EDITOR IN ENGLAND

Readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS may be interested in a little sketch covering the Editor's five weeks in England.

His first Sunday in England, July 30th, was spent with Rev. Charles Fisher, M.A., at Lansdowne Hall, Norwood—which, of course, is London. Mr. Fisher is obviously doing a fine work in this church. The Editor preached three times on Sunday, a second evening service being arranged for 8.15, to afford opportunity for ministers who could not leave their own services to attend. These services were all largely attended, and greatly enjoyed—at least by the preacher. We were asked to give a further address on Monday evening, at what we supposed would be a small and informal meeting; but again the area of the building was completely filled.

The following Sunday we were at Heathfield, Kent. The building was not large, the weather was extremely warm, but the congregations were as large as the building, and were very representative in character, some coming from long distances.

Following that service we were happy to accept the invitation of Mrs. Fegan to be her guest at Goudhurst, the training farm of four hundred acres where boys from the Fegan homes are trained for farm work in Canada. The physical equipment of this farm is magnificent. The boys are well housed, and well fed; and have recently been provided through the generosity of one friend with a magnificent swimming pool. One of the most conspicuous features is the chapel in which service is held every Sunday.

On Monday we visited the Baptist Church in Bessels Green, where our own greatly beloved Deacon Greenway was baptized and married, and in the yard of which his father and mother are buried. We visited also Mr. Greenway's brother at Sevenoaks. We returned to Heathfield for Monday night, and preached once more—then back to London after the service.

The following Sunday, August 13th, we had no public engagement, but being in the midst of a motor tour we had the privilege on that day of making some "pastoral" calls on some Jarvis Street friends. In our little hired Ford we

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Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 40

October 1st, 1933

FOURTH QUARTER**THE TEMPLE BUILT AND DEDICATED**

Lesson Text: I Kings, chapters 5 to 8; I Chron. 22 to 29; II Chron. 2 to 7.

Golden Text: "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name."—I Kings 8:43.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Psalm 26:1-12.

Tuesday—Psalm 138:1-8.

Wednesday—Neh. 1:1-11.

Thursday—Eph. 2:11-22.

Friday—Matt. 6:1-15.

Saturday—John 17:1-10.

I. PREPARING TO BUILD THE TEMPLE, (5:1-18).

Before any building can be erected preparations must be made and material placed on the ground in accordance with some well-defined plan. The plan of the temple was fundamentally the same as that of the tabernacle with its two main compartments, known as holy, and most holy places, with certain additions, and of a more abiding nature. The material for its construction could best be secured in the territory of the Phoenicians, and we are informed of the arrangements for the same. First we are told of the friendship of Hiram, king of Tyre, for David, and of his message of condolence and congratulation sent to Solomon after his accession to the throne, (v. 1) following which the record is given of Solomon's request for the necessary material for his building, (vs. 2-6), the agreement of Hiram to furnish this and the contract entered into by the two to their mutual satisfaction for the services rendered, (vs. 7-12), the levy of Solomon upon his people for the carrying on of the work, (vs. 13-16), and the greatness of the foundation stones, (vs. 17, 18). Note the greatness of the preparations, the thorough nature of the organization, and the political daring, power, and wisdom manifest in the levy. The last characteristic is manifest in the arrangement for the men to be at home two months out of three. This would tend to quell any discontent which might arise from forced absence from the country.

II. BUILDING THE TEMPLE, (6:1-38).

Following these extensive and careful preparations, the building of the temple was begun. The date of this important event is stated, (v. 1), followed by the dimensions, (vs. 2, 3), and general description of its various parts. It was not a very large building in comparison with the structures of the present day, but it would doubtless then be esteemed a fair size. It was a very beautiful and costly building, however, as even a cursory glance at the list of the material of con-

struction will testify. Large and finely finished stones were used in its erection, expensive and beautiful wood lined its inner walls, with splendid carvings thereon, and this again was overlaid with gold, so that this metal alone was seen within the holy building. This was carrying out the same plan as that followed in the making of the tabernacle, where the boards which constituted its sides were overlaid with gold, (Ex. 36:34). This was a significant finish, implying not only the desire of the king to enhance the beauty of the structure, and to magnify the precious nature, and sacred purpose, but typically as the royal, most precious metal it speaks to us of the glory where dwelleth the Lord God Almighty. Being associated with His dwelling place, and with His nature, it is but fitting that it should be used in His earthly dwelling place. In the erection of the building "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house", (v. 7). This implies that all parts of the building were prepared in advance, in accordance with a definite plan, and each piece was fitted into its own place. In the spiritual temple the same is true. That building is composed of saved persons, (Eph. 2:19-22), the work of building is proceeding now, only prepared people are built into it, the structure is most precious and costly, and its purpose is the glory of God, (Eph. 2:22). Observe the message of God to Solomon while the work was proceeding, (vs. 11-13). Warning and encouragement are found in it, the latter in the promise of God to fulfil His word, and dwell among His people, the former in the condition laid down. Men are so weak naturally that the most of them have their heads turned by prosperity, or personal accomplishment, and Solomon is warned respecting the necessity for obedience in order to the continuance of blessing. The time was fitting for this reminder in the midst of his success. Note the time spent in the building operations, (vs. 37, 38).

III. SOLOMON'S PALACE, AND TEMPLE VESSELS OF BRASS, (7:1-51).

Some rulers are famous for the wars in which they have engaged, as in the case of David; others for achievements in the domestic sphere; but Solomon has gained his fame chiefly from the manifestation of wisdom, but also on account of his building operations. His temple was his chief accomplishment in this line, but not the only one of importance, for he also erected a palace, and several other buildings. These were also beautiful and costly, particularly the former building, (vs. 1-12). It appears to have been a fitting place for the abode of a king of a prosperous people. The record of the making of temple vessels is of interest historically. Relative to them, information is given concerning the man in charge of the work, (vs. 13, 14), then the various articles made, with a description of each, relating to the pillars of brass, (vs. 15-22), the molten sea (vs. 23-37), and the lavers, (vs. 38, 39), the chapter ending with a recapitulation of the work done, (vs. 40-51). In the making of these articles no expense was spared, there was nothing too good for the Lord's house, and the finished ap-

pearance of all was one of beauty in keeping with the gorgeous building in which they were to be received.

IV. THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, (8:1-66).

Eleven months after its completion, at the time of the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, the temple was dedicated with suitable ceremony, (vs. 3; 6:38; Lev. 23:34). The first part of the service pertained to the depositing of the tabernacle with its various vessels in the new building, (vs. 1-11). The leaders of the nation, and a great concourse of people were assembled for this purpose, (vs. 1, 2), and in solemn procession, the priests and Levites carrying the vessels, they were transferred to the sacred edifice, and placed in position in the same, (vs. 3-9). After this was done, and the priests had left the place a cloud filled the house, so that they could not carry on their duties "for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord", (vs. 10, 11). This was a sign of the divine approval and evidence of the divine presence. Note the pillar of cloud which at first filled, and then covered the tabernacle, (Ex. 40:34-38).

Solomon was the chief celebrant at the dedication, and took charge of the proceedings. His first action after the descent of the cloud was publicly to acknowledge the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His word respecting the building of the temple, (vs. 12-21), after which he offered the dedicatory prayer. Concerning this, note certain things. First the posture of Solomon, (vs. 22, 54), then his praise for the faithfulness of God, (vs. 23, 24), his reference to the greatness of God, (v. 27), and his request for answered prayer on several possible future occasions, as when trespass would be committed against a neighbour, (vs. 31, 32), when the people of Israel would be smitten before the enemy, (vs. 33, 34), when heaven would be shut up, and there would be no rain, (vs. 35, 36), in the time of famine or pestilence, (vs. 37-40), in the case of a stranger in the land of Israel, (vs. 41-43), and the people in battle and captivity, (vs. 43-53). In this prayer God is magnified, his faithfulness is praised, and supplication is made on behalf of others. Note, in addition, Solomon's humility, reverence, definiteness, holy boldness and confidence. Explanation should be made of the nature, necessity, and blessed results of prayer.

At the conclusion of his prayer, Solomon arose from his knees and blessed the people, (vs. 54-61). Note his statement concerning the faithfulness of God, (v. 56), his expressed desire for the presence of God with Israel, (v. 57), and his exhortation to the people to walk in obedience to the divine statutes, (v. 61). Following this, burnt offerings, meal offerings, and peace offerings were offered, and a great feast was held in which the assembled host participated, and these returned home "glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people", (vs. 62-66). Note should be made of the fact of joy in the service of the Lord. Christians are called upon to rejoice evermore, (I Thess. 5:16), and our Lord's desire for His disciples was that they might be full of joy, (John 15:11).

The Union Baptist Witness

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THE CONVENTION

On September 30th, 1933, the Convention Year of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec closes.

The necessary report forms are being mailed to the churches earlier than formerly and this year, to facilitate the compilation of statistics for presentation at the Convention meetings, it is suggested that the churches make their reports as at the end of August, 1933, giving figures from September to August, rather than from October to September.

The CONVENTION DATES are October 24th, 25th and 26th. The MEETING PLACE is Toronto in the Jarvis Street Baptist Church. The GUEST SPEAKER is Dr. Albert G. Johnson of Detroit, Michigan.

A NEWSY, NEWSY LETTER

Liberian Events

This letter begins on July 20th and ends upon August 5th and it is from our missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. Hancox who are stationed at New Cess. It, however, takes us on a visit to Geah Bar Zondo and contains much of interest.

"Dear Folks", it begins, "What would you do, if you were a missionary in Liberia, and received an urgent invitation to spend a little time up at Geah Bar Zondo? You see one gets spring fever even in this land and although we have no spring, (not even in our mattresses) we get the desire to go places, but there is usually no place to go.

"How much we would all like to accept this kind invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Mellish, but we don't know how to manage it. For one thing, although it hasn't rained for days, we never know when it will start and make the roads

impassable, and then we are still busy repairing the old house, so that if new missionaries come soon, things will be ready for them. Because of these things, we feel we must postpone our visit for a while.

"Saturday was a great day in the Mission for the children. Some of our flour had gone punky and nothing could be done with it. This time there were no worms in it but all its pep seemed to have gone and anything in which it was used was spoiled, no matter how one tried the finished product was really awful. We had two seven pound tins which were useless and so we gave them to the boys to make fritters and they made them too, evidently excellent ones, with no eggs, no baking-powder, no milk, and yet they had batter up to their elbows. Their recipe was soda and salt with enough water to mix the batter. They begged palm oil to fry them and when the oil is sizzling hot in go the fritters and they come out a golden brown. The delicacies were divided with the girls and all had a real picnic."

The letter is continued upon another day—"It has been quite chilly to-day and it has rained. Some of the boys were not able to get to the creek to bathe and so asked permission to warm water for a bath. Permission was granted and they greatly enjoyed it, while the rain beat down in torrents. They had no towels, soap or dusting powder, but emerged as happy as though they had enjoyed all the frills. These Bassa people are very particular about their ablutions and at least once a day bathe.

"Our boys killed a boa-constrictor, outside Miss Lane's house, yesterday. It was about a month old and had just dined upon a rat. It measured three or four feet in length, but they grow to be

twenty-five feet long and a foot in diameter. Full grown they will swallow a deer, then go in the bush to sleep. We are told that they do not bite, but crush their victims to death. This is another snake story but it illustrates God's watchful care over us at all times. Miss Lane was busy raking up some grass near her house at the time.

"Kanga and Joseph returned from their preaching tour on Monday. They were tired, but oh so happy, having told the Story in a good many towns.

"Now it is July 24th. We have just said farewell to Kanga and Joseph who are continuing their trip. We are happy to let them go, we wish you could hear Kanga preach, he has a real passion for souls.

"We did not have as many at Church yesterday, due to the fact of the heavy rains, but both of us had great liberty in giving out the Word. (Mr. Hancox in preaching and Mrs. Hancox with the Sunday School). The children are greatly interested in the blackboard talks and they also have a Sword Drill. There was wonderful attention at the service and we pray that God may use the Word, as a sharp sword to their hearts."

The latter part of the letter is written from the Geah Bar Zondo Station where a conference of the missionaries was being held. Further items will be given next week.

LINDSAY

The Lindsay Regular Baptist Church reports times of refreshing. Prayer-meetings, Bible Study Classes, Open Air work and the Sunday services are truly blessed and the church is looking forward to building in the near future.

THE EDITOR IN ENGLAND

(Continued from page 6)

went from London to Bristol; thence to Birmingham, where we visited some of our Jarvis Street boys now living there; then going south to Torquay and Paignton, to visit a former deacon of Jarvis Street Church and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. J. Laing-Stocks; and from thence back again to London.

On the 20th and the evening of the 21st we preached in St. John's Free Church, Tunbridge Wells, to large congregations. On the 23rd we preached in Highgate Road Baptist Church, seating perhaps eight hundred or eight hundred and fifty; and although it was August, and very hot weather for London, the church was full. Included in the audience were many ministers. By the suggestion of Rev. John Wilmot, the Pastor, an offering was taken for Toronto Baptist Seminary which amounted to twenty-seven pounds.

The following evening Trinity Road Baptist Church, of which Rev. Henry Oakley has been Pastor for thirty-six years, was not only filled, but crowded—in fact, it might literally be said to have been packed, with hundreds turned away.

The last Sunday, August 27th, was spent in Central Hall, Bromley, preaching morning and evening, where again, we

feel confident, the power of the Lord was present to heal. Thus within the space of five Sundays we managed fourteen preaching services.

Through the medium of THE GOSPEL WITNESS we would tender our apology to as many WITNESS readers as, up to this date, have waited in vain for replies to their letters. We greatly appreciated the kindness of friends, but letters poured in in such numbers that it was a physical impossibility to acknowledge them without utterly abandoning the purpose of our visit to England, namely, a vacation. We shall write to each of these friends personally from home. Meanwhile, those who are reached by this will understand that, without secretarial help, it was impossible to keep up with the letters.

We had delightful fellowship with a number of ministers, among whom were Revs. Percy Hicks, Editor of *The Christian Herald*; John Wilmot, Pastor of Highgate Road Church; Chas. Fisher, and more briefly, Henry Oakley and others.

We are grateful to the friends and organizations in nearly every part of the United Kingdom and in Ireland from whom we received cordial invitations to preach. At this writing we do not presume to make any comment upon conditions in England, but are content just to give this brief outline of our holiday weeks.