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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ONCE MORE—WHY DID CHRIST DIE?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 8th, 1933.

(Stenographically reported)

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Eastern Standard Time.

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John 10:17, 18.

I ask you this evening to think with me once again for a little while on the great central truth of the Christian revelation, which is the mystery of the death of Jesus Christ. I suppose there can be no question that it is the central truth. Paul summed up the gospel in these words, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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."

This subject has often engaged our thought; and yet because it is a sacred secret, because so much of mystery still surrounds it, it is always a subject of fruitful study. From the day that Christ died at the place called Calvary until now men have been busy trying to understand and explain His death; and though many centuries have passed I suppose I should be well within the mark were I to say that never in the world's history were so many people engaged in the study of the death of Christ, seeking to understand its significance, as there are to-day.

Where shall we begin, then, with such a subject as this? What shall be our point of approach? In all thought-processes something must be assumed. We can never arrive anywhere in our thinking if we do not begin somewhere. What is to be the "somewhere" from which we are to proceed this evening in an examination of this indisputable historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth died?

We may begin by assuming that His death is a fact of history. There is no dispute about that. Jesus of Nazareth lived—and died. I think I may say, too—and

I am not asking you to believe it for the moment, but merely to assume it for the sake of argument—that it is the consensus of historical Christian interpretation that Christ, in some mysterious way, did actually die for our sins "according to the scriptures".

In what sense did He die for our sins? Why was it necessary for Him thus to die? By whose or what order or arrangement did He die? Surely we may assume that Jesus Christ Himself understood why He was to die, that He knew the significance of His own death.

I.

On the basis of these assumptions, and in the light of these verses which form our text, we may begin with the observation that THE DEATH OF CHRIST WAS EFFECTED BY THE OPERATION OF THE DIVINE WILL. His death was no accident; whatever occasioned it, His death was in accord with the divine programme. His life was laid down by divine command.

Why, then, was He commanded to die? Certainly *not because of any worthiness of death in Him*. His enemies found it impossible to charge any fault to His account. Even the judge who gave sentence that He should die, first declared, "I find in him no fault at all." The absolute sinlessness of the person of Jesus Christ is surely beyond dispute. He lived under the white light of publicity, He was subject always to the most careful scrutiny of His discerning and determined enemies, and yet even these, with all their envious ingenuity, failed to register against Him one single error, or to find that He was in any respect at fault. Yet He died.

It is not difficult to account for His death on the ground of human passion, for He was envied by those who were themselves teachers of religion. It is never difficult to account for the opposition presented to any man of distinction. There will always be found men to envy him; men to seek to destroy him, and to remove him from their path to prominence. Pilate "knew that for envy they had delivered him". On that ground His death is easily explicable. But when it is said that He died by divine command, and when in the words of another scripture we learn that He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"; when we know and are assured that all these human elements and all the circumstances of the case were subject to the sovereign will of the divine Ruler, and that the cross was the outworking of an eternal plan conceived in the mind of God before the worlds were made, and that in spite of all, this sinless, this absolutely holy, Man Who had done nothing worthy of death, did actually die, we face a problem.

Considered as an event apart, of itself, without relationship or explanation, the death of Jesus of Nazareth constitutes an impeachment of the moral government of the universe. A faultless man ought not to die. A man who had never committed sin should never have suffered as a transgressor,—if, indeed, His death can ever be understood by viewing it as a single, unrelated, historical event, having no bearing upon the lives of men.

It could not be that He died *because He was unloved of the Father*. How indescribably lovely He was! When He began His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth, when He took the holy book and read therefrom a prophecy which He claimed found its fulfilment in His own person and ministry, the people "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth". As they listened to Him again and again it was ever the verdict that "never man spake like this man". It is no wonder the spouse prophetically declared, "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

How easy it must have been, in the days of His flesh, to love Jesus Christ! How marvellously attractive a personality His was! And His character was as winsome as His person; while His conduct, the deeds which characterized His life, were as lovely as was He Himself: "He went about doing good." If there be love in heaven at all, if there be any element of love in the Divine Nature, it must have found its affinity in Jesus Christ; it must have been lavished upon Him. He must have been the Father's Well-Beloved. For who could do other, were his heart freed from all envy and jealousy, and purged from every semblance of evil,—who could do other than fall in love with Jesus Christ? And yet He died! And His death was by divine command, according to the plan of God. He had received commandment to lay down His life.

You see therefore that if again you look upon Jesus Christ as a man apart, I mean apart from any suggestion of federal relationship, as being a character of history, a mere human personality appearing on the stage of time and disappearing again, and if by common consent He surpassed all humans the world did ever know, and yet died by divine order, we should be forced to the conclusion that there were no love in heaven; for if God could not love Him, He could love nobody. Then would

the cross of Christ impugn the love of God, as well as His justice. And of course that deeper word which comprehends all moral qualities blended together proportionately, harmoniously, into a perfect whole, that great incomparable word, "holy" or "holiness", could not be predicated of God, if, ordering the death of Christ, He ordered it for Himself alone. There must be some reason why Jesus Christ died.

No human death in all the long span of human history has ever commanded the attention of men as has the death of Christ; and, considered apart from its religious significance, as an historical event of incomparable influence, pervading all nations, perpetuated through all the ages—even viewed from that standpoint, the death of Christ must challenge the attention of all thoughtful men.

His character provides a problem. There was nothing in Him that could justify His death; and, at the same time, justify a divine government which permitted Him to be slain. You cannot set aside this fact of history as though it were something that could easily be disposed of. It is difficult to explain on ordinary grounds.

II.

Very well, then, we come to this further observation which grows out of the words of our Lord Himself, that His death was not only divinely ordered, but WAS CONSEQUENT UPON HIS OWN VOLUNTARY OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE PLAN AND WILL. He Himself said that He would lay down His life, and that He would lay it down because He had received a divine command so to do. — He explains His own death on the ground that He is, and would continue to be, in harmony with the divine government. Having received His Father's command, He is obedient to it, and will therefore of His own volition, without compulsion from heaven above or earth beneath, of His own accord, go to the cross, and there surrender His life.

That is a strange statement. It is not a virtue for any man to throw his life away. There is nothing heroic about the spirit that commits suicide. In moments of petulance and weakness, a great many people talk nonsense in that respect. Even so great a man as Elijah said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." But the suicide is always inherently a coward, blind to the future, careless of consequences. He seeks to escape from his present difficulties by the shortest and quickest route. So foolish is it that it would be impossible in our day to find a court of justice anywhere to bring in the ancient verdict of *felo de se*, or self-murder. It is generally assumed that a man who, of himself, to no purpose, takes his own life, must be mentally unbalanced.

But there never was such a mind as that of Christ. There never was such a massive intellect, if one may thus speak without irreverence of Him Who was God Incarnate. But, viewing His human nature only, there was no weakness in Him. Yet He laid down His life, and laid it down of Himself. What must have been the inspiring motive to lead Him to such an act as this?

Then we are assured too, that *there was no human power—or satanic power either—that could take His life away*. All the power of the religious world, augmented by the power of Rome, was impotent to terminate the life of Him Who was made "after the power of an indissoluble life". His life was not subject to death: He only hath immortality. As the Father hath life in Himself, so did He give to the Son to have life in Himself;

and there was no power on earth, no power in hell, that could cut His life short.

Frequently have I quoted it—and frequently shall I quote it to the end of the chapter—this great and challenging statement of His, this defiant word. When certain of the Pharisees came to Him saying, "Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee", He replied, "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem—Tell Herod I have chosen the time, the place, and the manner of My death, and that I hereby challenge earth and hell to interfere with my programme." The place of sacrifice was appointed, and the method of His death foreordained; and there was no power on earth that could accelerate or retard His movement in respect to the fulness of time. How therefore will you explain the death of Christ?

There is another problem. *How can you explain His manifest horror at the approach of death?* He willed to die. He would lay down His life in obedience to the Father's will; and by the grace and power of the Holy Ghost that was in Him, He would abide in perfect concord with the will of Heaven. And He knew that it was His Father's will that He should die: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." He came to die. Yet He was filled with horror at the approach of death. He did not court it, nor covet it. Many a martyr has done so. I have seen many people who, after a long and torturing illness, have welcomed death. One of our members said to me last week, "I am praying every hour that the Lord will terminate my suffering, and call me home." She was eager to depart, and to "be with Christ, which is far better."

Nor was our Lord without the expectation of that which lies beyond, for He said, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." The pen of inspiration tells us at a later time that "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God". Notwithstanding, the cross was hard to endure, and the shame was not lightly despised. How do you explain it? For He said to His disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." Or again, when He said to the Father, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"—as though God, in some strange way, had permitted His perfect human nature to speak with the greatest possible spiritual intelligence respecting the significance of His death, as He came face to face with the cross and saw the horror of it, whatever that was; the meaning of it, whatever it was: When He saw it He seemed almost to appeal to Heaven, as though He would say, "If there be any other way than this, let it be found."

But there was no other way. That He was permitted to drink the cup, of which He later said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it", must surely prove that there was no other way.

But what was the way ordained? What was there in His approaching death that differentiated it from all other deaths, that made the bravest spirit that ever was found in human breast almost quail in horror and apprehension? There was something in the death of Christ

that made it unique. Napoleon is reported to have said on one occasion, "Alexander, Charlemagne, and myself, founded empires, but upon what did we found the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ Himself alone founded His empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would still die for Him."

But what love? What kind of love was it? Unless there was some deep necessity for His death, unless there was some profound, underlying reason in the moral government of things for the death of Jesus Christ, how can it be a manifestation of love, or of justice, or of mercy? Do not tell me that He was commanded to make advent to this world, to take upon Himself our flesh, to be made under the law and to live under the law, in obedience to its precepts, merely for the sake of setting up an example how to live, and how to die. If that had been all there was in immediate prospect at the end of His brief life, so purely, so perfectly lived, leaving Him without one reason for regret, and with a prospect of immediate return to His Father's presence before Him, there could have been no reason for His fear of death. It would have been but the vestibule to glory. There must have been something more than ordinary mortality in the death of Christ.

III.

I think we have it in the text, THAT THE DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS IN SOME WAY THAT HUMAN REASON CAN NEITHER UNDERSTAND NOR EXPLAIN, MINISTERED TO THE DIVINE SATISFACTION, TO THE PEACE AND UNITY OF THE GODHEAD. This is a great word—have you thought of it? "Therefore doth my Father love me,—not because I have kept His law, not because I have failed at every point to displease Him in the slightest particular, not that, but—therefore doth my Father love me"—with a love that is unique, with a love that is comparable to no other love—"therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life."

It is as though Jesus Christ said, "The ground of harmony, of perfect satisfaction, as between the elements of the Godhead, these three subsistencies in one divine Person, is that which is accomplished by My death. That is the thing which ministers supreme satisfaction to God Himself, that I die, that I lay down My life."

I wonder can we understand anything of that from our own constitution? I know what imperfect representations of the ideal we are. I know that the divine image in us has been so marred that it is no longer discernible. I know that we have lost our moral sensitiveness, and that we can dwell in the presence of moral evil, if it be not too exaggerated, without great discomfort, at least without torture of soul. I know that it cannot be said of the holiest man who ever lived that he is or was "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst, or could, not look on iniquity". But we do know something of the complexity of our own natures, we do know what it is to be torn within ourselves by conflicting emotions. We know how conscience argues against the affections, and the affections against the judgment, and the judgment against these two, and all of them against each other, until there is chaos in our breasts. How seldom is there a course of action of which a man's conscience, his affectional nature, his judgment, all the elements of his being, approve! If a man could say, "My whole nature approves of what I do", his course would give him a bit of heaven upon

earth. The man who could find no single act of his life against which his conscience protests, would be greatly to be envied.

You remember the conflicting emotions as revealed in the nature of God Himself, when using the name "Ephraim" and "Israel" interchangeably in speaking of His people, and referring to "Admah" and "Zeboim", two of the cities which perished in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, He contemplates the possibility of giving His people up to a similar judgment. He communes with Himself. Justice demands one course, while mercy pleads against it: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."

The atonement effected in our behalf by the death of Jesus Christ makes it possible for God to be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth on Jesus Christ. The atonement that is in Christ is an *at-one-ment*. That is true enough. It does involve the principle of reconciliation as well as of expiation; but it is an *at-one-ment* that not only makes man at one with God, but makes God at one with Himself; it enables Him without any violation of His own nature to save the sinner and yet punish the sin. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life."

I cannot explain that. That is beyond human understanding. I said just now that there was enough in the life of Jesus to make Him beloved of God and man, but here He tells us of that higher, superior, holier—if I may so say—love of Him which was founded on the fact of His death, and the circumstances thereof. "Because of that, my Father loves me."

It was for His sheep. "I lay down my life for the sheep." It was all for us. If this be true, what then ought your attitude and mine toward the death of Christ to be? If indeed that which it accomplished is the divine masterpiece, if it be so that

"God in the person of His Son
Hath all His mightiest works outdone",

if in Him and through Him the heart of God finds satisfaction in the certainty, the divine certainty, of the ultimate realization of the divine ideal of making man in His own image; if it be so that when God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him"; and if it be that the marriage relation is the type, not the antitype, typical of that great fact that God Himself could not dwell alone and must therefore make somebody to share His affection, and that when sin entered, grace abounded and found a way whereby that mighty and mysterious act of His might be accomplished, that He might have a redeemed people, secured from all harm for ever that God might never be alone—if that be the Divine purpose, what folly were it to presume to question the adequacy of Christ's atoning work!

If you were in a foreign city where you did not know a word of the language, and if by some means you were to come under governmental displeasure and condemnation, and were to find yourself subject to detention which could be terminated only by the payment of a price; and if someone who knew the ways of that country and its government, who could speak their language—and yours—were in your behalf to come to pay that price—pay, to put it simply, your fine—and

if the one to receive the fine were to speak in a language which you could not understand, and your friend and benefactor were then to take from his pocket certain bills the value of which you could not understand, and if he counted them down until at last he had paid enough, and the one to whom it was paid signified satisfaction and gave command to the officer saying, "Let that man go", in such an event would you refuse your liberty because you could not understand the language? Would you refuse to glory in the fact, even though you could not form a satisfactory theory of the fact? Would you not rather say, "I cannot estimate the value of that money, I do not know whether it is much or little; I only know that it threw open the prison doors to me. I take my liberty, and bless my liberator."

When we have done our best to explain the atonement to the mental satisfaction as well as the moral repose of these complex natures of ours, we can see that beyond it all there is a field that will furnish us with food for thought, and room for examination, through all the eternal future. But while we see all that, can we not rejoice that the price is paid? Can we not accept simply, like little children, the assurance of Him Who "died for our sins according to the scriptures"? when He said, "It is finished"? The price was really paid; and God asks no more of any man than that Christ should die for him.

He died, my brother, my sister, for you. Whether you understand it or not, His death and resurrection were indispensable to your salvation, and you have not now to say, "Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it?"—Just this—"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead"—and you cannot believe that if you do not believe that He died, for it is merely the last letter of the alphabet, which includes all that has gone before. To believe in the resurrection of Christ is the acme of faith, it is the ultimate, the one thing that seals our confidence in and acceptance of all that Christ has done for us, therefore—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Let us pray:

For this full, and free, and eternally perfect, salvation we thank Thee, O Lord, to-night. With our hearts many of us do believe. There are many others here this evening who perhaps for the first time have been enabled by the grace of Thy Spirit to believe, and who do now in their hearts believe that Jesus Christ died instead of them, and was buried, and rose again, and that salvation is in Him. Give us grace, every one of us, to confess the faith that is in us, that, believing with our hearts, we may make confession of salvation. Bless this message to those who have heard by radio. May many find eternal life because they are found of the Good Shepherd. We ask it in His name, Amen.

FIRST STUDY IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, October 5th, 1933.

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

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: I Samuel, chapter 16.

Last Seminary year we concluded our course with a study of the fifteenth chapter of the first book of Samuel: we begin this evening with the sixteenth chapter. We have already covered the portion of Scripture from the first of Genesis to the fifteenth chapter of First Samuel. These lectures were all printed, and I think there are sufficient copies available so that those students who did not obtain them last season, and who want them, may be able to secure a complete set at the office.

Once again I offer a few preliminary considerations, especially for the benefit of our first-year students. Once upon a time I supposed that intellectual, educated, experienced, men might be depended upon carefully to examine every matter that was submitted to them for acceptance, and that they would, "prove all things", and "hold fast to that which is good". I have lived long enough, however, to discover that a great many people are governed by their prejudices. Only yesterday I was in conversation with a man on a certain matter, and I suggested to him that he had better hold his judgment in abeyance until he had really canvassed the situation, and was thoroughly informed on the subject in hand. We are far too ready to offer hospitality to the first suggestion that comes to us.

There are many, even in the study of the Word of God, who have accepted certain ideas in the beginning of their Christian life, and have thereafter viewed the Word of God through the media of those ideas; and, apparently, they have become almost incapable of any fair weighing of evidence, and of reaching a conclusion on the basis of the facts.

I was once rudely awakened while reading a sermon of Joseph Parker—I have read many of them, but on this occasion I was carried away by that sermon, in a kind of intellectual and spiritual rapture, when suddenly in the midst of the sermon, great man as he was, he launched out into an extravagant eulogy on the value of the "sacrament of baptism" to an unconscious child. I read that page over and over again and said, Can it be possible that a man who sees so clearly on other matters can yet be so utterly blind to the plain teaching of Scripture in respect to baptism?

But it is possible; and I urge upon students, and upon every one of you, once again the importance of letting the Bible speak for itself. Let us get rid of all prejudgments or prejudices, and come with an open mind to the Word of God, that we may learn what God the Lord would speak to us.

I wish you students would practice that. I have told it more than once, but I think I will repeat it again to you on this first Seminary evening. I have no intention of setting myself up as a standard, but I give you this experience for what it is worth. When I went to my first pastorate I was advised by my Pastor, who was my own father, not to have a commentary of any sort on my

shelves for at least five years. "Have a good Bible dictionary, a concordance, a good English dictionary, and your Bible. You will get along very well with these books for sermonic tools." Of course he advised me to read as widely as possible on general subjects, but to forego the help of books written for the elucidation of Scripture for at least five years. I said, "But I know so very little about the Bible." He admitted it, and said there was no argument on that point! Then he said, "Do not tell the people what you do not know, that would make your sermons too long. Content yourself with telling them what you do know—and be sure you know it before you presume to speak." I followed that principle, and came upon many a passage—hundreds of texts that were entirely beyond me—as they are now. I found it was necessary for me to go back into these historical portions of Scripture in order to give them their proper historical setting.

For example, when I came upon some difficult passage in one of the prophets, I had to recreate the historical setting of that passage, to familiarize myself with the history of that period, and try to understand the special circumstances, political and otherwise, in which these prophecies were born. Sometimes I had to put a text aside for months, and sometimes for years, before I felt I dared touch it at all. Meanwhile, there were plenty of simple texts upon which I could discourse for the edification of the people. I have always been glad that I formed the habit of going to the Bible first, and of listening to no other voice until I had heard God speak for Himself.

Instead of coming to the Word of God with our minds littered with the opinions of others—whether they be right or wrong is beside the point; it is for us to do independent work, to study the Book for itself—let us do our own delving. Reach your own conclusions; in later life you will have to modify some of them; but when you have formed the habit of independent study, there will then be time enough for you to consult commentaries, and to find confirmation or correction of your own views. And where and when you find your own conclusions confirmed by the best biblical scholarship, your conclusions will still be your own, and upon testimony thereto will be clothed with the authority inseparable from personal investigation and conviction.

These Old Testament scriptures are full of illustrative material. There is no book in the world so useful for the purposes of illustrating the Bible as the Bible itself. You will never get to the end of its illustrations, and they have the merit of being true—and you know they are true. And there is the additional advantage that when you use such material to illustrate the gospel, you are not only illustrating the particular principle in hand, but you are calling your hearers' attention to some other portion of Scripture, and pointing out to them another mine of wealth to which they may go later to dig for themselves. Let your sermons be biblical, full of Scripture.

Then, too, cautiously control the tendency that is sometimes very pronounced,—particularly in those who have the gift of discerning analogies to the truth of the gospel in all realms. I spoke to some of you Friday upon the necessity of cultivating your imagination, and training yourselves in the exercise of a creative faculty, so that you can create, so to speak, a world of your own for illustrative purposes. But that must be done with

discretion, and must be subject to intelligent control. There are some very amusing stories told of preachers whose bump of analogy, as the phrenologists would tell us, was evidently pretty well developed, and who were wanting perhaps in even the elementary knowledge of the Scripture which would have saved them from a good many extravagances.

Therefore, as we come to these chapters to-night, distinguish between that which is a type, and that which may legitimately be used only as an illustration. I think we shall be on the safe side if we follow this principle, of using nothing in the Old Testament as distinctively a type of New Testament doctrine unless the New Testament specifically says that it is so. The Queen of Sheba was representative of the religiously privileged people of all generations; and we have our Lord's own warrant for looking upon Solomon as a type of Christ. Jonah was mentioned as a type of Christ; as were Elijah and Elisha. The passage through the Red Sea was a type of baptism, for we have New Testament warrant for saying so: "I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Where you are without New Testament warrant for saying this or that is a type, you will be on safer ground to use it as an illustration for what it may be worth for that purpose, and thus avoid the practice common in some quarters, of building doubtful tenets upon doubtful types, which only strip the Scriptures of their authority. You must be authoritative preachers. Your teaching must be supported with the authority of a, "Thus saith the Lord." Not, "Thus thinketh this preacher", but, "Thus saith the Lord." Therefore, be sure that the Scripture teaches what you say it teaches before you undertake to instruct a congregation therein.

We have New Testament warrant for regarding David as a type of Christ, and we come, in these chapters, to a study of the life of David. "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" There are numerous passages in the New Testament which justify that view. But even then the details of David's life are so full of spiritual suggestion that you may need to restrain your type-finding propensities. We need to exercise care in these matters, lest our imaginative ingenuity should make us somewhat ridiculous.

I knew a man, a brother in a city where I was a pastor, who preached a series of sermons on, "Kingdomology". Had I not known him at all, that one word would have classified him: I knew his type of mind. One of the sub-divisions of this general subject was, "The corruption of the kingdom". Speaking to me over the telephone one day, he asked me what I thought of it. He said his text was the parable of the leaven in the meal. When I asked him what he made of it, he said leaven was error, the three measures of meal represented the saints of God, and the leaven was put in the meal until all the saints were corrupted; and the woman who put the leaven in the meal represented the Roman Catholic Church. "Then", I said, "we are all Romanized? The whole church leavened with Romanism? I believe I am a member of the church of Christ, and I am sure I am not Romanized."

That sort of thing to me makes the Word of God utterly absurd. No preacher who indulges in such fantastic interpretations could speak with authority to me.

I have heard of a certain grotesque interpretation of the parable of the good Samaritan. I forget the details of it, but at last the alleged expositor got to the two pence. I think the inn was the church. I do not know how he managed it, but he made the two pence to represent two of the deacons! It reminds one of those zealous preachers of a former generation who loved the Lord, and who preached much that was true, but who were sadly deficient both in general education, and in biblical knowledge. I heard a man in the Old Convention preach an educational sermon. I knew the man, and honoured him. He was a man of God. As for the sermon, it was very good. It was all true—but it had nothing to do with the text, and not the remotest relation to education. Apart from that, it was a good sermon!

You have heard of the man who preached on "the oyster man"? That is literally, historically, true of a certain preacher. The fishermen have certain nets for catching fish which they call pokes. On this occasion the preacher preached on "the oyster man", and on the art of fishing in general. When he got through someone came to him and said, "You were full of blunders today." "How is that?" he said. "There is nothing in the Scripture about an oyster man." (The preacher's text was, "Thou knewest that I was an austere man.") "Oh well," said he, "we got two souls in the poke anyhow!" Two people were converted. Although what he said was true, it had no relation to the text.

Be careful in your handling of the Word of God that you so speak as to make your hearers feel that behind the truth you present there is the authority of the divine Word. Of Paul and Barnabas it is written that they "so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed". It is possible therefore to so speak that people may believe: of course always recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit. Many scriptures may be pressed into service as illustrations of gospel truth which may not properly be called types; for a type, by divine inspiration, has locked up within it some gospel truth divinely packed into that figure for the illustration of the gospel.

Samuel was a great man, but we find the Lord challenging him in this sixteenth chapter, saying to him, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?" I think Samuel was a large-hearted man, a man who was incorruptible, and who fulfilled the duties of his office over a long period without, in any way, prostituting that office to wrong uses. Notwithstanding, he was a man, like the rest of us, and was subject to all human frailties.

He seems to have had a great affection for Saul. He predicted in the beginning the kind of king Saul would turn out to be—hence his development of character could have been no surprise to him. Yet his spirit apparently was depressed because of the tragedy which Saul's career presented. Now that he has been rejected, Samuel is full of gloom, and he mourns the failure of this character that, in the beginning, was so promising.

We may learn from this, I think, that we are all disposed to be led by our sentiments rather than by our judgment. Many of the religious cults of to-day have, for their basis, mere emotion. It is what people like, what they want; and they find it easy to believe.

In matters of discipline in church life, you will often find your heart, as pastors, leading you in one direction, and your judgment leading you in the opposite. Although it may be perfectly clear to you that Saul is wrong, altogether wrong, and although you know, if you know anything at all, that such a course as he has taken cannot possibly merit the divine approval, and you know that he must be rejected, you may be inclined to say, "He may be wrong, but I like him."

I talked with a friend to-day about Old Convention matters. The vote in the Old Convention, in those days of controversy, was dictated, never by reason, but always by emotion and sentiment. As pastors, you will have to learn to be judicial—Samuel was a judge—and to take a firm stand against that which is inherently and inevitably wrong, no matter what your heart says. "I have done with him", said the Lord, "fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons."

One of your disappointments in your pastoral work—and keep this in mind;—you may see little now in what I say, but if you store it away in your memory it will come back to you in years to come—one of your disappointments as pastors will be the revelation of the weaknesses of the Sauls with whom you associate; and you will come, like Samuel, again and again to the place where you will have to let him go. You cannot help it; you will have to let him go. Remember when that time comes, you are not to mourn too deeply. The Lord never removed a Saul that He had not a David to take his place. We are none of us necessary. The Lord sent Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his sons, for He said, "I have provided me a king among his sons." The Lord will provide Himself with whatever He wants, whenever He wants it. We need never be discouraged in respect to His purposes.

I suppose none of you even dare hope to exceed the stature of this man Samuel. He was a great man, and a prophet of the Lord from his youth. Yet he was far from being perfect, and even in his old age he was a bit afraid of Saul. You never will find perfect people. You had better be careful to examine the judgment even of a man like Samuel. You remember that Elihu said, "I am young and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you my opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore, I said, Harken to me; I also will shew my opinion." Samuel was a great man, and he was an aged man; but he did not "understand judgment" in respect to Saul.

There never will come a time when any of us will cease to need divine reproof. Never let anyone persuade you—much less, your own heart—that you have outgrown the necessity of constant watching lest in the eventime, after a long and useful career, you should spoil it all by some act of unwisdom.

The Lord directed Samuel what to do: He sent him to Jesse's house. You have the story of the anointing recorded. You are young ministers, and it is perfectly natural—and desirable too—that young men should be filled with a holy ambition to make the best of themselves, and to do some great thing for God. I do not think it is wrong for any man to desire to be great, really great. The evil consists in desiring to be the greatest. Moses was a *great* man, and he said when

others complained that some were prophesying, "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" He was great, but he had no desire to be the greatest. He wanted everybody to come up to his level. There is a vast difference between that attitude, and that of the man who wants to drag everybody down to, or a little below his level, in order that he may be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Do not seek to be greatest, but seek to be great—and to do great things for God. You remember Carey's sermon: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." We ought to desire to be great, to develop our powers to the utmost, and to do as much as it is humanly possible to do in the name of the Lord.

If you have it in you, you need not trouble about the discovery of your gift. There was Eliab. He must have been a fine-looking fellow, tall, splendidly proportioned; because, when Samuel saw him, he said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." But the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him. I judge by other standards than the sight of the eyes."

I have heard it said that it is somewhat dangerous for young women to be particularly good-looking: they are liable to become conceited. I do not know whether that is so or not—but I do not think it is half so dangerous as for young men. I have known them even to curl their hair, and to do many things to make themselves into some sort of an Eliab. I do not know that we need spend much time in the discussion of that principle, however, because I think you are all fairly safe in that respect.

At all events, the Lord looketh on the heart, and Eliab was rejected; as Abinadab, and Shammah, and all the rest. Notwithstanding, all these men in later life proved themselves to be men of ability and strength of character and real usefulness.

Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are here all thy children?" You know the story. Even David's own father did not recognize that he had a great man for his son. You must not expect too great appreciation from your own people, for "Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country". Your mother may think you are very fine, and perhaps your father too; but your brothers and sisters will see to it that the corners are well rubbed off you.

But on this occasion even Jesse did not recognize that David was a great man. He called all his other sons, and said, "I need not trouble about the other one: I will let him look after the sheep." I have often thought that I should like to know what David was thinking just then. I have known some young pastors who had but little flocks of people to look after, who were afraid that the great Shepherd of the sheep would pass them by, and that they would waste their sweetness on the desert air, that they were flowers born to blush unseen, and all the rest of it, that their powers really fitted them for larger service.

"Yes", said Jesse, "I have another son." "Where is he?" I wonder what answer could have been given had you been in that case? "Where is he?" Jesse knew where he was, because he knew where he had sent him. He had left him caring for the sheep, and he unconsciously paid him the great compliment of being perfectly sure that while this great assembly was gathered at the father's house, and the seer and judge of all Israel

had come, and David had been left out of it altogether, Jesse had not the slightest doubt that David would be out there keeping the sheep that had been entrusted to his care.

Never for a moment suppose that any church is too small for you. The smallest church that ever was organized, before you get through with it, will prove enough to turn any man's hair grey. There may not be many of them, but there will be all sorts of saints. If you have not enough members to provide the fifty-seven varieties in different characters, you will have the fifty-seven varieties in moods. You will have quite enough to do in looking after those few sheep in the wilderness. Keep that in mind—for David was attending seminary; he was going to school; he was under a great Teacher. It was there he learned to play the harp; it was there he learned to commune with God; it was there he learned all those discerning things that are written in many of his psalms; it was there he learned to fight the lion and the bear; and it was there he prepared himself for the great achievement of his life, when he suddenly burst upon the public view, and found himself the most famous man in all Israel. We shall see later that there was no accident about his spending years in training in the wilderness, looking after his father's sheep. He was called, and was anointed in the midst of his brethren, and "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward"—but apparently David went back to his sheep-tending even after that. Can you do it? We shall see how great a man he became later.

Here is a passage which has in it a great principle: "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." We all have our choice between a good spirit and an evil spirit. Saul asked for the evil spirit, and rejected the good spirit; and at last the Lord permitted Saul to have his way. It is possible for even a servant of God to afford hospitality to a lying spirit. It is possible—I have seen it illustrated, exemplified in more than one instance—for a man or woman to become so self-willed, so determined to have his own way that at last he becomes incapable of distinguishing between his own will and the will of God. Many call that "firmness", or "resolution", when it is sheer obstinacy, or to put it still more plainly and bluntly, unmitigated pigheadedness. Any fool can take that position. It does not require a great man to be stubborn. The asylums are full of self-willed people. Anybody can take up that attitude: "I will have my own way." In some cases having made up his mind to do that, the man begins to pray about it, and at length clothes his self-will with divine sanction until by and by he assumes that whoever opposes him is opposing the Holy Ghost.

I say one can go on in that way until it becomes impossible to distinguish between what he wants to do, and what God, in His Word, directs. That was the psychology of Saul's tragic career. He rejected the counsel of God, refused to hear the word of God, and was determined to have his own way. The Spirit of God departed from him, he grieved the Spirit of God; and an evil spirit came to trouble him. If you open your heart to that sort of thing, you will have plenty of trouble, be sure of that. An evil spirit is ever waiting to step in where the Holy Spirit has been rejected.

When Saul was thus depressed his servants said, "Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an

harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from the Lord is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well." I suppose there was a large mental element in that: when the sweet strains of music fell upon Saul's ear, long before it was written, it was found true that "music hath charms to sooth the savage breast". Saul felt himself soothed, and was better.

David was recommended—it was rather beneath his dignity, I think, yet somewhat extraordinary, that this young man from the sheepfold should be recommended as a musician to play in the palace. In the quiet days of life we do well to cultivate whatever gift is in us. I hope you know how to play. If you do not, you had better learn. I have a very vivid recollection of an interesting time I had in my first pastorate. I had a country appointment, and there was an organist and choir. I do not know what had happened, but before I accepted the pastorate the choir had gone on strike, and were waiting to see what the new minister would do.

I will tell you what I did. The first Sunday I went to preach there was an organ, but no organist. The service was in a school-house, and I called one of the men and asked him to assist me in moving the organ up on to the platform. He did so, and we moved it near my desk. I announced a hymn, and sat down and played the organ. I will not play for your amusement, but in the long ago I was an organist and choir-master! I did not make much of a fist of it, but I was independent. I said nothing to the choir. The next Sunday we carried on as before, and for a Sunday or two following. One day when I got there someone came to me and said, "You have a heavy day; Miss So-and-So is here and would be quite willing to play for you if you desire it." I said I should be delighted. She was the young lady who used to play. She did not resign while I was Pastor, she knew I did not need her, that I could do without her—so she behaved herself.

David was "cunning in playing"—and it will do you no harm to learn to play. He was a "mighty valiant man, a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord was with him." You may be all that, valiant and a man of war, and a "comely person". If the Lord has made you that, that will be all to the good. If He has not, there is no hope for you at that point. But I call your attention to this: David was a very versatile man. He played a harp of more than one string.

I have never been able to warm up to these clerical gentlemen who are so very precise: "He that hath yaws to yaw, let him yaw." I mean the gentleman who is always so very clerical. Sometimes I almost feel like throwing him into the lake to see if there is any man in him. You will have your special duties to perform as pastors, but remember that in the ministry of the Word, just as in the position which David was called of God to occupy, you will find opportunity for the exercise of all your gifts; and you can afford to be a many-sided man. Every man ought to have an avocation as well as a vocation. Be careful to distinguish between those words: your vocation is your calling, the thing to which your whole life is given; your avocation is your hobby, the something you do occasionally. David had several avocations. Although he was called and anointed to be a king, he could play the harp, he could write hymns, he was prudent in speech, when occasion required he was a mighty man of war, and above all he was a man "after God's own heart".

"Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer." You are young men, and as you go out you will find many people who will love you greatly; they will find you very lovable, and perhaps very loving. You will be in danger of being puffed up. But you must not depend too much upon that kind of thing, for the Saul who gave his heart so readily and quickly to David found it easy to withdraw his affection later.

I read years ago a book entitled, "A Prophet in Babylon", by W. J. Dawson, once a famous Congregational minister in London. I do not know whether it was autobiographical or not, but it was the experience of a minister. I think it was somewhat extreme, but in effect he said: A minister must never expect in his church much more than an official friendship. As long as he is successful, and conducts his work well, and achieves what the world calls success, the people generally will speak of "our beloved Pastor." But if trouble comes, and difficulties arise, and the Pastor takes a stand of which the people do not approve, they will very soon cease to love him.

That is not true generally. I have found, as a Pastor, in the churches I have had the honor to serve, the finest fellowship that can be found this side of heaven. I can sit down and call the names of men, not only in this church, whose friendship and loyalty never failed. I think of a man who was my deacon thirty-five years ago, who never meets me but he calls me, Pastor. He loved much in the beginning, and he loves much still. We have been friends thirty-five years, and I give thanks for his fellowship in the gospel "from the first day until now." But do not count too much on Saul's affection: we must set our hearts on something higher than that.

"And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight." So he went up to live with Saul, and when the evil spirit came upon Saul, David took his harp and played, and by the blessing of God the spirit of this troubled king was soothed, and the evil spirit departed from him.

I will not attempt the seventeenth chapter to-night. What we have said has been but a little common sense on the natural plane. When examination time comes we may examine you on something we have not discussed. I do not say that we shall, but take that sixteenth chapter, and remember that David is a type of Christ. He is the Anointed One. "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." See what you can find in that sixteenth chapter that will magnify the Lord in your view as the Anointed One, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Next week we shall have one of the greatest chapters in the Book. It is a great chapter for the beginners' class, for the primary class—for everybody. I never read the story of David's triumph over Goliath without being thrilled through and through.

"HADAD BEING YET A LITTLE CHILD"

There is an interesting bit of history behind the simple words which form the title of this article, recorded in the eleventh chapter of the first Book of Kings. When Solomon forsook the Lord, and he was told, "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant", it is said, "And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom." Then we are informed that years before, when David was in Edom, and Joab was captain of the host, "For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom."

Joab had been utterly ruthless toward the Edomites, but at that time, "Hadad being yet a little child", he fled into Egypt—and nobody thought of Hadad, or troubled to remember the little child who had witnessed Joab's ruthlessness. But in the next generation Joab's conduct bore its bitter fruit, and the one who had been but a little child in Joab's day became a formidable adversary to Solomon.

How careless many people are in saying and doing things in the presence of a little child! How many parents indulge in fault-finding and criticism about the table, or elsewhere in the home, in the presence of the children! They think that such an one, "being yet a little child", is paying no attention, or fails to understand. The terrible truth often is, however, that such careless speech and conduct sows in the child's mind certain prejudices which, in later years, may yield a harvest of implacable hatred; or at least will have the effect of so dulling the spiritual senses as to make people utterly unresponsive to the gospel.

When this Editor was Pastor in London, Ontario, the blessing of the Lord necessitated the enlargement of the church. One side wall and the front wall were taken down, and taken out to the street in each case, so that the capacity of the church was tripled.

We have a very vivid recollection of the Saturday night preceding the opening of the new church. The carpet had been laid over the whole building, the pews were in place, and a number of ladies were busy putting flowers and other feminine touches about the building, making it beautifully inviting for the day following. But there were other members of the church present, who were so interested that they could not wait until Sunday to see the finished interior.

Among them was an old man. His first name was John, and we shall call him John Hopkins, although that of course was not actually his name. Among the ladies there was one, a member of the church, who was always forward in every good work. Her husband was an excellent man, a fine, indeed exemplary character in every respect. These two were perhaps in their thirties, possibly nearing forty; of the exact age of course we cannot be sure. The husband was not a member of the church: he had never made a profession of religion. But he always supported his wife loyally in her every effort to do good; he always accompanied her to church; he was a lovely character, a perfect gentleman in his bearing. But no one was able to say whether or not he had really received Christ.

On the Saturday night to which we refer this young man, whom we shall call Bob, was present with his

wife. We were standing near by when Bob went up to the old man, John Hopkins, and said, "Well, Mr. Hopkins, are you going to turn me out of the church tomorrow?" "Certainly not, Bob", said the old man, "why should I turn you out of the church?" To which Bob replied, "That is what you did the Sunday the old church was opened." "But I do not understand you", said Mr. Hopkins, "I have no recollection of turning you out of the church." "Perhaps not", said Bob, "but that is what you did. I came to the church door Sunday morning as eager to enter and to see the new building as anybody could be. Of course there were crowds of people, and I was only a little boy; and you said to me, 'Come, get out of this. We have no room for boys today.'" "Oh", said the old man, "I do not remember saying anything like that, Bob." "Perhaps not", said Bob, "but I remember. I have never forgotten the disappointment of that day, nor shall I ever forget—but then, I was only a little boy."

Had that unchristian act of that old man toward the little boy anything at all to do with Bob's religious attitude? Did he still feel there was no room for him in the church? Did it give a strange bent to his life? We cannot say: we only record the facts as we knew them. That day in the long ago, when everybody sang, Hallelujah, and praised the Lord for their new building, John Hopkins, then we suppose a man in middle life, joined with all the others, and went home at night perhaps with a feeling of deep satisfaction and contentment in his soul. Little did he know, or even dream, of the disappointment it brought to the heart of Bob, "being yet a little child."

Ah yes! It is still true, whatsoever a man, or a church, or a denomination, soweth, that shall he, or it, inevitably also reap. The little boy may grow up to be a friend or an adversary, a saint or a sinner. Be careful, oh be careful, what you say and do in the presence of the children. And remember there was One Who said, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

AN ENCOURAGING REPORT

The work of the Seminary is primarily to train men for the Gospel ministry, and one test of good training is the desire to put into practise what has been learned. Thus at the close of every school-year we have a number of students who are eager to preach the Gospel, looking to us to give them an opportunity of exercising their gifts. It has become a recognized part of the work of Toronto Baptist Seminary to send out from summer to summer a number of student-missionaries and preachers. Last summer's work was one of the most encouraging in the history of the school: more men were sent out than ever before, a greater area was touched, more pastorates were opened to seminary students, and more pioneer missionary work was done than during any previous summer.

The Seminary Four ministered in song and sermon to twenty-eight churches, travelling over a large part of Ontario and Quebec and crossing the southern part of our province twice. In 117 days they held 112 services,

and made more than ten thousand calls. Everywhere they went their work was highly spoken of and was blessed of the Lord in the salvation of souls. Messrs. Dallimore and Hall did a most difficult piece of work in the city of Montreal and its suburbs. They carried on a house to house campaign in that great French metropolis, giving out about 7,000 French tracts and a large number of Gospels, and preaching the Gospel wherever there was an opening. Who knows what the harvest may be from this sowing in such a needy field as that of French Roman Catholic Quebec! Another student carried on a similar work in the Town of Bowmanville, Ontario.

Mr. Lorne MacAsh laboured in the pioneer district about the gold-mining town of Pascalis in Northern Quebec, a place that presents a missionary need second only to that of heathen Liberia. Mr. William Murray assisted one of our faithful Home Mission pastors, Mr. Boomer of the Miner's Bay field. Mr. Duncan Macgregor worked with Pastor Slade in Timmins and South Porcupine. Several other students returned to churches in which they had laboured last summer: Mr. Faulkner to the Maple Grove Church, and Mr. Bruce Hisey to the Avoca Church. Mr. Hisey is the third brother of his family to occupy this pulpit as a student of the Seminary. In addition to those named above three students went out last summer as regular pastors of churches, Mr. Robert Brackstone to Cannington and Sunderland, Mr. Harold Hindry to Westport, and Mr. John Cunningham to the Scotch Line Church. Other students who remained in the city carried on the usual student activities of the school year, engaging in such varied work as preaching in factories, in missions, in jails, and in hospital visitation.

It is no small undertaking to add such an extensive missionary effort as the sending out of fifteen missionaries to an already heavy academic programme, but we have confidence that it has been blessed of the Lord and the effects of it have already made themselves felt in the Seminary life. The men have come back to their work with a keener zest for their studies and a deeper appreciation of the power of the Gospel and the need for its world-wide proclamation.

This summary of student work is presented here partly as an act of stewardship to those churches who contributed some money for this purpose last Spring; partly as an example of the missionary work of the Seminary, but chiefly as a cause for praise and thanksgiving to the One from Whom "having obtained help, we continue unto this day."—W. S. W.

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No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 44

October 29th, 1933

FOURTH QUARTER**ELIJAH—THE MAN OF GOD**

Lesson Text: I Kings, chapter 17.

BIBLE SCHOOL READING—

I Kings 17:1-16.

Golden Text: "And the woman said to Elijah, now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." I Kings 17:24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Deut. 11:13-21.

Tuesday—Psalm 61:1-8.

Wednesday—Psalm 65:1-13.

Thursday—Luke 4:23-30.

Friday—Matt. 17:14-21.

Saturday—James 5:13-20.

1. THE ADVENT OF ELIJAH, (v. 1).

We come in this lesson to the study of one of the outstanding prophets of the Old Testament. The Lord used many persons for the purpose of conveying His message to Israel, but among them there are few, if any, more interesting than Elijah. Some had a longer period of service, and have left written records of their messages and experiences; they were also privileged to exercise a more continuous ministry, but none appears with a braver spirit than this fiery prophet of the oral school. He comes upon the scene at a very sad time in Israel's history, when Ahab and his wicked queen were seated on the throne, and the worship of God languished in favor of idolatry, (16:30-33). It was a difficult time for those who desired to serve the Lord, for persecution awaited them, and martyrdom was never very far off. In such a time Elijah made his advent upon the scene. One may note the necessity for the advent of such a prophet, the abrupt nature of his introduction in the record, and probably also in the service of God, and the purpose for which he is brought upon the scene.

Respecting the prophet we note, as in the case of Melchisedek (Gen. 14:18) that no genealogical details are given. We are informed only that he was "a Tishbite who was of the inhabitants of Gilead", denoting that he belonged beyond the Jordan. The nature of his message is striking and significant, containing as it does, an announcement of drought, to be imposed, we may learn from subsequent details, on account of sin. Such a punishment has been previously predicted on disobedience to the divine law, (Deut. 11:17). The manner of giving the message is worthy of observation. Elijah speaks boldly, unhesitatingly, confidently, with perfect faith that his prediction will be fulfilled. Such faith is held up to us as an example, (James 5:17), and gives us encourage-

ment. God honours those who take Him at His word, and dare to trust Him wholly.

In giving his message, Elijah spoke as the mouthpiece of God. He did not make choice of its content, but faithfully delivered that which he received from on high. He spoke in the name of the Lord, Whose servant he was, and his action denotes that he was true to his commission, and courageous in the performance of his duty. In these he is again an example to the children of God, particularly to those in positions of responsibility. There is need these days for men who will deliver God's message faithfully, regardless of consequences. Such a course is not popular, and many hesitate to pursue it, but it is the only way of duty and profit.

II. ELIJAH BESIDE THE BROOK CHERITH, (vs. 2-6).

Consequences ensue from every wrong action, but the faithful servant of God need not fear those which arise on account of faithfulness in the discharge of duty. God takes care of those who serve Him, and looks after their needs. This is clearly manifest in the case of Elijah, the drought would bring scarcity of food to the land, and cause suffering in this respect, but God had a place of refuge for His servant, and a place for his sustenance. He was directed to go to the brook Cherith where food would be brought to him by the ravens, and water would be at hand for him to drink. Obeying this direction he found the sustenance as stated. The wisdom and omnipotence of God are manifest in this place. Elijah was out of the way of Ahab, and his needs were supplied by the miraculous interposition of God in the use of the ravens. The whole creation is at the disposal of God, and He can make use of any part of it, organic, or inorganic, for the carrying out of His purposes. He sent the manna, and quails to feed the Israelites, (Ex. 16:11-15), and used the hornets to scatter their enemies, (Ex. 23:28). God's care for His servant was ample, thorough, regular and through an unusual and unexpected channel. The circumstances constitute a test of faith for the prophet, but submitting thereto his faith was strengthened, and God received the glory. We may learn to trust the Lord under all circumstances, and take His word at its face value. Faith of this kind is honoured.

III. ELIJAH IN ZAREPHATH, (vs. 7-24).

A further test of a most severe nature came to Elijah's faith in the drying up of the brook, (v. 7). As long as the water flowed in the brook there was that which would quench his thirst, but when this ceased there were no means of supplying the need. Probably Elijah was not worried about the matter, being conscious of the power of his divine Master, and realizing that inasmuch as God had directed him to take up his abode by the brook, he would make arrangements for the continued supply of this essential element, either in that part of the land, or in some other place. Such faith was justified, for if through obedience to God His servants get into difficulties,

He will certainly make a way of escape. Note Israel at the Red Sea, (Ex. 14:21, 22), and at the rock in Horeb, (Ex. 17:1-7).

Elijah was directed to go to Zarephath in the territory of Zidon, situated in the northeastern part of the land where a widow woman had been selected to sustain him (vs. 8, 9). Obeying this command he arrived at the place, and the remainder of the dry period he was miraculously sustained through the widow's meal barrel, and oil cruse, (vs. 10-16). This is again an unexpected means of sustenance. It is a case of means simple and weak, for the display of God's omnipotent power. He could have supplied the prophet with food direct from heaven, as in the case of Israel in the wilderness, or later of Elijah himself when fleeing from Jezebel, (19:5-17), but he chose this means to suit His purpose. His miracles have been wrought with means, and without means.

Several things may be observed respecting this experience. First: it meant a test of faith for Elijah, and for the woman, for the former in the outwardly slender source of the supply, for the latter in the seeming impossibility of a continuous supply, and in the request to attend first to the needs of the prophet. It is a tribute to the faith of the woman that she obeyed the request. It may also be observed that the experience meant a daily test of faith, a daily trust in God, a daily supply of need, a daily manifestation of divine favor, and a daily evidence of the Lord's care. Note the promise relating to the supply of our need, (Phil. 4:19), the wondrous power of God in multiplying little into much, (2 Kings 4:42-44; Matt. 14:15-21). Nothing is too difficult for God, if we would but trust Him more fully. Elijah's food supply failed not, and it is also worthy of notice that the woman also was blessed in this respect, because she was willing to aid a servant of God. The Lord rewards those who help His own, even a cup of water not being overlooked, (Matt. 10:40-42).

Another test of faith is recorded in the death of the widow's son, (v. 17). Questions might have arisen in the minds of prophet and mother as to the reason for such an occurrence. They were both in the place where God wanted them; they were receiving tokens of his favour; then why the entrance of death? We may note in this connection that God has not furnished immunity from trials unto his own, and further that such trials provide the opportunity for the further manifestation of the divine power, (John 16:33). The woman brought the child to Elijah, (v. 18), who receiving him carried him into the loft where he abode, and laid him on his bed, and then cried to God to restore the soul of the child, (v. 19-21). The Lord heard the voice of the prophet and restored the child to life, to the great joy of his mother, (vs. 22-24). In this there is manifest another exercise of divine omnipotence, the power of God over death. Several instances of the manifestation of such power are given in the divine record, (2 Kings 4:33-37; John 11:43, 44). Note the nature of Elijah's action and prayer, denoting his feeling of responsibility in the matter, and the fact of answered prayer.

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MORE LIBERIAN NEWS

It will be remembered that in the letter published quite recently, mention was made of the evangelists of the New Cess Station, Kanga, the interpreter, and Joseph, a school-boy, who were doing splendid work. At that time, it was also reported that Mr. and Mrs. Hancox were contemplating a visit to the Geah Bar Zondo Station. We have now received letters telling us of all that has transpired during the intervening weeks.

The Missionaries Speak

From a letter dated September 9th, written by Rev. Edward Hancox, we report the following:

"Previous to our going to Geah Bar Zondo, Kanga and Joseph started away for their second evangelistic tour, having had a week's rest. This time they went as far as River Cess, touching much of the territory of our trip last year. They were away three weeks, preaching the gospel every day. Now, although it is the rainy season, and we have been having plenty of it, these boys did not once encounter rain while travelling, and only once in the three weeks did they see rain. For this we praised the Lord, as it enabled them to get around so much better.

"While at River Cess, they stayed for a few days in the town of the Paramount Chief, where we stayed last year. Here they found a number of women seeking to hold a church service regularly, besides meeting for prayer. They are nearly all wives of the Chief who listened so attentively to the Word during our former visit to them. The choruses they then learned had not been forgotten, and to prove that they still remembered them, they sang them for our Evangelists. Once more these people pleaded for Kanga to remain with them to teach them more of the gospel. This he would gladly do, if he were free. On the trip several other requests were made for the establishment of schools.

"You will recall that I wrote about the boys being stoned out of one town, Moya Ta by name. Continued prayer has been offered for this town and for Ta, the sub-chief. Recently Joseph and Peter begged me to let them go again to try to get the message into the town, so with our prayer to God for His keeping and safeguard, they started away. On their return they reported that not only had they been allowed to proclaim the Word there, but that they were treated kindly, even to being offered warm water for a bath. An invitation was also extended to us, through the boys, to go and hold service there. We surely praise the Lord for this change and manifest answer to prayer. A little later on I shall certainly go for a visit and will proclaim the Good Tidings there."

Townfolk and Bible Class

"Last Thursday night," writes Mrs. Hancox, "we had fifteen townfolk to Bible Class. There is a real interest,

you may be sure, when it is raining and cold and they have no lamps. I believe there will be three or four ready to be baptized by Christmas time. We are greatly rejoicing and give God the praise and the thanks.

"I have the country folk learning a Bible Text for each Sunday. They learn it in Bassa and if they repeat it well, they get a Text card. I think there were ten or fifteen who said it yesterday. I got the idea while at Zondo Station. On the way home, the men who had been there mentioned it to me themselves, and begged me to teach them a verse each week."

A Word of Praise

Mrs. Hancox further writes, "The Mellishes are to be commended for the progress they have made on their field. They have a very happy little family of believers and both workers, and of course Miss Stacey, are untiring in their effort for Him. You would enjoy seeing their station".

A Happy Day

A letter, dated August 27th, tells us of another happy Sunday when the missionaries have been privileged to give forth the Word of Life. Mrs. Mellish writes, "We had splendid services today and certainly the Lord was with us, but our hearts are lifted in prayer for some who have heard the Word time and time again and yet have made no response. The days are so short and pass so quickly that we realize that we must buy up every opportunity."

Miss Stacey's Thanks

As many know, Miss Stacey has been very, very ill in the last month or two. Shortly after receiving the message of her father's death she suffered an attack of fever and the long days of anxiety evidently took their toll for she was desperately ill.

It was Miss Stacey's wish that no publicity be given to the matter, but it seems imperative to mention it and permit the whole constituency to raise the voice of praise and thanksgiving that her life, at one time despaired of, was saved.

This information will also explain the reason that some who have written Miss Stacey have not received replies and she wants to express her appreciation through these columns of all the letters of sympathy and encouragement that the friends at home sent her.

BRIEF REPORTS FROM THE CHURCHES

Alton—On Sunday evening, after the church service, in their own home, a married couple were saved. Pastor LeDrew reports splendid times in the Alton Regular Baptist Church.

Belleville—There are now one hundred and fifty-five enrolled in the Belleville Regular Baptist Bible School.

Central, London — Wonderful times are being experienced at London. The

Church is rejoicing that its Pastor, Rev. James McGinlay, is again able to take full charge. We hear that the other Sunday evening nine or ten came forward in response to the appeal at the close of the service.

Medina—Good services are being enjoyed on the Indian reserve, and several have recently been baptized.

Mount Albert — Rev. W. E. Smalley baptized five adults from Mount Albert at Second Markham on Sunday evening.

Miner's Bay — Rev. Oscar Boomer is seeing much to encourage him as he ministers on the Miner's Bay field. Great things are expected in the coming weeks. Pray that there may be no hindrance and that revival will break.

East York Mission — Pastor Bernard Jeffery and his able assistants have a Bible School to be proud of at East York. On Sunday, October 8th, the hall was practically filled and children from three years old up gave almost perfect attention while the pictures of the Liberian work were shown. That there was a keen interest and a knowledge of the work was evident as the children came forward after the service to ask questions, some asking how they might help the missionaries.

Mount Pleasant, Toronto — Open air services carried on throughout the summer months have been exceptionally well attended and the young people who have had charge of this important work have been encouraged and themselves benefited by the experience. It was cause for rejoicing that many who listened to the preaching in the open air found their way into the church services.

Five members have been added to the church recently.

The Rally Day services held on October 1st were all good. Mr. F. G. Pim was the special speaker at the Bible School and held the interest with an object talk which will not soon be forgotten by the boys and girls present.

A delightful custom in vogue at the Mount Pleasant Church is their singing after the evening service. The young people are to be found gathered around the piano and in this get-together time strangers are made to feel at home and the Christian young people are ever on the alert to witness to those who do not know the Lord.

The choir of the Mount Pleasant Church is also ready to assist the Pastor at all times, and Mr. Percy Clubine, its leader, is well qualified both spiritually and musically. The Mount Pleasant Church is confident that the Lord has much in store for it during the coming months.

LATER NEWS

The expected blessing has come to the Miner's Bay field. Eighteen have recently confessed Christ.