

# The Gospel Witness

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

LIFE'S COMPLIMENT.

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

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

(Stenographically reported)

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

"And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers."—Deuteronomy 6: 23.

Prayer by Rev. W. Gordon Brown

Almighty God Whose throne is in heaven, Whose name is infinite, Who has created this world as Thy footstool and us as creatures of the dust upon it, we rejoice to-night that Thou knowest our frame and rememberest that we are dust; and that like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Thou are the great God dwelling in eternal calm, yet Thou hast taken upon Thy heart the disturbance of our lives. Thou art the happy God in the midst of beatitude and blessing, and yet Thou hast, in Thy grace, come to the sorrowing hearts of earth, to give us of Thine own gladness in Christ Jesus. Thou art the holy God, too pure to look upon iniquity, yet it is by Thy blood that Thou hast redeemed to Thyself from all nations, sinful as they are, a people for Thine own possession.

Therefore, O Lord, do we praise Thee because Thine infinity has flowed in Thy grace, and Thou hast come to us, not only in the thunders of Sinai with the trumpet waxing louder and louder, but in the still small voice of Calvary. Therefore do we rejoice because we have come to the New Jerusalem, to the city of our God, to an innumerable company of angels, to that blessed assembly of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. Thou hast brought us to Thyself. Grant that in this hour we may know these glorious truths revealed in Thy Word. May they be brought home to us this evening, that the needs of our hearts, great as they are, may thereby be supplied.

Bless those who join with us in this service at a distance, especially such as feel a great burdening need of Thyself. Some are sorrowful; prove Thyself to them the God of comfort, wiping away the tears as they fall. Some are perplexed and distressed; reveal Thyself to them as the Dissolver of their doubts, the Answer to their perplexities. Some are sick and afflicted, even of Thine own children; minister to them, and prove Thyself to them the Physician both of soul and of body.

Have mercy upon us as Thy people, that in this place our united testimony may be with power, that the word of God as it goes forth from this pulpit may be used by the Divine Spirit to the salvation of the unsaved.

Remember all who similarly preach Thy gospel, and who, in sincerity and truth, lift up Jesus Christ and Him crucified

for the sins of the world. Be pleased to bless their testimony here at home and in the many lands beyond the sea. Extend the boundaries of Thy kingdom, and hasten its final and glorious coming.

To this end also do we ask, Thou King of the universe, that Thou wouldst overrule in the affairs of nations, granting wisdom to those in places of authority. May they look to the God of all righteousness, so that we may live a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and sobriety. In all ways, and with increasing power and grace, let Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

"And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the Lord hath spoken. And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: and the Lord shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers."

There are some texts which, at first glance, appear like a lake of very clearly defined dimensions, over the surface of which it would seem it would be quite easy to travel; but on further inspection the lake turns out to be but an arm of an infinite sea whose waters wash the shores of far and fruitful continents beyond. The text which I have read to you is such a text as that. It is not like the lamps of the foolish virgins, without oil;

nor even like the lamps of the wise virgins, having oil in their vessels, with their lamps designed to light the immediate pathway of the feet. This is like a great searchlight which may be turned upon the history of the past, and made to illuminate the circumstances of the present, and to light up, with its radiant glory, the prospect of the future.

The text which I have read is given as an inspired answer to questions that must inevitably be asked "in time to come". When the children of another generation shall observe certain things, shall hear the testimony of the statutes divinely ordained, they will ask the meaning of it all, and they are given here the philosophy of a divinely completed life. They are told how to answer the children, how to explain the ultimate good that has come to them, by saying, "He brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in", showing that the ways of God are ever perfect and complete, and that "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."

## I.

I want, very simply, first of all, to attempt AN EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLE of this text. It has in it, I conceive, at least two distinct elements. The first is this, *that any fair and reasonable review of the experiences of life, the life of a child of God, will disclose, running through it, a divine plan; that nothing comes by hazard, by hap or chance, but that all things are made to work together according to the plan of God.*

That is a doctrine which needs special emphasis in a day like this. It does not say that everything that comes to us is directly sent of God. There are alien elements in every life, there are things which come to us as the result of our own disobedience and rebellion; but it does say that the life of a child of God is divinely planned from beginning to end, and that it is never wholly separated or divorced from that divine supervision; and that everything is sovereignly over-ruled to the fulfilment of the divine will. I have not time this evening to argue the case, although it is somewhat difficult to resist the temptation: I merely content myself with asserting that such is the teaching of the text, that if you are a Christian, it is no accident; and that all the details of life, as well as life in its largest significance, have been divinely planned and ordered.

I may pause, however, to say that when travelling in a far country—that is foreign as well as far—where the language is strange, and the habits of the people such as one is not accustomed to, when one travels over a new road, and amid conditions that are unfamiliar, it is a comfort to feel that he has a conductor who knows the road, and will lead him safely through. And I say that we need to recover that conception of things which runs all through the Book, that just as there are evidences of plan, of design, in nature about us, and just as the man of science, through microscope, in test-tube, or through the far-reaching telescope which brings into view things that are beyond the reach of the unaided human vision—just as such an one discovers that in it all there are laws operating invariably and inexorably, all according to plan and design, so in the life of the true child of God, properly observed and understood, there will always be found evidences of a divine plan

and purpose. He brings us out with the definite purpose of bringing us in.

The second element is this, that *when life is viewed in proper perspective it will always be found that the execution of the plan is as complete as the design.* God not only makes plans, but He carries them out. He not only purposes to do certain things, but He always performs that which He has purposed. And when, "in time to come"—do not forget that element—when the experiences of to-day are viewed in the light of tomorrow, then we shall be able to say, "He brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in."

That is not a very popular doctrine, I know, because we like to persuade ourselves that we are the monsters of our own fate, and the captains of our souls. But this text insists, in principle, that what we now are has its root in something which antedated our powers of volition. "He brought us out . . . that he might bring us in."

The principle is that in the divine economy the negative is always completed by the positive. The exodus from Egypt argues the conquest of Canaan. The absence of the flesh-pots of Egypt implies the manna and the quails. The passover is a promise of the passage through the Red Sea, and the wilderness is but a parenthesis, however long drawn out. The exodus from Egypt is always completed by the conquest of Canaan. That is God's plan: a Canaan possessed for every Egypt forsaken.

## II.

Having the principle, let us try to MAKE APPLICATION OF IT TO OURSELVES.

It applies, first of all, of course, *to our distinctively spiritual lives.* If we are Christians, then "he brought us out" of the state of nature that He might "bring us in" to a state of grace. If we are Christians, we are Christians, not because of our own effort, not by the exercise of our own wills, untouched by the Spirit of God. But we have been brought out of Egyptian bondage by the mighty hand of God, and according to His predetermined plan. That is why we are here this evening as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We sing sometimes at our Communion Service:

"Why was I made to hear Thy voice,  
And enter while there's room  
When thousands make the wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?"

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin."

What a marvellous mercy that any of us here this evening should be really saved, and able to read our title clear to mansions in the sky! All glory must be given to Him Who "brought us out"; and we may rest in the assurance that He Who brought us out will surely "bring us in".

In our religious experience we may be sure we shall find honey in the carcass of every slain lion, we shall find compensating joys for every sorrow we are permitted to endure; for every trial through which we must pass there will be a happy return of a great revenue of glory. That is God's plan. That is the explanation of the experiences through which we pass from time to time.

He brings us out that He may bring us in. For the filthy swine-herd garments left behind, there is always the compensation of the "best robe" of the Father's gift; for the husks left for the swine to eat, the fatted calf; and for the long, long trail from the far country, the fulness and fellowship and perpetual merriment of the Father's house.

Are there some doubtful believers here this evening? Or are there some who hear this service by radio who have begun to doubt the possibility of their continuance in the divine will? My dear friends, you may well doubt it. You may well call in question the strength of your own resolution. The only guarantee of our ultimate glorification is that He Who brought us out will not fail to bring us in: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." There is no weak link in that golden chain of divine purpose. He Who begins a good work in us may be depended upon to perfect it unto the day of Christ.

If there are any here this evening who fear to leave Egypt—hating Egypt, longing for Canaan, yet who are afraid of the void of the wilderness between, and who are not at all sure that were you to begin to trust Christ you could continue to the end, let me try to make clear to you that it is always God's way to complete what He begins; and that salvation, since it originated with God, and is all of grace, must of necessity find its complement in Him. It cannot be of grace and of works. He will not "bring us out", and then leave us to bring ourselves in; but if He begins with us He will continue to the end, and we shall find, as we read this evening, that nothing can possibly "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord".

There are a great many people who profess to abide by the teaching of Scripture, who yet teach that a man can, by some means, save himself. They would tell us that while perhaps he cannot bring himself out, he may at least endeavour to bring himself in. It is just as impossible for us to continue serving God without the gracious ministry of the Spirit of God—to do it of ourselves—as it is even to begin of ourselves. That is the basis for faith. It would be vain to bid men come to God, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, if there were an admixture of human merit, or of human works. While you might believe in Christ, you cannot believe in yourself, in the church, in your Christian friends, or in any human effort, to lead you to the divine goal. There is no basis for faith apart from divine grace. "Therefore it is of faith", saith the Scripture, "that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."

That principle operates in the salvation of the soul, that He Who brings us out may be depended upon to "bring us in". That is our only guarantee of entrance to Jerusalem the Golden, with milk and honey blest. There is no prospect of our completing the journey if left to ourselves; but He Who is our Saviour will never leave nor forsake us; He will perfect that which concerneth us. Having brought us out, He will bring us in.

That being true of the distinctively spiritual experiences of the children of God, I want further to say

that the principle applies to the operation of divine providence. There was a day when we believed in divine providence. We not only believed in a personal Creator, from Whose almighty fiat all worlds came to be, but we believed in a personal, transcendent, Ruler and Preserver, Who also ordereth all things according to His own will. But the mechanistic view of the universe now so largely obtaining has almost excluded the idea of a personal, transcendent God over-ruling the affairs of His children. But I would rather take the word of the Lord Jesus in respect to any matter, in respect to natural phenomena, in respect to history, in respect to any subject—I would rather take the word of the Lord Jesus than the word of any man. "You do not mean to say that, do you? The Bible is not a text-book on science?" No! But He Who made all things, and "without whom was not anything made that was made", made no mistake when He referred to things of the natural world.

And He said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Behind the lilies of the field He put a personal God, for He said, "God so clothed the grass of the field." He did not say, "nature", He did not say, "law", He said, "God". God! God is behind the lilies. God gave them their beauty, not only in the beginning, but as each succeeding springtime comes there is still a personal Ruler Who clothes the grass of the field. He brings us out that He may bring us in.

He pointed to the birds which had no storehouses, and which do not gather into barns. He did not say they were fed by the operation of law, He did not say even that they provided their own meat by instinct: He said, "Your heavenly Father feedeth them." And furthermore, He said that God's care of the material world is so complete and so minute that though two sparrows be sold for a farthing, and five be sold for two farthings, and one of them should be of such little consequence that with the larger purchase it is thrown in for good measure, even that extra one cannot fall to the ground "without your Father".

That is "particular" government, is it not? That is a providence that descends even to the little affairs of life.

Then our Lord said that we are of more value than the lilies or the sparrows, and that He would look after His own. And so He does. He cares for His own. Do we not just now need that doctrine of divine providence? I wonder sometimes how the evolutionary preacher continues to preach in a day like this? I wonder what he has to say? To-morrow the man has to go back to his office, and he does not know whether he will be able to keep his business open to the end of the week. Some time the next week the father has to pay the rent, and he has no idea where the money is coming from. He has a family of children to feed, and he is at his wit's end to know where to find bread for them. His friends are impotent to help him because they are as badly off as he is, in many instances. He does not know which way to turn. His evolutionary pastor will tell him that, in the long and distant future, when things have had time to work themselves out, a few million years from now, an ideal race will emerge! that ministers great satisfaction to the man who has no porridge to offer the children for breakfast! I fear we are none of us so al-

truistic as to find any special comfort in that remote millennium.

That is not what the Bible teaches. It says that we have a God Who brings His people out, and takes them in; Who looks after them; Who gives them manna in the wilderness; Who finds bread for the hungry; Who in ways past finding out will really look after His own.

Do you not need a God like that just now? Do you not need that sense of the Divine Presence and providence in your life to-day? I think you do. We need, not to rediscover, because it is there, but to view with a reviving faith, these ancient truths contained in the revealed Word of God, and to get back to the biblical conception of God as a God Who always looks after His own.

It may be some man will say, "That is a very fine doctrine. It is well enough as a theory, but it does not work. My life just now is a tangled skein that I cannot unravel. I cannot see through this complicated plan—and sometimes it looks as though there were no plan: it looks like sheer chaos." So it may appear, but it is not really chaotic.

"The threads our hands in blindness spin  
No self-determined plan weaves in;  
The shuttle of the unseen powers  
Works out a pattern not as ours."

But observe, a truth like this can be seen and understood only as it is viewed *perspectively*, because said the Lord, "When thy son asketh thee in time to come." It is not always present and in view. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Do not forget the "afterward". Do not forget that things take time to grow, and that even God Himself takes time to mature the outworking of His plans, to complete them; and when "afterward" you shall look at this experience and shall be asked, "What is the explanation?" you shall tell people that before you understood, and before you had the enlightened intelligence to act for yourself, God anticipated your need, and He brought you out that He might bring you in, and give you the land that He swear unto your fathers.

Not always—not always—are we brought out from an earthly paradise, but perhaps there are some here this evening who are mourning the loss, not of an Egypt of bondage, but the transition from a place of plenty, prosperity, and enjoyment, to a condition of limitation and straitness and bondage; from freedom and fulness of life, to some form of affliction, of circumstantial limitation. You say, "It seems to me I am going down instead of up." That may be, but it is all in the divine plan; and we must view these things *perspectively* in order to understand them.

Moses turned his back upon the palace, and "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." He turned his back upon plenty, upon comfort, upon worldly honour and preferment, and counted that the worst that God had to offer was better than Pharaoh's best. Why? Because he got a perspective

view of things, and "had respect unto the recompense of the reward".

Why do some men deprive themselves of comfort, and scrape together every dollar they can find, in order that they may invest it in what they suppose will yield large profits in the future? Why do they subject themselves to privation now? Because they hope for plenty by and by. How many men who have done that, have not only failed to receive the revenue they anticipated, but forfeited their capital as well! Moses invested his whole life in the service of God, and seemed to throw away all the prospects of worldly advancement because "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

But someone says, "The Lord did not bring him into Canaan after all." No! But He brought him into glory. Moses lost nothing when immediately he was translated into the Divine Presence.

So I could multiply instances of divinely-inspired records of godly lives. Take for example the case of Abraham. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee"—"And he went out, not knowing whither he went." That is written of the human standpoint, but listen to the divine standpoint: "And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." He did not know where he was going with Sarah his wife—but God did! And God saw to it that he arrived at his destination. He brought him out that He might bring him in.

Look at the case of Joseph, a young man with life full of promise; he was his father's well-beloved, wearing the coat of many colours, delighting in the affections of his father, and perhaps assuming the affection of his brothers. Then came the dark day when he disappeared—when the Lord took him out. Was that the end? The Lord never finishes a story like that. Never! He took him out, and Jacob lost sight of him for many a year. As Jacob looked at it from his point of view, and as one trouble succeeded another, at last he cried in anguish of soul, "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." But they were not! They were not! God brought him out—why? That He might "bring him in". When his family had been reunited, and God had given him back Simeon and Benjamin—and Joseph beside—and when Joseph brought his sons to the old man, his father crossed his hands in benediction, laying his right hand upon the head of Ephraim and his left upon the head of Manasseh, saying, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." That was the complement of life. He brought him out that He might bring him in.

When poor Naomi came home from Moab's land, having lost her husband and both sons in the foreign country to which she had immigrated, the people said, "Is this Naomi?" And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty; why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" But "in time to come", when Naomi's to-morrow came, having returned to put her trust in the God of Israel, and under the

shadow of His wing, when she began to see the hand of God, and Ruth came home from her gleaning, she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." Read that sweet story of Ruth. It is simply an elaboration of the principle of my text: He brought them out that He might bring them in.

Or consider the story of that great man, David, when the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about, when he had built a magnificent house of cedar for himself, he sent for the prophet and said, "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains", and proposed that he should build an house for God. Nathan answered, "Go, do all that is in thine heart." But when God had revealed His plan to David more perfectly, and he looked down through the centuries he said in utter amazement, "And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" No; it is not.

"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." You cannot speak of "a great while to come", but God can. He loves to speak of "a great while to come". How long? "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory"—how long? "For ever"!

Why build your hopes upon the shifting sands of time? Why not build upon the plans and purposes of God, and the promises behind them which are always implemented for His own glory, and for the good of His people? He speaks of us for "a great while to come". For our light affliction, which is but *for a moment*, worketh for us—what?—"a far more and exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." "He brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in." And He will do it to the end of the chapter.

May I presume to make application of this principle, not only to national, but to world affairs? This was a word that was spoken to a nation—not only to individuals, but to a nation. Has God anything to do with nations? Yes; He is called, "King of nations." "He is the governor among many nations." He is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Has God anything to do with national and international affairs? Certainly He has. Someone will say, "What of the Great War? Had God anything to do with that?" It occurred in a world with which He has a great deal to do. "From whence come wars and fightings?" From God? No! "Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" Do not charge the war to God. Many things come by His permission, but are not brought by His ordaining will; but so sovereign is He that He is able to overrule them, and make them to work for His glory. I deplore war, and I hope you do. I hate it with perfect hatred. I do not wonder that soldiers are against war. We ought all to

be against war; and yet, at the same time, recognize that in a world like this we shall never be done with it until the Lord Himself shall come.

The prophets who say it is possible to make wars to cease are false prophets. They never will cease until the Lord takes to Himself His great power and reigns. And yet He does bring good out of evil, and maketh even the wrath of men to praise Him. The war settled nothing. I have said it before, but I say it again. Stop talking nonsense like that! On that first bronze tablet are the names of forty-one men who laid down their lives that the liberties of the world might be preserved. On that farther tablet are the names of three hundred who fought. They hated war then as we do now, but they did it as a duty; and I refuse to believe that their blood was shed in vain. I do not believe it. I thank God that we are still Britons, that the British flag still flies, and that we still enjoy our British liberty. There are no slaves under the Union Jack. I do not believe the blood of our men was shed in vain. It did not accomplish what everybody hoped it would, but it accomplished much.

But no sooner had the war passed than men plunged again into all kinds of pleasure, and in a few years the war was forgotten.

Has the Lord anything to do with the present depression? Of course He has: He has to do with everything. I do not know how, but I know He brings us out that He may bring us in. I have no hope that conditions will be better by the country's swallowing the nostrums of political charlatans who believe they have a panacea for all the political ills of the world. Our last state would be worse than the first were we to adopt some of them. I do not know how it is to be done: I only know that our God never forsakes His people. He will bring us out that He may bring us in.

Nor do I think it will come about by what I should call the inane—if not insane—policy of attempting to bring back prosperity by doing less work for more pay. That will never do it, I care not who proposes it. We shall not increase our prosperity that way. I believe there are laws at work under divine supervision, and those laws will work by the operation of the divine will, and in His own way. He Who has brought us out will bring us in. He will complement life, and make up its deficiencies in His own good time.

I am glad, I repeat, to be a citizen of the British Empire, a member of the Anglo-Saxon race; but there are millions of others, who are not of our blood, who love the Lord, and whom the Lord will care for just as He will care for us. But I am especially glad to be a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. I was glad to learn that the American Ambassador had made representation to Germany, reminding her that American citizens have some rights even in a foreign country which must be respected. I have no doubt that behind that notification there is sufficient determination to see that conditions shall be improved.

But how wonderfully our God takes care of His own! "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" He will bring us out, and bring us in. There will be no loose ends when life's plan is completed, when the end of the day is come, if we put our trust in the Lord Jesus.

Are you a citizen of the heavenly kingdom? Are you under the protection of the Heavenly King? You

remember how the Apostle Paul once said to the centurion after he had been scourged, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" Then the chief captain came and said, "Tell me, art thou a Roman?" He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom", to which the Apostle Paul proudly answered, "But I was free born." You cannot become a citizen of the heavenly kingdom by any process of naturalization: "Ye must be born again." When we trust in Jesus Christ, and our sins are washed away by His blood, we are made new creatures in Christ, citizens of that heavenly kingdom.

Then we shall have all the angels for our ministers, and we can be sure we are safe for time and eternity. When the day is done we shall understand, and shall be able to sing:

"With mercy and with judgment,  
My web of time He wove;  
And aye the dews of sorrow  
Were lustr'd with His love:  
I'll bless the hand that guided,  
I'll bless the heart that planned,  
When throned where glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land."

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee for Thy sovereign grace, for salvation which is ours in Christ, and for the assurance of Thy guardian care. Let the blessing of the Spirit accompany our meditation this evening, and help us all that we may rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; for Jesus Christ's sake we ask it, Amen.

## DAVID AND GOLIATH

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

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(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: I Samuel, chapter 17.

We shall deal with the seventeenth chapter of the first book of Samuel. This history may be viewed, first of all, for what it literally is, an inspired chapter of history, a record of things which actually came to pass. Therefore if analyzed it will disclose principles in operation which form the very warp and woof of life, and we may learn from this accurate record how those principles work. It is as reliable as any test in a chemical laboratory, for there are moral and spiritual principles governed by laws which emanate from God Himself which are just as true, as certain, as inexorable, in their operation as any law of chemistry or of physics. "Whosoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." What a man becomes in the eventide of life is largely the fruit of what he was in his earlier years.

The chapter may be read also as a passage from the biography of a man after God's own heart. And as all Christian biography is instructive and inspiring, so these inspired biographies, these written lives of men who sought to do the will and work of God, will furnish us

with lessons, admonishing us and inspiring us in our courses as Christian men and women.

I think, too, we should not be fantastic in our interpretation, we should not be departing from sound and sane principles of exegesis, in view of all the teaching of the New Testament respecting the relationship of David to the One Who is greater than he, if we look upon this chapter as one of typical significance, having in it certain pregnant prophecies telling of the coming of One, great David's Greater Son, Who would achieve, in behalf of a greater multitude, great and signal victories over a still greater giant.

### I.

Let us take, then, THE SIMPLE, EVERYDAY, PRACTICAL LESSONS TO BEGIN WITH.

It is a bit of history, and *it begins with the story of a battle*, two armies lined up in opposition to each other, waiting for the hour to set the battle in array, with a valley between them.

That is a parable of life. You were singing just now, as I came in, with singular appropriateness,

"Sure I must fight if I would win."

The last war was designed to put an end to war; it was to make the world safe for democracy. And while it settled some things beyond question,—it helped us to retain our British citizenship, to be Britons to-day instead of Hitlerites—yet, on the whole, it made the world rather a difficult place to live in. There are still some people who are talking about putting an end to war. While I am not an evolutionist, and do not subscribe to that pagan doctrine of the survival of the fittest, yet it must be admitted that life, in all its aspects, is a conflict, and that the last battle will not be fought until the last enemy, which is Death, is destroyed.

We have all been foolish enough to suppose that if we had one more conflict in which to get some difficulties and some enemies under our feet, thereafter we could have a comparatively easy time. But the easy time has never come—at all events, it has never come my way. I do not know whether you have found it or not. If you have, I should like to know your address. So far as I have been able to observe, life is a battle all the way through, a struggle for existence. You will always find the Philistine element in life, the thing that is alien and antagonistic to our highest interest, the principle with which there can be no permanent peace concluded.

I hope you young ministers will face that fact. I hope you will not look for an easy place, "a garden walled around"; for if you find the garden walled around, though the walls may keep some things out, you may be sure the bugs and blight will find a way in. Even the garden will trouble you, no matter where you go.

You may have it even in the domestic realm. I know that husband and wife are delightful people, just as lovely and loving and loveable as they can be, but they have their moods; and a wise man will choose his time for discussing certain subjects even with his wife. He will avoid the morning of washday, and some other inconvenient and not pleasant occasions. You will have your battles to fight always, right to the end of the chapter.

Then, of course, it is a picture of the human heart. If you do not find any Philistines anywhere else, you will find some inside: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,

and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." There are some old men who are too infirm to fight. But there is one "old man" that I know something about who has much fight in him yet. You have not had the last battle with him: he will be bobbing up again and again.

There are many professedly holy people who have not "mopped up," as they used to say in the War. They make clean the outside of the platter, but not the inside. They have driven the enemy from the surface of the field, but they have not searched the dugouts. Do not be superficial in your soul-culture. You must bomb the enemy out of his trenches and dugouts. There are still some Philistines you will have to fight.

Another thing: *these opposing forces are always championed by giants.* It is very unwise to under-estimate your difficulties. I believe that British conceit has lost about as many battles as British valour has won. It has been the way with British governments in time past to assume that one good British soldier was equal to about a dozen of the enemy of any other nationality. They sent out their military force in about that proportion. Man for man, the British soldier is as good as any soldier to be found on earth, but he would have to be—were I to be permitted to resort to a colloquialism—he would have to be "some man" to be equal to a dozen. That is the history of Britain in Egypt, South Africa, India, everywhere; and after much blood has been spilt she has learned not to under-estimate the foe, nor to over-estimate her own prowess. But, while losing many battles, it has been her most uncomfortable habit, uncomfortable for her enemies, to win the last one—and that is the important one.

You will often be tempted to under-estimate your enemies. Do not laugh at Goliath. He is not to be laughed at. He may be a vainglorious character, but unless he is properly and wisely met and fought, you will find that his defiant attitude is not without some foundation in reason itself. Goliath knew that he was more than a match for any one ordinary man.

That is true of *the difficulties of life in general.* You will find all kinds of trouble in the kitchen, in the nursery, in the office, in the shop, on the street, in the class-room—everywhere; even in the church, for the devil always goes to church. The power of evil is everywhere great. I suppose some of us, when we had had less experience, believed there were "little white lies", that there were little evils that might easily be overcome. There are no little evils. Did you ever have a leaky faucet in your kitchen? It leaked only a drop at a time, did it? Put your finger under it and stop it. When the pipe is filled up, you will find the water will still force its way out. You have not strength enough to stop it. It is only a drop—but it has the pressure of a full pipe behind it.

There is always power in evil. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Our Lord said, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." Let us remember that wherever evil presents itself, it comes to us in the form of a "strong man armed". The devil is mighty. I have heard people speak of him somewhat

lightly, but the Book says that an archangel was afraid of him. He knew the power of the devil; he did not trifle with Goliath, but handed him over to God, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan." So ought we to do.

*The terror of Goliath's challenge is always very real.* Saul was not a weakling by any means, nor were the soldiers who were gathered to his standard; but when they heard Goliath's challenge they were all filled with fear. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We are admonished to "serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling!" It is no easy thing to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. It is no light matter to be numbered among those against whom the armies of Philistia have gathered in battle array.

Then you will always find *there are some official soldiers who know exactly how to do everything:* the only trouble is, they do not do it. But they know how! There were Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah, three brothers in uniform! They had joined the army, and had gone up to fight the giant and all the hosts of Philistia!

They remind me of many church officials,—Presidents, Moderators, and all the rest of it. They have their uniforms on, and are there to fight. They make a magnificent array—but the giant is not afraid of them. I do not think the devil troubles much about a great many church councils, any more than the giant troubled about Eliab, Abinadab, or Shammah: he was quite comfortable at the prospect of meeting them.

I hope you are not Eliabs, or Abinadabs, or Shammahs—but you might be worse, for they did some useful service at some time in their lives. But they were not equal to this particular emergency. There are some exigencies that call for special courage and special skill, and occasions where special and heroic leadership is necessary—indispensable indeed—to any true victory.

And *almost invariably it comes from a quarter where men least expect it.* There was a youth who knew how to keep sheep, and he had been anointed to be a king. But after he had been anointed, and actually told he was to be king, he went back to the wilderness to keep sheep. Occasionally he went up to visit Saul, because he could do more than keep sheep. As I pointed out to you last week, he was a versatile man, he could do more than one thing. He could play the harp. David was a real musician, and he learned how to play in the wilderness. That is a fine place for anybody to learn how to play—or to sing either. Mr. Spurgeon was once asked if he thought a man who played a cornet could be a Christian. He said, he thought it quite conceivable that he might be, but if he was in the habit of practising on it at home, one might legitimately question the ability of his neighbours to behave like Christians.

It is a good thing to have a place to practise. It is a good thing for a young minister to begin his work where there are no newspaper reporters, so that he can make all sorts of blunders without getting into the papers. That is one of the difficulties if you live in a large centre where all the gossip of the city finds its way into the press. That is largely what newspapers are. During the war, when every day seemed to be important, I discovered while at sea for a week or ten days without seeing a newspaper that I had not missed much. I think we waste much time reading things that are not true—and sometimes things that are true of which we should be better to remain in ignorance.

I remember my first pastorate. It was marvellous! The people had a wonderful preacher—and he did some extraordinary things. He did things he would not dare do now, but he dared anything then, not because he was especially courageous, but because he did not know any better. He was fortunate in this, that there was no one to put it in print. I suppose David practised a good many things in the wilderness. Learn to thank God for an experience in the wilderness where there are not too many people, and where you can waste your sweetness on the desert air—if you have any sweetness—and can go out and preach to the trees if you like; they will not report it. Those early years were most useful to David, and he had sense enough to allow himself to be buried in the wilderness and forgotten, while his big brothers went up to the army to fight.

I wonder how many of us would have been willing to do what David did? Great men have not infrequently been made errand boys to wait on men who thought they were great. This lad who had been anointed to be king, and who had gone back to the sheepfold, was sent by his father with a basket of provisions up to the army to find out how his big brothers were getting on.

When I was a lad a joke was told in the family circle of a very famous preacher whose ministry was always attended by multitudes of people. On a certain occasion there was a young minister coming to town, and the man of fame knew all about him. He was to be in town over Sunday, not to preach in the great man's church, but somewhere else. The famous preacher knew where he was to be entertained, and said he would meet him at the station and conduct him to the house of his host. He put on the shabbiest clothes he had—and most preachers can find some if they look for them—and went to the railway station. The train came in, and a man of very important bearing stepped out. The great preacher, who was past middle life, stepped up to him and said, "Are you Mr. So-and-So?" Brusquely, the young man replied that he was. "You have come to preach in such a church to-morrow?" "Yes! Yes!" "I was told to meet you, and to conduct you to the house of the friends who are to entertain you over Sunday." "Very good of you, indeed", said the young preacher with condescension, "is there anyone here to carry my bags?" "I will carry them, sir." "Well, here they are"—and the famous man loaded himself up, porter-like, with the bags and got into the cab that was to convey them to the place, and gave direction.

When they got there he handed out the bags to the important man, paid off the cabbie, and vanished, and left the young preacher in all his glory on the steps of the house where he was to be entertained. Shortly after he went inside, and his hostess, who did not know anything of the part that had been played by this famous man, said, "You were met at the station?" "Yes; an elderly man met me, and told me I was to be your guest. He carried my bags for me, brought me here in a cab, and left me at the door." "By the way", said she, "did you ever hear of Mr. So-and-So?" "Oh yes! He is a great preacher; one of the most outstanding men of the day, I should count it a great honour to meet him". "Well," said his hostess, "it was he who carried your bags to-night."

Mr. Moody had a great Convention at the Institute in Chicago, and he had several English preachers there as special speakers. In England, in places of entertainment

and even in private houses if there is a guest, shortly after he has gone to his room, one may expect to find the man's boots outside the bedroom door. I remember my father's telling me of the first experience he had in Canada. He came back laughing, "I put my boots out" he said, "and they were still there in the morning!"

When Mr. Moody's guests had all retired he walked along the corridor of the Institute, and he saw the boots at each door. He had no facilities for cleaning the shoes, and he called to a student who was passing and said, "I would like you to help me out. Our English guests are accustomed to this sort of thing: it is part of English hospitality to see that their guests have clean shoes. They do not understand our ways, and I must get these shoes cleaned. I should like you to help me." "But with fine dignity the student replied, "I came here to study for the ministry, not to clean boots." "All right", said Mr. Moody, "I will excuse you."

Then Mr. Moody got a piece of chalk from a classroom and went along and put the room numbers on the soles of the shoes, gathered them up—I do not know whether he did it in the room I recall vividly or not, for I have many times slept in Moody's bed. Between the bedroom and sittingroom was a small connecting bath room containing a box and shoe black so that one could clean his own shoes—I do not know whether that was where he cleaned them or not, but he cleaned all the boots; and when his guests got up in the morning there the boots were bright and shining.

The friend who told me the story said, "What would I not have given to have had Mr. Moody clean my shoes—but I would not have put them on again: I would have put them in a glass case and kept them for the rest of my life as the shoes that D. L. Moody cleaned."

Long before our Master said it in the days of His flesh, this young man David learned that he who would be chief must be servant of all. He went up with a basket of cheeses to his big brothers—and, incidentally, *in running an errand for his father, and doing menial service for his brothers, he found life's great opportunity.* That is how it is always found, by doing the duty of the hour. That always leads to larger service. Do not be above looking after the sheep, or carrying a basket. This was before the days of "cash and carry"; it was carry without any cash. David was the delivery-boy.

When he got up to the army he heard the men talking about "it". It! They were talking about "it". It makes no difference what it is, there are many people who spend their lives talking about "it". Mark Twain said, that people were always talking about the weather, but nobody seems to do anything about it! Which was quite true!

I sometimes wonder what the Lord thinks about some religious Conferences, and all the committees that are appointed. We had the "Laymen's Missionary Movement", and I know not how many other "movements". What a lot of talk we have had! I have a set of books on my shelves I do not know how I got them, but they occupy about eight inches of space, and they contain the addresses that were delivered in connection with the "Men and Religious Forward Movement". I do not know what it was all about—nor did they. I do not think the devil ever troubled to attend their Conventions, because he knew nothing would come of it. They delivered many addresses. They were like Eliab, Abinadab, and



Shammah: they had their uniforms on, and their weapons in their belts—talking about it.

There was a splendid article in *The British Weekly* in the days when Sir William Robertson Nichol was Editor, entitled, "Do something! Do it!" He complained that the great majority of ministers in England attended conferences and conventions to talk about doing something. In effect, he said, "They are always talking about 'how to reach the masses'—but they never reach them; 'how to promote a revival'—but they never have one; 'how to succeed in the Lord's work'—but they know nothing of success. They are forever talking about it." Then Sir William Robertson Nichol's advice to these ministers was, "Stay at home. Do something. Do it. Do not talk about it—do it."

It is always easy to get people to come together to talk.

David did not say much, but he listened much. That is a great art, to learn how to listen. Let somebody else do the talking while you listen; you may learn something even from people who can do nothing but talk. Again, an illustration from Mr. Spurgeon. A friend said to him, "You had Mr. So-and-So to see you some time ago?" "Yes." "You ought to hear the report he gives of that evening." "What does he say?" "He says he has heard the great Spurgeon on many occasions. He has heard you preach to assembled thousands, and always thought you were the greatest preacher that ever lived. He has read your books, and read your lectures; but he says no one can really know and appreciate Mr. Spurgeon until he meets him in his own home. He says that great as you are as preacher and author, you are greatest as a conversationalist at your own fireside." Mr. Spurgeon smiled and said, "It is true that Mr. So-and-So was my guest one evening. He sat on one side of the fire, and I sat on the other—and I listened to him talk!"

That is where a great many churches make a mistake: they think people would rather listen to a choir than sing themselves. They would not. A man, though he has a voice like the fog-horn on the Bay, would rather sing himself than listen to Caruso. Do not be above listening when other people talk. I know some preachers who are too important to listen to anyone but themselves. Avoid their practices. You can learn something from the humblest of preachers.

David listened. What were the people saying? "Have you not heard about the giant?" "What about him?" He kept asking questions. That is the high privilege of ignorant people, to ask questions of those who know. Try it. Ask some questions. "Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men", when he enquired, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel?" I always enjoy this passage, because I have met many Eliabs. I think Eliab was an M.A., a Ph.D., a D.D., an LL.D.—and maybe a D.S.O. "And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?"—Can't you hear him?—"I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle."

I do not think David ever exercised so much self-restraint as he did at that moment. If he had spoken what was in his heart I think he would have said, "No! No! Eliab! I know you too well to have come this way in expectation of seeing you fight. You do not fight: you

only talk about it." David knew very well that Eliab was not going to do much in that battle.

"I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart." Just a word to some of you young preachers. You will meet Eliab when you become a pastor. He may be of your own denomination, or of some other denomination; but he will despise your youth, and dismiss you, rule you out of court by saying, "He is just a stuckup young fellow." Perhaps you will look the part, but "let no man despise thy youth". Do not quail before Eliab. Do not lose any sleep on account of Eliab's strictures.

David said, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" You would have had an argument about it. David did not argue; he simply asked the question, "What have I now done?" and he "turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner". He knew it was not worth while wasting time on Eliab. "And the people answered him again after the former manner. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul, and he sent for him."

David repeatedly asked questions. He showed himself to be of an enquiring mind. At last Saul heard of it—and sent for him. Go on preaching. If you have it in you to kill giants, you will not long lack the opportunity. Somebody will recognize and report your ability, and Saul will send for you one of these fine days.

"And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." And David said, "Wait until I show you my credentials"! Not a few people come to me with credentials, sometimes a pile of them bound with rubber bands about them—and they all tell what a wonderful man somebody is. I always feel like saying, "If you are such an unusual man, why are you here?" David had nothing but the record of what he had done. "Did you ever fight a giant? That is what we want, somebody to fight Goliath." "No, I never did." Do not say you have fought giants if you have not. I have known some ministers who delight to talk about the big churches they have had. If you ever had a bigger job than you have now, do not tell anybody: you will only advertise the fact that you are stepping down.

David did not pretend that he was a warrior. He did not say he had had experience in fighting giants, for he had not. But he had had experience in keeping sheep. What has that to do with fighting giants? Just this: you cannot keep sheep without meeting lions and bears. You cannot do your duty anywhere without meeting difficulties. He told his story simply: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him."

Keep your sheep, and slay your lions and bears—not "teddy" bears, or toy lions, but real bears, bears that can hug. There are plenty of opportunities to slay bears. You will find them in the churches you serve. I heard of a man one day who in a testimony meeting, said, "Before I was converted I was like a great grisly bear"—and somebody who knew him said, "Well, you ain't much better now." You will meet plenty of lions

and bears in the ordinary course of life, plenty of real difficulties that will try your manhood.

David met them, that was all; and he recognized God in the little things of life; he put God to the proof in the daily task. In other words he said, "Lord, help me to keep my sheep to-day", and when the lion and bear came he said, "I have asked for help to keep the sheep, and I am going out against this lion and bear, and I shall slay them in the name of the Lord."

Do the same with your temper, and with every other thing about you that is ugly. Bring it into subjection. Let God do something in you. David was a man who had not a theory about God, but an experience of Him. He knew that God could come into a human life and make a man do, by divine power, what was entirely beyond him on the human plane. He said, in effect, "If God helped me kill the lion and the bear, He will help me kill the giant. Giants are as easy prey to Him as the lion or bear."

"Moreover"—do not miss the "moreover". "David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

When I was a little boy I heard my father preach from that text, and I can remember some of the things he said. He said that in the material world there is in operation a law which science calls the conservation of energy. That is to say, there is a certain amount of energy in the created order, and while that energy may be transformed from one form to another, no energy is lost. There is a certain amount of energy in a piece of coal that may express itself in heat, in light, in motion, and so on. But when that energy has been released it is not lost: it is still somewhere. The sum-total of the energy of the universe never diminishes: it is conserved. Likewise, the preacher said, it was the divine plan to put into every redeemed human life the power of the Spirit of God, and that power could be put to a thousand uses. If exercised in killing a lion, it is lost, is it? No! The reaction has strengthened the man to face the bear; and he triumphs over him also. But is the power thus expended lost? No! It has fitted him now to slay a giant.

I do not know anything about it except as a general principle, but when we take food into our bodies there is in that food a certain amount of potential energy. It is not lost, but locked up; and when we take that food and assimilate it by the ordinary processes of nature, it does something for the brain, for the blood, for the muscles, for the bones, something for both mind and body. That energy is transformed, and it is now mine. Because you had dinner to-day you were able to do your work. That energy is received into the system, and finds some new expression in the doing of the daily task, whatever that may be.

God is feeding his people all the time, leading them into various and varied experiences; and all the little things of life are designed to make us stronger men and women. I believe that is the meaning of the passage which says, "All things work together"—to get us ready for a picnic? "All things work together"—for what, "to them that love God"? For "good". What is "good"? Sitting down for an easy time? No! It is vastly more than that. Everything that comes into human life, the keeping of sheep, the slaying of the lion, the conquering of the bear, enduring the mocking of Eliab, are but fitting us for the great hour when we shall be

enabled to say to some giant, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." We shall find, in the early years of life, if we make use of the opportunities that throng us; and if we have the enlightened wisdom which characterized this man David, that we shall be able to take the humble place, and do the ordinary things, and lay up in store an accumulation of faith, which will grow out of an experience of the divine faithfulness, so that when the great crises of life come, we shall be able to stand. What else does it mean when we are admonished to "put on the whole armour of God"? What for? "That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Like a rock! What is it that makes the man? The wilderness experience, the turning to spiritual profit of all the experiences of life, by which we are rooted and grounded in Christ, and built up in Him in all things.

David was equal to the great crisis. You must not expect to have many great days in life. There are only a few great days. There are only a few great trials. There are only a few opportunities to display true greatness. Only one Goliath did David slay, but he was trained for that hour by years of faithfulness in obscure places and occupations; but when God wanted His man, He knew where to find him.

Let us go back to last week's lesson for a moment. The Lord said to Samuel, "Go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons." How did He do it? By making him keep sheep, by ordering his life in such a way that its ordinary, everyday, discipline, would develop him into the great character he had to be when that great crisis should come to the nation and to him. And he came back victor over the Philistine.

Next week I shall speak to you about Saul's armour, David's sling, about the five smooth stones. Somebody asked me some time ago, "When are you going to preach on the four stones in David's scrip that he did not use? Why did he take five when he needed only one?" You know what marksmen the Boers were? There is a story of one of them who was going out hunting ducks. A friend noticed that he had only five cartridges and asked, "Why do you take only five cartridges?" "Because I want only five ducks!" David took five when he wanted only one. It is very suggestive, but I think we will reserve that for another night.

#### UNION BAPTIST NEWS

ORILLIA—In a recent letter from the Rev. John Byers the following news items have been given:

"As a 'Regular Baptist Church' the Lord has blessed our testimony to many of His own people in the town of Orillia; sinners have been saved, and backsliders gloriously restored."

"During the years of depression and unemployment God has in a very remarkable way proved to His people that He really does hear prayer, and that He answers far and beyond our greatest expectations."

"For a small body of people to erect a substantial stone Church in the days of prosperity is considered no small thing, but to accomplish this great task in days of adversity and financial distress must be acknowledged as an achievement of living faith in God. We anticipate opening this magnificent new building, beautifully furnished throughout, with the best pews possible installed—entirely free of debt. Our obligations at the present moment are large, but thus far God has not failed us. Some weeks ago we came to our last cent. A special prayer meeting was called on Sunday afternoon to pray definitely for money. Now, the preacher has no money,

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## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

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No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 45

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## FOURTH QUARTER

## ELIJAH AT MOUNT CARMEL

Lesson Text: I Kings, chapter 18.

Golden Text: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."—I Kings, 18:21.

Bible School Reading: I Kings, 18:19-40.

Daily Bible Readings: Mon., 2 Chron. 7: 1-7; Tues., Ps. 79:1-13; Wed., Luke 23: 1-7; Thurs., Acts 1:1-8; Fri., Acts 16: 19-24; Sat., Rom. 1:9-17.

## I. THE MEETING WITH AHAB

In our last lesson we noted the abrupt introduction of Elijah upon the scene in connection with his courageous statement that there would be neither dew nor rain, but according to his word, (17:1). His prediction was fulfilled, and for the space of fully three years there was drought in the land, (James 5:17). In this lesson the effects of that drought are manifest, in the scarcity of fodder for the animals, and we are also informed of the end of the same, preceded by the dramatic meeting of Elijah and Ahab, and the test at Carmel. Throughout the record the triumph of faith is evident.

In all his actions, Elijah moves at the command of God. His pronouncements are grave, and the consequences are severe, but the prophet is sure of his ground, and safeguarded from error in acting only as the divine instrument. The responsibility for the infliction of the penalty was the Lord's, the duty of announcing the infliction was the prophet's. In the record we are first informed of the command of God respecting Elijah showing himself to Ahab, the promise of rain being associated with it, (v. 1). God is merciful even in His judgments. His people had sinned grievously against Him. Yet He did not utterly destroy them. Note His merciful attitude in relation to the world, (2 Peter, 3:9).

In obedience to the divine command Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab, (v. 2). He was willing to brave the wrath of the king, and risk personal injury in order to make known the message of God. A scene is then presented indicative of the sad condition of the land due to the famine, wherein we are informed of the search for provender for the animals on the part of Ahab, and Obadiah (vs. 2-6). The meeting of Elijah with Obadiah is next recorded, (vs. 7-15), followed by the meeting of the prophet with the king, (vs. 16-19).

Concerning the record of these sections the following may be noted: First, the distress of the land as a result of sin. On every hand we may find illustrations of the evil effects of sin, manifest in the political, social, economic, and religious spheres. Observe also the respect of Obadiah for Elijah; the former was well aware of the fact of the latter's power, together with its source and

nature. God had vindicated His servant, and given testimony to the world of His approval of him. The fear of Obadiah for Ahab may also be noted, giving us a sidelight on the character of the king, and the belief of the servant respecting the power of God. Obadiah was evidently a good man. He feared the Lord from his youth, (v. 12), and hid the prophets of the Lord from the vengeance of Jezebel, (v. 13). His position was a difficult one, but he accomplished something for God despite his circumstances. It is worthy of note that wherever we are, we can serve God, even in prison, as in the case of Joseph, (Gen. 39:23), and that of Paul, (Acts 16:25-34).

The meeting of Elijah and Ahab is recorded in a simple manner, yet is not without its dramatic side. Those two individuals were opposites in character, position, and significance. The one stood for righteousness, the other for wickedness; the one was strong, the other weak; the one was a devoted servant of God, the other had sold himself to do evil, (21:25); the one had no followers, the other was the head of a kingdom; the one was poor, the other rich; the one was seeking to lead the people back to God, the other was leading them astray; the one was the divine messenger of judgment, the other was the cause of the divine anger. Note Ahab's attitude in blaming Elijah, and the answer of the prophet, together with the latter's command, (vs. 17-19). It is only too frequently the case that the one who seeks to prevent the spread of evil is blamed for any trouble which may ensue in contending with the evil-doer. It is a case of blaming the policeman for disturbing the thief in the prosecution of his nefarious business. The servant of God must not be afraid of trouble in contending with the forces of evil in the spiritual arena. Neither should he be deceived by the cry of the evil-doer that such and such an one is causing trouble, by the methods used in the spiritual battle.

## II. THE TEST AT MOUNT CARMEL

In this section there is recorded one of the great scenes of scripture, when heathen religion was put to the test and was proved powerless, in the presence of the omnipotence of God. The purpose of the test is manifest in the prophet's question, (v. 21); its nature related to the sacrifice of the altar, (vs. 23-38); and its consequences were far reaching in effect, (vs. 39, 40). We are impressed with the boldness of the prophet, a characteristic also manifest in the members of the early church, (Acts 4:31). His supreme confident faith in God is likewise manifest, accompanied by its attendant works, (James 2:26). Note may also be made of the wisdom of his action, and the God-fearing spirit animating his every movement.

Respecting the test, we may observe that it was of a public nature, taking place in the open air, that it was fair to both sides, and admitted no opportunity for deception, resolved itself around the question of power, based on sacrifice, was decisive in character, and involved grave consequences. It was a case of one man against many, but one man with God is in the majority, and sure to win. Note further the significance of the test in re-

lation to the present day conflict with spiritual forces. The same resolves itself round the great sacrifice of Calvary. In relation to this the power of God is manifest, while all religions which reject our Lord's atonement prove themselves lacking in spiritual power. God answered the prayer of His servant, and manifested His power, because it was the prayer of faith which glorified Him. Spiritual power is needed these days, which, as in Elijah's day will convince the people that "the Lord, he is the God", (v. 39).

## III. THE LITTLE CLOUD OUT OF THE SEA, (vs. 41-46).

A different scene is now enacted. Ahab is warned about the coming rain, and returns home, (vs. 41, 42). Elijah ascends to the top of Carmel, there to await the fulfilment of the divine promise. Note his devout attitude, and the direction given to his servants. He knew the rain was coming, and bid his servant look for it. It is significant that he was satisfied of its arrival when informed of the little cloud. Sometimes showers of blessing are heralded likewise by the little cloud from the sea.

## UNION BAPTIST NEWS

(Continued from page 10)

and in that sense he is in the true Apostolic succession (Acts 3:6); and the deacons have less. We claimed the promises, and Deacon Dunford said, 'I believe what God says, and the money's coming'. What happened? The following day I received a telephone message, to the effect that a widow lady had \$100.00 as a contribution toward the building fund. The next day a business man called on the 'phone to say that his aged mother, over eighty years, had a cheque to the value of \$25.00 toward the completion of the new church. In a few weeks hundreds of dollars were sent in by outside people. We still need over \$2,000.00, but we firmly believe that God will supply every cent. The church stands as a noble monument to the love and liberality of our great and gracious God.

"Eighteen months ago we felt the need for revival among God's people. A special prayer meeting was called for every Saturday night beginning at 8.30, and purposing to pray indefinitely as to time, but positively as to revival of God's people and conversion of sinners. God moved the hearts of His people and gave them a great burden for souls. The meetings continued on into the morning. What happened? Well, God revived His people, sinners were saved,—and building operations were begun. God's blessing continued to flow in a measure to saint and sinner. Two weeks ago Pastor Robt. Brackstone preached in Orillia, and God signally blessed his ministry, and in answer to prayer three decisions were made. Last Sunday night, I witnessed the greatest manifestation of God's convicting and convincing Spirit I have ever beheld in Orillia. At the close of the sermon ten (or twelve) people left their seats and came to the front. The whole congregation was moved to tears—tears of joy and gratitude to Almighty God—deacons and pastor were completely broken down, as they beheld young men and young women weeping their way to the Cross. To God be all the glory."

## Sixth Annual Convention of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec

To be held in Jarvis St. Baptist Church, Toronto, October 24th, 25th, 26th, 1933

**SPECIAL FEATURES**—Special Speaker, Dr. Albert G. Johnson, of Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, Mich. **MUSIC:** The Kinsmen Quartette, Toronto; The Johnson Trio (Indian), Lewiston, N.Y. **MEALS:** Dinner and supper will be served in the B. D. Thomas Hall at 30c per meal.

### PROGRAMME

#### PRE-CONVENTION MEETINGS

##### MONDAY, OCTOBER 23rd, 1933

Meeting of Executive Board at 2 p.m. sharp.

##### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24th, 1933

- 11.00 a.m.—Registration of Messengers.  
 2.30 p.m.—OPEN MEETING—Pastors and Church Officers.  
 Rev. Alex. Thomson in Charge.  
 Theme: The Bible School, its Purpose and Possibilities.  
 4.00 p.m.—ADDRESS—Dr. Albert G. Johnson.  
 "Getting on with the Business of God."

#### TUESDAY EVENING

##### First Session

#### SIXTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

- 7.30—Prayer, Praise and Testimony, led by Rev. J. K. Yalland.  
 8.00—Opening of Convention.  
 Rev. C. M. Carew, President, presiding.  
 Appointment of Committees.  
 1. Committee on Scrutineers.  
 2. Committee on Arrangements.  
 3. Committee on Nominations.  
 4. Committee on Resolutions.  
 5. Committee on Budget.  
 Report of Revision Committee and Adoption of Tentative Constitution.  
 ADDRESS—Dr. Albert G. Johnson.

##### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25th, 1933

##### Morning

#### SECOND CONVENTION SESSION

- 9.30—Prayer, Praise and Testimony, led by Pastor J. F. Dempster.  
 10.00—Rev. C. M. Carew, President, presiding.  
 Presentation of the Annual Report of the Executive Board of the Union by the Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. W. E. Atkinson.  
 11.00—ADDRESS—Rev. James McGinlay.

##### Afternoon

#### THIRD CONVENTION SESSION

- 2.00—Prayer, Praise and Testimony, led by Rev. F. W. Dyson.  
 2.30—Rev. C. M. Carew, President, presiding.  
**HOME MISSIONS**  
 Work Among the Six Nation Indians—Rev. Melchie Henry.  
 Pioneering in Haliburton County—Rev. Oscar Boomer.

Our Neighbour—the French Roman Catholic—  
 Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, Student Arnold Dallimore.

4.00—ADDRESS—Dr. Albert G. Johnson.

##### Evening

#### FOURTH CONVENTION SESSION

- 7.30—Prayer, Praise and Testimony, led by Pastor John Armstrong.  
 8.00—Mr. O. L. Raymer, Vice-President, presiding.  
 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS—Rev. C. M. Carew.  
**YOUNG PEOPLE'S NIGHT.**  
 ADDRESS—Dr. Albert G. Johnson.

##### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26th, 1933

##### Morning

#### FIFTH CONVENTION SESSION

- 9.30—Prayer, Praise and Testimony, led by Rev. F. S. Kendall.  
 10.00—Rev. C. M. Carew, President, presiding.  
 Discussion of Executive Board's report.  
 11.00—Report of Committees.  
 11.15—Nomination and Election of Officers and Board Members.

##### Afternoon

#### SIXTH CONVENTION SESSION

- 2.00—Prayer, Praise and Testimony, led by Rev. H. E. Buchner.  
 2.30—Rev. C. M. Carew, President, presiding.

#### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Review and Presentation of the work of the Toronto Baptist Seminary—Rev. W. Gordon Brown in Charge.  
 Members of the Faculty will address the Convention on the work of the Seminary and Students serving Summer Fields will relate some of their experiences.

##### Evening

#### SEVENTH CONVENTION SESSION

- 7.30—Prayer, Praise and Testimony, led by Rev. Leander Roblin.  
 8.00—Rev. C. M. Carew presiding.  
 Introduction of Officers and Board Members.  
 Presentation of Resolution re the Missionary interests of the Union.  
 Missionary Message by Rev. A. J. Lewis of Benton Street Baptist Church, Kitchener, Ont.  
 Adjournment.  
 Benediction.