

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

CHRIST'S COMING THE HOPE OF THE BEREAVED

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto.

(Stenographically Reported)

NOTE:—We reprint this sermon in response to scores of inquiries. It appeared in THE WITNESS some years ago, the reserve stock being exhausted within a few days after publication.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

This Bible is written in pregnant speech. The words of Scripture are manifold; they are fulfilled again and again. You have, for instance, in the story of man's first temptation, not only a history of the first temptation, but a prophecy of every subsequent temptation, and an epitome of the history of every human soul. Man made his choice between believing the word of God and the word of the tempter; and believing the word of the tempter brought death into the world and all our woe.

The divine requirement set out in the Word, by which our first parents were hedged about, was a requirement that demanded the sacrifice of the pleasures of the present for the larger and more abiding interests of the future. From then until now, the devil has endeavoured to lead men to live for the present rather than for the future, for time rather than for eternity. There is not a man or woman here who has not at some time or another engaged in a course of action which, if persisted in, inevitably would result in disaster. But it was done without intention of continuance. "Let me enjoy myself for the present, and in due time I will give attention to the weightier matters of the future."—that has long been a temptation of the adversary of souls: "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." But for some years now that seductive temptation has issued from the pulpit. The modern in-

terpretation of the gospel lays emphasis upon the present rather than upon the future. Those of us who talk about "days to come," whether it be the coming of the Lord Himself, or the day of reckoning which inevitably awaits all men, or the day of rewards for those who have been redeemed, are voted to be altogether out-of-date, and to have failed to keep up with the progress of human thought. In religious assemblies where the representatives of the churches convene to do the business of the churches, you find it again and again declared that we have left behind us the old habit of seeking to persuade men to prepare for the future. The average preacher to-day, it seems to me, is not exerting himself to persuade men to come into such relationship to God that they may be prepared for that life, that sinless life described in this wonderful Book, for the City whose streets are gold and whose walls are jasper, and whose gates are pearl, and whose glory is the Lamb: the business of the church to-day is supposed to be to organize itself into a colossal institution. As somebody said at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, "I should like to see the Government in Canada that would dare to say, No, to a demand of a United Church." My contention is that it is no business of any religious body to demand anything of the Government. The Lord Jesus did not leave His Church in the world for any such purpose. We may

exercise ourselves as citizens, but as an organized body of believers it is no part of the Church's function to wield a club over governments, and to compel legislation according to its own will. That whole conception of the church is just about ten million miles away from the New Testament conception; it has nothing in common with the revelation given to us in God's Word.

But I merely point out to you that the tendency of the time is not to prepare men for the future but to make this world a little more habitable. Of course, we ought to do that. We have a right to exercise our influence as Christian citizens. But our social service should be a product of something deeper than that. I do not believe that the Church of Christ was put into this world to improve the sanitation of our cities, or to whitewash our houses, or to paint our verandahs, or to give us more richly furnished homes; what it was put in the world to do was to give us better hearts, and cleansed souls, and to make us over again into the image and likeness of God. But you may go to church after church—and do not call me a pessimist; do not charge me with fault-finding: I cannot be faithful to my trust if I do not with all my soul protest against these tendencies—and on the right hand and on the left, you will find that the devil has turned aside the ministers of Christ to some other mission than that which was given them by the Lord Whom they profess to serve. But, I say, you may go to place after place and never hear men exhorted to prepare for a life that is to come, and to come into such relationship to God that they shall have no fear of the future.

Now, I venture to assert that our Lord Jesus always laid the emphasis there. You remember it is said of those worthies whose names are inscribed upon that honour roll in the eleventh of Hebrews: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." I have quoted it before, I quote it again. Long ago Whittier said—and I think, perhaps, it is more emphatically true of the Christian Church to-day than it was in his day:

"The church, to place and power the door,
Rebukes the sin of the world no more;
Nor sees its Lord in the homeless poor.
Everywhere is the grasping hand,
The eager adding of land to land;
And earth, which seemed to the fathers meant
But as a pilgrim's wayside tent,
A nightly shelter to fold away,
When the Lord should call at the break of day,
Solid and steadfast seems to be;
And time has forgotten eternity."

Our Lord, however, said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

The testimony of the apostles was to the same effect; and in this word which I have read to you, the Apostle writes in order that his readers might not "be ignorant concerning them which are asleep". "For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord." This apostle professes to be speaking by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He declares that the word he writes is not his word; it is the Word of the Lord. And he is writing about a matter concerning which all human voices are silent. He

sees a great company of people coming down to the edge of the dark river; he sees their loved ones leave them, and go out into the great unknown. Whither they have gone; what they have discovered in that bourne from which no traveller returns, no one may know unless God shall tell them. And he writes this especially that they may not "be ignorant concerning them which are asleep". Is there one of us here who has not dug a grave? Is there one of us here who has not projected himself into the future? We have followed with an affectionate imagination those who have left us; we have tried to visualize them in that unknown realm; we have tried to picture them, to imagine what they are like, what they are doing, whether they are happy, whether they are better off than they were here, whether they ever desire to come back again, whether they have any thought about us; but, notwithstanding all our heart's longing, no voice comes back to us from across the river. And there is no voice apart from the voice of this Word. But here we may come and find a sure footing for our faith. Here is a word designed to enlighten us, that we may not "be ignorant concerning them which are asleep".

What then has the Word of the Lord to say about those who have gone? It tells us that there are some who sorrow without hope. That, my brethren, is a terrible word. That is a word whose truth we are ourselves reluctant to believe. It is a truth we would fain persuade ourselves must surely have some modification. For I have observed that some—even of the most orthodox, even some who profess to believe this Bible to be the Word of God, in face of the death of one who has apparently died in his sin, or in rebellion against God, will somehow or another hope against hope, in order that they may sorrow not without hope. My dear friends, I would not add anything to anyone's anguish; I would not intensify your sorrow; I would not deepen the shadow that has fallen upon any life; and yet, faithfulness to my trust demands that I should tell you that if this Bible be true—and if it is not true, I repeat, we know absolutely nothing of the life beyond; we know no more than Abraham knew: with all our advancement we have discovered nothing. Sir Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge to the contrary notwithstanding; we have discovered nothing of the future apart from the Word, and—if this Bible be true, then it is possible for a man to die in his sin; it is possible for a man to go down into the grave with heart unchanged, with sins unforgiven, and with the black record of his iniquity written in God's book, awaiting the day of revelation and righteous judgment of God. I can conceive of nothing more hopeless than that. Jesus said: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." And in the nature of the case there can be no hope for a man who thus rejects and neglects the gospel to the end of life. I offer this evening no word of encouragement to those who believe in a future probation. I cannot conceive that it is possible for God to do more than He has done: He has emptied Heaven's exchequer; He has invested His all; He has poured out His own life's blood for the redemption of the world: "Last of all, he sent unto them his Son." You remember how in the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the Apostle expounds the great doctrine of the essential Deity of Christ, of His oneness with the Father from all eternity, of His superiority to all angels; and He leads up to this tremendous climax: "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect

so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" God Himself speaking His last word in the Person of His Son certified to His Deity in the resurrection and ascension, witnessing to the testimony of the witnesses of that tremendous fact by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. And the Scripture says, in effect, "There is nothing more that even God can do to save a soul from hell." Therefore, for a man to reject this gospel, to trample under foot the blood of the Lord Jesus, to say "no" at last to the Son of God—there is no hope for such an one in the future. There is nothing more that God can possibly do. He has no other Son: "He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Well, there is another sense in which some sorrow hopelessly. Many I have seen standing at the graveside of one they love—a Christian mother, a Christian father, or some darling child carried by the angels into the divine Presence, without a shadow of a doubt as to the glorious future of the one departed: but the man or woman left behind is himself or herself without preparation to stand before God. It may be there is somebody here this evening like that—you sorrow without hope for yourself, not concerning those who have gone, but you are unprepared to follow them into the glory. Blessed be God, you need not sorrow without hope; for the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin. And it is possible for us to be prepared so that we can say of all our loved ones as David did when he dried his eyes and washed and asked that they set bread before him. When they asked him why he sorrowed no longer for the child, he said: "Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Blessed be God, some of us can say, "I shall go to him—or to her; we are on the way; we are bound for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And we can say, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We have no doubt about the future whatever. We shall go to those who sleep in Christ.

But is that enough? What was that loved one to you? You tell me of his or her mental qualities: you tell me of the moral beauty which characterized that, as you think, symmetrically developed and beautifully spent life. But was that all? No. So many times, so many hundreds of times, I have stood first at the casket and then at the grave when I have seen someone weeping over some loved form. I cannot join with my brethren who make light of the body. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved entire unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Even in the Old Testament those who died in faith must have had some faint apprehension of this glorious truth, as when Job said: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Oh, no one but God could have taught him that. How careful those ancient saints were of the sepulchres of their dead! I am glad it was written of Jesus: "He made his grave with the

wicked, and with the rich in his death." I shall never cease to feel grateful to the women who lovingly wrapped His precious body about with fine linen and embalmed it with spices, and who went to the grave where Jesus was laid. And since Christ came forth in His resurrection body, we have had a new conception of the life to be; for with that body He returned to the Father: He actually took a physical body back into the glory with Him. I need not remind you this evening of those passages which prove the reality of His physical resurrection: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." You remember His word to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side." "They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them." And He did actually carry His resurrection body into the glory.

I met at the close of the service this morning in Guelph a certain professor whom I had never met before. I left hurriedly while they were singing the last hymn, and I met him outside the church. He said, "I want to talk with you for about fifteen minutes." I said, "You will have to come down and have lunch with me, so that we can talk as we eat, for I must hurry away." And he told me of a certain Movement among the students—The Student Christian Movement—and of his experience, of how in a discussion with a certain man, this man had said to him, "Do you mean to say that Jesus did actually go up through the clouds into the glory?" "Well, yes," he said, "put it that way if you like." "Do you think He did actually take His body up into the glory?" He said, "Yes, put it that way if you like. He took His body into the presence of God." "Well," the doubter said, "where is He now?" My friend said, "Was your grandmother a Christian?" "Yes, sir," replied the doubter. "Well, where is her spirit now?" enquired my friend. He said, "I do not know." "Now," continued my friend, "I have told you where my Saviour is, that He arose, that He ascended into the glory, and that He is at God's right hand. Where is yours? Where is He?" We cannot think of Christ in any other terms than those in which He was pleased to manifest Himself. He clothed Himself with human flesh, and "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." That is our conception of the future with respect to Christ.

But what about your loved ones? Where are they? Can you love them as disembodied spirits? Can you think of reunion with them as intangible spirits? Can you think with joy of meeting them in some sort of spiritual realm where they will not be clothed with flesh? Do you say the bodies are not raised? There is undoubtedly an intermediate state of which we know but little. We only know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. I cannot conceive of it as being a state of unconsciousness. I cannot conceive of an active spirit like that of Paul, which had so heroically served his Master, saying, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you", if depart-

ture from the body meant a lapse into unconsciousness. I have myself wrought with men who did not want to depart, who have found a little bit of heaven in the service of God here. And yet with all his splendid achievements, with all the joy of service, with all his splendid powers trained, sanctified, subjected to the will of God, Paul said, "There is a realm into which I have had a glimpse, and I would rather be there than here; it is *far* better."

The story of the sixteenth of Luke suggests to us that in that intermediate state, while still there were some brethren upon the earth, Dives was in a state of consciousness, and so was Lazarus yonder in Abraham's bosom. There is no warrant there for the doctrine of soul sleeping. "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is *far* better"—I cannot measure that. You young gentlemen, when you go to school, learn to count things up, will you? And when you have spent fifty years, and you have measured all your astronomical distances, and you have projected yourself to the rim of the universe, come and measure this great word, "to depart, and to be with Christ, which is *far* better".

It must be something very wonderful, and yet there is something better than that! Because the day is coming when the soul and the body will be reunited. Ah, will she forgive me? I think she will; she is here tonight. I stood with a mother beside her darling boy, and I shall never forget when she laid her loving hand upon that icy temple, she said, "Pastor, that is death." Ah, yes, it is death. And death is an enemy which takes our best and most beautiful out of our embrace, and we have no redress whatever. But shall we never see them again in the flesh? Shall we never see that precious body again? Of course we shall. You say, "I'm comforted whenever I read the story of the resurrection." You remember how Mary supposed Him to be the gardener, and said, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master"—a recognition on the other side of the grave! And when He came to break bread, sitting at the table, their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight. When they were fishing that morning at daybreak, and they saw Him on the shore, one keen of vision said, "It is the Lord; I know Him—the same Jesus I loved before He died. And I love Him a thousandfold more to-day." They knew Him in His resurrection power and glory.

"Christ the first fruits": He is the type, He is the symbol, He is the prophecy, He is the promise, the incarnation of "God, that cannot lie". The Marys will meet their loved ones by and by. But where? where? when? Some friends have been talking about healing in the atonement. Is there healing in the atonement? Yes, do not say there is not. But the resurrection is in the atonement, too. The redemption of the whole creation is in the atonement, and there is as much scriptural reason for demanding the immediate resurrection of the body on the ground of the atonement as there is for demanding the healing of the body on the ground of the atonement. Think it over. Do not be carried away by every wind of doctrine. Every blessing we receive is in the atonement. I will tell you what is in the atonement: everything short of hell is

in the atonement—the promise of the future, and of the resurrection. The body of our Lord Jesus had the marks of the nails in His hands.

I remember when I was a child when death came into our family—the only occasion in my memory until later years—how just as a little boy I used to lie awake at nights and dream of the resurrection—a waking dream—wondering what it would be like to have that little brother back again. I had never stood beside a grave until then, and I had wondered what it would be like. But he did not come back! And your loved ones have not come back! and you have had a lonely, weary time of waiting. The years have not fled rapidly. It seems so long since they were here.

But, my brethren and sisters, there is hope: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." And this is the condition: "*If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." There will be some alive who will be on this earth at the coming of the Lord, but they shall have no advantage over those who are asleep: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming."

There is a day of reunion, and it is *inseparably connected with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Whether there is recognition between those who have departed in that intermediate state, we cannot certainly say, but it would appear that there is. If across that gulf Dives recognized Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, even before the resurrection, recognized him as quite distinct and separate from all others, identified him as one he had known upon earth, it would seem that even in that intermediate state there is recognition. But the perfection of redemption will be realized when soul and body are reunited, when our whole spirit, soul, and body, are presented "faultless, before the presence of his glory".

That is all connected with the coming of our Lord Jesus. Let no one rob us of this "blessed hope". I love to think of His coming down the sky. I do not know when it will be. I remember Spurgeon saying that for himself he could not say that he desired to be among those who were alive and remain at the coming of the Lord. He said that he would prefer even to pass through the article of death that he might enter thus, in some measure, into the experience of Jesus. But we shall all be changed; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. And I would insist upon that, notwithstanding the mystery which surrounds it—and we cannot be positive of many things; we cannot be wise beyond that which is written; we should be content with that which God has been pleased to reveal to us,—there is a day coming when our Lord Jesus will return, and He will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Why is it then that men are so opposed to this doctrine of the "blessed hope"? Why is it that men are so opposed to the proclamation of this great truth in our

day? I cannot tell, unless it be a further illustration of the truth that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be". Our Lord Jesus said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself." Oh, what a joy it will be, what a glorious meeting that will be when those who sleep in Jesus shall return triumphantly with the Lord! It is the only hope of the bereaved. Can you give any comfort to anyone on any other ground than this? "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Sin and sorrow at an end, no more crying, no more tears, no more infirmities of the flesh: with perfect bodies, with sanctified spirits and renewed minds, we shall be with Him, and "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." I think of some whom I do not want to see precisely as I saw them last. I am glad they are going to have new bodies. I would have relieved them of pain, and so would you. And with streaming eyes and aching hearts, you have said, "At last the long fight is over. They are at rest. And I am glad for their sakes they are delivered from their pain." But to have them back again, with bodies like unto those we knew in earlier years, but glorified, and fashioned like unto His glorious body, what a meeting that will be!

Are there any here this evening who are without that "blessed hope"? Any man or woman here who has loved ones yonder, and yet who are not ready to meet them? Anyone here who, if you were called to-night, would die in your sin? Ah, it is an almost forgotten doctrine, but it is terribly true! I at least know of no way whereby any human soul can be prepared for that great day but through the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the cleansing of the precious blood. How many are there here this evening, I wonder, to whom this is a "blessed hope"? I wish those of you who believe that Jesus is coming again would tell everybody about it. And let me ask if there is one who desires to be numbered among those who shall be ready when the Lord shall come? Somebody said to me last Sunday night, "I wish you had given the invitation before you announced the hymn." I give it now. Is there anybody here this evening who desires to know Jesus Christ as Saviour, and to be ready to meet Him when He comes? Let us pray.

SEMINARY NOTES

A certain pastor recently paid the Seminary an unwitting compliment. He said its course is too difficult. We admit that it is difficult: we deny that it is too difficult for the man or woman who is really serious about training for the most difficult work on earth, the gospel ministry at home or abroad.

We give herewith a sample of the work being done by our third-year students. In the recent examination on Modernism, one question quoted a paragraph from a leading Modernist, Dr. C. W. Emmet, in which he said:

"We shall therefore use the term 'Modernist' as denoting the movement in the Anglican church, and indeed, in other churches, who believe that religion needs to be interpreted afresh to the modern man, and that it can be so interpreted

without the loss of any essential element. It is prepared to welcome without reserve the results of historical criticism and scientific discovery with their new outlook on the world. It strives to preserve a real continuity with the past and is resolved to work within the church to which its adherents belong. At the same time it recognizes in varying degrees that the time has come when services, formulas, and doctrinal statements require revision. It needs, however, to be said very clearly that Modernism is not primarily the acceptance of a set of opinions and new dogmas, critical or scientific. Any given Modernist may or may not believe in the Virgin Birth, or empty tomb, or the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The essence of Modernism lies, not in its conclusions, but in the way in which they are reached and the temper in which they are held. Modernists agree that we can no longer appeal to the authority of Bible, creeds or church, as something fixed and decisive; they agree that the Spirit of God is speaking in divers channels and by divers voices, and that we must be ready to hear all that He saith to the churches; and they agree that truth flourishes best in an atmosphere of freedom and that the church must be brave enough to suffer a great variety of opinions within its walls."

The class was asked: Why are you not a "Modernist" according to the above definition?

In reply, one student, Miss Mary Millar, wrote the following direct answer. Read and rejoice.

"I am not a Modernist because I do not believe that religion needs a new interpretation. My need of a Saviour is as great as any who lived before this modern era. Human nature does not change, and God does not change. I deny that a new interpretation can be made without the loss of some essential element. Christ is either divine or merely human. His miracles are either genuine, or else His whole life is a failure. Man is either dead in trespasses and sins, or he is innocent of any sin and does not need a Saviour.

"I claim the Bible is the only authoritative guide in spiritual matters; and when science contradicts revelation, it is to be rejected.

"I do not believe that any formula, doctrinal statement, or service, which is in accordance with the Word of God needs revision.

"I believe in the Virgin Birth, the empty tomb, and John's authorship of the Fourth Gospel. My only authority is the Word of God, which endureth forever, and creeds and churches are minor authorities only as they are in harmony with the Bible.

"The Spirit of God uses as its weapon the Word of God. The Spirit never speaks contrary to the Bible. His mission is to take the things of Christ, and reveal them to us. He illumines the sacred page, and brings the truth to light.

"Truth flourishes best when we can say 'My freedom is Thy grand control'. In casting off all authority so that we may have freedom of thought the way is opened for all manner of error.

"I do not believe that a great variety of opinions should be suffered within the walls of the church. Paul is severe in his denunciations of those who preach any other doctrine save Christ, and Him crucified. John commands his readers to have no fellowship with one holding wrong conceptions of the person of Christ."

DR. CLARK IN QUEBEC

Dr. O. L. Clark spent a few days last week with the Dalesville, Brownsburg, and Lachute, churches, Quebec, where Rev. F. W. Dyson is faithfully ministering the Word. The people on this field are deeply interested in the Seminary, and Dr. Clark was given a sympathetic hearing at a well-attended Missionary Rally held in the Dalesville Church on Friday, November 10th. She emphasized the fact that each individual Christian is responsible to God in the matter of sharing the burdens and joys of the Lord's service at home and abroad. Pastor Dyson has been bringing messages from the Book of Acts, showing the characteristics of the early Church, and the Lord is pouring upon the people there a spirit of earnest intercession. Dr. Clark also gave a message in the Lachute Church on Sunday evening. The Lachute Baptist Church comes third in the list of churches in the matter of the number of young people attending the Seminary; Jarvis St. Church and Mt. Pleasant Road Church, Toronto, being first and second, respectively.—W. G. B.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 49

December 3rd, 1933

FOURTH QUARTER**THE MOABITES DEFEATED**

Lesson Text: 2 Kings, chapter 3.

Golden Text: "For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts."

—2 Kings 3:17.

Bible School Reading—2 Kings 3:1-25.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—I Kings 12:25-33.

Tuesday—Psalm 56:1-13.

Wednesday—Isaiah 16:6-14.

Thursday—Luke 6:17-23.

Friday—Eph. 3:14-21.

Saturday—John 7:32-39.

I. THE CHARACTER OF JEHORAM, (vs. 1-3).

Like Ahaziah Jehoram had the misfortune to be brought up in an ungodly atmosphere, where every influence tended to lead him away from God, and to fasten more securely in his heart and mind the fetters of heathenism with its wicked ways. It is not to be wondered at therefore that after his ascension to the throne it should be recorded of him that he did "evil in the sight of the Lord". Note the standard of judgment; the "sight of God", not the sight of men; divine, not human judgment. It is possible to be esteemed right in the sight of men, while wrong in the eyes of God, and vice versa, as human judgment is tinged with sin, and prone to err. It should be our supreme aim therefore to please God in all things, (Col. 1:10), whether or not men approve of our conduct, knowing that some day we must give an account to God of the deeds done in the body, (Rom. 14:12). While Jehoram wrought evil, we are told that he was "not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal which his father had made". This action was probably due to some special reason of a personal or national nature, and not because of a desire for a thorough reformation, for he still clung to the sins of Jeroboam, "he departed not therefrom", (10:29). Selfish reasons may lead to the abandonment of certain sins, but in order to secure the approval, and blessing of God, there must be a forsaking of all sin, (Heb. 12:1).

II. THE ALLIANCE WITH JEHOSEPHAT, (vs. 4-7).

Alliances between the righteous and unrighteous are wrong in principle, and receive condemnation in Scripture, (Deut.

7:1-6); they are of such a nature that righteousness is always compromised, and evil receives the advantage; therefore it is the part of wisdom to remain separate from that which is contrary to the will of God, (2 Cor. 6:14, 7:1). Jehoshaphat was a good king, (1 Kings 22:43), while Jehoram was an evil king, therefore they were unequally mated. The reason for their union was the desire of the latter for help in quelling the revolt of the Moabites, (vs. 4-7). It is of interest to note that there is in Paris a Moabite stone, with certain historical matter inscribed thereon by the command of Mesha king of Moab, the same person as the one referred to in our lesson, which gives corroboration to several scriptural statements respecting that time. Observe the power of Israel manifest in the former subjugation of Moab, the boldness and strategy of Mesha in endeavouring to throw off the yoke; and the hearty response of Jehoshaphat to the request of Jehoram. He became one with the forces of Israel.

III. THE INTERVIEW WITH ELISHA, (vs. 8-19).

After the merging of the forces of Judah and Israel the combined armies took their march by the way of Edom in order to secure the aid of the king of that country, (vs. 8, 9). But while they succeeded in this, they were beset by difficulties which came near wrecking their expectation: the stream which they expected would supply men and cattle with water, was dry, "and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them". This brought to pass a very serious situation, for no body of men can go long without water, and death by thirst was not outside the realm of possibility. Water is necessary to life. Note the spiritual teaching attached to this element, (John 4:14). The discovery of the unhappy condition of the host brought dismay to the king of Israel, (v. 10), but stirred Jehoshaphat to look to the Lord for guidance, (v. 11). The attitude of each in this matter discloses his condition in God's sight; as each crisis in our experience betrays our spiritual state. The one who knows not God has no other than human resources upon which to depend: the one who knows the Lord is sure of Divine guidance and help, and looks for the same. It is truly a blessed thing to walk with God. Note the rest of faith found therein, and the security inherent in such trust.

The king of Israel knew where Elisha, the servant of God was, but evidently he had not thought of going to him for help. He had not been in the habit of having fellowship with him; his desires led in another direction. Note the loss sustained by those whose friendship is exclusively with the world. At the instigation of Jehoshaphat the three kings go down to Elisha, (v. 12), whose tent was probably pitched near by. The reception accorded them is in accordance with the stern nature of the prophet. He bids the king of Israel go to his heathen gods for help, and upon receiving a somewhat submissive answer, he informs his royal visitors that had it not been for the regard with which he held Jehoshaphat he would not have seen them (vs. 13, 14). Note

in this the humility, and earnestness of the kings, together with their real sense of need; and the independence, fearlessness, truthfulness, and severity of the prophet. Elisha was not a time-server seeking the favour of men, but a servant of God, valiantly doing his duty, showing neither fear, nor favour, conscious only of the greatness and sacredness of his office. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty in more senses than one, (2 Cor. 3:17), and where the true servant of God is, there you will find people wending their way in ones, and twos, for help in times of trouble. Note the importance to the community of people who live near to God, also the importance of all messengers of God remaining independent of men, that they might faithfully proclaim the message of God.

Despite the severity of Elisha he consented to seek divine directions for his visitors. Note the eastern method respecting the minstrel, probably an aid to concentration and contemplation; also the fact that "the hand of the Lord came upon" the prophet while the minstrel played, (v. 15). Such a statement signifies a divine visitation, conveying the instructions which follow, and implies that the prophet required special direction for special occasions, and that he was not continually inspired. The directions were of a twofold character, affecting water (vs. 16, 17), and victory over Moab, (vs. 18, 19). Respecting both, the omniscience and omnipotence of God are evident. The kings received more good news than they expected or deserved. It is always God's way to grant to His own more than they deserve.

IV. THE WATER AND THE VICTORY, (vs. 20-27).

God's word is always fulfilled; He never fails to keep His promise. Multitudes can testify to this, and the three kings found it so. In the morning water came, "and the country was filled with water", (v. 20). Note the abundance of the supply. God is never stingy with His gifts. The same characteristic is to be found in the spiritual stream. Note in both natural and spiritual spheres, the necessity for water, its life-giving properties, and its source in the mercy of God. One may also mention its pleasant nature, and refreshing effect.

Respecting the victory over Moab, several things are worthy of note. First, the resolute nature of Moab's defence. Every person able to bear armour was pressed into the fray, and they fought evidently with desperation. Second, the deception of the Moabites through the action of the sun on the water, (vs. 22, 23), and their surprise at finding the Israelites so much alive. Third, respecting the nature of the victory, which was divine in prediction, origin and place, great and decisive in effect, and was brought about through a combination of faith and works. Note the same principle enjoined in spiritual warfare with the same decisive effect.

The Union Baptist Witness

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COMFORT BOXES

All the churches, or their Women's Auxiliaries, which have these Christmas boxes in hand for our Home Mission Pastors, please endeavour to forward them before it becomes too late. The Express companies and Postal facilities will soon become so congested that it will be difficult to make deliveries on time.

Should any of the friends desire to express their gratefulness to God in a like manner and wish some guidance in this, the Office will be glad to assist you and put you in touch with those who are in need, or if you will forward your gifts to us we shall be only too pleased to place them in the possession of some needy Pastor's home.

ORILLIA

Word reaches us that the blessing of the Lord continues to fall upon the work in Orillia. Many responded to the invitation on Sunday. Rev. Clifford J. Loney will continue as the special preacher each night this week. Rev. John Byers, the pastor, and his people are rejoicing in the good hand of the Lord which is upon them. Other churches should be encouraged to pray and wait upon God that like blessing may fall upon their work also.

EAST YORK MISSION

Word has come that five have recently confessed Christ as Saviour at the East York Mission, where Mr. Bernard Jeffery is Pastor. One of these is a blind man, and another a man over fifty years of age. They are both giving clear testimonies as to the saving grace of our Lord.

On Friday nights a crowd of nearly two hundred children gather to hear the gospel message. The Sunday-school is well-attended also, and there is a spirit of revival in their midst.

FAREWELL

Sunday, November the 12th at Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto, was a day which will not be soon forgotten by all present, for was it not the day that the Church and Sunday-school listened with eager, responsive hearts to the Farewell messages of their own representative to Liberia, Mr. Percy E. Clubine, M.A.

Mr. Clubine has served this church for some time in a faithful, efficient manner, holding several responsible offices, and many hearts were wrung as the Good-byes were said. His life in the midst of the people has been of the highest type. True missionary qualities and characteristics are his, always in every circumstance co-operating with his fellow-labourers. His quiet, Christian life was a silent rebuke to many, and led not a few to a deeper consecration to the cause of Christ. The many gifts showered upon him tell of the place which he holds in the hearts of the people.

Word was received from Mr. Clubine from Quebec City where his vessel was

storm-stayed for a few hours. Characteristically he wrote in a letter posted there, "May He keep me always humble by giving me a more perfect vision of Himself. I am glad that the work that we do for God does not depend for its success upon us, but that it really succeeds in spite of ourselves because He is pleased to bless it." We are sure that the prayers of all our people will follow Mr. Clubine as he goes forth to serve the Lord in Africa.

ORANGEVILLE

The Orangeville Regular Baptist Church is making splendid progress under the leadership of Rev. A. C. Whitcombe. It was the joy and privilege of the writer to visit them last Lord's Day and bring messages at all three services. In the morning, in spite of inclement weather there was a fine attendance, and the people responded very graciously to the preaching of the Word of the Lord. Many went away expressing themselves as having received a new vision of their responsibilities in connection with our Foreign Mission work. This church, for its membership, gave more last year, proportionately, than many of the larger churches, and it is quite evident that they intend to do even better than heretofore.

In the afternoon a splendid company gathered to hear the illustrated African talk, and the children were delighted with the picture of African life which was presented by the speaker. The inclement weather continued all day, but in spite of it a goodly congregation gathered in the evening when another time of blessing was experienced through the ministry of His Holy Word, and the hearts of the people were uplifted, and quite a number were deeply stirred as they listened to the presentation of the old-fashioned gospel message from Romans one, sixteen.

Many such congregations as that which meets in the Orangeville Baptist Church are isolated from other churches, and were it not for the Pastor's and People's Conferences which are held from time to time, very little outside fellowship could be found. There is a hungering and thirsting in the hearts of our people for a revival which will not only create a lively interest within the ranks of those who are among the saved, but will sweep into the Kingdom of God many individuals who have often heard the Word of the Lord, but because of the hardness of their hearts have not turned to Him. You are requested to pray for the work in these places that the hand of the Lord may be seen and that His arm may be made bare in mighty saving power.

OBITUARY

Miss Margaret MacCallum

In the early evening of October 30th, 1933, the soul of Miss Margaret MacCallum slipped away to be with her Lord. Her passing was characteristic of her life,

quiet and peaceful. She was one of that rare type of Christian, whose spiritual heights and depths attained were lived not spoken. Her Bible and her GOSPEL WITNESS provided her with spiritual food that made her life a benediction. She loved her Lord. The Atonement was the foundation of her Christian experience and hope. She was thoroughly conscious of the fact that salvation belongeth to the Lord, and gave Him all the glory for her own redemption and for whatever good was in her, and anything she accomplished. Hers was a familiar figure in scenes of sickness and poverty, yet she told it not in Gath. She was a faithful attendant and supporter of the Baptist church at Winchester, Ontario, but her missionary offerings were given to the Regular Baptist cause and other fundamentally sound missionary organizations.

Her many friends miss her sorely, but the prayers and sympathy of all go to the invalid sister whom she cared for most tenderly, and who is the sole-surviving member of a family of Baptists of the old school.

Rev. H. H. Wood had charge of the funeral services and used "She hath done what she could" as his sermon text. Her body was tenderly laid to rest in the old family plot in Ormond cemetery to await the resurrection.

NORLAND

Special meetings have been held under the auspices of the Miner's Bay Baptist Church, in a schoolhouse called the "Rock Schoolhouse". It is surrounded by rocks and yet in its isolation makes an appeal to our Christian constituency to send the gospel even where these mute influences abound.

Rev. M. B. Gillion of Bobcaygeon went over to assist Rev. Oscar Boomer in the meetings, and eleven responded to the invitation given by the brethren. The first to decide for Christ was the school teacher herself. A very happy situation has been created in that community because of the wonders of His grace reaching the hearts of both the teacher and many of the scholars.

Meetings are to be conducted in the village of Kinmount, and the prayers of God's people are requested that as He has visited them in these other places, so might His blessing fall upon the ministry in this place.

MR. CLUBINE AT MONTREAL

In a letter received from Mr. Stanley Goldsworthy, Vice-President of the Union, he states, "We had a wonderful meeting in St. Paul's Church last Thursday night. The place was crowded. The Verdun people came over by a special bus." Everywhere our Brother Clubine has gone he has created an interest in the work which will have its effect in days to come. He is going out alone, and this will be a unique experience for him, as he had expected to have older and more experienced missionaries travelling with him.

RADIO STRETCHES

The listing last week of the names of the places which news had reached us telling of the reception preceding Sunday evening's broadcast created such interest that we repeat the feature in this issue. Letters have reached us this week from the following centres: Enterprise, Alabama; Pine Bluff and Little Rock, Arkansas; Bridgeport, Kent, New Canaan, and Norwich, Connecticut; St. Augustin, Florida; Commerce and Thomasville, Georgia; Canton, Illinois; Warsaw, Indiana; Steuben, Maine; Bowie, Maryland; Brockton, Cliftondale, Clinton, East Pepperell, Falmouth, South Chatham, South Swansea, and Worcester, Massachusetts; Albion, Kalamazoo, Grandville, and Plymouth, Michigan; Aitken, Faribault, Lewiston, and Owatonna, Minnesota; St. Louis, Missouri; Fitzwilliam, Littleton, and Manchester, New Hampshire; Buffalo, Hurley, Hyde Park-on-Hudson, Long Island, New York City, Syracuse, and Wurtsboro, New York; Laurinburg, North Carolina; Akron, Cleveland, Delaware, and Killbuck, Ohio; Okmulgee, Oklahoma; Carlisle, Gibsonia, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Latrobe, Lewis-

burg, Malvern, Milford Square, Nicholson, Philadelphia, and Quentín, Pennsylvania; Cranston and Pawtucket, Rhode Island; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Burlington and Gilman, Vermont; Follansbee and Princeton, West Virginia; Appleton, Wisconsin; Lunenburg and Marshall's Town, Nova Scotia; Fredericton, New Brunswick; and scores of places in Ontario and Quebec.

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET

The Saturday evening meeting was one of unusual power and blessing. The Spirit of the Lord was mightily present, and the people were burdened for the salvation of souls. Notwithstanding the unfavourable weather of Sunday the congregations were good, and strong, impressive sermons were delivered morning and evening by Rev. W. Gordon Brown and W. S. Whitcombe respectively. Mr. Brown and Mr. Whitcombe will take the services next Sunday, and it is expected Dr. Shields will be home Sunday, December 3rd, and preach morning and evening.

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