

# 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

### GOD'S CHRISTMAS GIFT

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Christmas Morning, Sunday, December 25th, 1932

(Stenographically Reported)

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."—2 Cor. 9:15.

Perhaps there is no portion of the word of God, no element in the Christian story, with which old and young alike are more familiar than the story of the Nativity. There is nothing comparable to it in the literature of the world. There was only one Jesus; there could never be another, for "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son".

The prevailing practice of the Christmas season is really significant of the purpose of Christ's coming into the world. Of course, I know that the majority of the people who give and receive gifts to and from their friends, have little thought of Him Whose coming into the world really inaugurated that practice. But there is an indirect as well as a direct effect of the gospel. They only are really saved who receive and know Jesus Christ for themselves. But I doubt not that the world itself owes its continuance, and its prolonged probation, the long-suffering of God, to the fact of the Incarnation and the cross, because our gracious God was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The Christmas story is ever new. Often as we have heard it, greatly as we have rejoiced in it, it comes to us with every recurring season, with a new freshness, a new charm, a new beauty.

I fear I cannot say anything new to you about it. I can but call forth from the treasures of memory, perhaps, some precious thing, of which you have thought again and again. But it occurred to me, that perhaps it might profit us this morning to reduce the Christmas message to the simplest possible terms; not to speak of the Incarnation with its mystery, and its infinite suggestiveness: but just to remember that Christmas means—oh, if I may put it so for the little children!—that God is the real Santa Claus; that He is the real Giver; that there is no gift in life that has value to anybody that does not come from Him: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above", and all "good" gifts,

and all "perfect" gifts are comprehended in the one great gift, the gift of Jesus Himself.

It is significant, I think that at the conclusion of the two chapters in the second epistle to the Corinthians in which the apostle Paul specially expounds the principles relating to Christian stewardship, laying upon the consciences of God's believing people the duty and privilege of ministering to the Lord of their substance, that when He has expounded these principles He suddenly exclaims, as though it were too much for him, as though the Source and Inspiration of it all were entirely beyond Him: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"

#### I.

Let me remind you of the very simple and elemental truth that JESUS CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD AS GOD'S GIFT, and that all that is associated with His name, the salvation of which He is the Author, the faith of which He is the Beginner, and the Perfecter—all that is involved in the name of Jesus comes to every one of us as a gift. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"

First of all, then, *it is a gift*. It is not something that is purchaseable; it is not something which may be obtained at a price. How difficult it is to persuade men of that simple truth! Not merely little children, not only people who are supposed to have but little instruction in divine things, but how many churches, how many ministers there are who preach Christ, so far as they preach Him at all, as though He were Someone or Some Thing to be earned and paid for! And how they magnify human effort and human goodness! the saying of prayers, the giving of alms, the doing of works of righteousness, the ordinary decencies of life, the paying of one's debts, the being—well, just a decent respectable husband and father, as though these were really some extraordinary qualities by which men are to be recommended to divine considera-

tion, and on the ground of which Jesus Himself may be persuaded to take knowledge of them!

There comes to my mind just now a humorous thing, a syndicated article, that used to appear in the press of the Continent, which represented two Irishmen as talking together, and the principle speaker was always Mr. Dooley, who was a great philosopher. At the time I speak of, an election for the presidency of the United States was in progress, and his friend, Hennessey, asked Dooley what sort of man they needed for president, and what his qualifications must be; what special distinction he must have in order to qualify for that high office. Mr. Dooley said that a president or a presidential candidate was a man who, if he had a wife, spoke to her every morning, treated her with respect, and provided for his children; paid his taxes when they were due; and kept himself out of jail. In general, he was a man who used all these ordinary decencies of life to get himself elected to the presidency! It was not a bad summary after all, and it would apply to much modern preaching. One might suppose that these commonplaces were so rare that—well, that the Lord Himself must be mightily pleased with them, and that in consideration of their exercise a man should be saved.

My dear friends, you cannot pay for Jesus Christ. He is God's gift. If any friend has sent a gift to you, however simple it may be, or however costly, you would not offend that friend's generosity, you would not offer an insult to him by offering to pay for something that he or she desired to confer upon you as a gift.

And to enter into the meaning of Christmas, to have the Christmas bells ringing in our hearts, to hear all the melody of the skies as the shepherds heard it that first Christmas morning, we must put away, not only our dollars, but our pennies too, and remember that the gift of God cannot by any possibility be paid for: it must be received for what it is, without money and without price, without merit of any sort. It must be received and accepted as the free gift of God's sovereign Hand, because He is rich and able to give: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

Now *this gift is for everybody, not just for a few.* I have seen very pathetic pictures in the paper this last week, drawn by some skilful artist to represent the direst poverty. A father and a mother, and a little child, perhaps, all in rags, and all of them wondering whether Santa Claus will come! Into the homes of the rich he comes; into the homes of those who have plenty Santa Claus comes. Gifts there are innumerable, and oh, how true it is that "he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath". And what a puzzle it is in life that very often the people who need the gifts least are the people who receive them; and the people who are in direst need are the people who have fewest to remember them! I dare say some of you in these times of straitness have had to curtail your Christmas remembrances. It may be that to some you were accustomed to remember with a worthy gift, you have sent only a card; others you have remembered, but with regret you have had to refrain from sending them any token of remembrance.

I read last week of a man in Manitoba who had brought or sent ten magnificent ten-pound turkeys into a second-hand store to pay for a four-dollar, second-hand stove. He had put a letter in with the birds expressing regret

that he had not even money enough to buy a postage stamp.

We are living in days when people are reduced to such straitness as that. But oh, the wonder of the message of the gospel is that our gracious God has remembered everybody—father and mother and all the children, down to the baby! Yes; no one is exempt, no one is forgotten. Jesus Christ came into the world for you.

Last night I was sitting thinking a little. It was late, past midnight. Suddenly I heard some music out on the driveway just beside my house. I said to myself, "Oh, some old-fashioned 'waits' have come. I shall listen a little while, and then I must give them something." I put my hand into my pocket, and I found I had only a quarter in change. I supposed they were going up and down the street playing for everyone. But they played so well that I said, "I shall have to give them more than a quarter. That is worth more than that." And I looked about to see if I could not find some more money, and I managed to get a little more. I turned on the front light; and still they played—you know they do not as a rule when the lights are turned on! Then I turned on the back light, and still they played. I went out on the verandah, but they never looked at me; they went on playing. And presently I found they were four of our own Jarvis Street boys who had come up to play for me! I thought they were playing for the whole street, but I discovered that they were playing for me. I did not offer them a quarter—they do not know what they escaped. But I would not insult them by paying them. I knew that out of the love of their hearts they thought they would run out and serenade the Pastor early Christmas morning. I appreciated it; it warmed my heart. And they played splendidly. Oh, we hear Christmas music afar, and we say, "It is for everybody." But it is not until we find it is played especially for ourselves, that it is the gift of God to us, that we are really enriched.

Well now, so much for that. It is a Christmas gift.

## II.

I wonder HOW MUCH IT IS WORTH? Do you value the gifts you receive by what they cost? May I be familiar with you? I feared I was going to have influenza Friday night, and I asked Brother Brown and Brother Whitcombe to stand by, because I was afraid I should not be able to be here. But I was all right Saturday morning. But I was late in getting up, and a little past nine o'clock two little children came to the door. My housekeeper knocked at my door and said, "There are two little children down at the door, and they have some gifts for the Pastor, and when I told them that you were not up their faces saddened." I said, "You send them right up, will you?" They came up into my bedroom, and they were very sweet. A little girl and a little boy! Do you suppose it ever entered into my mind to ask whether their gifts were worth five cents or a million dollars? Not at all. They were love gifts from two little children. And the Pastor appreciated them more than some great gift—if he had ever had it, from a millionaire.

We do not measure gifts by their intrinsic value, though they may be valuable. We measure them by the love of which they are the expression. And the Lord loved us so much—I had almost said that it was difficult for Him to express His love. That is speaking after the manner of men. His gift is called here an "unspeakable" gift; and it is unspeakable so far as we are concerned.

And because of our finite minds, it is impossible for us to estimate the value of the gift. But during this past season some of you, perhaps, went down to the store and bought something, and ordered it sent. I do not blame you; that is all you could do. We have all done that, have we not? But our gracious Lord had a love gift for the world, and if I may so put it, that problem faced the Infinite: Who shall deliver it? Shall I send a multitude of angels? Shall I commission seraphim and cherubim? Shall I charge the archangels with this important mission? Who shall go to that sinful world to carry to them an expression of My love? And you know the answer? God sent no proxy; He trusted nobody to carry His gift: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Jesus came Himself to lay all heaven's treasure at our heart's door, and to beg us to accept it.

Well may His gift be called "unspeakable"; and the value of it no one can estimate. You cannot measure it in terms of dollars and cents; you cannot estimate its worth by houses and lands, nor by counting out a million worlds as the payment of the price. It is just like God Himself. And so, dear friends, there is the love of it, and there is the value of it too; and the love and the value are all one.

What can you buy with it? What if you had in an envelope from some rich friend, a cheque? And you opened it and you saw a signature, and you said, "Now what can I buy with that? Let me see. I have had a world of worry. I can pay off my debts with it." Yes; all your debts can be paid off with this infinite Gift so that you will be entirely out of debt forever. Then, perhaps, you have said, "I have always wished that I had a house of my own; I have lived all my life under someone else's roof, and have paid rent! I wish I had a house of my own!" And you looked at your cheque, and you said, "That will buy me a house too. I will buy a house to live in." And then you have someone far across the sea, a father or a mother, or someone else you greatly loved; and Christmas was coming, and you said, "I cannot go: I can only send them a letter." What! You look at your cheque again, and say, "Hallelujah! I can pay my way home, and I can see my loved ones." Then you said, "Oh, I do not think I can go home. I am not fit to go in the clothes I have. I should not like them to see me in clothes like these." But you looked again at your cheque, and you said, "It is a big one. I can get a new wardrobe out of that, and have my way paid beside, so that when I go home I shall be ready to meet them all in the finest of garments." And then, what if you were going to a place where they wear shining jewels, and you reflected, "I have no kind of jewels at all. If I were decently dressed I should be glad. But I know how they dress there. I know the dinner is a great occasion; and I am afraid I should be a little out of class." Then you look again at your cheque, and you say, "Yes; there is plenty for that, too." Do you see the moral of my parable? Everything is in the gift of God; enough to pay our debts; enough to give us a place in the many mansions in the glory; enough to robe us with the garment of His righteousness, and to bedeck us with all the jewels of His grace; and enough to insure, best of all, our passage into the presence of God Himself, and to have a happy re-union about the Father's throne.

I was going to speak to you about the characteristics of the gift, but turn it over in your mind for yourself, then I need not weary you. I was going to tell you that

it is wonderfully useful. People sometimes give Christmas gifts that are not so very useful. You must expect to see many men wearing new ties in the next few days. They will be well furnished in some directions. And it would take almost the wisdom of Solomon to discover what some of the gifts are for. Not so with this Gift.

There is nothing superfluous in nature! Do not believe the nonsense of the evolutionist who speaks of "vestigial remains" in your body, of something that is the remnant of a lower animal existence, from which you have emerged, but which has not been quite sloughed off, and that therefore you have in your body some things which are now useless. When anyone talks to me about having any part of my anatomy removed I tell him that I should like to go out of the world, if I can, just as I came into it. I do not want to lose anything, because I do not believe the Lord put anything in these bodies of ours that had not some useful purpose. If the man of science does not know what it is for—well, so much the worse for the man of science. It is there for some purpose, and no doubt fulfils its function. Of course, it may be necessary to cut off an arm, or take out an eye; "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." God be thanked if He leaves us whole and complete as to our bodies. But I tell you our gracious God wastes nothing. I love to remember that He is a great Economist, notwithstanding His infinite wealth: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Nothing is lost where He is concerned. And when He sent His Christmas Gift He sent us just the gift we need, the Gift that is indispensable for our wellbeing here and our wellbeing hereafter. It fits everybody.

Between now and the next few days they will be busy down at the stores at the exchange departments. Slippers, and shoes, and hats, and all sorts of things that are good in themselves will be returned, because for some reason they are unsuitable. But the Lord knows how to fit us. And His gifts are just the very thing we need. I can promise you that Jesus fits! Oh, He fits! He fits into every requirement of life. And you that have known Him a good many years can bear testimony to that, can you not?

"I could not do without Thee,  
O Saviour of the lost,  
Whose precious blood redeemed me  
At such tremendous cost:  
Thy righteousness, Thy pardon,  
Thy Sacrifice, must be,  
My only hope and comfort  
My glory and my plea."

We could not do without Jesus. He is exactly what we need. And He is good for father as well as for the baby, and for all.

Father will have a great time to-morrow breaking in Johnnie's toys, won't he? He will have a fine time with the engine that winds up. Of course, he will have to do it to show the little ones how to do it! But he will get a world of enjoyment out of it himself notwithstanding. Praise the Lord, there is one day in the year when we can be little children without being ashamed of it. I wish we could remain little children! I wish the world were full of little children with all their carelessness, and lovely simplicity, unspoiled by the enemy of souls. It

is the greatest joy of my life to know that little boys and girls in this church so manifestly know Jesus Christ.

Being saved is something more than mere subscription to an elaborate creed. There are little boys and girls who may not know a great deal, but they know Jesus; they know Him in a real way beyond all possibility of doubt. And is it not a joy when a man can say, "I have known Him for fifty years." Brother Tomalin last night in the prayer meeting said, "Sixty-five years ago I was born again." Knowing Christ, he finds a Christmas gift that fits, and that never wears out.

Let me ask you, What have you done with the gifts of last Christmas time? Immediately you say, "Let me see, what did I receive? I had almost forgotten." And of the things you did receive, how many have you now? Two or three days after Christmas the children's toys are broken, forgotten; and it is all over. It lasts only a little while. Not so with this Christmas Gift. It wears all through the years. When I first received Jesus I know I did love Him a little: I thought I loved Him much. I trusted Him a little: I thought I trusted Him much. But the years have taught me how little I then knew. Down in the valley, through the furnace, through conflicts on the fields of battle in many places where there was nobody else to stand by, always I have found Him there. And He is more to me to-day than He ever was before. Is He not to you? "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

And we shall never grow tired of Him. Some people are always making new friends. When I was a boy at home, and we were having some hilarious time about something, everyone laughing, and particularly jubilant, my father loved to hear it, but sometimes he would speak this word of caution: "Remember laughter and tears are not far apart. Be careful not to turn your laughter into crying." I have seen so many people who could laugh and cry almost at the same time. Such an one has a friend, and he is the only man in the world, a wonderful man—for about a week; and then "Good-bye!" And the women are not much better. Two may be as thick as the proverbial thieves, so that, for a time, you never see one without the other. They are great friends until there is a little rift in the lute, but I will not try to tell you what they are after that. "Thanks be unto God" Who is always a friend; for a Gift of which we never, never tire.

Do you like to look at Jesus? Do you know what it is to look at Him, just by faith to gaze at His lovely face, for that is what the Bible says: "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." I never look into the face of Jesus without saying to myself, "I thought I knew Him, but oh, He never appeared as He does to-day! Never did I see such surpassing beauty in that altogether lovely Face as I see to-day!"

Oh yes, our gifts given or received, wear out; or our tastes change, and we tire of them. The thing that was so interesting to us a few years ago we are not interested in at all now.

There is a psychology in a man's treatment of his motor car. You can generally tell when a man has a new car. For a little while he is up in the morning polishing it. It is a wonderful machine! But after a while as long as it starts when he puts his foot on the starter, that is all he asks. Of course he expects it to stop too! But that is all he asks. He is not now so particular about its

appearance, and even then he grows rather weary of it. I overtook a friend one day and I stopped and said, "Can I give you a lift?" "Thank you", he said, "I am just out walking to avoid the wretched things." I saluted him, drove on, and left him alone with his walking stick.

Yes, we tire of things, but we never tire of the Lord Jesus Christ. No, no! Nobody who really knows Him will ever tire of Him,

"For, ah, the Master is so fair,  
So sweet His smile on banished men  
That they who meet Him unaware  
Can never rest on earth again.

"And they who see Him risen, afar,  
On God's right hand to welcome them,  
Forgetful stand of home and land  
Desiring fair Jerusalem."

Are you going to say "Thank you" for this Gift? Would you receive a gift and never say, Thank you? You might overlook it, but you would not do it deliberately, would you? If some little boy or girl just out of love for you were to come to you with the simplest thing, would you not say, "Thank you"? How shall we give thanks to God for His "unspeakable gift"? First, by receiving it first. Would you insult a friend by saying, "I do not want your gift"? That would almost be the end of friendship, would it not? How would you feel if, out of the love of your heart, you had given a good deal of thought, and had sent some little remembrance to someone, perhaps only a Christmas card, we may suppose it was all you could afford, and it may have been the cheapest Christmas card you could buy; and suppose you had not a postage stamp, and could not afford anything else, and you were therefore to take it to the house, and deliver it at the door. Suppose that friend were to put that card in an envelope and send it back to you, and, in effect, say, "I do not want it", how would you feel?

How must God feel when men do not receive His Gift, and such a Gift—"His only begotten Son"! Suppose He at last should go back and say, "Father, I have knocked at the door, and I stood there knocking many a year, and I entreated them to let Me in, but they would not have Me. They said they could do without Me." Do you think God would ever forgive that? No; He would not. That is the only thing He will not forgive. To spurn His gift, to reject it, to send it back to Him, is the worst of all sins. But we will not do that, shall we?

Oh, I do not now ask you to come to Sunday School, or come to church—you are here; I do not ask you to give attention to religion, to anything of that sort: I ask you to receive God's Gift. That is all. Receive the Gift for yourself, just as when you hear the door bell ring, or when someone knocks, and you open the door, and someone hands you a little gift, and you say, "Thank you"; you take it in; you receive it. That is what it is to be a Christian—nothing less than that, actually to receive Jesus Himself into your heart. Have you done that? And if you have, have you said, "Thank you"? Have you said, "O Lord, I am so glad Thou hast come; I am so glad Thou hast come"?

Did you ever receive a gift that revolutionized some little corner in your home, something that came to you, and you did not quite know where to put it, something that made everything else around it look shabby, and you said, "I did not know my house was

so shabby"? And you got a brush and started to scrub up everything, to try to make things around it into harmony with the gift. When Jesus comes into the heart He effects a regular housecleaning, always. He cleans us inside and outside. "Behold, I make all things new"; everything must ultimately be made to harmonize with Him.

Have you said "Thank you" to Him for His gift? There is only one way to do it, and that is to say, "Lord, I have nothing at all; I am only a poor bankrupt. I have nothing in my hands, and nothing in my heart. I have nothing in this world that I could offer that would be of any use to Thee at all; I cannot even write 'Thank you'; it would not express what I feel. I do not know what to do. But if Thou wouldst only take me, just take me, just as I am, I will be Thy servant for the rest of my life. I want to be wholly Thine. I have nothing else to offer:

'Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come!'

Let us all come.

O God, some of us have come to Thee long ago, but we come again. Some of us have given ourselves long ago, but we give ourselves again. And some have never come at all; some have never given Thee thanks for Thy coming for them. O Spirit of the Lord, let this be a real Christmas! Let the boys and the girls see the star, the light that shines from heaven, showing them where Jesus Christ is. Bring them, like the wise men, to kneel before Thee, and to worship Thee. Bless us, we beseech Thee, every one with Thy full salvation, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

### "THAT YE MAY KNOW"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
Sunday Evening, December 17th, 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.

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."—Ephesians 1:6.

#### Prayer before the Sermon

Into Thy holy presence, O Lord, we dare to come because Thou hast summoned us so to do. We are deeply aware of our inherent sinfulness, of our utter unworthiness to be where Thou art, much less to address Thy throne. Yet Thou hast spoken to us in One Who is the express image of Thy person, and of Whom it is said when He walked the sands of earth, this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. We this evening acknowledge that only thus can we approach Thee.

Thy Word has told us, and deeply have we learned the truth in many a bitter experience, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Therefore we come without any plea of human merit. We cannot ask Thee, O Lord, to receive us because of what we are, or for anything that we have done, for we acknowledge we have forfeited Thy favour; by our rebellion we have yielded the last right we ever had to come in peace where Thou art. But we praise Thee for the manifestation of that matchless love in the coming of Jesus Christ into the earth. Never shall we cease to magnify Thy holy name for the great truth that He was called Jesus because He came to save His people from their sin.

We draw near to Thee this evening in confidence. We think of Him Who died at the place called Calvary, Who rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and Who ever liveth to

make intercession for us. Accept, we pray Thee, the gratitude of our hearts. We remember that it is written, The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. So, sorrowing for our sin, deeply lamenting our unworthiness, we come before Thee, We thank Thee for the abounding grace which offers salvation to the poorest, the weakest, and the vilest. Look upon us here within the walls of this building, a company of men and women who need God, who need Thy saving, Thine enabling grace. Touch us every one, O Lord. Put Thine arms about this entire congregation, and draw us close to Thy bleeding side. Forbid that even one should escape Thine evening benediction.

For the multitudes who are without this building, in several provinces in Canada, and in many of the states of the land to the south of us, who share this service with us, and bow in Thy holy presence, we pray. They are all, like ourselves, poor, broken men and women who need the recreating grace and power of God, that they may be what Thou hast willed they should be. Look upon this great company this evening.

We bless Thee because we are not straightened in Thee. Our sufficiency is of God. We worship Thee as the God Who made heaven and earth, and Who therefore is able to do for us all that we need.

There are many who languish upon beds of pain this evening. There are many who suffer great agony of body, and others anguish of mind. We thank Thee that Thou art able to minister to our bodies, and to our troubled-souls. Look upon any, O Lord, who thus need Thy healing touch this evening. We remember how Thou didst minister to the sick in the days of Thy flesh. Be gracious to all who are in pain this evening at home and in institutions, wherever they are found.

We think of some who are aged, for whom the day has all but passed, and about whom the evening shadows gather. Very soon they will depart for their long home. May it come to pass that at evening time it shall be light to them. Graciously minister to all such this evening.

And how we long to pray for an innumerable company of troubled souls, fathers and mothers troubled about their families, how to minister to them, how to supply them in these trying days! Others there are who sorrow because the children have gone wrong, or because they are threatened by some dire evil that seems to be pursuing them. Thou great Shepherd of the sheep, we commend them all to Thee this evening. We are always coming to Thee with our sorrows and troubles. Fain would we come to Thee with our praises, but Thou knowest what a troubled lot we are, and Thou hast hidden us, Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

We come to Thy holy Word this evening. Lead us into the depths, yea, and into the heights of it. Teach us, as Thy children, to revel in the luxuries of divine grace. Lift us out of the poverty of our material circumstances, that we may rejoice in Thee this evening as children of the King.

If there are some without the pale, some who have not bowed the knee and sought forgiveness and cleansing through the precious blood, constrain multitudes to come to the mercy-seat this evening.

We bring this simple prayer to thee—and yet how great a prayer it is, that we should ask the God of heaven to bless countless thousands for the sake of His own dear Son. We bless Thee for the assurance that our prayer is heard, and that because Thy compassions fail not, and Thy faithfulness reacheth even unto the heavens, Thou wilt hear us and answer us for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

On "the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts", wherein leviathan doth "play", "there go the ships", and the mariner sails the sea whose depths he cannot fathom. The farmer trusts to the sun as the producer of his wealth, though he has no exact astronomical knowledge of the unwearying and unvarying march of the stars in their courses, and little appreciation of the wonders of the heavens. The wayfarer may drink of the brook whose mountain sources he has neither strength nor skill to discover. The little child may live

in his father's house, and sit at his table, and answer to his name, though he has but the dimmest apprehension of the wealth of his station. So the believer may journey toward the sunrise, though he has no line to fathom the profoundest deeps of that saving truth which floats his soul-bark toward the haven of the Golden City. He may spread faith's canvas to that divine Wind whose coming and going he cannot explain. He may live in the vitalizing glow of that Orb of grace by whose radiance all virtues flourish, though he cannot measure the power of His attraction, and has no knowledge of the value to other worlds of His rejuvenating rays. So, too, may the Christian pilgrim drink of the waters of that river the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy places of the tabernacles of the Most High, although he cannot fathom the philosophy of the mutual ministries, in the spiritual world, of dew and sunshine, of cloud and mountain-spring. And every soul with whose spirit the Spirit of God bears witness, though he may not cease to marvel at the mystery of his regeneration, may yet rejoice in the consciousness of sonship, and live in enjoyment of the earnest of the inheritance of the children of God. The river of the water of life which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and floweth beside the altar, when measured, always somewhere provides waters to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and at last "waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over".

I have said this to justify the apparent presumption of taking such a text as this. Every word of this text is an infinite sea in which the glories of the heavens are mirrored—the text is an ocean in which all seas are merged, and to whose glorious fulness every drop of dew which trembles on the tiniest flower and flashes in the morning sunlight, and every cloud which casts a shadow, and every brook that sings in all the world of truth, contribute: for all truth's rivers run into this sea. We might well fear to set sail upon such waters were it not that by the word of the Sovereign of all seas, stormy winds are forever forbidden to disturb the calm of these waters, and the skiff of the most infinitesimal mental draught is as safe as the most gigantic intellectual *Mauritania* afloat. So then we may wade in these waters where they lap the shore, or, putting out a little with our shallow craft, skim the surface of these infinite deeps.

Here is a word touching *the Father and the Son*, then a word about *the Saviour and the saved*; and last of all a word about *the glory of sovereign grace*.

### I.

Let us consider first HOW THE SON IS RELATED TO THE FATHER. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Religion is an affection of the heart. The character of a man's religion determines the very essence of his life. His life is essentially good or evil, whatever it may appear to be, as his religion is true or false; and his religion is true or false as he has true or false conceptions of God. If a man have wrong thoughts of God, he is in dissonance with the law of his own nature, and of the universe. Nothing is more important than that we should know God. For not in his own fancies, or dreams, or ideals, can a man find life: "For this is life eternal", said Christ, "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus

Christ whom thou has sent." Sin in its mental content is a misunderstanding of God, based on belief of a misrepresentation of Him. What wonder the Bible lays such emphasis on the necessity of knowing God!

Can we for a moment eliminate ourselves from our consideration of God? Can we in imagination dissolve the earth, or at least, blot out the history of the human race? We read the life-story of great men, and it begins on an unsoiled page when the eyes of an unstained child look upon the world. And even later, when the child has grown great, and has made enemies as well as friends, sometimes the page is brightened, as the veil is drawn, and we are permitted to look at the great man at home. Every biographer feels that you cannot get the true perspective of a great life unless you go back and view it from the beginning.

But here is a life which had no beginning, yet our interest in it centers in the relation of that Life to the beginning of human life. May I reverently enquire if you have done God the justice of thinking of Him before sin entered? You have talked glibly of His justice in the light of His omniscience, but have you ever tried to get a glimpse—oh, may I say it worshipfully?—a glimpse of God at home? And do you think you can ever really know Him without seeing Him at home?

Here, then, is the picture: when there were no enemies, before sin came, before the worlds were born, God was supremely satisfied in His Son. We do well, I take it, to begin back there in our thought of God. We have heard of thrones of judgment, and of consuming fires of wrath; but before those fires were kindled there burned eternally the kindlier light of love.

Our Lord Jesus has many titles, but this is the best of all, "The Beloved". He was loved but little on earth: here He was hated without a cause. It is well for all worlds that somewhere there is a Heart which throbs with love for Jesus, for such a life as He lived, such a person as He is. If every heart agreed in the sentence of Pilate, and the judgment of Calvary, Hell would be universal; evil would sovereignly rule. There is hope for the universe in that simple fact that the incarnate truth and love and holiness of Jesus Christ can be spoken of as "the Beloved". My heart rejoices that somewhere there is Someone Who always loved Jesus Christ.

Let us see what love can do. You have never seen God: you can know Him only in His relationship to the Son; what He is must appear from His relationship to the Son, even as what we are must ever be determined by the same rule.

Jesus Christ was "the Beloved" of the Father *as a person*. You know what is meant by personality? The sum of those qualities which distinguish and differentiate one man from another, that mysterious, indefinable, imponderable, ego, the "I", the man, the person. Not his circumstances, his physical powers, his mental qualities, nor even his moral virtues—behind it all, and independent of it all, there is a personality which attracts or repels. Thus beneath the rags of poverty, and the stain of crime, and the loathsome sores of vice, that personal something, "he", attracts. Thus also behind the adornments of wealth, and the refinements of station, and the culture of intellect, and the splendour of perhaps genuine moral virtues, there may be a personality that repels.

I cannot be definite or exhaustive on such a theme, but

only suggestive. The person of Christ was infinitely dear to the Father. He was One in Whose companionship He found supreme delight. If there had been no earthly paradise, if man had never been, if there had been no angels, no cherubim excelling in knowledge, no fiery seraphim before the throne, still the heart of God had found rest and delight in Christ, the dearly beloved of His soul.

Further, Jesus Christ was beloved of the Father for His character. The person of the prodigal was beloved of his father, but not his character. His father loved him in spite of, and not because of, what he was. But not so was the divine Father's love for His Beloved. In all the works of His hands, in the holy angels which do His commandments, He found no such pleasure as in contemplation of the glorious character of His Son. Was He not the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person? There was perhaps never a human father, dearly howsoever he may have loved his son, who did not discern in the character of his beloved, some flaw to mar his perfect beauty. But Jesus was perfect in the eyes of the Holy One; and when sin had lifted the sword against God, when principalities and powers rebelled, and when later the fatal defection touched this planet, and man, who bore the divine image, became involved in the disaster, the Father of spirits could ever turn with infinite composure and delight to His own imaged holiness in His Son. Perhaps they only know

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child,"

and who, in contrast, also know what perfect joy is ministered by an obedient and worthy child, can ever dimly appreciate the pure, the holy, the absolute, joy the Father has ever had in the dearly beloved of His soul.

Then, too, we have the clearest Scripture teaching that Jesus was loved of His Father for His works' sake. It is conceivable that one might be possessed of a lovable and winsome personality, and a character resplendent with moral beauty, but whose activities, whose works, could inspire no enthusiasm in the beholders.

But God the Father had delight in His Son as the Creator. There was a day when "the Lord God created the earth and the heavens", and it is said of the Beloved, "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made".

Establishment in these fundamental things is essential to any real—shall I coin a phrase for my purpose?—*at homeness* in the realm of spiritual truth. A mere knowledge of grammar, of etymology, and syntax, cannot qualify one for the criticism of a document which treats of a subject of which he is ignorant. Hence if a man is deficient in theological knowledge, he is likely to be critically awry. And we shall not be troubled by theories of the composite and contradictory character of Genesis, if we have clear views of the creative works of the Lord Jesus. As we worship Him as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature", let us remember that "by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Therefore the pleasure which God had in His work when "he saw that it was good", was the

pleasure He found in His Son, through Whom He uttered Himself, by Whom He called all worlds into being.

But especially is Christ the Beloved of the Father as the Redeemer. One in their love of holiness, one in their abhorrence of sin, one in their love of sinners, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God—is the Source of the love that abides. Do you wonder that angels accompanied the Godman to this world, and heralded His presence with songs of praise? And when He showed Himself to Israel at His baptism, as though Divine Love could scarce restrain itself, the heavens were opened and down the skies there rang this happy word, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Was that baptism a picture of His own grave from which he should emerge a Conqueror, even as our baptism is symbolic of our resurrection in Him? Was that baptism of Christ a prophecy and promise in the Father's eyes of the open grave, the open way to glory? And was the heart of Infinite Love ravished by its contemplation, so that it rent the heavens and thrilled all worlds with the ecstatic cry, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? I believe there was all that in Heaven's testimony when Christ emerged from Jordan's wave.

Again on Tabor it was heard, and when angels ministered to Him in the wilderness and in Gethsemane, and on many another unrecorded occasion, they came to whisper to Him that He was the Father's Well-Beloved. And now that

"The golden gates are lifted up,  
The doors are opened wide,  
The King of glory is gone up  
Unto His Father's side",

He is for ever "the Beloved" in Whom God is well pleased.

"Now let our cheerful eyes survey  
Our great High Priest above;  
And celebrate His constant care  
And sympathizing love."

## II.

The second word of the text is a very great saying, and leads us to view Christ in another relationship, that of THE SAVIOUR AND THE SAVED: "Accepted in the Beloved." The revised version renders the passage, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved", or, "wherewith he abounded toward us in the Beloved." The meaning is that all the fulness of divine grace is lavished upon us in Christ, that having given Him, with Him He freely gives us all things. He not only bestows His grace, but He makes us gracious or acceptable to Himself in Christ. So that if we would feel the vivifying power of this truth, we cannot improve on the text as it stands here, "Accepted in the Beloved."

Shall I take you hurriedly over the ground we have covered, but with a new interest? What miserable creatures we all are! How ugly our dispositions! I am glad I have not to live with some of you—and I am sure some of you say of the preacher, "I do not mind seeing you on Sunday, but I should not like to live in the same house with you all the time." I suppose there is room for thankfulness that here and there there are to be found some who will overlook our frailties, and

will tolerate us for a while. A dear old lady who used to be a member of this church said to me once when I was leaving for my holiday, "Well, Pastor, I am glad to see the last of you." She was one of the most loyal friends I had, and she continued, "I love you, and I shall be glad to see you back again. But if you were living in my house you would have to get out of my sight part of the time."

We are none of us so admirable that we could stand too close inspection over an extended period. Our persons—I do not know what you think about them, but I feel like saying what I heard a friend say of a certain preacher in the United States, "I thank God every time I think of you, and then I thank God there is only one of you! This world would not be big enough to contain two people just like you." I suppose that is true of all of us. But here is the wonder of it, that even our persons are made "accepted in the Beloved". From all eternity the Father and the Son have dwelt together, and the Father has never once been dissatisfied with His Son. And by His abounding grace He has taken us up into the Beloved, and made us one with Him, so that it has become possible for us to dwell in the Father's presence through all the eternity that is to come, with the assurance that God will never become tired of us, and will never want us out of His sight. Accepted, not for our own sakes, but accepted in the Beloved.

We are accepted as to our characters too. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." We have no works, no righteousness, of our own. Our righteousness is as filthy rags, and yet the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to us, and we are in the Father's sight as praiseworthy as He. Looking upon us, He says there is no spot in us. We are all fair. He calls us beloved, beloved for Christ's sake, accepted in the Beloved.

So are our works accepted. There is not one of us who ever did anything that God could accept, apart from Christ: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." He fills out the imperfections of our service, He imparts His own merit to it, He purges away the iniquity of our holy things, making our praises and our prayers, our preaching and our testimony—all our efforts to do good, whatever they are, though full of faults, defective to the last degree, to come up as a sweet savour, as the sacrifice of a sweet smell before God, because it is all offered to Him through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thus are we complete in Him, as we are told in the epistle to the Colossians: "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." There is nothing lacking now. You have heard the story of a political meeting to which Mr. Lloyd George came late, having been detained by some matter. When he had been introduced by the chairman he began by saying, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am here at last." Some wag in the audience said, "And so am I." "Yes", said Mr. Lloyd George, "but you are not all here." That could be said of all of us: we are not all here. But we are complete in Him: and we are made accepted in the Beloved. Salvation is *in* Christ. His very life is communicated to us.

There is a passage from which I have tried to preach

several times, and which I quote for my own comfort, not understanding it, but getting a glimpse at its meaning, a passage which speaks of our High Priest being "made, not after the power of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an indissoluble life", a life that has eternity in it, a life that cannot be dissolved, a life that is not merely endless as to duration, but a life that is essentially eternal in its quality, a life that is not subject to death, a life over which death has no power. It is said of Jesus Christ, "Death hath no more dominion over him." He laid down His life, and He took it again; and now that life is given to us, as to its endlessness, as to its purity, as to its power, as to its inherent holiness, which some day will shine out in the fulness of glory; and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

You thought salvation consisted in saying prayers, did you? You thought you could be saved by ceasing to get drunk? by cleansing your tongue, and refraining from blasphemy? Or, being too respectable to indulge in any of these things, you thought you could obtain salvation by being a little more strict in your business, a little more charitable toward your neighbour, a little more liberal in your giving, a little more just in your relationship to others? You have been like a man brushing his coat before he goes out, and believing it to be clean. But when he gets into the bright light of the sun he sees still more dust. You have been brushing your coat for a long time, and you say, "I am going to be saved by and by." When you get into God's light, you will need a new brush. Things you did not see in your own inner consciousness at all you will discover when you get into the light of God's Word.

And you will learn that salvation consists in something no church can give you. You are not saved by being a member of a church. I will not name any church, but there is no church on earth that can save anyone—there never was. Not by ordinance, not by mental assent to any sort of creed. I shall not make light of creeds, for much depends upon our thought of God, and we need to entertain correct thoughts of Him. We need to accept what God has revealed about Himself as the last word. There is no higher authority than God's Book. But if you yield a mental assent to every word in the Bible, that alone will not save you. We must be saved by the Beloved. Salvation consists in a living Saviour, One Who is alive forevermore.

And it consists in vital union with Him. I cannot explain it, but thank God I know what it means. I am sure the truth we had before us last Sunday evening is of great practical value to us all: "He . . . gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." That is the church to belong to, the church which is His body, of which He is the Head, and to which we are joined by a spiritual union, receiving the very life of God into our redeemed spirits, made one with Him for ever; "accepted in the Beloved".

I have said nothing to you that you can understand mentally. It is beyond our intellectual comprehension. We may glance at it, but it is only as the Spirit Who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, takes hold of that truth and makes it real to us, that it becomes vital, and that we feel something of its saving efficacy.



## III.

What is it all for? TO EXHIBIT THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF SOVEREIGN GRACE. For "the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved". You were saved that your life might be cleaned up a little? Yes. You were saved that you might be delivered from the thralldom of sin, and made a free man in Christ? Yes. You were saved that you may escape the consequences of sin? Yes. That you may be saved from hell? Yes. There is no more foolish man on earth than the man who denies the existence of hell. If you have any sense at all you can smell the flames even here. I think we see enough of sin to know that there ought to be a hell. And there is! There is no doubt about it. Salvation is something that saves us from hell. We are admonished to save some with fear, pulling them out of the fire. That is what it is to be saved, to be plucked as brands from the burning? Yes; but it is vastly more than that. Saved to everlasting felicity in the Golden City? To have plenty of gold at last, enough gold to pave the streets—to put it under our feet where it ought to be, rather than in our hearts? I suppose we shall be on the gold standard when we get up yonder. Saved to all the joys of heaven, whatever they are? Saved to a realization of what is pictured to us in the concluding chapters of the Book, a city where there is no night, no pain, no death, no tears, no sin, no sorrow of any kind? Yes, all that.

But that is only a means to an end. That is not the real purpose of salvation. We are saved that we may be for ever "to the praise of the glory of his grace", that at last we may exemplify the grace of God. I mean by that, that the grace of God may be seen in us. By whom? By the angels? Yes. By the archangels, the cherubim and seraphim? Yes. But I am sure there are other intelligences, as we observed last Sunday evening, and as this epistle so profoundly states, who will gaze in wonder for ever and ever at the manifestation of the grace of God in the hosts of the redeemed.

Mr. Whitcombe read to you just now Paul's explanation of his knowledge of the mystery of God: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Do you think God has been defeated? Do you think sin has thwarted Him in the accomplishment of His purpose? Not at all. He has surpassed all He did in creation in that work of redemption and recreation ef-

fectured in Christ Jesus our Lord; and from it, as I have told you the last two Sunday evenings, He will derive for ever a revenue of glory; and we, poor broken sinners that we are, will be permitted to make our little contribution to the "praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved".

Are you outside of it? Are you not saved? Have you not been washed in the blood? Have you not put your trust in the Lord Jesus? Will you not trust Him now? Will you not begin with him? It is too big a subject for your to understand. Yes. But little children can understand what it is to trust the promises of God. We have known hundreds of them—thousands of them—in this place who have come to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to know they were accepted in the Beloved. What are you going to do to-night? Are you going away from this place with Christ, or without Him? In Christ, or outside of Christ? With Him in Whom God is well pleased, or in company with him against whom His wrath shall some day be most terribly revealed? Oh that we may all have a place in the family of God!

My radio friends, how many of you are Christians? If you really know Christ, do, I beg of you, praise Him to-night. Thank God for the mercy that has forgiven your sin. If you have not given yourself to Him, give yourself to Him now. Say it, even as we bow together in prayer,—

"Lord, but I yield, I yield,  
I can hold out no more;  
I sink, by dying love compelled,  
To own Thee Conqueror."

Let us pray:

O Thou God of all grace, look upon us this evening, reverently and humbly bowed in Thy presence here in this building, and upon others in their homes and elsewhere, whose hearts ascend to Thee in simple faith, saying, Jesus Christ, I trust Thee as my Saviour; I surrender to Thee as my Lord. O Lord, may multitudes this evening pass from death unto life. Thou creative Spirit, Who didst in the beginning move upon the waters, and didst utter Thyself in that great word, Let there be light, and there was light; speak to every darkened mind this evening who has heard Thy word, and say it again, Let there be light, so that we may be able to say, many for the first time this evening, 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. For His name's sake we ask it, Amen.

The entire Gospel Witness Staff  
wishes all The Gospel Witness  
family a Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New Year.

# The Union Baptist Witness

Is the Official Publication of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Send all communications to the Office Secretary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

## MR. PERCY CLUBINE, M.A.

In the outgoing of Mr. Clubine to Liberia, the Executive Board of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec feel they have a man of poise and excellent judgment which bespeaks great things in the days to come for the Foreign Mission Work. The following article is furnished by a member of the Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, of which Mr. Clubine is a member.

"In a letter received from Mr. Clubine from London, England, he writes, 'The trip has on the whole been very good and rather interesting, with cheerful company and good weather. The days seem to fly very quickly, and nothing seems to drag . . . Things have become so natural on the boat that I suppose it will feel queer on land for a little while.

When you get this letter I suppose that Christmas will be just around the corner, and I will be almost to the land where the little Dannies grow wild in the jungle. . . I am going to be very careful of my health, for I realize that it



Mr. CLUBINE

pays in that country where the most dreadful kinds of disease stalk about seeking whom they may destroy.'

Mr. Clubine also sent back a daily diary of his trip, four pages of closely typed material. This diary is full of interesting details and gives an insight into travelling difficulties, which greatly aid one in praying for our missionaries. A copy of this diary is in the possession of the Union office, and will be gladly loaned to any church in the Union desiring to have it read to the Sunday-school or Young People's Society.

In the opening paragraph Mr. Clubine expresses his gratitude to the large number of friends who went to the Union Station to bid him Godspeed. He writes, "Then began the task of trying to make myself comfortable for six or seven long hours in a train which, although it was very frosty outside, was kept at a boiling temperature inside. Imagine my anxiety when after some hours it was suddenly found necessary to change trains with all my baggage. Having lacked one more box to complete my packing I had my arms full with the following articles, a pullman case (heavy), a typewriter, also heavy, one gladstone bag, also loaded to

capacity, a cornet in a case, a baritone horn in a cloth bag, and a concertina in an ordinary shopping bag. My umbrella added to my embarrassment by looking silly on a winter's day. However, a redcap appeared from nowhere and so the change was made quite nicely with the help of a tip, proving that the love of money is not always the root of evil."

From the remainder of his diary we learn that altogether our Missionary spent only two days in bed, and that the weather seemed fairly mild all the way across the "mill pond" as he calls the ocean, also he refers to it as "the puddle". Ping-pong and Shuffle-board are some of the games indulged in on board ship. Several visits to the gymnasium were recorded. A reference to music is interesting, "The orchestra plays for us at almost every meal. They seem to choose to play a very good class of music, no jazz at all. It is rather strange that it is so, but of course very agreeable. This evening they played among others a group of selections from 'Il Trovatore', many of which I played years ago with the old Burford orchestra."

Mr. Clubine sailed from Liverpool on December 2nd, and expects to arrive in Liberia, December 21st. Pray for him as he spends his first Christmas away from loved ones in dark Liberia.

## TIMMINS

The Timmins Regular Baptist Church wishes us all to share in their joy, which came through blessings from God. "Recently", the Pastor, Rev. H. C. Slade, writes, "we held two weeks of nightly Prayer meetings. It meant a deepening of spiritual life in Christians, and the revival has reached the unsaved as well. For some Sunday evenings one or two have been responding to the invitation, but last Sunday excelled all, when seven walked to the front of the church professing their faith in Jesus Christ. It certainly brought great joy to all our hearts to see hard cases yielding to the call of Christ. We ask you to pray with us that this may be but the forerunner of floodtide blessings:

During our prayer meetings the Northern country seemed especially laid on our hearts, and we asked the Lord to lead labourers into this needy part of Canada. We do believe that through our prayers God has opened a door to preach the gospel to this people which we never dreamed of. A new broadcasting station has just been installed in Timmins, and they gave us the first opportunity of broadcasting our Sunday evening services. They offered us an hour and a half for a very reasonable rate, so believing this to be the leading of the Lord, we signed a contract for six months, with an option for the next six months in case we desire to continue."

We certainly do rejoice with the Timmins people, and trust that this new feature will be the means of salvation to many people in the Northland. We are sure that all our readers will claim the privilege of praying for this work.

## COURTLAND

The Courtland Union Baptist Church has just concluded a series of evangelistic meetings with the pastor of the Willowdale Baptist Church, Mr. J. F. Dempster as the special speaker.

Although the meetings were planned for two weeks, the interest shown in them, and the good attendance, caused us to carry on for another week. The blessing of the Lord was manifested in the salvation of souls, and eleven professed salvation. A number of these expect to be baptized in the near future in the Otterville Baptist Church.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

At the request of the Pastor, Mr. Howard Chipchase, of the York Road Baptist Church, Guelph, the date of the Recognition and Ordination Services is changed from Thursday, December 28th, 1933, to Tuesday, January 9th, 1934.

Will all the churches which have appointed delegates please notify them of this change? Thank you!

**Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf**

Vol. 9

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 1

January 7th, 1934

**FIRST QUARTER****KING JEHOASH**

Lesson Text: 2 Kings, chapter 12; 2 Chron. 24.

Golden Text: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."—Prov. 14:34.

Bible School Reading—2 Kings 12:1-16.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS:**

Monday—2 Chron. 35:8-17.

Tuesday—Ps. 2: 1-12.

Wednesday—Hos. 5:1-10.

Thursday—Matt. 23:34-39.

Friday—Luke 21:1-6.

Saturday—I Cor. 16:1-7.

**I. DOING RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, (2 Kings 12:1-3; 2 Chron. 24:1-16).**

It is quite evident that the reign of Jehoash must be divided into two periods, each distinct from the other, and in contrast with each other. During the first period he does that which is right in the sight of the Lord, while in the second he does that which is evil. In the first he appears as an earnest worshipper of God, while in the second he supports idolatry. Such a complete reversal of attitude compels us to enquire as to a possible cause for the same, and this is found in the record. We are there informed that the king "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him", (v. 2). But after his death he surrendered to the idol worshippers (2 Chron. 24:17, 18). The conclusion, therefore, is that the teaching and influence of Jehoiada kept Jehoash on the right track.

One particularly important work ascribed to the king during the first period is the repairing of the temple. Under the previous ruler it had been robbed and neglected, (11:18), the building required attention. Money was needed to effect the repairs, and it is of interest to note the plan used to secure the same. The command was given to the priests to use the money which came from these sources; first, that which came from everyone that passeth the account, amounting to half a shekel (Ex. 30:13); second, "the money that every man is set at", relating to the re-

demption price of dedicated things, (Lev. 27:1-8); and third, free-will offerings, (vs. 4, 5). Evidently this arrangement did not prove satisfactory, due probably to the dilatoriness, or lack of interest of the priests, (vs. 6-8), and another arrangement was made for securing the necessary finances, based on the purely voluntary principle. Jehoiada "took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the Lord." Into this receptacle the people cast their money for the repair of the building, (2 Chron. 24:10). A separation was thus made between the money given for the priests, and that contributed for this special purpose, and it produced excellent results, (2 Chron. 24:11).

Several things are worthy of attention respecting this work of the king. It may be characterized as necessary, beneficial, and in line with the will of God. Respecting the plan for securing the money, it may be noted that the same meant straight giving to the service of God, without the expectation of receiving anything in return. There are some these days, and their number is not small, who are willing to contribute to the work of God if they can receive something in return, either a supper, a fair, a tea, a concert, or a theatrical. The scriptural method is to give freely, because we have received from God, and not with the expectation of receiving from man, (Matt. 10:8). Observe also the spiritual lessons to be derived from this record, in the need for attention to the work of the spiritual temple, which, due to the attacks of enemies has suffered considerably. There should be earnest effort in defence of the faith, (Jude 3), with wholehearted giving of service, (Col. 3: 23), and money (2 Cor. 9:7). A further lesson may be derived from the fact that the number of workers engaged was in accordance with the amount of money contributed, and while, possibly no one was able to pay the whole expense, each one giving what he could, and all co-operating together, make the work possible.

**II. DOING EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, (2 Chron. 24:15-22).**

After the death of Jehoiada, Jehoash fell into idolatrous ways. His faithful and strong adviser had gone, and left to his own resources he proved his weakness before the subtle approach of his princes, (vs. 17-18). We are impressed by this, with the great influence of Jehoiada. He was the uncle of the king, and a priest of God, and evidently one with a genuine desire for the true worship of God. He had previously manifested his sincerity, (2 Kings 11: 17), and he was strong enough to continue the same line of conduct. He was the king's friend, and guided him aright in the midst of the temptations of high office. Note the influence of good strong men in public service, but particularly in the word of God; and the need for the same these days. They are not always appreciated, and their counsels are

at times accepted with reluctance, but their service is valuable beyond esteem.

The return of Judah officially to idolatry proved disastrous for the nation, and brought the wrath of God upon the people, (v. 18). It would seem as if the princes, prior to this, had been but little more than lip servants of the true religion, else why did they so easily turn therefrom? In hearkening unto them the king manifested his weakness, and suffered like evil consequences. It should be noted that nothing but a strong attitude is warranted in the face of evil. God never compromises with it, and it is sin for His servants to do so. One may well wonder at the attitude of those leaders of the people in forsaking the worship of the true God, and going after idolatry, but the answer is to be found in the heart of man, (Jer. 17:9) and his alienation from God, (Rom. 8:7). The old nature desires not the things of God, but seeks the things which are more akin to its spirit. The Christian's aim is to live victoriously over it, (Rom. 6:12).

The grace of God is seen in this incident, in the sending of the prophets to bring His people back to Him, (v. 19). It is characteristic of God's dealings with men that before visiting them in judgment, He seeks to bring them to repentance. This is manifest throughout the history of Israel, and is the case in the present day, (Acts 17:30). God desires to pardon, rather than to punish. His efforts are sometimes fruitless, due to the obstinacy of men, then He has no option but to judge. On this occasion His servant Jehariah was slain for delivering His message, (vs. 20, 21). Note the wickedness of this act, together with the king's base standard of judgment respecting the conduct of men, "in the sight of the Lord", and the necessity and blessing of staunch defenders of the faith. When men deliberately forsake God, they hate His servants, and the latter must be prepared to suffer for Him, (John 15:20).

**III. PUNISHMENT FOR SIN, (2 Kings 12:17-21; 2 Chron. 24:23-27).**

We have noticed frequently in our studies that sin brings evil consequences in its train. One cannot sin and enjoy blessing. Sin is contrary to the principle underlying beneficial action. God's face is set against it, and He must punish it. The punishment in this case took the form of defeat at the hands of a small body of Syrians, (2 Chron. 24:23, 24). Victory for Israel had always depended on the favour of God, in the manifestation of His power on their behalf, but when they sinned they lost His help, and became weak before the onslaught of the enemy. Sin separates from God in the spiritual as in the national sphere, (Is. 59:2).

The second result of the king's sin was his assassination, (v. 20; 2 Chron. 24:25, 26). This took place in revenge for the slaying of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, the king being in bed, afflicted with disease at the time. Again we are impressed with the evidence that it never pays to sin. Righteousness is the more profitable here, and hereafter.

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