

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c. Per Single Copy.

Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editor: ALEXANDER THOMSON

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

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.
Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 12, No. 33

TORONTO, DECEMBER 28, 1933

Whole Number 606

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

GOING HOME: COMFORT FOR THE HOMESICK

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 24th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported)

"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; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14:2, 3.

Prayer before the Sermon

O Lord, our God, we bless Thee that He Who is the sovereign Ruler of all, without Whom nothing was made that was made, became for our sakes the little Lord Jesus. We thank Thee that in Him Thou hast brought the Infinite within the comprehension of the finite; and that now, though Thy thoughts are higher than our thoughts, even as the heavens are higher than the earth, yet we are able to understand Thee, for the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Help us all to see afresh with gladness and gratitude of heart, this revelation of Thyself in the Person of Thy Son. We thank Thee that so many in Thy presence have already, by faith, beheld Him. We have seen Him not alone in the manger at Bethlehem, but on the cross at the place called Calvary. And by faith we have seen Him ascended into heaven as our great High Priest, there making intercession for us.

We thank Thee for the salvation Thou hast thus accomplished, and which Thou dost offer to us as the free gift of Thy sovereign grace. We pray that all who heard this sweet carol sung by the children this evening, may find a place in their hearts for the Lord Jesus. We thank Thee for these children whose voices we have heard. We thank Thee for the assurance that Jesus is the children's Saviour. We remember, with gratitude, with thanksgiving, His gracious words: Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. We would all, O Lord, come this evening as little children that so we may enter into Thy kingdom.

We beseech Thee to speak with grace and power this evening to our invisible audience, those who are not within these walls, countless numbers, perhaps, who worship with us as we gather in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that Thou canst be with them all, even as Thou art here.

Let Thine evening blessing descend upon us all. Save such as are unsaved; build up in the faith those who are already Thy children. Minister, we pray Thee, to those who are sick, to the aged and infirm, to those who are needy, and all the multitude of lonely ones, so that we may be partakers of

the comfort of the Holy Ghost this evening, that we may rejoice in God our Saviour.

Graciously remember all congregations similarly gathered where the Lord Jesus is recognized for what He is—the King of kings, and Lord of lords. May Thy word have free course and be glorified throughout the world this day, at home and abroad, wherever the witness of the gospel is given. Wherever the story of Bethlehem is told, may the blessing of the Lord attend the message, that there may be joy in heaven, and joy on earth because Jesus reigns as Lord in the hearts of men.

Bless us in our hymns of praise this evening, and in every exercise of this service. Let Thy presence be felt by Thy people, for Christ's sake, Amen.

I am unable to explain the reason for the fact, but I think it will be generally admitted that for some reason the Christmas season has become an occasion for family reunions. There seems to be a general desire on the part of those who are away from home to go home on that particular day, if that be possible, and for those who are at home, to remain at home. It is a time when all the family gather together under their father's roof.

I remember when a boy how I anticipated, with joy, the coming of Christmas when I was away from home. How I looked forward, counting the days to the time when I should set my face towards home! But those who chiefly made that home have long since gone to another home. And then some of us have had homes of our own, and they, too, have been broken up. There remains, perhaps, for many of you, for many who hear me this evening, no place that you can really call home. How many there are who, like Abraham, and those who were his contemporaries, or immediately succeeded him, must confess that they are strangers and pilgrims in the earth, and that they seek a city!

Perhaps my message this evening will be a somewhat unusual one for Christmas time, but we shall hold our distinctively Christmas service to-morrow morning, when I hope to bring you a Christmas message. This evening I shall endeavour to turn to practical account, if I can, this universally recognized Christmas homing instinct, and some of its spiritual implications.

I.

I wonder why the day or the season which commemorates the advent to this earth of the Saviour of men should have become a time when the majority of people want to be at home? And yet, what is the significance of this season? I remind you that on THE FIRST OF ALL CHRISTMAS DAYS THE SON OF GOD WAS AWAY FROM HOME; He did not spend the first Christmas day at home. He came from heaven to earth, and heaven itself must have been somewhat darkened by the absence of Him Who was its very Light. And to what a world He came! How far it was! How far away from Home! What a chapter of contrasts the story of Christmas presents! How greatly different was His earthly situation from His heavenly life!

How different *circumstantially!* We have only the faintest idea of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. That He lived in the glory, that He was worshipped by the angels, that He knew no limitation, we may safely assume from the teaching of Scripture. And yet, as we observed this morning, when He came to this earth there was no room for Him in the inn, and He was crowded out into the stable: He was laid in a manger away from home.

I suppose it is not possible for us to understand how greatly our Lord suffered during His earthly life. We are accustomed, in our thought, to confine His sufferings to the cross. But His whole life was one of privation and suffering. How His infinitely refined soul must have been offended, must have been tortured, by the things with which He came into contact through all His earthly life! How far away from home was He!

And then you will remember, too, how different was His situation *in respect to His personal relationships*. I know that in the days of His infancy He enjoyed the loving care of Mary and of Joseph. I know that there were a few discerning souls to whom it was given to see Who He was. The wise men came from the East, and the shepherds from the fields of Bethlehem that they might do Him honour; but for the most part this world was most inhospitable to the Heavenly Visitor; He was not only away from home, but He was made to feel that He was not wanted here. Herod sought by every means in his power to discover His physical location, where He was, that he might destroy Him. He Himself said in later life: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head". He was not only without a home in heaven, but He had no home on earth, nowhere to go, nowhere to abide. From His birth forward His association was with the poorest of the poor. What wonder, then, that at last He should seem to have been possessed with a holy nostalgia, a kind of home-sickness!

I wonder what significance you see in that seventeenth chapter of John? Sometimes we speak of it as His high priestly prayer; and so it was: but it was something more than that. He had been a long time away from

home. For nearly a third of a century He was absent from home in a strange land, in a world that was not kind to Him. We read in the Scriptures "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." How much, therefore, He lived in a single day! How much He suffered in a few hours! How long, oh, how long, the time must have seemed even to Him, the time spent away from home! I suppose He felt that He was a long way from home, too.

The first time I went to the Pacific Coast, I felt as though I had never been so far away from home before. I had crossed the ocean many times. I had got up morning after morning, and looked out on the sea, when there was nothing but water to be seen. But there was no consciousness of progress, or of distance: merely the passage of time. I recall that first trip to the coast when the train rolled along day after day, and I saw the land passing by until at last we came to the Rockies, and we climbed through them, and then descended the Pacific slope; I felt as though a hundred worlds were between me and home. I had never felt quite so far away from home before.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth He must have had a profound consciousness of the distance separating this sinful earth from the holiness of heaven whence He had come. There is a scripture which says, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God"; and the Rocky Mountains, oh yes; they were piled between Him and God. He was so far, oh, so far, away from home; the separation was so great! And then, as He nears the end of His life, He sends a letter home—if I may reverently say so; the seventeenth chapter of John. He seems to be a little homesick, and He speaks of the glory which He had with His Father before the world was; and He seems to say: "I shall be in the glory again very soon. It will soon be Christmas for Me." Of course, He had to go by the way of the cross and the empty grave; but we read that "for the joy that was set before him" He "endured the cross, despising the shame".

One year, during the war, I was in Europe about four months. Other years I remained for a shorter period. I was not away as long as the soldiers, but four months was long enough to make me feel that I wanted to get home. There seemed to be but little prospect of getting passage at that time; and so I went to The Continent as the war concluded. I was in Mons, where the war began, and where it ended, when I received a telegram from London, from the Ministry of Information, telling me that they had arranged a passage for me on a certain day. I had to get back to London to get my ship, and there were no railways—they had been torn up by the war—and so I got a motor car. They sent me from Headquarters to the place where they make the lace, Valenciennes. It had been largely blown to pieces. I got there one moonlight November morning about one or two o'clock. An old train came in made up of horse cars, and third-class cars, and one or two second-class cars; and such cars as had windows—well, nearly all of them were broken. I walked about on that station platform—there was no station; it had been blown to pieces—and there were fires here and there which a few soldiers had made. I got as close to them as I could, occasionally, just to get warmed up. I walked about from about half-past one in the morning, a moonlight morning, until six o'clock when it was time to take this ramshackle thing they called a train. I was half on official duty; and when

I went to get on board there was a sergeant in charge. Some of the soldiers were making their way to Calais, too, and they were climbing on anywhere. I went up to a second-class car—it was the best there was, and some of the windows of that were broken—and this sergeant stood there saying, "Officers only!" He let me on, of course, because I was—well, I was supposed to be in that class, you know! As I got on this old car, I said to myself, "Well, if this is first-class, what must the third-class be like?" But I did not care very much; I was getting to the coast, and I was going home! I was glad at last to be setting my face toward home.

Oh, not thus, in that spirit of weariness, did the Lord Jesus anticipate His home-going! And yet, He compressed an eternity of suffering and humiliation into that period which He had spent away from home. Notwithstanding, we can at least dimly understand His desire to get up to Jerusalem, even to the cross and the grave, that He might go up the shining steep of glory, and at last get home again to God.

Thus, may I say with reverence, He addressed His Father when His home-going was immediately in prospect: "Now . . . I come to Thee".

To His disciples He said, "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto my Father, for My Father is greater than I."

II.

But He had something to say to us before He went away, for HE LEFT A MESSAGE FOR HOMESICK SOULS. He said: "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."

Well, that is something to be thankful for. *There are "many mansions"* in the Father's house. Some of us cannot say anything about the father's house on earth. We have now no longer a father's house to which we may go. We cherish the memory of it, but that is all. Oh, you children, while you have your own homes, I beg of you, appreciate them to the full! But if we have not a father's house here, we have one yonder. If, indeed, we are washed in the blood, and born of the Spirit of God, we still have a home. And it is a home of many mansions. I think the Lord Jesus meant to say, "Do not be afraid to come to see Me, because I shall have plenty of room to entertain you."

I speak this evening, I dare say, to some homes that are fuller than usual. All the family have come home, and some of them have brought their children with them, and when children and grandchildren get home together, what a full house it is! And somebody has to arrange for the sleeping accommodation of all these people. I do not know how many cots some of you have put up to-night. There may be a little inconvenience, but it is home. And the children are glad to be home, and they will gladly sleep on the floor if they must. But the Lord Jesus seems to say in these verses, "When I came to visit you, you had no place to entertain Me. I went to the inn, and there was no room there. The only place that I could find was in the stable. That was where I was born. And since then I spent many a night beneath the stars. Occasionally some of My friends offered Me hospitality, but when other men went to their own homes, I have gone, on more than one occasion, to the Mount of Olives, and I have seen the day break upon the Mount. You had not room for Me here; but when you come to

see Me in the world to which I am going, I shall have plenty of room for you. I have many mansions there. You need not be afraid that you will crowd Me. There will be plenty of room in My Father's house when all the children come home."

Is not that something to be thankful for?—plenty of room for all of us! "In my Father's house are many mansions."

Our Lord Jesus had abundant wealth before He came to this earth. We read that He was rich. And when the Holy Ghost speaks of riches He must have meant immeasurable, "unsearchable" riches. How wealthy He was! How people worship those of wealth and of substance in this life! I wonder what was meant when the Holy Ghost said that He was rich, rich according to Heaven's estimate, Heir of all things. And yet He left it all behind when He came to earth.

Shall I be misunderstood if I say this daring thing, and yet it is true, I am sure? He came to earth to increase His wealth. He came to earth that He might acquire another kind of wealth that would enable Him to prepare a place for us in the "many mansions". That is why He stayed away so long. The Prince of Glory came to earth to add to His riches, and He laid up a store of vicarious legal merit. He was our Big Brother, our Wealthy Prince. And now He says, "My work is finished, and I am going back, I am going to spend my wealth. I go to prepare a place for you."

It used to be said that the Chinese came from China to Canada and opened up a business of some sort here, and lived as frugally as possible; and that, when they had gathered a few thousand dollars together, by Chinese standards they were rich. They went to a far country, and then they carried their wealth back home, rich with the wealth that they had acquired far away. But oh, all the wealth of earth could not have prepared one mansion for a poor sinner! All the wealth of the Fords and the Rockefellers could not buy a ticket that would admit you through the pearly gates. But Jesus Himself came, and spent His whole life working out a righteousness for us, mining—if I may so say—a new kind of wealth. And when He, as the world's Redeemer, had made His fortune—dare I put it that way—He said, "I am going back home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. There are many mansions in My Father's house, and within them I shall prepare a place for you." He is preparing a place for every one of His believing people.

What did you do about Friday, some of you mothers, perhaps grandmothers? You said, "The children will be home on Saturday. We must see what provision we can make." You surveyed the capacity of the home, and you said, "I can put up an extra bed there. I think, perhaps, we can make provision for so-and-so there." Possibly last night the family circle was completed. And when the time came for retiring, somebody said, "Well, mother, where are we all to sleep?" "Oh, I will show you." And she took the family through the house, and said, "That is for you", and "That is for you". Then to-morrow I suppose there will be some kind of Christmas tree, and there will be parcels hanging on the tree, and names on them, and everything prepared. What preparations are made for the Christmas season! I remember a time when in a certain house of my acquaintance preparations began, I think, in October or November. That is my memory; perhaps it was a childish memory.

But it seemed to me that Christmas was a great event, and elaborate preparations had to be made for that great occasion long in advance.

The Lord Jesus said, "I am going to prepare for a great house party, a great family gathering. Good-bye for a little while. I will send Someone to look after you until I come back again. Meanwhile I am going to prepare a place for you." And that is what He is doing now.

Some years ago I passed along a certain street in this city in a friend's car. He pointed to a certain house saying, "That is a very interesting house." I said, "I should think it would be. It looks like it." It was a veritable mansion. He told me the name of the man who lived there. He said, "He has retired from business now. He is a very wealthy man. He has no sons, but he has three daughters. They are all married, and all have homes of their own and families. And," he continued, "when that father built that house he built first a place within it for himself and his wife. Then within that house he built three complete dwellings, separate apartments, all luxuriously furnished, self-contained. Then to each of his daughters he gave two keys. He said, that is the key to the door of your father's house outside, and that is the key to your apartment within your father's house." I do not know what their names were, but I shall call one Lucy, and one Mary, and—oh, I suppose we ought to have an uncommon name, an unusual one. What shall we say? Phyllis? And so to Lucy he said, "Here is your key. That belongs to your house." To Mary he said, "Here is your key." And to Phyllis he said, "Here is your key. Now your apartments will always be ready. Whenever you come to the city you will always live in your father's house, but in your own mansion within your father's house." The three apartments were unlike each other, but each one was complete.

I said to my friend, "Thank you for that story. It is very suggestive to me. I should think there are a good many fathers in Toronto who would like to be able to do that for their children, but there are not many who can." But I know Someone Who is doing it: "In my Father's house are many mansions", and the Prince of Glory has gone home to prepare one for me, and I am going to have my own place. I do not want your place: I want my own.

How often have I met with people to whom changes of circumstances have come. A woman, perhaps, whose husband has died, is living alone, and then a daughter says, "You come and live with me." I am sure I have known it in scores of cases where they have spoken to me as their Pastor. They have said, "Now, Pastor, I just want to tell you what is in my mind. My daughter, Mrs. So-and-So, wants me to go and live with her, and I appreciate her invitation, for it is lovely to visit one's children and grandchildren. But after all, I have had my own home for a long time, and I do not feel like giving it up. I should like to have my own home still. I have said to them that while I appreciate their invitation I would rather have my own home. What do you think?" I have always said, "I think you are very wise, indeed."

My dear friends, when we get to heaven we shall each have his own home. In the Father's house are "many mansions". Each will be different from all the

others, for it will be specially prepared for the soul who is to occupy it, and therefore perfectly suited to his individual tastes and capacities.

Sometimes I wonder why the Lord waits so long. He compressed into the narrow space of a little over thirty years His earthly ministry, and in that time laid up in store treasure for us all—very much like Joseph when he was carried away and he saw his brethren going back home to the father. I think he knew the significance of it, because in his dreams he had had some preintimation of the coming glory; and as he went down to Egypt away from home, and away from his father, he knew that there would be a happy home-coming some day. He was there for a long time—twenty years or more—preparing a place for those whom he would summon to his presence some day.

The Lord Jesus has been gone now nearly two thousand years. What a wonderful house He must be preparing for us! What a marvellous place it must be!

Some of you, perhaps, live not more than forty miles from home, some of you who hear my voice this evening are domiciled perhaps hundreds of miles from home. Did you all come home at once? "Yes; we arrived home about the same day." But some of you had to start earlier than others. Some of you had to come a thousand miles or more on this journey, and some of you had only an hour's travel. I read that our gracious Lord is not willing that any should perish; He is long suffering: He is waiting for all the children to come home. In effect He said, "We will not have the family party until all are ready." That is the reason for His tarrying. If His second advent were the prelude to a great wave of salvation, His waiting could not be attributed to His "long suffering". I am confident the Scripture teaches that His second advent will for ever terminate the dispensation of grace for Jew and Gentile alike, and now to His believing people He saith, "I go to prepare a place for you", and some day He will cut short His work in righteousness, and He will summon all His children to the Father's home. What a blessing, dear friends, that we have a home in prospect! There has been nothing profound about what I have said to-night. It has been designedly simple! But do we not all need a home? Are you not homesick? I confess myself frequently to be so. And I rejoice in the great truth of this text.

III.

But I must not let you go until I have said one other thing: Our Lord Jesus said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself. I shall not let you come to me alone: I shall come for you, and I will take you home with Me."

How different will His second coming be from His first. When He came the first time there came wise men from the East saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." They consulted the holy Book, and they found that it was there predicted that He was to be born in Bethlehem, and they followed the star until "it came and stood over the place where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy". And

finding the Child at last they presented to Him gifts: "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh". There at the manger throne they worshipped the King of kings, because God had taught them who He was.

But only a few people saw the star, and only a few people saw the King. There are still many who do not believe that He ever came to earth. There are still some who have never been told of His coming. They do not know; but "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Jesus will come again, and when He comes again it will not be a secret coming—get that out of your mind; there is not a vestige of scriptural warrant for that doctrine that the Lord Jesus will come secretly for His saints, not a bit of it! "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him." His first coming was heralded by a star; but when He comes again: "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Everybody will see Him then.

I wonder if there is some poor person here in Toronto, hard up—oh, there are many of them; we are all hard up. We are all poor. But let me suppose there is someone especially poor, living in a little house where there is no comfort. But some Christmas morning a great motor, shining in black and silver, rolls up to that door, and someone, evidently having abundant wealth, steps out, knocks at the door, and then opens it himself and walks in and says, "It is I, I have come for you. I am going to take you home." And they go out to that magnificent chariot, and they say, "Is that for us?" You can almost imagine their looking back at their squalid quarters, and saying, "Are we going to ride in that?" "Yes; I am taking you to a palace, and we are going to have a glorious time this Christmas."

I wonder, is anyone sad to-night? I rejoiced in that song you sang just now. Why should we not be glad if we are the friends of the Prince of Glory, and sure to be carried away to glory by and by? When Jesus comes to receive His people to Himself, and takes us away to be with Him to dwell forever more, what a happy Christmas gathering that will be! A good many of you will not enjoy Christmas this year because for the first time one of the chairs is empty. Some of you will say, "Ah, yes; there are a good many empty chairs in our family circle. At this season we think of our loved and lost perhaps more than at any other time. And so, while trying to be cheerful, we cannot very well forget the losses we have sustained." But when we get yonder the family circle will be complete. No one will be missing who has been washed in the blood. "Where I am, there ye may be also". Are you glad of that? Do you want to be where Jesus Christ is?

I read a sermon by a great preacher of the long ago in which he said, "Even as I preach to you the thought of my dog makes me ashamed, for I know that he is waiting for me, and will never be satisfied until I go home." I did not know what he meant until I got a little dog of my own. She is a great chum. I was in my study this afternoon, and I shut both doors as I wanted to be alone. Presently I heard a scratching at the door, and I opened it, and there stood my little dog. I said, "What do you want?" She came in wagging her tail, and then lay down on the rug, and said, "This is

what I want. I just want to be where you are." Oh, to be where Christ is, to be always with Him, and never to have to say good bye! That is our prospect, dear friends. Are you not glad Jesus has come? And are you not thankful that He is coming again?

Are any of you outside of all this? Are any of you saying, "I do not know what the preacher has been talking about. I do not know the Lord Jesus"? I beg of you to come to Him. I beg of you to receive His grace, the forgiveness of your sins; be washed in the blood; get on the spotless garment of His righteousness which He offers you so that you will be able to stand even in the presence of the angels, rejoicing in God your Saviour.

I wanted to talk to you this evening very simply about going home. I hope that when that great gathering shall come all of you within these walls, and all who have heard me by radio this evening, will be among the happy gathering that shall sit down in the Father's house.

Let us bow in a moment's silent prayer.

We thank Thee, Lord Jesus, that Thou hast come, and we thank Thee, too, that Thou art coming again. By Thy grace, make us all ready so that here and hereafter we shall be with Thee. We ask it in Jesus Christ's name, Amen.

SUNDRY EXPERIENCES OF DAVID

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, December 14th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported)

*Sixth in the 1933-34 Series of Thursday Evening Lectures
on Biblical Theology, which is included in the
Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary.*

Lesson Text: I Samuel, chapters 21-23.

We shall begin our study this evening with the twenty-first chapter of the first book of Samuel.

David is being hotly pursued by Saul, having been told by Jonathan that, manifestly, it is Saul's purpose to destroy him; therefore, he flees for his life.

I.

He came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. David had a real religion; he believed in a divine Helper; and it was not at all surprising that he should make his way to Ahimelech. But Ahimelech was afraid when David came. There are some people who are afraid to meet you when you are in trouble—when you are out of favour with influential people. And knowing Saul's attitude toward David, Ahimelech was naturally afraid to identify himself with David. Yet he seems to have been a courageous man, and one who, notwithstanding his fear, was ready to render a service to David. The really brave man is not the man who is never afraid, but the man who, being afraid, notwithstanding, does his duty. Ahimelech was such a man. David was in desperate straits: he was hungry.

Have you ever been really hungry? I do not mean feeling that you could enjoy dinner, or whatever the next meal may be: I mean, have you ever been really famished? Have you ever had to go without food, for any reason, for days together? We read sometimes of what people do in such circumstances. We have read of people even resorting to cannibalism; and you are inclined to say, "How terrible such people must be!" Yes, I dare

say; but you had better withhold judgment until you have been through their experience. You do not know what you would do under such circumstances.

I recall one hungry day that stands out in my memory. A friend of mine and I, years ago, decided to spend our vacation on bicycles. There were no paved roads in the direction we wanted to go; many of them were only rough clay roads—there were a few gravel roads. We pushed our way toward Sarnia, and then from Sarnia up the shore of Lake Huron for about a hundred miles. And we rode against a head wind. There were no restaurants in little villages in those days before motor cars came in. You could go through place after place, and could not buy anything to eat, no matter how much money you had. We made slow progress because of the wind. The roads were rough, and sometimes we had to get off our wheels and walk. And we trudged on, or wheeled, mile after mile without finding a place where we could buy even a biscuit. We started early in the morning. By noon we had not found any place where we could get anything to eat. We went on to late afternoon, with nothing to eat at all. And our food was our only gasoline! Work hard like that for about eight or ten hours, and you will begin to understand that food has some relation to your physical energy. We went into several farm houses to see if we could buy a meal, but even the farmers had nothing; and they were not particularly friendly toward bicyclists because they thought the bicycle was going to put the horse off the road; in the meantime it frightened the horse, and the fewer of them the better! I do not think they cared whether we starved or not.

At last we found a place where there was a bachelor farmer, who kept house for himself. He told us he had not a thing in the house, and was just about to hitch up his horse and go to the nearest village to buy something. He said, "In the back of the buggy out in the barn there are some apples and a few tomatoes." We said, "Show them to us", and we went out and got a few apples—I think my friend took a tomato or two, also. The farmer was very generous. I confess I am a little squeamish about matters of that sort, but on that occasion I did not even wait to wash those apples. I was desperately hungry. Many a tramp has since profited at my door because of that experience.

David was very hungry. I think it is well not to judge people too harshly in certain circumstances, unless, indeed, you have been there yourself. He found there was no food on this occasion except the sacred bread, the shewbread, which it was not lawful for anyone to eat save the priests.

Now David was not perfectly frank with Ahimelech. I shall not try to explain his want of frankness. He bordered, I am afraid, on untruthfulness. Apparently he was very considerate of Ahimelech, and did not want to involve him in his troubles; and Ahimelech did not know that David was fleeing from the king for his life. There is no excuse for any sort of deception. We ought to be straightforward and frank; but I think you will all admit that there are circumstances when it is very difficult to be frank.

I remember when I was boarding at one time hearing my landlady remark to her husband one day, as she looked out of the window, "O, here comes Mrs. So-and-So. I do hope she will not come in here. I do not want to be bothered with her." Presently there was a knock

at the door, and I heard my landlady go to the door, open it, and say, "O, how are you? I am delighted to see you." Of course, she was not; and I suppose it would be quite easy to blame her for that, but I am not sure that some of you would not be blaming yourselves at the same time. While we must admit that it is difficult to find justification for that sort of thing, we must also recognize that only the sinless have the right to throw stones. Let us be merciless toward ourselves, and as charitable as we can be toward other people.

David partook of the shewbread which it was not lawful for anyone but the priests to eat; and he did it with the consent of Ahimelech the priest, apparently violating the letter of the law. But our Lord comments upon this incident. When He and His disciples were going through the wheatfields on the Sabbath day, and, being hungry, they plucked the ears of corn, rubbed them in their hands, and did eat, the Pharisees complained that they were breaking the Sabbath by so doing. Our Lord referred to this incident as a justification of what the disciples did, and laid down that great principle that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man. That principle obtains in all the laws of God. God's laws are made, not to limit our freedom, not to deprive us of pleasure: but they are made in our interest, and our highest good is achieved by our obedience to God's laws. Ahimelech and David, by a kind of divine intuition, rightly interpreted the law, and they knew that in such a case it would not be a violation of any moral principle for them to satisfy their hunger.

Let me say to you that living is not a science: it is an art. Life can never be regulated by objective standards, or external moulds, but always by a divine intuition. "Oh", you say, "but how about the Word?" Ah, yes, but it is when the principles of the Word, as objectively recorded, have been assimilated, and become part of our very moral fibre, when the law of God is no longer written only "in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart", and when, by the Spirit of God, we are taught how to apply those principles, and are led to an appreciation of their inner spiritual significance, one is enabled to see that what to some legalists may seem a violation of law is really the highest form of obedience.

I used to know a man who was very legalistic in his outlook on life, and very, not pious, but pietistic, goody-goody. I hate goody-goodyism! Do you? Those ultra people who are so marvellously careful about some things, and strain at a gnat and swallow, not one camel, but a whole herd of them sometimes. Well, this man complained to me once of a certain man who was fairly well-to-do. He said, "Dr. So-and-So always travels by Pullman. He might better save his money and give it to the Lord's work." I think I told him the story which I had heard of the great Dr. Theodore Cuyler who was once on a long journey. When the train stopped at a certain point he got off to stretch his legs, and walk up and down the platform. One of the people called "Brethren", a very rigid gentleman, stopped Dr. Cuyler on the platform. He was travelling on the same train. Taking from his hat a conductor's check, indicating that his ticket had been collected, he said, "Dr. Cuyler, I believe in saving the Lord's money". "Very good, brother", said Dr. Cuyler. And taking his Pullman check from his hat, he replied, "I believe in saving what the Lord values more than his money, namely, his servant." I think he was right.

Now, only as we are, in the truest sense, under grace, and Christ is formed in us, and dwells in us, and the word of God dwells in us richly with all wisdom, teaching us, and admonishing us,—only then can we know, under difficult circumstances, the particular thing a Christian ought to do at that particular moment. Certainly, our Lord endorsed the action of David, and told us there was no wrong in it. You cannot make Christians as you make pig iron, by pouring them into a mould, every one alike. It is the man or woman who is taught of God, who has the witness within, and who has taken the word of God into his very system, who behaves as a Christian ought to behave under all circumstances.

II.

We come now to a verse which I shall read, and then refer to it later: "Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belong to Saul." Now mark this: whenever you reach a crisis in life, or face a difficult situation such as David did at that particular time, you will always find an Edomite standing off in the corner watching you. The Psalmist, in one of his prayers, said: "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of those which observe me". We are always under observation; and you can be sure whatever you say, whatever you do, whatever you refrain from saying or refrain from doing, if you are of the Lord's anointed there will be an Edomite looking carefully at you to see what you do. David was not unconscious of his presence, for later he said, "I knew it; I knew what he would do." There are a good many Doegs in life, always looking for trouble, always trying to make trouble, always listening to catch something out of everyone's mouth, always ready to carry evil tales somewhere. You can never escape Doeg; even though you pay a visit to Ahimelech the priest, even though you find yourself in the temple itself, you will find somebody there on the watch. So those who are the Lord's people need to be ever on the alert.

III.

David asked Ahimelech also for a sword, and he said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here: and David said, There is none like that; give it me." It was better than none anyhow, a heavy, ponderous, thing. But by this time I suppose David was more skilled in the use of the sword than he was when he had employed it to sever the giant's head. And so David found in religion that which fed him, and that which equipped him for life's pilgrimage, and prepared him to defend himself.

Now let us learn this at least from this incident in the light of the New Testament. I received a long letter from a man, I think the day before yesterday. He had been an Anglican of the High Church order. He had had a little to do with Roman Catholicism, and had turned in disgust from both, and had spent many years reading everything he could read about the religions of the heathen, Buddhism, Taoism, Hindooism, and every other 'ism. His letter was a plaintive, pathetic, appeal. He dimly understood that somehow Christ stands apart from and above all, and if he could only get through all those crudities, and all those obstacles which men have built

up between the soul and God, to Christ, he thinks he might find satisfaction. But he is resentful toward the various forms of religious formalism. So ought we all to be. What is the temple for? What is the shewbread for? What is the priest for? What is religion in its largest sense? What is Christianity for? Not something to be observed on Sunday; not to teach us how to kneel, and how to wear vestments, or cross ourselves, and all the rest of it: religion is designed to fit us, and to equip us for the great business of living. David understood that true religion was of some practical value to a hard-pressed man. And so he found in the temple bread to eat, and a sword by which to defend himself.

That is what we find in the religion of Christ, for this Book which is described as "the bread of life" to our souls is also called "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God". The religion of Christ feeds and satisfies the deepest longings of our awakened spiritual natures, and at the same time it arms us against all our spiritual foes. In other words: Christianity is a real salvation for time and for eternity.

IV.

David went down to Achish, king of Gath. He turned aside from Israel's territory, fleeing from Saul. He was foolish to go. Do not forget that the best of men make mistakes; and do not forget that if you make any man your example you are far more likely to copy his vices than his virtues. Abraham was a great man, but he turned aside into Egypt on a detour, and then he had to come back again. David did the same thing: he turned aside into Gath.

Let us learn that it is important to instruct ourselves how to meet life's emergencies. It is not hard to do right, to be good, and to do good on a beautiful June morning when all the birds are singing for you, and the flowers are blooming, and all nature is smiling upon you, and you feel it is well worth while to live. But the true Christian is the man who knows how to meet the crises of life. It is the crisis which proves what is in a man. It is that which reveals a man's true character, shows the stuff of which he is made. Under stress we have all been foolish enough, momentarily, at some time or another, to cross from Israel's territory into the land of the Philistines. On another occasion David said, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines", and away he went.

Doubtless you have all at times been so uncomfortable in the presence of Israelites that you have said, "I wonder if it would not be pleasanter in Gath? I believe many who never go to church would not behave themselves like some professing Christians." I have found that; I have found people in the church of God doing things that the meanest and lowest people on earth would be ashamed of. Do not be alarmed at that, young men, because I warn you that you will find in your experience as ministers that while you get near to heaven itself, and sometimes feel as though you had almost got inside the gate, at other times you may feel that you must be travelling in the opposite direction; for you will meet, in the name of religion, the best people on earth, but also the worst!

I was going away for a holiday once, and one of my deacons, years ago, said, "Well, Pastor, I hope you will have a good time. Go away and be wicked." Of course, I knew what he meant. He meant, just get away from

under the burdens and responsibilities you carry. Be light-hearted. But you have all said, looking just across the border land, "It seems to me there are some nice people over there in Gath. I have a mind to go and visit them." That is exactly what David did; and when he got there they said, "Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? What is he doing here?" They reported it to the king; and David saw that he had made a mistake, and immediately he disguised himself by feigning madness. The king said, "Why did you bring a madman to me? I have enough of them already." And David hurried out of Gath as quickly as he could, and got back to his own territory. It was an experiment that did not pay. If you had been writing this biography you would have said, "Let me see, when David left Ahimelech he went to Gath, but I had better not write that; that will do him damage". But this record tells the truth, that David did foolish things like other men, that we may learn that he was a man like other men, and that we may avoid his mistakes. It may be uncomfortable enough in Israel, but it will never profit you to exchange it for the land of the Philistines.

V.

In the twenty-second chapter we find David in the cave of Adullam. He escaped to the cave of Adullam. "And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him." Now this is a choice verse: "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men"—four hundred disgruntled men, every one of them either in distress or in debt or discontented. They were the original "D. D's". That was the army David had, four hundred of them. It is awkward enough to have two or three, but to have a whole congregation of them! But we have all seen modern caves of Adullam.

I was Pastor in a certain city years ago, and there was a church that ought to have been called the church of the Adullamites. I will tell you what it was made up of: Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Brethren, Baptists, Salvationists, and religious nondescripts of every sort. When people got out of sorts in any other church, when they got cross with the Pastor, or had a row in the choir, or did not like some of the Deacons or Elders—all the disgruntled ones found asylum in that particular church. And they were the most spiritual people in town! They were ultra-spiritual! Other people might be pressing toward the mark, but they had arrived: they were there already! The Pastor was a very wise man. He was like David; he became a captain over them. They had no voice nor vote in the affairs of the church. The Pastor was the centurion, and he said to this man, "Go!" and he went—or if he did not go he went outside! But he was a wise man. You cannot safely enfranchise the "D. D's"; you will soon have a peck of trouble on your hands if you do.

Let me say this to you young men: you will be pastors of churches some day, and you will have the experience that every other pastor who ever lived has had periodically—you will never get to the end of it. You will enjoy periods of quietude, of tranquility: "Then had all the

churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied." You will have gracious times like that. And then, when you least expect it, you will have a little ripple on the surface of your church's life. And I will tell you where most of your trouble will come from. It is nearly always true. I have been a Pastor for some years and know it to be true. There are few rules that do not admit of exceptions; and there are people who leave other churches who have just grounds for leaving, and, therefore, do not come to your church recommended by letter from another church. But you will find your trouble will mainly arise from people who have been members of other churches, and who left them because they were distressed, or discontented; and they wanted some place of refuge. Be very careful what you do with them. Of course, if you have David's ability to be captain over them, you may safely receive them. But I have sometimes thought there ought to be in churches a kind of ecclesiastical rogues' gallery. There are certain people, let us say, in Montreal who periodically appear in the police court. They get drunk, or are vagrants, or commit some other misdemeanor, and they get into the hands of the police again and again. In every community there are people of that sort who scarcely get out of one trouble before getting into another.

Once I was a member of a certain committee who waited upon Magistrate Dennison. He said to us, "I am glad to see you, gentlemen. I do not think I know who you are. You do not look like my regular customers!" He had his "regular customers". They appeared before him every little while. We have them in Toronto and in all cities. They drift about from city to city. They go from Montreal to Ottawa, and from Ottawa to Toronto, to Hamilton, to London, to Windsor, and back again. And wherever they go they are known to the police. They know that they are coming, and are not at all surprised when they pick them up. And the police of Montreal work in co-operation with the police of Toronto and with other cities. But, unfortunately, among ministers, when a man or woman has all but destroyed a church in one place he or she may be reasonably sure of being welcomed with open arms somewhere else. Beware of the Adullamites; they can make for you a great deal of trouble. But if you have them on your hands, the only safe thing to do is to be a captain over them. Do not let them be captain over you, or you will rue it to the last day of your life.

David sent his father and mother to Mizpeh of Moab, to the king of Moab, and asked him to let them find asylum there until the way should be cleared for him, and then he left the hold and departed into the land of Judah.

VI.

Now we come to the sequel of that passage to which I referred: "When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him) then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me?" Do you see how Saul revealed himself? He offered bribes to the men who

were about him: "I am in a position to reward you, to pay for your loyalty, to give you fields and vineyards. Will David do that for you?"

In our controversy a few years ago, one man went to one of our men and said, "Why do you go with those people? Will they get you a church? Will they give you a field or a vineyard?" True men cannot be bought. The loyalty that can be bought at one price can always be bought by someone else for a little higher price. It is not worth having when you have to pay for it, as Saul proposed to do.

And then, what a wretched figure! Listen to this: "And there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day. Nobody is helping me!" Now listen again: "Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he enquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine." That was the man who was standing back in the corner when David visited Ahimelech. "I saw all that", said Doeg. "Oh, is that so?" And then the king sent for Ahimelech; and he came. And he said to him: "Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse?" Ahimelech said: "Who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?" Then, frankly, he said, "I did not know anything about him. He came to me, and I only knew his good points. Thy servant knew nothing less or more." But the king said, "Thou shalt surely die"; and he called upon his servants to fall upon Ahimelech the priest of the Lord, and to slay him. But to the honour of Saul's servants they said, "No; we will not soil our hands with that business. We will not stoop to murder of that sort." Then the king, by a horrible instinct, turned to Doeg, saying to himself, "This mischief-maker who brought me the news, will do it." And he called on Doeg, and he slew Ahimelech and all the priests of the Lord.

What a terrible character Doeg was! But you will find Doegs everywhere, just waiting in the corner somewhere to see what mischief they can do.

When the news was brought to David he said: "I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house." And he said to the one remaining priest who had escaped: "Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safe-guard."

So does our David receive us. So does He identify us with His cause, and Himself with ours, and we are bound up in the bundle of life with Him.

This chapter may not be pleasant reading, and some of you young men, and some other people here this evening will say, "What does the Pastor say that for? Why does he call our attention to these things?" Some of the young men who have passed through my Pastoral Theology class have been kind enough to write me saying, "You told us many things about church management, about the kind of people we should meet; and we did not understand what you were talking about. But we listened, and made notes of those things, and now that we are

actually on the field, we have met every one of them. We know all about them." And in many instances they have been able to meet the situation because they were forewarned. I regret that it is so.

When I began my ministry as a Pastor, I was a pastor's son, and I knew something of church difficulties; but still I dared to hope that I should some day find a church that would be like a little garden of the Lord, walled around; and there would not be anything but birds singing, and flowers blooming. Everything would be so lovely. I should never have any trouble at all. Everything was going to be ideal! But I have learned since that in the measure in which we try to do the Lord's work, just to that extent will the devil try to prevent it. Some people will worry us; and some people who may seem to be good, and are not good, will give us much trouble. But there are compensations in the ministry that I believe are not to be found anywhere else on earth this side of heaven. If I had my life to live over again—I was speaking to you the other morning of what I would do if I were twenty-one again—I would be a minister of the gospel. I would choose it notwithstanding all its difficulties, and all the uphill climb that we must make if we would do the Lord's work faithfully.

These characters of which I speak will meet you. Do not forget that man standing back in the corner, Doeg the Edomite; and be on the lookout, for you will meet him again, and he will make trouble for you. The success of your ministry will depend in very large measure on your ability to meet and deal with Doeg.

David is described as a man after God's own heart. He was a type of Christ. But remember that He Whom we serve was called "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief". If we follow in His footsteps we shall have difficulties as He had.

VII.

In the next chapter David came to a place called Keilah; and he enquired of the Lord. The distinctive thing about David was that he never did anything without enquiring of the Lord. Though he knew so much of the Lord and His work, he never took a single step without enquiring of the Lord. The Apostle Paul when he began his service said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And he never ceased asking that question. David enquired of the Lord whether he should deliver the men of Keilah, whether he should fight the Philistines. And the Lord said, "Yes; go and fight the Philistines". He did so, and the Lord gave him the victory. He delivered the city of Keilah out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the information came to him that Saul had found him. Someone had told Saul where David was, and he set out in hot pursuit. David said to the Lord, "If I stay here in Keilah will these men whom I have served in this city, to whom I have ministered—will the men of Keilah deliver me up?" And the Lord said, "Yes; they will deliver you up." "Will they not be grateful to me for what I have done for them? Cannot I depend on them?" The Lord said, "No; you cannot depend on them. They will be glad enough to accept any service you render them; but in the moment that you require service of them they will not give it to you: they will deliver you up." So David left Keilah and hid from Saul.

Be sure you enquire of the Lord when you are called to a church. David wanted to know whether he had a call to Keilah or not. You have heard the story of the minister of whom it was reported that he had been called to a certain church, which was somewhat larger than the church he served. Somebody asked one of his little boys what his father was going to do. Was he likely to go? He said, "I do not know. Dad is upstairs praying about it now, and Mom is upstairs packing up!" There are some who pack up before they enquire of the Lord. You had better enquire of the Lord first before you set out for Keilah. Get the Lord's mind; go to Him with an open mind ready to be directed by Him.

David escaped and he went into the wilderness of Ziph. Then comes a beautiful story. We have not heard of Jonathan for a while. David has been "on his own" running from one place to another, to Ahimelech, then to Gath, then to the cave of Adullam, then to Keilah, and now he is in the wilderness of Ziph. "And Jonathan, Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God." Thus does our Lord come to us. And they made a covenant before the Lord.

Again David enquired of the Lord, and again he was told that the Ziphites would deliver him up to Saul; and again he fled from Saul, and went and dwelt in strongholds in En-gedi. It was rather an undignified sort of course, was it not? Pursued like a deer by the hounds, running from one hiding place to another! But God was with David all the way, and brought him at last to the throne.

And so, dear friends, life is made up of just such things as that. And I remind you that though David had this strange course, though between him and death there had been but a step again and again, God had appointed him to the throne, and nothing was permitted to harm him. All obstacles were removed, all enemies were overcome, and at last we shall see the Lord's anointed coming to the throne.

That is true of great David's greater Son. It is true of the progress of religion. If I had time I think I could take that story and let David be regarded as representative of the cause of Christ in the world. Then turn back the pages of church history and you will find the church of Jesus Christ being betrayed in the house of its friends, suffering all sorts of indignities, running from one hiding place to another, until sometimes you wonder that the flickering torch is not blown out, and marvel that there is any witness left for the Lord in this world. But the Lord never leaves Himself without witness: He always sustains the Davids, whether through Ahimelech, or in the cave of Adullam, or in the stronghold of En-gedi; wherever it is, the Lord is with him, and brings him at last to the throne. And that is the main thing: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We are the church, the members of His body, and 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".

So, notwithstanding all our difficulties, all our troubles, all our adversities, we give thanks to God Who always causeth us, to triumph in Christ Jesus.

THE REAL GOSPEL MESSAGE

By the Rev. Dr. Dinsdale T. Young

Broadcast sermon preached at the Central Hall, Westminster, London, Eng., on Sunday evening, November 19th, 1933

(Specially Reported for the "Christian Herald")

Text: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29.

I ought to have preached on that text to you, my beloved people, at least once every year of these nigh twenty years that I have been amongst you. It is one of the cardinal texts of the Bible; and it is a text which throbs with a message for this day; it is the sweet, golden word, the plaintive word which we have just read. What a remarkable thing it is that the sternest preacher the world ever knew preached the sweetest sermon ever heard! What a surprise we have in John the Baptist, a rugged man, a preacher of terrible things—he would not have been at all popular with many congregations to-day; and yet from his rough lips these words drop.

We are told here that he saw Jesus coming unto him. I hope we all see Jesus coming to us now. It is no more true that Jesus was coming towards John those centuries ago, than it is true now that Jesus is coming to this great congregation. Oh, that we may all see Him, and see Him as John saw Him. John spoke to that little concourse of people about him, and then to all the ages, and to you and to me assembled in this place to-night; for, my dear friends, this word of John the Baptist is spoken to you and to me, and to every man; it is a personal message for every individual soul, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Now there are three things in this message that I would the Holy Spirit might impress upon us to-night. First, Sin; then Sacrifice; and then Salvation; and, oh, what tremendous realities these are!

Look at the note that is struck here concerning sin. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Sin is the blackest word in the Bible; it is the darkest word you can ever meet. Is the world full of sin? Yes, so full that the two words might be almost read co-extensively. Is the world saturated with evil? Surely it must be, or such a sacrifice would not have been needed as the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. I infer the tragedy of the sin from the marvellousness of the sacrifice.

What is Sin? Never since the world began was it more necessary to ask that question than it is to-day; and if I asked it at every service it would not be superfluous. Sin—missing the mark. Yes, but how missing the mark? By disobeying God. That is the essence of sin: disobedience. I think if we could all realize that sin is disobedience to God, to such a God, so tender, so gentle, so patient, a God whose heart is as sweet as His understanding is unsearchable and His power infinite, if we could all realize that sin is disobedience to Him, it would surely make us averse to sin. I believe that the clear plan of the world as revealed in the Bible, and specially as revealed in Jesus Christ, God the Son, would do more to convince of sin than all other forces that might be brought into operation. The greatest definition of sin, I think, in the Bible is that brief, pregnant definition which the Holy Spirit gave to St. John, that sin is lawlessness. And is the whole world in a state of lawlessness towards God? It is. And is every evil that I perpetrate an act of rebellion against God? It is. What a tremendous thing sin is! Anyone who deals with present-day life, and with present-day tragedies, and who does not deal with sin, is not even approximating in any adequate way to the treatment of this thing. Sin lies at the root of the world's love of war, and of the selfishness of the age. Sin is the secret of all the disquietude that is haunting the earth to-day. And, my dear friends, forgive me for saying it, but sin is the root of all your troubles and mine. Sin is moral evil in relation to God; and I submit to you that no one takes a true view of things, the Bible view of things, which is God's view of things, who does not regard it in that light. Sin is moral evil and an insult to God; and really all sin is an outrage upon God. Through all the centuries men have discussed, and are still discussing, the origin of evil. I am far more anxious about the extirpation of evil than about its origin. It does not trouble me very much how sin got into the world; the trouble is to get it out; and God has a plan for getting it out, and it is here in our evening text, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Notice it does not say "sins of the world," but "sin of the world". And if, like heaven it has permeated the whole world, then the world must be guilty before God. Do not dismiss that as an absurd notion. Do not wave it away as some exploded idea from an old-fashioned theology; it is a fact of life. Whenever you get sin you get guilt, and the liability to suffer punishment; and unless God intervenes, punishment must descend. I know how many there are who have persuaded themselves that they will not have to answer for their guilt. I know how easy it is to say there is no hell. I shall believe there is no hell only when this Book tells me there is none; but this Book assures me with a solemnness that shocks my soul, that there is a hell. And no one declared that so forcibly as the One who spoke the most awful things about guilt and its punishment.

Let me pass from that to a brighter picture. Has God dealt with the problem of sin? Yes. God has provided a lamb. Oh, how winsome the message sounds! "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." What does that mean? I believe it means the Lamb which God has provided. Has God provided a Lamb? He has. Not "a" Lamb, but "the" Lamb; the uniqueness stamped upon the personality. What are we to understand by it? Simply a gentle creature, a mild and lovely example, an ideal of character in all its charmfulness? No. I make bold to say, and I say it dogmatically, that the Lamb in this connection can only be the Lamb of God in this sense that He is the sacrifice for sin; and the Lamb in Scripture is always a sacrifice for sin. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." God might have swept this sinful world into annihilation or dashed it into flames of fire because of its sin. But instead, He has intervened, and intervened with love undreamt of and matchless; and He has provided an Atonement and a Sacrifice. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And that Lamb is Divine; John says in almost the next sentence that He is the Son of God. Oh, the marvel of it! I am always telling you dear young folk how wonderful the truths of the Evangelical religion are. There is the romance of an unmatched reality. Think of it. The God who had been outraged by the world's sin loved that sinning world so much that He allowed His own Son to be the atoning Sacrifice for the sin of the world. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." That is my message to you to-night. I do not expound it; I do not explain it; I do not philosophise about it; I simply declare it to you. The great point about preaching is to declare the message. And who can ever conceive it that God's own Son should at the dictates of God's

own love have become the atoning Sacrifice for the sin of the world. Oh, there is no other way of salvation, my friend. That vicarious Atonement, that objective Atonement, is the only ground of all our hope.

It's all my hope and all my plea,
For me the Saviour died.

If the sin of the world is ever to be removed, it must be by that Lamb of God. If your sin and mine is ever to be removed, and all the guilt taken from us, it can only be by accepting that Divine provision, the Lamb of God.

And that leads me to speak the final word concerning Salvation. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Does that sacrifice remove human sin? It does. You may call sin a burden. If that be the figure then He lifts it from us. Blessed be God, He has lifted it from hundreds in this place to-night. If the figure used of sin be a pestilence, or a plague, or a disease, then He releases us from its terrible results. He "taketh away" or "beareth away" the sin of the world; all the guilt of every sinner is taken away for ever if a man will believingly and trustfully and with a penitent heart behold the Lamb of God.

There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee.

And is the the power of sin destroyed by beholding the Lamb of God? It is. We might well read our text thus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which is taking away the sin of the world." Every believer is always having his sin taken away as he beholds the Lamb of God, and there is holiness in no other way. I preach to you to-night good news, a present forgiveness, a present renewal, lifelong sanctification, and eternal glory. The gladdest news that can ever be proclaimed but on this condition, that you will behold the Lamb of God, with the eyes of the soul, with that spiritual vision. I call to the worst, and I call to the best, and I say to each that the only hope for life everlasting is in beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Let us look to Him now. Let all who hear my voice look to Him now. Look, and look while life lasts. My beloved friends, we may behold everything else, but if we do not behold the Lamb of God we are rejected; for therein lies our only ground of hope. So I cry now the old, old cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." This Gospel is as effective as ever it was. This old Gospel is proving its matchless worth; it is incomparable. Old it is, but ever new; bright it is with the glory of the Lord. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and life everlasting is yours. Amen.

WHOLE BIBLE LESSON COURSE

January to June, 1934

Arranged by Rev. Oliver W. Van Osdel, D.D., LL.D.

Date	Lesson	Golden Text
Jan.		
7	"King Jehosh" II Kings 12	Prov. 14:34
14	"Jehoahaz, Jehosh and Elisha" II Kings 13	II Kings 13:19
21	"War Between Israel and Judah" II Kings 14	II Kings 14:27
28	"The Carnal Mind Unrestrained" II Kings 15-16	Romans 8:7
Feb.		
4	"Sin's Harvest" II Kings 17	II Kings 17:13-14
11	"A Good King Appears" (See Is. 36-39) II Kings 18	II Kings 18:5
18	"Hezekiah Prays" II Kings 19	II Kings 19:19
25	"Answered Prayer" II Kings 20	II Kings 20:5-6
Mar.		
4	"Satan Gets His Man in Power" II Kings 21	II Kings 21:7-8
11	"Good King Josiah" II Kings 22	II Kings 22:19
18	"Josiah's Reforms" II Kings 23:1-30	II Kings 23:3
25	"Israel's Wickedness Bears Fruit" II Kings 23:31-24:1-20	II Kings 24:14
April		
1	"Into Captivity" II Kings 25	II Kings 25:3-4
8	"History of the Prophets of the Period" (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others) II Chron. 7:14	II Chron. 7:14
15	"History of the Babylonish Captivity" Prov. 14:34	Prov. 14:34
22	"The Decree and Preparation" Ezra 1-2	Ezra 1:5
29	"The Altar Set Up and Worship Established" Ezra 3	Ezra 3:11
May		
6	"Adversaries Hinder the Work" Ezra 4	Deut. 32:26-27
13	"The Temple Restored" Ezra 5-6	Ezra 6:16
20	"Ezra's Expedition" Ezra 7	Ezra 7:10
27	"Ezra, His Companions and Treasures" Ezra 8	Ezra 8:31
June		
3	"Revival in Israel" Ezra 9-10	Ezra 9:9
10	"Nehemiah Goes to Jerusalem" Neh. 1-2	Neh. 2:17
17	"Building the Wall and the Opposition" Neh. 3-4	Neh. 4:6
24	"Opposition by Greed and Craft" Neh. 5-6	Neh. 6:11

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 9

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 2

January 14th, 1934

FIRST QUARTER

JEHOAHAZ, JOASH AND ELISHA

Lesson Text: 2 Kings, chapter 13.

Golden Text: "And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice."
—2 Kings 13:19.

Bible School Reading: 2 Kings 13:1-9; 14-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Psalm 6:1-10.
Tuesday—Is. 10:1-14.
Wednesday—Nah. 1:1-8.
Thursday—I John 5:1-12.
Friday—James 1:1-8.
Saturday—Matt. 1:18-25.

I. JEHOAHAZ (vs. 1-9).

Since the division of the kingdom of Israel under Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:16, 17), two lines of kings have been observed in relation to this people; the one pertaining to the ten tribes of the northern kingdom, the other to the two tribes of the southern kingdom, known respectively as Israel, and Judah. Another division may be observed respecting the conduct of the kings in the sight of the Lord. Some do that which is right, while others do that which is evil. Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, belonged to the latter class, (v. 2). He "followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin: he departed not therefrom". Jeroboam was the first ruler of the northern kingdom, and being afraid of losing the allegiance of his people if they should visit Jerusalem for religious purposes, he set up the idolatrous calf worship in two places in his territory, and instructed them to worship at these places, (1 Kings 12:28, 29). This worship, with kindred idolatrous rites, was an abomination in the sight of God, yet it was persisted in from generation to generation, much to the loss of the nation. Man by nature never grows toward God; his desires, and tendencies, are always from Him. No one who really understands human nature, and is aware of the course of men throughout the ages could be a believer in the theory of evolution. Man only rises in a real sense by virtue of the grace of God.

As a result of Jehoahaz's sin the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of the Syrians, (v. 3). As a nation Israel was punished for her sin by being subjected to the oppression of an outside

enemy. Such a position was humiliating to a people claiming to be God's elect, and meant suffering and degradation, and clearly manifests the depth to which a favoured nation may fall through disobedience. Nations suffer for their sins as well as individuals, and the question may be raised as to the extent to which modern nations are suffering for their sins. In the conduct of their affairs the will of God plays no part, and selfishness is to be observed in every sphere. There can be neither peace, nor real satisfaction under such circumstances. Troubles and perplexities, wars, and rumours of wars, are all that can be expected therefrom. A spiritual revival is the real need of the hour. Note the prayer of the king and its answer, (vs. 4, 5), and the comment concerning the subsequent conduct of the people, (vs. 6, 7). Jehoahaz sinned, reaped the consequences of sin, cried unto God, was heard by the Lord, and received an answer to his prayer, resulting in deliverance from his enemies. Note the way of salvation through the divinely-appointed Saviour, (v. 5), and the plan of salvation for the present time, (Matt. 1:21). The same in addition to being divine, may be characterized as necessary, complete, effective, and accessible to all.

II. JOASH, (vs. 10-13).

Following the death of Jehoahaz, Joash, his son, came to the throne, and "reigned sixteen years", one year short of the length of his father's reign, (v. 1). The character of his reign was similar to that of his father's in the sight of the Lord. He "did that which was evil", and "departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat who made Israel sin: but he walked therein". It was a case of like father, like son. No more was to be expected in the light of the parental example. Fathers cannot reasonably expect their sons to be better than they are. No matter how good the teaching may be at home, if the parental example is not in accordance with it, the children are not likely to follow it; for example is more powerful than precept. The kingdom of the son was evidently greater in might than that of the father, as we read of Joash defeating Amaziah the king of Judah (v. 12: 14:8-14). He undoubtedly benefited from his father's answered prayer in the freedom of his land from the Syrian (v. 25), and the strengthening of his people, but he failed to turn from the evil of his ways and serve the Lord. God was good to him, but he repaid Him evil, like all who are outside of Christ. Note the condition of such from this standpoint. They are aliens from God, (Eph. 2:12), at enmity against Him, (Rom. 8:7), denying Him the use of His own property, (1. Cor. 6:19, 20), and making Him a liar by their unbelieving attitude, (I John 5:10).

III. ELISHA AND JOASH (vs. 14-25).

Deathbed scenes are always of interest, very often significant, and sometimes pathetic. In this section there is recorded a scene at the deathbed of Elisha, the prophet of God. His predecessor Elijah was privileged to escape a deathbed experience by means of rapture in the fiery

chariot, (2:11). It is sometimes said that death is certain for all, and this is true under ordinary circumstances, yet two Old Testament saints, Elijah and Enoch, (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5) escaped it; and later at the coming of Christ, many saints will be spared the experience, (1. Thess. 4:17). It may be noted, in refutation of certain false ideas respecting sickness and healing, that Elisha was in communion with God, and was not healed. The unscriptural idea that all sickness is due to personal sin is thereby condemned; also the other conception that God is obligated to heal all those who trust Him. His will must govern all such transactions, and all other actions, (James 4:15). In the study of these subjects one must compare scripture with scripture.

The visit of the king to Elisha's bedside was significant in fact and result. It meant that the prophet's services to his country were recognized as valuable, and while his messages were not always appreciated or obeyed, he was not looked upon as a servant of God. Note in this respect the genuine sorrow of the king, (v. 14). There may have been a two-fold reason for this, arising from personal loss, and from state loss. Elisha was a powerful ally to fall back upon in times of trouble; he was always dependable, and sure of his ground in the midst of times of perplexity. As such a help he would be missed by king and country. If his counsels had been followed there would have been no less sorrow, but there would have been more confidence in an abiding Lord. Note the blessings derived by the state from the presence therein of good men. Nations are best governed when their laws conform to the divine law, and men of God are best fitted to interpret the same. In a very real sense the saints of God bless this world, preserving from corruption as salt, and dispelling darkness as light, (Matt. 5: 13-16); and they do this because of the power of God within them.

The significance attached to the visit of the king affecting subsequent results, is seen in relation to the symbolical action with the bow and arrows. The shooting with the arrow was in accordance with eastern custom, in declaring war on another nation. The direction in which the arrow was pointed denoted territory occupied by the Syrians, the placing of the hands of the prophet on the hand of the king signified the impartation of power in the warfare against the enemy, (v. 16); the declaration of Elisha gave assurance of victory for Israel, (v. 17); and the smiting on the ground foretold the number of times Israel would be victorious over her enemies, (vs. 18, 19). Note may be made of the fact that victory for Israel depended on God. He was the Deliverer of His people. In order to benefit therefrom, faith in God is necessary. Joash was weak in this, and while gaining victories over his enemies, he failed to effect their complete overthrow. This may have been owing to his lack of interest, due to his backslidden condition, (v. 19). Note the necessity for trusting God completely. Observe also the miracle, (v. 21), the gracious attitude of God, (v. 23), and the fulfilment of the prophetic prediction, (v. 25).