

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

PHARAOH'S BUTLER—AND YOU!

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 14th, 1934.

(Stenographically Reported)

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"Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."—Genesis 40:23.

Prayer before the Sermon.

We thank Thee, O Lord, for this great truth of which we have been singing. We rejoice that the Lord Jesus is, to the eye of faith, forever separated from all others, and always to be identified as the One Who died for sinners. We bless Thee for the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat, for the place where Thou dost meet with those who have sinned against Thee. And such are we; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

We thank Thee that we have not to come this evening making mention of our righteousness, for we have no righteousness of our own. We rest in the assurance of Thy word that He Who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Help us that we may come—all in this building, and all our radio hearers, wherever they are found this evening—each with his burden of sin; help us to confess our sins, knowing that Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We come thus, O Lord. We beseech Thee, grant us the convicting power of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not come presumptuously into the presence of God as those who have a right in themselves on the ground of their own merit. We acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Only as we look to the cross and experience the cleansing of the precious blood can we be made whiter than snow. Lord, help us this evening that whatever else this service may do for us it may afford us an opportunity of coming to the Mercy Seat, and there leaving the burden of our guilt, that we may go from this place rejoicing in the salvation of the Lord.

We pray especially this evening for those who are shut in, for those who are ill, for those who are aged and infirm. We thank Thee for the privilege of reaching a great multitude of people who are deprived of the privilege of public worship. The Lord bless them where they are! Make them just now conscious of Thy Spirit's blessing. May they hear the whisper of the Holy Ghost in their own hearts, bringing to them the comfort of the Scriptures, the assurance of pardoning grace, girding them with strength to endure whatever further awaits them!

Then, O Lord, we pray for all in active life, that we may be Christians indeed, that we may adorn the doctrine of God

our Saviour in all things, that in the home and in the market place, in the shop, on the street, in the school, in the study—wherever we are, may we show forth the praises of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Give us, we pray Thee, grace to acknowledge Thee in all our ways, that Thou mayest direct our paths.

It may be someone is bowed in Thy presence this evening who is subject to peculiar temptation, or who is face to face with some special crisis of life, who has come to feel his or her impotence in the presence of difficulty, who needs especially the undergirding of Thy grace. We beseech Thee, O Lord, to meet any such this evening. Give them a special anointing. Help them to withstand in the evil day. Rebuke the devourer for their sakes, and give victory to Thy people everywhere.

We beseech Thee to prosper Thy gospel wherever witness to the power of Thy saving grace is borne this evening, whether in this or other lands. Let it be accompanied by the gracious power of the quickening Spirit of God, that souls dead in sins may be made alive again, and that real revival power may come to the hearts and lives of Thine own people. O send us, we beseech Thee, in this place, and to all churches a real revival from heaven! Glorify Thyself, we beseech Thee. Turn the hearts of men back again to Thyself, and to Thy Holy Book.

Bless us in this service this evening. Help us that we may understand the thought of God, and that this service may be made a means of salvation to such as are unsaved, and of sanctification and of upbuilding in the faith to all who are Thine own people.

Bless these groups, we pray Thee, such as we have heard of in Northern Michigan and elsewhere, those who are gathered in their own homes listening to this service, in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, as well as in the nearer provinces, and to the south of us in many states of the Union, wherever people are gathered together in Thy name, and who are one with us in hearing this service. May the Spirit Who here presides be present with them! Make us all one in Thy presence this evening.

We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The immediate context of this scripture was read to you by Mr. Brown this evening as our lesson, and you

will recall readily the outline of the story, how that two of Pharaoh's officers, having displeased their lord, were confined in the prison-house into which Joseph had unjustly been cast. They each dreamed a dream and were troubled because they could not understand it, and Joseph, in the name of Jehovah, asked them to tell him their dreams, assuring them that the interpretation thereof belonged to God. The dreams were related, and Joseph interpreted that of the butler first: that on the third day he would be restored to his position, and to the favour of his lord. And Joseph said, "Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

Seeing the interpretation of the butler's dream was good, the chief baker related his dream, but was told that on the third day he would become the subject of Pharaoh's vengeance, and would be hanged.

I suppose none of them knew that the third day was Pharaoh's birthday. But it was so, and on that occasion each dream was fulfilled: the butler was restored to his position, and the baker was hanged. "Yet", says the text, "did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." When the emergency was past, when his trouble was over, when prosperity returned to him, he entirely forgot the friend who had befriended him in the time of his distress; and enjoyed his promotion in forgetfulness of the one who had befriended him.

There is in this story an illustration of the failure of men generally to acknowledge the goodness of God to them in all the vicissitudes of life. When the emergency, which requires special help, is past, and the crises of life, perhaps, seem to be over, when the storm has subsided, and the sea of life is once more calm, then we are prone to forget the divine Helper, and make no mention of the abounding grace by which we have been delivered. I ask you to look at this story this evening in the hope that it may stimulate us to the discharge of our duty as Christians, and, further, that in the examination of it we may learn something of the principles of salvation, how we may be saved, indeed; and how we ought to behave ourselves when once we have been made partakers of the grace of life.

I.

To begin, then: CONSIDERATIONS OF GRATITUDE, TO SAY THE LEAST, OUGHT TO HAVE PREVENTED THE CHIEF BUTLER FROM FORGETTING THE FRIEND OF HIS PRISON DAYS. There are few sins blacker than that of ingratitude; and yet, I suppose, there are few offences to which people are more generally subject. What an ungrateful lot we are! When it is remembered that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning", that "in him we live, and move, and have our being", when we remember "the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways"—how ungrateful we are to spend hours, and days, and weeks, and, in some cases, many years, without any acknowledgement of God at all!

The chief butler was greatly indebted to this man, Joseph. Joseph is, I suppose, one of the most eminent

types of Christ to be found in the Old Testament. Like Joseph our Lord was "numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors". Not a few who have actually been partakers of the benefits of His salvation are just as forgetful of their duty as was the chief butler. Indeed, my message this evening is particularly directed toward those who profess to be Christians: not to those who have been visited with the King's anger, or who are under the condemnation of His law, but to those who have been restored to His favour, and who enjoy the privilege of His presence, and yet fail to acknowledge the One Whose grace had brought them where they are.

Joseph had been to the butler *a messenger of hope in the dungeon*. The butler had no idea of the significance of his dream. But when Joseph interpreted it, hope sprang up again within his breast. He saw a new life opening before him. There was spread out to his wondering view an entirely new prospect: instead of the privations of the dungeon he was to enjoy once again the fulness, the privileges, of the palace. Instead of the company of fellow-captives he was to enjoy the freedom of a servant, an honoured servant of the king. He was to be permitted to go into the king's immediate presence, and deliver the cup into his hand. What days of happiness those three days must have been to the butler even before the prophecy was fulfilled! But that word of hope, of good cheer, that brighter possibility of life was predicted by Joseph who was numbered, as was he himself, with the transgressors.

Now I say that there is no word of comfort spoken to the souls of men that is comparable to this word of revelation which is the record which God hath given to us of His Son. What is there before any one of us, until the gospel is heard and believed, but a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries"? But the gospel has come to us with a promise of pardon, with a promise of restoration to favour, with a prediction of exaltation to high privilege. It has, indeed, dissolved the walls of our dungeon; it has "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel", so that we are not only able to enjoy the three days of prospect here, but we are able to sing, as did the choir this evening, of the land beyond the river, when we shall come into the King's immediate presence, and enjoy the fulness of His house.

What would life be to any one of us if our Joseph had not spoken? What would life hold for anybody here this evening if it had not been said, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins". Joseph had exercised the office of a prophet in the dungeon, and the butler ought to have been grateful to him for his prophetic ministry alone, and ought never to have forgotten the word of cheer he brought him in life's darkest hour. And those of us who have

"heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto Me and rest:
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast",

those of us who have heard the prophetic words of Scripture telling us of the possibility of the cancellation of our sin, the washing away of our guilt, the robing of our souls in the garment of righteousness, and restoration to divine favour,—the blessed hope which this gospel brings us ought to make us faithful in witnessing to Him Who has spoken to us such words of cheer.

And yet, how many there are who cherish this hope secretly! Some time ago when one of the newspapers asked a certain number of prominent men in Toronto their opinions respecting certain aspects of religion, one man declared, "That is one thing that I publish to, no one. My religious views are nobody's business." Well, the man who thus speaks surely has no religion. Our religious views are everybody's business. If we have heard the voice of Heaven speaking words of comfort to our stricken souls, then we ought to recognize it as a binding obligation to bear witness to the great Prophet Who has come to us to dispel the darkness, and to restore us to divine favour again.

This man in the prison-house said to the butler, "I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and I am put here for no crime of my own, for I have done nothing that they should cast me into the dungeon." Suppose Joseph had been able to say to the butler, "I am here for your sake. I was made under the law to redeem them which were under the law that they might receive the adoption of sons". Ah, no! our Joseph was not stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, but

"from the highest throne in glory
To the cross of deepest woe."

He came in order that He might pay the price of our redemption. Jesus Christ was numbered with the transgressors. With the transgressors He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree". He has become to us, *not only a Prophet, but a Priest, ministering salvation to those who did not deserve it.* And there are many who have received that benefit at His wounded hands, and who really trust in the cleansing of His precious blood, and who have been brought once again into the banqueting house, over which love's banner floats, who yet, like the chief butler, forget Him Who has been the means of all the blessing that has come into their lives.

Oh you secret disciples! you men and women who dare to hope that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ you will pass at last through the gates into the city, and dwell in everlasting felicity in the presence of the King of glory, who confess to your own heart that you have no merit of your own, but that it is all of Christ if you are ever saved at all, how dare you receive such benefits at His hands, and yet, like the chief butler, forget Him Who is your divine Benefactor! We ought ever to be ready to confess Him Who is our exalted Priest, Who not only died, but Who rose again, and Who ascended into heaven, and Who makes intercession for the saints in the presence of God.

Ah, but the parallel breaks down once more, for *Joseph had nothing to do, actually, with restoring the butler to his former position;* he only predicted it. He did not provide the means whereby he was restored; nor did he exercise the power, the sovereign grace, which brought him out of the dungeon and into the palace again. But He Who was our Prophet, and Who became our Priest, *is also our exalted King;* and it is written that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord". He Who predicted, and promised, our salvation, Himself paid the price of our redemption; and then, by an act of sovereign grace, threw wide the doors of the prison-house, and brought us out into life and liberty again. That was His special mission: "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound". And yet how many there are who

profess at least to have been partaker of that liberating grace, and to have been made free men and free women in Christ Jesus, whose lips are sealed, who are dumb, who give no evidence, no witness, at all, by the lip at least, of the grace that has saved them! I say that considerations of gratitude alone should have impelled the butler as soon as he came into the king's presence to speak well of him to whom he owed so much.

II.

Once more: CONSIDERATIONS OF TRUTH SHOULD HAVE BROKEN THE SILENCE. The butler ought to have borne witness to the truth. This man in the prison said to him, "Within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place"; and in uttering that prediction he told him that interpretations belonged to God. Implicitly, he said, "Heaven's promise to you is that in three days you shall be restored to favour, and you shall have"—perhaps it would have special significance to many in our day were I thus to put it—"you shall have your old job back again." There are many people who would like to have their old jobs back again just now. There are many butlers who would like to be back in their old positions. I met a man not long ago, and as I shook hands with him and said, "How are you?" with a proud smile upon his countenance he said: "Fine, I have got my old job back again. I am going back next week." That was something to be thankful for.

The prediction which Joseph uttered had come true. Whoever else doubted the prophetic authority, if I may so put it, of the man in the prison, there was one man who knew that Joseph had spoken the truth. Why? Had we asked him, "How do you know that man in the prison-house speaks what is true?" he would have said, "I am the proof of it. I was a prisoner and he told me I should be free. I was in the dungeon and he told me I should come to the palace. I was under the king's wrath, and now I enjoy his favour; I deliver his cup into his hand. That was what he told me, and he told me three days before it happened, and I am, myself, the absolute proof of his authority as a prophet."

My friends, you may argue about the gospel as long as you like; you will prove nothing by mere argument. Polemical discussion has its place. We are set for the defence of the gospel, and we must endeavour, so far as it is possible, to clarify people's views of the truth, and to establish them in the truth as it is revealed. But a mere intellectual apprehension of what is written in the Book will not demonstrate its reliability, its accuracy. I may say to you that I believe the gospel is true. Yes; I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I believe that He was a true prophet. I am convinced, logically, from my reading of the Scriptures that He is the Saviour; and I believe that we have scriptural warrant for believing that He is enthroned in heaven, and that some day the kingdom which He has established, shall be manifested. We may argue after that fashion, and those to whom we speak may say, "Well, that is very interesting. I think your argument is rather convincing." But the one and only apologetic that can have no refutation at all is when a man can say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. It is no longer a theory with me that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation: I know it."

I think it was Harry Munro, a missionary in Grand Rapids, who when asked at his ordination how he knew he was converted, smiled and said, "Why, brother, I was

there! That is how I know." If you had asked this man how he knew that Joseph was a true prophet he would have said, "I was there in the prison, and he told me, and I am here in the palace exactly as he said I should be. His word has been verified in my own experience, and I know it."

What the Lord Jesus wants to-day, what He needs, is a multitude of men and women who will go everywhere preaching the word, not as a mere theory, but who will go saying, "I have myself been saved, redeemed by His grace. I know that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation because it has saved me." If you have thus had experience of the truth of the gospel yourself, and you maintain silence instead of bearing witness to that fact, then you are verily guilty before God of failing in the fulfilment of your duty.

"Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." I speak to many this evening sitting in the quiet of their own home who cherish secretly a hope of salvation through the atoning death and resurrection and gracious intercession of our Lord. You may be church members, but what do you do between Sundays? What have you to say on Monday about the Christ Who died for you? What witness did you bear last week to the power of His saving grace? To how many people did you speak about the salvation of which you have been made partaker? What have you done for the Lord Who has done so much for you? That is the question. I believe that if half of the saved people of Toronto could have the dumb devil that is in them cast out, if their tongues could be loosened, as well as their lives more truly sanctified, and if, like the Christians of apostolic days, in the power of the Holy Spirit they would go out everywhere preaching the word, there would be a revival. And there would be blessing for every true witness. Instead of that, there are many who are like the chief butler, who have remembered not the One to Whom they are so greatly indebted, but have all but forgotten Him.

Someone will say, How can that be true of a Christian? I used to wonder myself how that could be. Sometimes I was half-inclined to deny that it could be, and to say that those who are thus dumb idlers in the church of Christ, who have nothing to say, no witness to give to the power of Christ, must really be false prophets. But I do not believe it now. I believe there are thousands of people in churches in Toronto, where the gospel is not preached to-day, where Jesus Christ is not exalted as the Saviour, who suffer it all in silence, making no protest, bearing no witness; who yet are themselves really saved. You say, "How can that be?" Read the first chapter of Peter's second epistle where he exhorts us to "add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But"—and this is my word—"he that lacketh these things"—that is, he that does not go on growing up into Christ, he whose Christian life is not a life of continuous progress, he who leaves the school of Christ, instead of always sitting at His feet, like the man of whom we spoke last Sunday evening—"If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath for-

gotten that he was purged from his old sins." The man who is like the butler in Pharaoh's palace, is without spiritual vision, carnally minded, without spiritual perception, without spiritual perspective—"is blind and cannot see afar off." Such an one is equally without a grateful retrospect, and "has forgotten that he has been purged from his old sins." That, however, does not affect the fact, having once committed his soul to Christ, that his sins have been forgiven; but he is negligent of his duty, forgetful of his obligation to Him Who is his Saviour.

III.

One other thing: THE BUTLER SHOULD HAVE BEEN MOVED TO BREAK HIS SILENCE; AND HE WAS AT LAST SO MOVED, BY THE NEED OF THE FUTURE. When he came into the presence of Pharaoh, and learned that a like emergency, as had once come into his life, had come to Pharaoh, when he learned that, he broke his silence. When Pharaoh needed an interpreter of dreams, "then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker: And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged."

My dear friends, you and I are surrounded by people who need the same grace which we profess to have received. We meet them every day. We rub shoulders with them. You meet them in business; you meet them everywhere. And they need just the secret which you have. They need to hear of the one and only true Interpreter of life. Why do you keep silence? Why don't you tell them that there is Somebody Who knows how to guide them through this labyrinth, this wilderness, how to lead them out into a larger place. He did it for you. Why do you not tell others what He is ready to do for them?

Moreover, *there was a depression coming.* Pharaoh did not know it, the chief butler did not know it; no one knew it; but God knew it. It was part of His eternal plan, part of the divinely-ordered scheme of things that there should be seven plenteous years, to be followed by seven years of drought. But no man knew it. The depression was likely to overtake people without preparation for it having been made. And so the Lord came to Pharaoh in a dream, and He repeated the dream in different form. It happened twice. The butler said, "I know a man who can interpret that dream." And Pharaoh sent down into the prison-house for Joseph; and Joseph came into the presence of the king through the testimony of one of his humble servants, his butler. Joseph interpreted the king's dream, and told him that there were seven plenteous years to come, to be followed by seven years of drought. He went farther, and counselled that someone be found to make the wisest possible use of the seven plenteous years, to gather the surplus products of the land, in order that they might be ready to meet the depression when it came.

There are hundreds of people who hear me to-night, who, when I say that, will say to themselves, "I wish I

could have had a dream a few years ago. When the years of plenty were coming to me, I wish I could have had a dream, and somebody to interpret it. I should not have gone into all the speculations I then indulged in. I should have been more careful. I should have done just as Joseph counselled the king to do. I should have filled up the storehouse, so that I should not have been taken unawares." But you did not have anyone to interpret your dreams? I am not so sure that you did not. If you had gone by the principles of this Book, and built your financial house upon a rock—I mean, if you had put into your business principles of righteousness and truth, and had gone no further than you could go with absolute honesty,—when the winds came, and the storm broke upon you, who knows but that your house would have stood? Be that as it may, I can tell you this: there is a time of great depression coming. There are years of drought yet to come, not in material things so much—I know nothing about that; but I do know that other years of plenteousness will end some day: opportunities for hearing the gospel, opportunities to repent and turn to God will come to an end some day, and the years of drought will begin to come, and the only people who will be saved at that time will be those who come into relationship to our Joseph.

Do you not see, dear friends, that when this simple butler, this humble man, gave his simple testimony respecting the man who had been in the dungeon with him, he did more for the world than all the world's philosophers could have done. He made a greater contribution to the world's weal when he introduced Joseph to Pharaoh than he could have done if he had had inestimable wealth of gold at his command. The man who is doing most for the world to-day, who makes the largest possible contribution to the world's betterment, is the man, who having experience of the saving grace of Christ, himself, will tell others:

"Tell to all around

What a dear Saviour he has found".

I know there are some here to-night who would not have listened to this gospel a few years ago. There was a time when some of you went to business Monday morning, and had a great day—everything prospered that you touched, and you came home in the evening with a feeling of elation. You went again Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday, and you sat down at your desk, and said, "There is a week. With fifty-two weeks of prosperity like that, where shall I be at the end of the year? And if I multiply that by ten, in ten years I shall be absolutely independent; I shall have arrived. I shall not need to bother any more. Ten years of such prosperity as that"—perhaps you said only seven plenteous years—"and I shall be well off."

Then after a week of that sort, you went to church on Sunday, and the minister told you what a fine fellow you were. He poured scorn, contempt, upon the old fogies who talked about sin and salvation, and the need of divine help. "Why", said this business man, in his prosperity, "I had no one to help me:

'I am the master of my fate,
The captain of my soul'.

I do as I like. I am a prosperous man." The preacher flattered him, and told him what a fine fellow he was, and he admitted it! He went home saying, "That is the kind of sermon I like. None of your old-time religion for me: I am ready for another week of

prosperity." He goes to business again Monday morning, and at noon he goes to his club. (I know what I am talking about; I have been with you; I know what you do. Some of you are not here to-night, but you are listening). He goes to his club, and meets another business acquaintance, also a prosperous man, he slaps him on the back—and how proud you are of each other! "Well, how are things going?" "Oh, splendidly." "Great day?" "Yes; everything is going along splendidly. I never had such a week as last week, and I am looking for a better one this week." "Say, did you hear our minister last night?" "No; what did he say?" "Well, he told us that the wind was in our sails, and we were just sailing gloriously. I am not given to emotion in religion, but I really felt almost like saying, 'Amen!'" And so Mr. Modernist Preacher who had little of God and nothing of grace in his message, had people sitting in his pews who were greatly pleased by his flatteries. But the tide turned! And the years of drought began to come! Then at the end of a week the man had to say, "Well, fifty-two weeks like that, and there will be nothing left." And week after week passes until the time comes when he says, "It will be difficult to pull through to the end of the week." Saturday comes, and he is like a man who has been battling to keep his head above water, until he is almost exhausted, almost ready to give up. And he says to himself, "I wonder how long I can keep on." He drags himself home on Saturday, and his wife sympathetically remarks, "You look rather weary and worn." "Yes," he replies, "I have had a terrible week. You may see in the paper next week that the house has closed. I do not know whether we shall be able to keep our heads above water another week. We shall try; we shall do the best we can, but oh, I wish I could have help from somewhere!"

Sunday morning comes, and the man's wife says, "Shall we go to church?" "Yes; let us go." They go; and the same minister is in the pulpit, and he preaches in the same way. He declares everything to be evolving toward an ideal state; and that the old ideas of miracles and divine intervention in human affairs in answer to prayer must be discarded as being entirely unnecessary. But this battered business man can hardly sit the sermon through. He is very restless, very nervous, and when he gets home he says to his wife, "Did you enjoy the service this morning?" She replies, "I cannot say that I did, very much." To which he answers, "I used to enjoy Mr. So-and-So very much. I do not know why I don't enjoy his ministry now, but really, he did seem to be talking a lot of nonsense this morning—at least he failed to meet my case. I am not the fine fellow he spoke of; I am not the successful man he lauds: I am almost down and out. I shall be underneath pretty soon. I do not know what to do. Is there no other religion than that? Are miracles impossible? Is there no answer to prayer? Can no one tell me of a power that is more than human, that can come to a poor wretch when he is almost ruined, and save him?" And then the Modernist preacher wonders why his gospel is failing in these days.

We have come to a day when we need Joseph. We need our Joseph. We have come to a day when we need to hear the voice of One Who can look into the future, and, in spite of all the darkness, ring out the cheerful clarion cry: "All is well. Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." And when He thus spoke all the clothes He had in life were the clothes He wore. He had no bank account, and no house wherein to dwell, no place

to lay His head. He overcame the world by doing without it, by putting it beneath His triumphant feet.

Ah, we have a gospel that a weary world needs to hear. Oh, Pharaoh's butler, will you not break your silence? Will you not tell of the Prophet who knows the way out of the difficulty? Will you not tell the men you meet in business to-morrow that there is a better way after all, and that that way is the way that leads by the Cross and the empty grave, to the full storehouses of grace, which are opened to all the depressed spirits of men?

Let us turn to the Lord, and seek salvation if we have not sought it. And if, indeed, we have sought Him, and found Him, then may He give us grace that we may tell others about Him. My appeal to you who know the Lord is that you should share your knowledge with a needy world at home and abroad, everywhere.

"Souls that are ready to enter the kingdom,
Wait for the glad invitation to-day:
'Go ye and tell', is the word of the Master—
Servant of Jesus, oh hear, and obey!

"Reap for His glory in fields that are nearest;
Look all abroad for the harvest is white:
O'er the wide earth are the sheaves to be garnered—
Hasten, O reaper, fast cometh the night!"

DAVID IN PHILISTIA

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, January 11th, 1934.

(Stenographically Reported)

Ninth 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 29, 30.

If one could believe in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, it would sometimes be possible to imagine the spirit of a mule getting into a car. Cars, like individuals, in the course of time are compassed with infirmities, and have a way of stopping in the middle of the street, with the lights out. But thanks to Mr. Barham, who came to the rescue, I am here.

Our lesson this evening was to have been in the twenty-ninth, thirtieth, and thirty-first chapters of the First Book of Samuel, but we will go just as far as we can—like my car—and stop.

The twenty-ninth chapter. David is still in the land of Philistia, with his six hundred men. He has established himself in the confidence of the king of Gath, but has failed utterly to allay the suspicion of the princes and the lords of the Philistines. The crisis which David might have foreseen at last has come, and war is declared between Israel and Philistia once again. David finds himself an alien in a foreign country, in a country that is at war with his own people. As the armies are mobilized, and proceed in the direction of the camp of Israel, the king of Philistia, with David and his men, bring up the rear. But the lords of Philistia object to the presence of David and his men, saying, "Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to the battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in

dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?"

At last Achish yields to the pressure brought upon him and invites David and his men to return from following the army. David objects and enquires, "But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord and king?" And Achish answered, "I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. They know your reputation, they have heard what the women of Israel sang, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'—and that, in relation to a triumph over the Philistines. You had better go home." Hence David found it necessary to return.

It was a merciful providence that forced his return, for the war that was now about to break was a war that was to issue in the death, not only of Saul, but of Jonathan, David's great friend.

Looking upon David as a servant of Jehovah, there is a lesson for us here. The great difficulty, not only with individual Christians, but with many branches of the Christian church to-day, is that they are trying to placate the king of Gath, and the lords of the Philistines; they are trying to live on good terms with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Indeed, the modern church, it seems to me, while there is something of the Jerusalem dialect about it, has its speech half of Ashdod. There is just as much of Philistia as of Israel in the modern church. Its methods, its affiliations, are all of Philistia rather than of Israel. Occasionally—about once a year—they become very religious. Just now I think some of the churches are having a week of prayer—as though the Lord, Who is neglected for the other fifty-one weeks, could be especially pleased when for one week the people come together and hear men give addresses on prayer, and call it a week of prayer. Why do people thus treat the Lord?

Other churches will observe Lent a little later. It may have some advantages, but the picture of the professing Christian church to-day is largely that of David in Philistia. Perhaps I have told you the story of a young lady who was a member of a church, and also a very popular social figure, a very attractive and popular dancer. No dance was complete, in her set, without her presence. Though she went to church on Sunday, she frequently went to the dance during the week. Her brother was a Christian, as she professed to be, and objected to her presence at these places. She insisted there was no harm in it for her. "But, Sis", he urged, "you have no testimony at those places. All your associates reject the claims of Christ, nor could you witness to a partner at a dance." "Of course I could", she said. He then extracted a promise from her that at the next dance she would ask her first partner if he were a Christian, and report to him at the earliest opportunity.

She went to a dance a few days later, but seemed to avoid being alone with her brother afterward. At the first opportunity he said to her, "You did not report your experience at the dance." "Do not say anything about it. I do not want to talk about it." "But you promised you would tell me how you got on." "Well, it is enough to say I am not going again." "But you promised to tell me. Come now, what happened?" "You know Mr. So-and-So?" she said, "he is a very fine gentleman and he asked me for the first dance. We danced to-

gether for a while, and then sat down. I turned to him and said, 'Mr. So-and-So, are you a Christian?' 'I beg your pardon?' 'Are you a Christian?' 'Am I a what?' 'Are you a Christian?' 'No, of course I am not. Are you?' 'Yes, I am.' 'Then what in the world are you doing here?'"

That was simply the Philistines saying to David, "You are in the wrong company. Go home; we do not want you."

The world generally to-day does not fear the church. What is true of organizations in general, of course, is true of the individuals that compose them. A church does not gain power by transferring its domicile to Philistia. The measure of our influence over others is the measure, not of our conformity, but of our nonconformity. The problem of the transmission of power is always a problem of insulation. In the measure in which organizations and individuals are absolutely separate from the world and all that belongs to the world, in it but not of it, bearing witness against it and its ways, just in that measure will the church have power.

Our Lord Jesus taught us that Philistia would never be favourable to us: "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

David came back from the army of the Philistines, and if any of us have been experimenting in that direction we, too, had better take the first train home—and if there is no train, let us walk, hitch-hike, get back from under the flag of Philistia by some means. "David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel." That is to say, they were behind the army and "returned" in the general direction of Ziklag.

But something had happened at Ziklag while David was away. He had left his family, as had the other men, in Ziklag, and while they were visiting Achish of Gath, the Amalekites made a raid upon Ziklag and took all the women and children captive, and the cattle for a spoil, and burned the city with fire. You may expect trouble to break out if you go away from home and neglect your city. The depression may have done some good in this respect, that it has made preachers stay at home. There are many people who like to hold conferences, and form committees, and discuss plans of doing things; and while these experts are putting their heads together the Amalekites come up and burn Ziklag. If we would each stay at home and mind our own business, cultivate our own farms, grow what we can in our own garden, we should at least be able to protect what we have against the raids of the Amalekites.

However, if we have been overtaken in that fashion, and we come back and find things rather topsy-turvey, what are we to do? "David and the people that were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep." That would suit some people we know! They believe in a weeping religion. I heard of a religious gathering of some sort where there were one or two brethren who were in rather a hilarious mood. They actually said some things that made people laugh! One long-faced brother—you know, the coffee-pot type—got up and said, "I think it is most unseemly for Christian people to be engaged in such levity. I think the brethren should weep before the Lord rather than laugh." To which the chairman replied, "Perhaps our brother is right. And I shall ask him if he will be kind enough to lead us in weeping." It was a very good answer.

But there is a time for weeping, and I suppose it was natural for David and his men, brave spirits as they were,

to lift up their voices in weeping. Did you ever feel like that? I have. But unfortunately, I cannot do that now. I do not remember it, but I fancy when I was a lad I must have shed all my tears, for it is not very easy for me to shed tears now. It is for some people. But we may feel things keenly even if we do not show it. And there is a place for weeping. I am not at all surprised that these men, when they came upon the smoking ruins of Ziklag and found that all their families had been taken captives, and their property taken as spoil, should have wept.

But that will not mend matters, will it? David, when he "had no more power to weep", said, "This will never do. We must do something more than weep." When they had got through weeping they turned on David, those men of his, and "spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters". David was their commander, but in this instance he had failed. He had been down visiting Achish instead of being on duty. This was the very man of whom some people had said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Nothing succeeds like success, and nothing fails like failure.

When you young men become pastors, if you succeed, if you really succeed, and command a great hearing, do you know what you will be? "Our beloved Pastor". If you fail, do you know what you will be? "I move, Mr. Moderator, that the Pastor be requested to resign." That is what you will be! You must not be surprised at that. Even though you may have had a large measure of success, as David had, one failure will blot out the memory of all your successes; one defeat will blot out the memory of your victories.

And let me say further to you who will be preachers some day: It will take years of continuous progress to establish you in the confidence of the people you lead, and you must not expect that they will trust you absolutely until you have shown, by the wisdom and power of your leadership, that you are worthy of trust. As you do that, people will trust you as they trusted David. But you can lose it all by a visit to Achish. You can put yourself back where you were in the beginning. Turn aside and let the enemy burn your place with fire, and the very people who had bouquets for you will present you with a house! You have heard of the minister whose congregation presented him with a house—a brick at a time.

The people spake of stoning David. Now was the time to weep, when, in addition to the destruction of Ziklag, he had lost the confidence of the little band of men of whom he had become captain. David finds himself back where he was before, when, single-handed, he went out against Goliath.

"But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." That is a favourite text of mine. I have gone to it hundreds of times when I was not sure that I could encourage myself anywhere else—in anybody else, least of all in myself. But one can encourage himself in the Lord his God.

I suppose David went back in his thought, as he prayed before the Lord, and said, "I remember when I was in the wilderness, and how I slew the lion and the bear; then I went up to the camp, and I remember how Eliab and all the rest turned on me. I remember, too, saying to Saul, 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of

this Philistine." David's memory is rich with the record of many a glorious victory which the Lord had wrought in his life, and he said, "What does it matter if they all leave me? God is with me; I will encourage myself in the Lord my God."

I do not believe any man can be a strong man, a really strong man, until he has had every prop taken away, until every friend has failed him, until he has been circumstantially, by the providence of God, compelled to stand in some great emergency of life absolutely alone, with nobody but God, and then to win through with God alone. When once he has done that, he need not be afraid of anything, because no matter who may leave him, he may be sure that God will not. The victories of history may be repeated to-day, because we have the promise, "I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age." Do not give up because others have given up. Encourage yourself in the Lord your God.

Let us see what David did. I call your attention again to this principle, that David never did anything without enquiring of the Lord. "David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David enquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all."

I have heard of people who are so sure of the mind of the Lord that they have persuaded themselves they have arrived at the place where they cannot do wrong, they cannot make a mistake. They do not need to enquire of the Lord. David had had a long experience, and a very full experience, even up to this time. He had seen much of the mercy and favour of God, and yet in this emergency, when there was no going back, or turning to either side, and when it looked as though there was only one thing to do—and that to make a desperate effort to recover what was lost—he yet enquired of the Lord. He might have reasoned that that was the proper thing to do. Probably he did; but even then he said, "The Lord Himself must be consulted." And he enquired of the Lord.

Take time to consult your great Adviser. I heard of a very wealthy lumberman, the head of a great firm, who was once interviewed by a man who wanted to sell him some timber limits. The transaction would involve a very large sum of money. He was admitted to this lumberman's office, and stated his case to him. The lumberman said, "I am interested in your proposal, but I shall have to consult my Partner about it." "I am surprised, Mr. So-and-So", said the prospective salesman, "I did not know you had a partner; I thought you were the whole firm." "I suppose the public generally think that, but I am not the whole firm; I have a Partner. And His decision always determines my course. I cannot give you an answer immediately, not until I have had an opportunity to consult Him."

Said the salesman, "Would you have any objection to my meeting him?" "Not at all; I should be happy to have you do so; I should like to introduce you to Him." "Then if you will name the day and hour, I will be delighted." "He is on the premises now, and we will see Him immediately." He touched a button and indicated to the man who answered that he did not wish to be disturbed. Then he opened a door and went into a smaller room. "This is my council-chamber, Mr. So-and-So, and if you will kneel with me I will talk to my Silent Partner,

and put the case before Him." So he bowed in prayer; he "enquired of the Lord his God".

Nothing is too great to bring to Him: nothing is too small—for the reason there are no small things in the life of a believer. If "all things work together for good", then the small things may easily be just as important as the things that we call large; and to make a mistake in the little things may be just as serious as in what seem to be the greater matters. Therefore let us emulate David's example and enquire of the Lord.

And, having enquired of the Lord, be sure you wait for His counsel. I have heard people say, "I have prayed about this." "You have prayed, have you?" "Yes." "With what result?" "Well, I have prayed about it." "And after you prayed, you were of the same mind, were you?" "Yes." But did you actually enquire of the Lord? That is the one side of the transaction, but did you get an answer? "Yes; I felt it was all right." David did not feel: he had a very definite message from the Lord.

And with that word of instruction there was a specific promise. When David went forth to battle, he was not depending upon his emotions, upon any subjective feeling about the matter. God had in some way become articulate, and a very distinct and definite message had been communicated to him.

What is the application to us? We have the message here; we have the Word of God. And we are not to be guided by opening the Bible at random and seeing what is the first verse that comes to us like a conjurer's trick. There is little to commend in the practice of pulling a promise out of a box. The Bible can be made to say anything that way. I heard of a man who had in his mind a certain course that he might possibly pursue. He opened the Bible and found a verse in the parable of the Good Samaritan, "Go thou, and do likewise." He opened it again and found a passage which told him of a man who went out and hanged himself. That provokes a laugh, but the Bible was never intended to be a box of tricks. We are given an enlightened intelligence. We are expected to know the great principles of the Book.

When we enquire of the Lord, and ask for the illumination of His Spirit, it does not mean that we are to neglect the word and depend upon our feelings. Let the course that is in prospect be brought within the teaching of the Book. Let this be the touchstone. Enquire whether the proposed course is in line with the principles of the gospel. He may bring to your mind, not merely a suggestive impression, but a scripture promise or precept. I received a letter to-day from Brussels, Belgium, which quoted this text, "He preserveth his saints." That will do for you, for me, for all His believing people everywhere, for all time.

There are definite promises in the Word of God. We are to use the Bible as people who have intelligence—not as those who gamble with truth. God's Word is always true: I do not say you may not get blessing from a morning text on the calendar, but I try myself to keep always in mind that which is written of our great Exemplar, Who, at the beginning of His ministry when He stood up in the synagogue, "found the place where it was written". He knew where to look for what He desired to read, and He read that particular scripture. Then He said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Let us thus use the Word of the Lord.

David, thus encouraged, went forward. Two hundred men out of the six hundred remained behind at the brook Besor. Four hundred went with him into the field. They found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David. You know the story of the man who had had nothing to eat or drink for three days. They nursed him back to life, gave him food and refreshment; and found out who he was: "And David said unto him, To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

The Amalekite master paid dearly for that act of uncharity. You cannot leave anybody on the roadside to die without exposing yourself to the danger of paying for your carelessness. He paid dearly for thus cruelly leaving him behind. He might better have taken him with them. David, on the other hand, bent on war, stopped to nurse a sick man,—and found him his greatest asset. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Do not be soured by the circumstances of life. Do righteously, and you will reap righteousness. There is a dear delight in doing good, though you get only the satisfaction of having done good. Scatter seeds of kindness. They will grow, and you will reap a harvest some day.

This was the very man David needed. He told them about the destruction of Ziklag, how it was done, and who did it. David would have made a good detective! I think it would be a good thing if we had someone like him in Toronto. We are not "Toronto the good". Do not let anybody persuade you of that.

This Egyptian brought David down to the Amalekites, he smote them, and recovered everything they had taken away. "David recovered all." That was a great order, was it not? But the Lord can—and does—pack a great deal of blessing into a few days, that will more than compensate for all the deprivations that preceded. Job had a hard time, but in the midst of it all he said, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." If you read the story you will find that "the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before". He not only recovered all, but more than all. Cheer up! You may be better off after the depression than you were before. Do not get down-hearted. The Lord may bless you, and help you to recover all, as He enabled David.

There is another principle to which I would call your attention. "David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart." Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into

our hand. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."

The application of that principle is general. You cannot go to India, or Africa, or China? Tarry by the stuff at home. There are some things you cannot do, but you can do some things to make it possible for others to do what you cannot do. If you cannot fight, tarry by the stuff. If you cannot preach, pray. If you cannot be a missionary, then support somebody else in India, Africa, or China. If you cannot do one thing do something else. David said, "It is all one. These people who stayed at home are as much entitled to reward as the men who fought the battle. They shall share alike."

I was once in a camp in England during the war, speaking to the men, when I was asked by several, "Are the people at home really in the war?" I said, "They are more in the war than you are." "How can that be? What do you mean?" "You", I replied, "are not in the war just now, are you? I have not heard any shells bursting around this house where we have had this meeting. You are back from the lines. The enemy is miles ahead. You are safe here, are you not?" They replied that they were. Turning to one of the men I said, "Are you married?" "Yes." "Is your mother living?" "Yes." "Do you know where your wife and mother are to-night—and all the time?" "Back in Canada." "No they are not. They are in the front-line trench every minute. Before they close their eyes they picture you in the most dangerous place on the field. They are in the war all the time: you are there only part of the time."

Very often those who tarry by the stuff have a harder time than those in the battle. There is as much suffering behind the lines as in the lines. I have seen some women who have bravely faced impossibilities—husbands taken from their side, and a family of children left to feed and educate. After a while all the children are brought up, and given an honourable start in life. You look upon it and say, "How in the world did that woman do it? Left without a husband, and with little material wealth. I could not have done it." You probably could not have done it, but she did. By and by one of the children distinguishes himself, does something whereby he becomes a great public servant and a famous man. Who did it? The mother who tarried by the stuff did it. She made it possible.

He Who will some day come to reward His servants, when the battle is over, has promised that even a cup of cold water given in His name will bring a reward. You need not be afraid of being overlooked. Perhaps some man who comes back with the Victoria Cross has been less brave than he who went not to battle, who tarried by the stuff. Our David will not forget it when the day's work is done.

It is lovely to see that David's spoil was so much. They said when he came back from the battle, "This is David's spoil." But he shared with everybody. I have not time to work it out, but I offer this suggestion. I am speaking of David now as on a level with

ourselves, but in this he is an example of our Lord Jesus Who comes upon this city of ruin, nothing but a heap of smoking ashes, a world that lieth in the wicked one, with the whole creation groaning and travailling in pain together until now, a veritable Ziklag everywhere—our David comes and He recovers all. "Do you mean that?" someone asks. Yes; I am sure that the plan of redemption contemplates a complete recovery for every believer,—

"In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessing than their father lost."

Our first parents wore robes of innocence, a negative thing; we wear robes of righteousness, a positive quality. We are all-glorious with the garments of salvation, bedecked with all the ornaments of grace. We are admonished to put on our beautiful garments, not to wear sackcloth, but to live as princes and princesses of the royal blood, so greatly has our Lord blessed us. He has recovered all.

And then He comes back. Do not forget that time of reward. A judgment awaits the wicked, but not us, save only that when we shall be given our rewards. We are saved by grace, but we shall be rewarded for faithfulness—if there be any faithfulness to reward. Whether you fight in the ranks, or tarry by the stuff, the King will see that you are not neglected.

Observe those verses that you might pass over because of the names in them. They said, "This is David's spoil." David stopped to say, "What shall I do with all these possessions? I know what I will do: I will share them with my people." He sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord." Our Lord Jesus was infinitely rich from the beginning, but by His redemptive work He has greatly multiplied His riches. And of His spoil will He send a present to every one of His friends. You know what He said? "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne"; "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee—not only life, but—a crown of life." Salvation does not depend upon our faithfulness, but upon His. But if we are faithful He will reward us, and cause us to sit with Him in His throne. In other words, our Lord Jesus will not keep the victory all to Himself. He will give it to us. He will share it with us.

Put these two prayers together: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee", and, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am that they may behold my glory." He is going to be glorified, and He is going to share His glory with us. A great fortune is His, for God hath made Him Heir of all things. And what about you? "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Suffering? Yes. What for? "That we may be glorified together." "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed"—to us? No! That is not what it says—"not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." He will not only show us His glory, but by His abounding grace He will actually make us glorious, without fault before the throne of God. Let us-rejoice in Christ our Saviour.

RADIO LETTERS

Hackettstown, N.J., Jan. 1, 1934.

We received very clearly your splendid spiritual messages over our radio via Rogers B. Station. As a retired minister, after preaching forty years the Gospel of Redemption and having been honored of God in leading hundreds of children, men and women to Christ, it is soul-refreshing to hear that the good old Gospel, preached by men like yourself is still the power of God unto salvation. Your broadcasting is a great comfort to many down this way. The children's chorus was splendid New Year's eve. God greatly enrich you and your dear people who make the broadcast possible.

Arthur, Minn., Dec. 30, 1933.

Enclosed find a dime. I'd like the sermon you preached last Sunday night, Dec. 24, "In My Father's house are many mansions," etc. O, it was so good and fitted so well for Christmas. If you can spare Dec. 31 sermon I'd like that too. We will be hearing it. I tell folks I go to Canada for my sermons. Our church has no evening service. We get your station so well, better than many nearer home. Our radio is such a blessing. God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform, it is wonderful how He uses radio for His glory. You will never know how many will find our blessed Lord through your sermons, Isa. 55:11. Wishing you a Happy and Blessed New Year and thanking you in advance for those sermons.

P.S.—Should you have a few older sermons still on hand I would enjoy them and appreciate them.

Rochester, N.Y., Dec. 13, 1933.

It seems a crime to wish for money, but I sometimes wish I had more, to do some of the things I would love to do. But of such as I have I am sending. I sometimes feel like a thief to listen and not repay.

Last Sunday evening I was quite impressed with your sermon from Ephesians I, so I wrote this poem thinking of you. When Mr. Blackwell looked at it he hummed the tune Lydia to it and later Harmonia which I liked. So he copied it off for me, as we weren't sure whether or not it was in your beautiful hymnal. I hope you will like and enjoy them as it is given in a spirit of good will.

Parts of the 5th and 7th stanzas do not fit as smoothly as I would like but hesitate to change them. In singing—the 2nd and 4th lines are repeated in each verse.

May your Christmas and those at Jarvis Street Baptist Church be happy and the New Year prosperous.

Wassaic, N.Y., Dec. 31, 1933.

I must try to tell you how much my wife and I are enjoying your Sunday evening broadcasts. (And let me say, our church, a small country church, does not hold an evening service, or we could not hear yours.) Thank you for the clear and definite evangelistic note, always to be heard in your preaching. May your God and ours continue to bless you richly, in your service for Him.

We were especially delighted with the junior choir tonight. Their voices sounded wonderfully sweet, singing the songs of Zion.

I am enclosing a small contribution to your work. We thought we couldn't do it, but perhaps it was the story of the "twelve cents a day", that made us decide we could. We want you to know that we are praying for you and your work.

Audubon, N.J., Dec. 27, 1933.

I hope you will pardon me for addressing you in so familiar a manner, but your sermon last Sunday night (Dec. 24) brought you so close to me that to address you as Dr. Shields would place you in a sphere so far removed that I would miss the connection. I want to thank you so much for your help during the Christmas season. I cannot express myself as I would like to but I have tried by this little poem I am sending you to further express myself. I wrote it after having heard your wonderful sermon.

I live in Audubon, N.J. This borough is about five miles south of the city of Camden so you see I am a few hundred miles away from you but I enjoyed every minute of your wonderful service. While you were having ice up there we could enjoy going out without an overcoat on Saturday. It is quite some cooler now. Thanking you again for your wonderful and helpful sermon.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 9

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 5

FIRST QUARTER

Feb. 4, 1934

SIN'S HARVEST

Lesson Text: II Kings, chapter 17.

Golden Text: "Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

"Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God."—II Kings 17:13-14.

Bible School Reading—2 Kings 17:1-24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Deut. 10:12-22.

Tuesday—Hos. 13:9-16.

Wednesday—Ps. 78:1-8.

Thursday—I Cor. 10:1-12.

Friday—Rev. 3:14-22.

Saturday—John 4:19-26.

I. THE EXILE OF ISRAEL (vs. 1-23).

On several occasions attention has been drawn to the fact that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7), and in the lesson before us the truth of the same is again forcibly brought before us. The Israelites had been dealt with in mercy; they have been corrected in chastisement, servants of God had appealed to them to turn from the error of their ways, but they could not wholeheartedly return to their God; they loved their sin more than their Saviour, and brought upon themselves the judgment of evil from their land. They had hardened their necks, and were finally cut off. But in this, as in all God's dealings with His people, His mercy is evident, for captivity did not imply extinction of individual or national existence, the Israelites were henceforth a people without a country, but they were eventually cured of idolatry, and returned to the worship of their fathers.

The exile occurred in the reign of Hosea, (v. 1), "who did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him", (v. 2). His conduct was not right in the sight of God, although he had refrained from following certain idolatrous practices of his predecessors on the throne. There must be a complete forsaking of sin in order to please God. The exile was carried out by the Assyrians, at first under Shalmaneser, then completed by Sargon, if we are to place weight on the latter's statement concerning the matter. The Israelites were defeated by the Assyrians, and compelled to pay tribute, (v. 3), then, desirous of shaking off the yoke they sought help from Egypt, but were prevented in their attempt by the Assyrians who marched against them, captured their king, and put him in prison, (v. 4). Then going up through the land, they overthrew Samaria after a siege of three years, (v. 5), and carried the people into various parts of Assyria, (v. 6).

In explanation of this drastic judgment, and in justification of the same, the inspired writer records the condition of Israel, the efforts of God to lead them to repentance, and their refusal to listen to His appeals. They had sinned against the Lord their God. Who had brought them up out of Egypt, "and had feared other gods", (v. 7). They had walked in the statutes of the heathen, (v. 8), practising evil things in secret, setting up high places, where they burnt incense, and served idols, (vs. 9-12). The Lord sent His servants to call them to repentance, (v. 13), but they would not hearken unto them; they hardened their necks, rejected the divine statutes, served Baal, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, and brought upon themselves His anger, (vs. 14-18), resulting in their removal from their land by the Assyrians, (vs. 14-18).

In this summary of the causes of the exile several things are worthy of attention. First, in relation to the sinful attitude of Israel. This was heinous, corrupt, deliberate, foolish, and ungrateful. We have before noticed the almost incredible nature of Israel's attitude. They had not been left without the evidence of God's presence in their midst, all through their national history He had manifested His power on their behalf, yet they had forsaken Him for idols, which could not help them. The reason for this may be found, not in the realm of their knowledge, but in that of their desires to serve God then, as now, means the control of the passions and desires of the flesh. One may serve an idol and give rein to these desires, therefore, such service is more pleasing to the natural man, and consequently more popular. The real servants of God are always in the minority. Fake religions are followed by multitudes in the present day because they make no demand respecting self-control. And God's service is rejected because it makes such a demand, (Matt. 16:24). It does not pander to the flesh, but calls upon its followers to walk in the Spirit, (Gal. 5:16-17).

The hardening nature of sin is evident in the conduct of Israel. The people "hardened their necks", (v. 14). They became stiff-necked like others who follow sin's way instead of God's way, (Acts 7:51). The more one deliberately follows sin the harder one becomes, (Heb. 3:13). The dangers incident to sin in this respect require to be pointed out. Note should also be made of the heavy price paid for sin. The Israelites evidently loved their sins, and gained some pleasure therein, but they suffered the loss of the best in life as a consequence, and many lost life itself. It is perfectly true that the "wages of sin is death". (Rom. 6:23). Observe, further; the reality of God's anger, (v. 18), the certainty of the divine judgment, the mercy and patience of God manifest in His efforts on behalf of His people, the definite refusal on the part of the people to heed the divine appeal, and the fulfilment of prophecy seen in the judgment, (v. 23; I Kings 14:15, 16).

II. THE ASSYRIAN COLONISTS, (vs. 24-41).

After displacing the Israelites the king of Assyria sent colonists into the land to take up their abode therein. This was in accordance with the eastern custom of that time of removing conquered peoples from one part of the empire to another in the belief that they would thus be the more easily kept under control. Probably the former class of Israelites would be left in the land, and with these the aliens would mingle, and intermarry, resulting in a mongrel race, no longer the true sons of Abraham, with heathen ideas of religion, and rejected then, and later as Samaritans, by those of pure Abrahamic stock, (John 4:9). After stating from whence the colonists had come, (v. 24), the information is given concerning certain troubles which beset them in the new land. Due to the decimation of the population the wild animals increased in number and boldness, and attacking the people, caused many deaths among them. This grievous affliction was permitted to come upon them because "they feared not the Lord", (v. 25), and realizing that it had some connection with God the colonists informed the king of Assyria of their condition, (v. 26), and received by his express command one of the priests of Israel into their midst to teach them the way of the Lord, (vs. 27, 28). It may be noted that their affliction made these people think of God, and although their view of Him was not the correct one, their thoughts were at least turned in the right direction. We may learn from them to seek a reason for our afflictions. In doing so, in a world-wide sense, if not personally, we are bound to come to the conclusion that it is because the people know not God. On every hand this ignorance is manifest, and this despite an open Bible.

The remedy applied by the king of Assyria was the sending of the priest to instruct the people concerning the true God. Evidently his efforts met with little success, for his hearers continued to worship their idols while acknowledging Jehovah (vs. 29-41). This may not have been the fault of the priest, for it is difficult even with sound teaching to wean men and women away from their idols. If the priest happened to be one of the compromising kind, however, it would be more difficult still to win the heathen to the Lord. The remedy in the present day lies in leading the people back to God.

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BOBCAYGEON

Recently the Pastor, Rev. M. B. Gillion, proposed to his church that a further effort be made to reach the districts around their village. The pastor told of the blessings of the past few months and how eighty souls had responded to the invitations at the various places where meetings had been held. He emphasized the need of exercising special care over those who had so recently confessed Christ as Saviour and Lord, and that the Church should endeavour to make some arrangement for its regular services so that he could be released to help foster these other causes. A resolution was passed to the effect that owing to the many who had no pastoral oversight, the Bobcaygeon church would undertake through its pastor, the spiritual oversight of the work in the village of Kinmount. Travelling conditions are not at all favourable at this season of the year, but with such a door of opportunity open before them they are going to press on despite the adverse conditions.

The people at Kinmount are anxious for an evangelical testimony to be established there, and already there is a splendid company of people gathering for prayer in the various homes. A place of meeting will have to be secured which will mean the outlay of some money. Perhaps some who read these lines will be led to make a special donation to assist in such a worthy cause.

The Bobcaygeon church and its pastor are to be congratulated on its missionary vision in evangelizing these other places, and in this way opening new fields of labour.

FAR AWAY FIELDS LOOK GREEN

Right here at home there are hundreds of people through no fault of their own who are deprived of hearing the gospel, or of enjoying any Christian fellowship, while the church is busy raising money to send men and women thousands of miles away to reach those who have been born under less favourable conditions than we. Eighty souls as a result of the labours of a few faithful saints of God is not to be ignored. If that be the case, let every member of every church catch the same spiritual enthusiasm and carry the evangel to those of their own race and tongue. There never was a greater opportunity for evangelizing this country than now. In the early days the Primitive Methodists went from village to village, and from house to house, preaching the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, with wonderful results. "God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will." But those days have passed and gone for many religious denominations. As regular Baptists we have much for which to be thankful, but nothing should make us more grateful to God apart from our own salvation than the opportunity of telling to others who are perishing what God has done for us. If you cannot go yourself pray and give that the work may be blessed of Almighty God our Father. Pray for Brother Gillion and his loyal band of supporters at Bobcaygeon.

A STATEMENT

The Missionary work of the Union is supported by the free-will offerings of the churches. The Board of the Union is elected by the delegates from the churches in Annual Convention, and as such receives its power to function on behalf of the churches between the sessions of the Convention. A part of its business is to employ missionaries to propagate the work of the Lord as directed by the Constitution of the Union adopted by the Convention. The missionaries in Liberia are therefore the employees of the Board elected by the Convention, and no one else has the right to solicit funds for their support but the Board of the Union.

The Principles and Practice of the Foreign Mission work require that all monies shall come through the Board whether designated or undesignated, for the support of the missionaries themselves, or the work they are doing on behalf of the Board. Should any missionary not be in favour of the objects and the practical design of the Principles and

Practice no other course would be open to them except to resign honourably from the work. No Board could carry the responsibility of supporting any missionary while funds were being solicited to be used for devisive purposes.

All salaries and missionary allowances, Home and Foreign, have been subjected to a twenty-five per cent. cut, with the exception of Rev. H. L. and Mrs. Davey during their sojourn in the homeland. Calvary Baptist Church of Ottawa furnished the Board with the full amount of their allowance, and it was deemed advisable as long as the church was doing this, it should be paid to them in full. The missionaries in Africa have no house rent to pay and the station buildings are not only erected, but are kept in repair, by the maintenance allowance which is separate from the missionaries' personal allowances.

The Union is to be congratulated that during these difficult times it has been able to pay up to date the missionaries' allowances in full in accordance with the twenty-five per cent. cut.

When the time came for Mr. and Mrs. Davey to return to Liberia, their allowances were subjected to the same reduction beginning with November, 1933. This plain statement should allay any fears in this respect, and assist the constituency to a better understanding of the Board's problems.

THE HOME-COMING OF THE MISSIONARIES

Many enquiries have been received in reference to the home-coming of Rev. Gordon D. and Mrs. Mellish, and Miss Minnie Lane. The Board has set no time for them to return to Canada. It is usually better for them to begin their journey northward in the spring of the year so as to reach Canada at the beginning of the warmer weather. When word reached the office in the Fall that it might be advisable for Mrs. Mellish to return home, immediately arrangements were made and the necessary funds were sent for both Mrs. Mellish and Miss Lane's passages to England. Word came later that satisfactory arrangements had been made for her to remain in Liberia, and the funds were transferred to the allowances account on the field. The whole matter as it now stands, lies with the good judgment of the missionaries. As soon as Mrs. Mellish is able to travel and the way is open for them to return, their return will be expedited by the Board. Therefore, until further word is received, patience must be exercised about these matters. A cable code is in hand and as soon as any word comes it will be given out.

BELLEVILLE

In a letter from the treasurer of the Belleville Regular Baptist Church, where Mr. John Armstrong is pastor, we have the following: "I thought you would like to hear an interesting item of news which happened at our Sidney Prayer Meeting the Thursday before Christmas. That evening the meeting was held at the home of Miss Prest, and it was well attended. After the regular meeting, Mrs. Nelson Stapley read the following address: 'Mr. J. R. Armstrong: Dear Brother, We feel that we cannot let this Christmas time pass without expressing to you in some tangible manner our grateful appreciation of your service to us and this district. We humbly give thanks to God, Whom we believe has been working through you in a wonderful way. You would gladden our hearts by accepting this token which in a small way expresses our feeling for you, in the spirit in which we give it. May God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, continue to bless and work through you in our earnest prayer and desire. Faithfully yours, From Friends of this district.'

He was then presented with a purse of money. Although taken absolutely by surprise, he thanked the friends in an excellent speech, and assured them that he had enjoyed his work among them very much indeed. One can see that the work in Sidney is growing greatly, and new faces may often be seen at the Sunday service, at which the attendance varies from thirty-five to sixty-five. Such an appreciative audience certainly should be an inspiration to any speaker. We ask your prayerful interest in the work in this new field."