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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

HOW CHRIST WOOS AND WINS HIS BRIDE

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 18th, 1934

(Stenographically Reported)

Broadcast over CFRB, 690 k.c., as is every Sunday evening service of Jarvis Street Church, from 7 to 8.30 o'clock, Eastern Standard Time.

"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

"I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord."—
Hosea 2:19, 20.

Prayer before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord, that in the person of Thy Son Thou hast shown us Who and what Thou art, and Thou hast told us things of Thyself, of which left to ourselves, we had never dreamed. No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him. We bless Thee that He has really come to us, showing Himself to be the Saviour, the Lover, of our souls.

We are none of us sufficient of ourselves. We acknowledge our transgressions; our iniquities we would not hide. Once again we confess we have all sinned, and come short of Thy glory. How far short of Thy glory we have fallen we shall never fully know until we see Thee face to face, and know Thee as Thou art. But we have fallen so far, and so low, that we cannot recover ourselves. Only as Thou dost come to us in the infinite stoop of Thy grace does it become possible for sinful men to be restored to fellowship with a holy God. We thank Thee for Him Who trod the path of life for us, and Who showed us its end at the place of a skull. We bless Thee for Him Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, Who died the Just for the unjust to bring us to God.

We thank Thee for the cleansing blood, for the fountain that is open, that is filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins. O Lord, give us the wisdom this evening to cease from all self-confidence, no longer to trust in works of righteousness which we have done; but help us every one that we may behold by faith the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. We thank Thee for all the possibilities of grace, for the grace wherein we stand, and wherein we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. For all our experiences of Thy faithfulness we praise Thee this evening.

Look upon this congregation not as a congregation, but as a company of individuals, as men and women who need God. There is not one of us who does not need Thy grace. We would come this evening to be enriched by Thee. Look upon the still greater number, we pray Thee, who worship with us as they hear this service by radio, and join with us in these songs of praise. We know not how many there are, nor who they are. We know nothing of their conditions, save that they, even as we, need Thy saving grace.

Look upon any who are afflicted. We thank Thee for the opportunity of reaching many who are shut up in hospitals, in sanitarium, and in sick-rooms at home. Accompany Thy word with Thy gracious power this evening, so that they may not only hear Thy word, but be made aware of Thy presence with them, that they may become the recipients of Thy grace.

Bless any who may be in special need this evening. May Thy sheep, Thou good Shepherd, hear Thy voice. Call us each by name, that we may know Thou hast discovered us, that nothing is hid from Thine omnivident gaze.

Bless our meditation this evening. May the word of the truth of the gospel be very precious to believers, and convicting to sinners, that all our hearts may rejoice in Thee. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

This is the word of a resolute and resourceful Lover, Who, having made His choice, is determined to win His suit. But in this high enterprise no word or act of His shall mar the record of His chivalry, nor dull the honour of His reputation, nor dim the glory of His transcendent character. For while He speaks of His betrothal of His chosen as an absolute certainty, speaks of it indeed as of the victory of an irresistible Conqueror, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever", He declares His purpose to accomplish His will in such a way that the glory of His triumphant love shall be a combination of righteousness, and judgment, and lovingkindness, and mercies, and faithfulness, and mutual knowledge and trust: "I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord."

Nothing is more difficult than to portray the character of this gracious and determined Lover. This text is from the Old Testament, but we must have the Old

Testament and the New, and every picture, type and symbol, in them, if we would get but a glimpse of His glory:

"Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That mortals ever knew,
That angels ever bore;
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set my Saviour forth."

Nevertheless, it is well that we should consecrate all our powers of heart and of intellect to an endeavour the better to understand and appreciate the incomparable beauty of His character and person. The Crusaders used to sing as they marched:

"Fairest Lord Jesus,
Ruler of Nature!
Jesus, of God and of Mary, the Son:
Thee will I cherish,
Thee will I honour;
Thee my delight, and my glory, and crown!

"Fair are the meadows,
Fairer the woodlands,
Robed in the flowery vesture of spring:
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer,
Making my sorrowful spirit to sing.

"Fair is the moonshine,
Fairer the sunlight,
Than all the starry celestial host:
Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer,
Than all the angels that heaven can boast."

There is no language which can express the glory of His person. In one of the hymns of good Isaac Watts, we sing:

"The whole creation can afford
But some faint shadows of my Lord;
Nature, to make His beauties known,
Must mingle colours not her own.

"Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,
Nor heaven, His full resemblance bears:
His beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold Him face to face."

And yet it is true that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". Only by the direction and personal ministry of the Holy Spirit can anyone come to see what Jesus Christ really is. Shall we not therefore, every one who knows the love of Christ this evening, pray that the Holy Spirit may enable us to behold the Lord Jesus in all His beauty as we see Him wooing and winning His bride. He is the one great Master of the heart. He knows its nature and constitution, and carries at His girdle the master-key wherewith to gain admission, as He did in the case of Lydia when He opened her heart that she attended unto the things that were spoken by Paul. Let us see this gracious Expert at work.

I.

I think I cannot begin my exposition better than by saying HE BEGINS HIS WORK ANONYMOUSLY.

It is thus He lavishes His gifts upon His chosen one. Sometimes a young lady receives a gift of flowers, or some other delicate expression of interest from an anonymous admirer. And then how curiously she examines them! How she tries to make them speak! How assiduously she studies the language of flowers, that she may gently compel them to disclose their secret! And imagination is given a roving commission, to fly on wings of fancy and explore all the possibilities of Love's own wonderland.

And what anonymous love-tokens come to the children of men! Who is the Benefactor Who is always sending us expressions of His love? When at last the secret is out, and the believer comes to know Christ, he is moved to sing:

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise.

"Unnumbered comforts on my soul
Thy tender care bestowed,
Before my infant heart conceived
From whence those comforts flowed."

It is strange that we all should receive and accept so many priceless gifts without enquiring the name of the Giver, is it not? That we should expend so much effort to maintain life, and never enquire whence life itself proceeds?

But *this Lover puts His beloved in a furnished house, withholds the Landlord's name, and collects no rent.* Do you not wish you had a landlord like that? You have, as a matter of fact. Little have any of us thought of what love has been expended on this earth to prepare it for our habitation. In very truth it is a place,—

"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

Even now in the midst of this depression He cares for His own. And what brought about the "depression"? We may blame our economic systems, or our tariff barriers, or the forms of government under which we live, and blame perhaps the devastation wrought by the Great War; but there is One Whom nobody can blame. You cannot blame God, for He has been lavish enough. And actually governments are now attempting to restrict the divine bounty, to direct their people to grow less of the necessities of life. One of the most striking things I have read recently was a quotation from the speech of the Prime Minister of Canada. When someone asked what steps the Government was taking to restrict the production of wheat, the Prime Minister, admitting that promises to that effect had been made, remarked that grasshoppers and other pests had operated so effectively that it would probably be unnecessary for the Government to take any action.

Since when were these pests, named in the Bible as God's army of chastisement and judgment in the earth, commissioned to do works of benevolence? He "openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." Shall we throw His gifts back in His face? Shall we restore prosperity by ignoring the economic law, "Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost"? The folly and wickedness of such philosophies as are now being propounded by professional economists will some day appear.

This house of the world is full of beauty, and, to the awakened soul, is reverberant with love's own music. For hungry men the fields are enriched with love's dust of gold; the woods are resplendent with the colours of love's spectrum; the gardens bloom with the beautiful thoughts of love, and are fragrant with love's incense. The mountains memorialize the strength of love; their snowy peaks, the purity of love; their running streams fill the valleys with love's laughter; and earth's mighty rivers, in the service of love, sweep on their way to the oceans, which symbolize the fulness, and depth, and infinity, of love. And over all, the sun sheds the glory of love, and the stars glitter and shine as the jewels of love. While the north wind proclaims the passion and intensity of love, the south wind whispers its secret to the listening soul, that this house of the world, in spite of human sin, is full of Somebody's goodness, as though nature had a personality, and were saying by ten thousand voices, "I will betroth thee unto me in loving-kindness, and in mercies."

II.

But THIS LOVER FURTHER PRESSES HIS SUIT BY MEANS OF LETTERS BEARING HIS SIGNATURE.

Mere benevolence may content itself with impersonal anonymity; but true love is personal, and demands recognition and acknowledgment. Hence the declaration of the text, "And thou shalt know the Lord."

He would introduce Himself by means of letters. That is what this Bible is, a Lover's letters to His beloved. Love-letters are very amusing when we have no interest in their address or signature. They provide a good subject for laughter when occasionally, unfortunately, they appear in the newspapers. But all critical dispositions are suppressed when they become personal. And no one will ever understand the Bible until he regards it as the articulation of infinite Love.

I received a letter from a bride on one occasion when she was on her honeymoon. It was a beautiful letter, full of praises of the most wonderful husband in the world. I thought of writing her husband, to draw from him a parallel description of his bride. No: do not laugh at that! Restrain your critical faculties from their wonted exercise. Let us rather learn more perfectly to speak in Love's own language, for there is surely enough bitterness in the hearts of men.

A man came to see me some years ago, a man whom I knew very well, and for whom I entertained a very high regard. He was a magnificent man. He came into my study, and took from his pocket a package of letters, put them down on my desk, and said, "What do you think of that?" Examining them, I said, "This is your writing, is it not?" "Yes; they are my letters. Look at them." I turned over the envelopes. "They have been returned to me unopened," he said heartbrokenly. For him the light had gone out of the sky. She upon whom he had set his love had returned his letters unopened, and he was at a loss to understand it.

But the gracious Lover of Whom I speak has often had His letters returned unopened. Ah, my friend in this building, and you who hear me by radio, you have long refused to read your Lover's letters. And to justify yourself, you have said He does not write well; or that some man of science, falsely so-called, has told you He does not write truly. I beg of you to open your Lover's letters:

"Here, Jesus in ten thousand ways
His soul-attracting charm displays,
Recounts His poverty and pains,
And tells His love in melting strains."

Much that is now mysterious would be perfectly plain to you if you would read and believe your Lover's letters. After many anonymous gifts, when that young lady receives a letter bearing the signature of one of honourable name, and learns the identity of her erstwhile anonymous friend, with what new significance all those gifts are thereby invested. I wish you could know Who is visiting you every day. I wish you could know Who is providing your table, Who keeps that heart throbbing within your breast. I wish you would open the volume of love-letters He has sent you. It would explain many things. The whole world would appear in a new light. Even the confusion of nations, the universal distress, would appear in a changed perspective. It would put a new colour upon life, if only it were viewed through the medium of love's own message. The world about would appear altered; it would take on a different colour if only you knew the Lord:

"Oh, that ye knew the sacred emphasis
The Word on Nature's loveliness hath thrown,
And how the world by Christ's face lighted is!
As if new sunshine broke into the air!
As if new odors burst from everything!
This Word is a wide window opening fair
Into the splendours of immortal spring."

Why, man, sitting in gloom and despondency in your room, take out your Bible and read it. If you do not know where to begin, begin with the twenty-third Psalm. Let its music sing itself into your soul this evening. Listen to one who has identified the great Giver as he sings, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

III.

But no true lover can long be content with mere letter-writing. Hence THIS LOVER CAME IN PERSON TO THE LAND OF HIS BELOVED, AND STILL COMES IN PERSON TO PLEAD HIS OWN CAUSE.

Even the Bible cannot win His suit for Him. He comes, therefore, to interpret His own letters. You know what I mean? The fact of the incarnation is eternal. The Lover's name is "Immanuel", God with us. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." As truly as He followed His postmen, the prophets, by a personal visit in the days of His flesh, He follows the reading and preaching of His Word by personal appeals to the hearts of men through His Spirit.

He has come to you many a time. He has come to some of you who are here, pleading for your love. You came thinking to hear a certain preacher preach, but before the service was over you forgot all about the preacher, did you not? Even your prejudices were set

aside, and for a little while you forgot where you were because there was a Voice within the Word. There was a Presence and Power accompanying the preaching of the Word. When the benediction was pronounced, and the service was over, you went away trying to forget it. But you could not. You felt as though Somebody was walking at your side. Somebody accompanied you to your home; Somebody whispered things in the night-watches. Read the story in the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's, where the spouse, half awake, saith, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." How we all have hidden, as it were our faces from Him, how we have spurned His love again and again. But that Voice persists.

Sometimes by such an experience the soul is converted. The anonymous gifts, the gracious letters, all glow with spiritual meaning in the consciousness of the presence and power of their divine Author,—

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green!
Something lives in ev'ry hue
Christless eyes have never seen:
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine."

IV.

But in some cases the wayward heart is not so easily won. And THIS LOVER MUST NEEDS MANIFEST HIMSELF IN PROVIDENCE. He comes not as an ordinary suitor. He comes as a Prince, claiming a Prince's dominion over the heart and life of His beloved. Often the soul goeth after other lovers. We have it in the context: "And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal." How many seek to divide the heart with Jesus Christ! She professes herself to be not averse to Christ, but claims the right to share her heart with the world. She is willing to be betrothed in loving-kindness and in mercies, but not in righteousness and judgment.

Many would be Christians on Sunday if they were not required to be true to Christ all the week. This spirit is difficult to deal with. But this Lover knows the secret of the heart, and knows how to open the door.

Sometimes *He discontinues His presents*: "Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness." And when they come not, she turns her thoughts to the Giver.

He also visits her with sore distresses, and makes her to reap the fruit of her own thoughts: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of

the field shall eat them. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the Lord."

Sometimes, too, *He discontinues both His visits and His letters*. The soul becomes aware of a spiritual silence. No preacher can awaken interest any more. Even the Bible is dull and uninteresting, and lapses into silence. Then the very silence speaks; the soul is alarmed at its own loneliness. The one who has run after so many lovers fears she may have no lover at all. The one who has had so many letters at last complains that now the postman never calls—

"When some beloved voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness faileth suddenly
And silence against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and new—
What hope? What help? What music will undo
That silence in your sense? Not friendship's sigh—
Not reason's subtle count! Not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew—
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales,
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress trees
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted, nor the angel's sweet, All hails,
Met in the smile of God. Nay, none of these!
Speak *Thou*, availing Christ!—and fill this pause."

V.

I wonder are you missing the divine Lover's attention? Is there someone who is saying to himself, "After all, perhaps, it is too late for me. I was very foolish. I ought to have accepted when I had the opportunity"? My dear friend, this sovereign Lover does not so easily give up. Though all else fail, running through all, and illuminating all, and glorifying all, HE TRIUMPHS AT LAST THROUGH THE GRACE OF HIS CROSS.

Jesus Christ is incomparably glorious in all His offices and characters: as Teacher, Healer, Leader, Friend. But He is chiefly glorious in His scarlet robes, when He cometh with dyed garments from Bozra. In any aspect He is fairer than the children of men, for grace is poured into His lips. But in the royal purple of His sovereign saviourhood He is most glorious of all.

Are there some who hear me this evening who remember the days of the Great War? I had much to do with anxious hearts in the war days. Many a tender heart followed our untried soldiers across the sea. And here was one. She was not sure the emotion she felt was love. She knew it was respect. It might be a fraternal affection. But she dared not call it by the one and royal name of love. But when he came back bearing the honourable scars of war, when she saw displayed in him the qualities with which she had clothed her ideal, she was ready to yield her heart to him. And when she had succeeded in extracting from him the story of his sufferings, and she saw clearly that he had really stood between her and the destroyer—not only her heart, but her whole life was given to him.

Often do we read the story of David, and it is ever fresh and full of instruction and illustrative value. He was ruddy, and of a fair countenance. I doubt not he was a lovely and attractive lad. And he was a cunning player upon the harp. It would be surprising if some hearts did not beat more quickly at his approach. But

there was a dark day in Israel. The enemy defied the armies of the living God, and threatened Israel with destruction. Saul was not equal to the emergency, nor was Abner the captain of the host, nor Eliab, nor any of Israel's mighty men. It was then David stepped into the breach and went forth to the battle. Oh, see him as he takes his sling and stone, and hurls back the giant's challenge in his teeth! See how he hastes to meet the champion, and with one mighty throw lays low the pride of Philistia. See how the Philistines flee, and David returns in triumph! What wonder that Israel's maidens sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Or that after a later victory, it is said, "Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him."

But David is only a picture, he is only a type, of the Lord Jesus. Cannot you see your Lord and Lover in him? When Satan challenged, "Send me a man to fight with me", He accepted it. When there was no other,—

"Down from the shining seats above
On wings of love He sped,
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,
And dwelt among the dead."

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He was made bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, that He might win the fight for us. Finding us prisoners of the law, He paid our debts, and set us free. Finding us fearful before the foe, He defeated our enemies. Finding our souls in jeopardy, He snatched us as brands from the burning. And when He has thus triumphed in righteousness, and judgment, and faithfulness, as in lovingkindness and in mercies, He ascends on high, and leads captivity captive; while angels—

"Bring His chariot from on high
To bear Him to His throne,
Clap their triumphant hands, and cry,
The glorious work is done."

Oh, what a Man is He! What a Daysman! What a Warrior! What a Hero! What a Conqueror! What a Prince! What a Substitute!—don't forget that. What a Priest! What a Saviour! What a Lover! What a Bridegroom! What a King! "Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates: even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

And when by faith we see Him, the enlightened soul exclaims,—

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died.
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingling down:

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

DAVID AND ABNER

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, February 15th, 1934.

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Lectures on Biblical Theology, which is included in
the Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary.*

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: II Samuel, Chapter Three.

Our lesson text this evening is the third chapter of the Second Book of Samuel: "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker."

In our lesson last week we observed that notwithstanding the fact that David had been chosen to reign, had been anointed with the anointing oil as king over Israel, even after the death of his chief enemy Saul, he discovered new opposition; his path to the throne was steadily opposed. We must not forget that the New Testament gives us very clear warrant for regarding David as a type of Christ. I remind you again, however, of the necessity of dealing with these matters with some caution. Do not allow your imagination to run riot. Refrain from building a doctrine upon a type of Scripture. There is danger of your reading into types your own thoughts, instead of reading out of what is plainly revealed, the thought of God.

There are types of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament. There are foregleams of the ultimate Glory. There are lesser personalities who, because their lives were lived in obedience to the will of God, and were particularly fashioned by the plan and purpose of God, run parallel, at some points at least, to the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. We shall be on safe ground if we specifically name as types of Christ in the Old Testament only those which are authoritatively so designated in the New Testament.

We may find in many characters—and in many chapters of history—striking illustrations of certain aspects of gospel truth, where it would be really an exaggeration to say that this or that was a type. We may safely look upon David, however, as a type, because our Lord Himself so implied when He said, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" Many passages of the Old Testament, including the prophetic Psalms which manifestly pointed to the Messiah, found their historical basis in the life of David himself. The second Psalm is a case in point, and may be taken especially to illustrate this stage of David's progression toward the throne: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed?"

That found its fulfilment in the opposition presented to the Lord Jesus, and you recall how Peter quoted that Psalm in the presence of the other disciples, saying, "Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

I.

The opposition presented to the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness, and to the coronation of the One Who alone has the right to reign, is illustrated in this chapter from David's history. Our Lord Jesus is the Anointed One, and was anointed from all eternity. The entire Bible, the Old Testament and the New, has been given to us in order to show God's purpose to bring Him to the throne, and to establish the kingdom under His hand. Notwithstanding that, however, not only Saul, but his son Ishbosheth, and Abner the son of Ner, and many others, are found challenging David's right to reign. So it has been in the past, and will be in the future, until the last night of the world's darkness shall pass, and the morning shall be ushered in by the coming of Him Who is the Light of the world, when He takes to Himself His great power and reigns.

Here in this first verse of the chapter before us this evening, abiding and perpetually operating historical principles are set forth. We have seen it in the early histories: Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel; Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, the one the son of promise, the other born after the flesh. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. These two continually contended with each other. In the Epistle to the Galatians we are warned that these principles will always be at variance. They are morally and spiritually incompatible with each other. They cannot reside together in peace. The son of the bondwoman cannot be heir with the son of the freewoman. The principles they represent, in the history of the past, as in this present day—as they will be in all remaining years of time—have been in conflict one with the other. "There was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David." "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."

To bring it home to ourselves, it has, of course, its first and most personal application to our own experience. We have not to go without the circle of our own lives to discover the truth of this principle. There are within every one of us the Saul and David principles, if we are Christians. There are the flesh and the Spirit; the mind of the flesh as opposed to the Spirit of God. They lust the one against the other, and they are contrary the one to the other.

Perhaps some of you get tired of the long war. Even so, I do not see any prospect of an armistice. So far as I can see, from the teaching of Scripture, the history of past and present human experience, the houses of Saul and David are likely to continue to battle one against the other. These principles are at war within us.

A little girl came to see me the other day about baptism. I asked her to tell me her experience. She put it very simply, without the slightest prompting. She said she was constantly hearing two voices. There seemed to be a bad voice, that was telling her to do certain things, and not to do other things. Then there seemed to be a good voice that was telling her to do certain things, and not to do other things. She found that this

battle was raging all the time within herself. She knew nothing about theology, she was only a simple little girl; but she had learned experimentally that her heart is the battle-ground where these contrary principles contend for the mastery.

Belgium used to be spoken of as the "cockpit of Europe", as the place where contending armies met, in order to do battle with each other, and settle some principle in dispute. The human heart is a veritable "cockpit" in which the principles of righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, good and evil, are always struggling one with the other. I hope you have not got to the place where peace has been proclaimed between them. If you have, I can promise you this: it has been settled at the expense of righteousness. The devil never resigns. Anybody can resign. It does not require very much skill to resign. But the devil never resigns. He yields only to force, and he yields only to the force of the One Who is stronger than the strong man armed. And that is not your force: it is not mine—but the battle is on.

Of course, it has application, too, to the Christian church. I read only yesterday an article by C. H. Spurgeon, in which he raises the question as to where the ideal Communion is to be found, from which all evil is permanently expelled, where no error is to be found, but where a state of settled, abiding peace, and the pre-eminence of righteousness obtain. Then he enumerates all the Communion. Is it to be found in the Roman Catholic Church? Is it to be found in the Episcopal Communion? Is it to be found among Methodists? Is it to be found among Congregationalists, or Baptists? Or, said he, even among the Brethren? Have they no divisions among them? Is there no war there? Of course there is war. There always will be war. As the principles of Christ's gospel are set forth they will always meet with opposition, even within the church, for the simple reason that, however spiritual a church may be, there will be still a very large element of the "old man" in us—in every individual member, and it must be so of the church as a whole.

Our only hope is the domination of the Spirit of God, and the subjugation of these evil tendencies by the power of the Spirit. But it is always there. When in a few years, you young men get to be pastors of churches, you will preach away, and think you are having a great time. You will remember some of the things I have said to you, and will say to yourself, "I do not know. I am inclined to think that he was a little wrong. I have an ideal situation. All my people love me. They think I am the finest pastor in the world." When you feel like that, write it down! You will need to read it some time. Write it down, if you ever come to a situation like that. After a while you will run upon some snag, and will say, "I did not know that was in my church." I do not suppose you did—but it was. By and by you will find there are a good many members of the house of Saul who, somehow or another, are members of your church. "I thought they were all members of the house of David. What are these members of Saul doing here?" But they are there! You will feel like running away, and will whisper to some other pastor, "I think I have reached the limit of my usefulness here, and perhaps I had better resign." Please write down that I once said to you, "Any fool can resign." Do you want to qualify for that appellation? Go and write your resignation if you do. Anybody can resign: but it takes a real

man to face opposition, and go through with it.

I recall some years ago meeting a company of ministers; it was at a ministerial conference, and we were having an informal chat before the session began. There was one man present who was much the senior of the others. He had been for an extended period the pastor of the same church—at least it seemed an extended period to me then. He had been there ten or fifteen years, and it seemed half a lifetime. Someone said to him, "Brother So-and-So, how are you getting along?" "Oh, I am getting along. Not making much speed, but getting on." "Having blessing?" "Yes, having some blessing. No great floodtime, but we are having blessing. There are conversions occasionally. Not as often as we should like, still there are evidences of the Lord's favour." "Any difficulties?" said this young man. "Yes, plenty of them. We always have difficulties." "You have been where you are a good while, have you not, Brother So-and-So?" said this young fellow. "Yes, and I expect to be there a good while longer. When I was younger I thought it courageous to run away from difficulties. But I find they are everywhere. I view the whole matter philosophically now, and have resolved to bear the ills I have rather than to fly to others that I know not of." He became quite Shakespearean—and thereby he saved moving expenses!

That was a very sound conclusion to come to. Our Lord prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." If you are going to get away from the evil one altogether, and from all difficulties, you will have to be taken out of the world; because there is "long war between the house of Saul and the house of David".

That is not only true in the individual heart, and in the church as it affects the special mission of the church within the church, but it is true of the function of the church without. Is it not an amazing fact that the country which gave Luther to the world, which was, although not wholly the birth-place of the Reformation (there were movements springing up in many places at that time) the country where God found His chief instrument in Martin Luther—I say, is it not amazing that in that country which proved such a blessing to the world, there should now arise a movement so great, so influential, that almost a whole nation talks about deliberately and of set purpose reverting to paganism, and re-establishing the shrines of paganism. It is but a recrudescence of the old things, some new member of the house of Saul showing his hand. "There was long war." There has been: there will be.

The "golden age" does not seem to be immediately in prospect. I do not think we are on the threshold of it, unless it be that the heavens should be rent, and the white horse and his Rider should suddenly come down from the skies. Apart from that, we had better get on with the war.

You say you grow weary? You will have to get over your weariness, then. Take a fresh grip on your sword. There is nothing to do but keep on. During the Great War, David Lloyd George said in one of his speeches, "We shall have to go on or go under." That is the only alternative. It will be a struggle to the end of the chapter.

That is true of contending principles in the world at large. I know that, as ministers, your special mission will be to preach the gospel. But I think a minister ought to be a thoroughly informed man. He ought to

be a man of many correspondences. He ought to be able to relate himself to life in all its aspects. We may well pray that we may have peace in our time.

Some people foolishly described the Great War as "a war to end war"! Any man acquainted with the philosophy of the Bible would never have said that. A war to "make the world safe for democracy"! That was a catch-phrase that was nothing less than silly. You cannot make the world safe for democracy. No generation can settle the troubles of the generation yet to come. Every generation must meet its own difficulties. Every generation must fight its own battles.

We did hope we had settled some things. We settled them—but only temporarily. These things come back again, and back again, and back again. What shall we do? Surrender? No! We must go on.

II.

"David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." Blessed be God, that is true. I often find difficulty in agreeing with certain friends whose favour I covet, and with whom I should like to be in agreement. This is a bad world, is it not? Well, is it any worse than it was? What about your own life as a Christian? Is the house of Saul getting weaker? Is the house of David getting stronger? Is there less of the old man in you, and more of the new? It is your fault if there is not. For the rule is to be putting off the old, and to be putting on the new. The old man going off, and off, and off, steadily diminishing, we should progress in the cause of righteousness, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, (we) press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus".

Not perfect; oh no! The nearer we get to the light, the more we see how imperfect we are. The reason is that things that offend us now, we should not have troubled about some years ago. It is a fact, is it not, that it is the privilege of every believer to see the house of Saul steadily declining, and the house of David steadily growing, until by and by we shall be like Him, "for we shall see him as he is". That is the prospect for the believer: that is the prospect for the church.

There are some things that improve. You say this world is a pretty bad place? Yes; but perhaps if we could have lived a hundred years ago we should think it is not so bad now. Do not make any mistake: I am a premillennialist thus far that I do not believe there will be any millennium until the Lord comes. I am not so sure what the millennium is to be as some profess to be. I do not know so much as some of my friends. I shall not fight with them. One of my friends said, "I am for the millennium." That is, an American phrase, "I am for it." Well, so am I "for" the millennium. I do not want any tribulation. If we can have the millennium right now, I am "for" it. I have nothing against it! But when, in order to establish a contention, people shut their eyes to all the lessons of history, and say that the world is worse than it ever was, I am bound to confess I am not so sure of it.

Someone says, "But look at the depression." I do not need to look at it! I can feel the thing. I do not need any special eye-glasses to see it. But what about it? "But look how many people there are on relief." What! "See how many people there are on relief, how many people are being fed and sheltered at the country's ex-

pense." Find me a city in the world fifty years ago where a hundred thousand people would have been fed at public expense. I am a minister's son, and I remember a time where I lived when it was said there were twenty thousand men out of employment. Nothing like as many as we have now. Funds were raised by the mayor of that city by voluntary contribution, and the ministers were made distributors of the fund. And there was a queue of people at my father's door all the time. You could not say there, "There is no necessity for a man's being hungry." There were no means then to make it impossible that little children should be hungry.

I am not a professional sociologist, but there are surely social implications in the gospel of Christ. As surely as the principles of the gospel are applied, life must be improved at some points. Somebody says, "But there are only a few real Christians in a city like Toronto; what can they do?" Did you have dinner today? What did you have? "Meat, potatoes, other vegetables, and so on." What did it all represent in bulk? More in some cases than in others! I will not ask you to answer that. But did you have any salt with your dinner? "Yes." How much? "Just enough to make it palatable." How much was that? "It was not much in bulk; it was a very small amount; you could scarcely see it." Listen: "Ye are the salt of the earth." How much salt? A very little salt will save a great mass from putrefaction.

Even the indirect influence of the gospel has its value. The social effects of the gospel are but by-products of the gospel, I know: but they are not to be despised or ignored. At a certain town in Ontario I went one day to the museum and saw in a glass case a printed page, the heading across the top of which read something to this effect, "The last hours of certain condemned persons" who were to be hanged in Toronto. In Toronto! In the early part of the nineteenth century. One of the condemned persons was a little girl twelve years of age, who was sentenced to be hanged for stealing some silver spoons from her mistress—in Toronto.

What sort of earthquake would take place in Toronto if anything like that were proposed to-day? What sort of commotion would there be outside, in the world at large, bad as we are, in which the house of Saul is waxing a little weaker. Do you not think it is so? I do. I believe that is the principle of divine progress. I know what the Scripture says about the apostasy, and I know that ultimately there will be a certain recession, a lapse into utter lawlessness. Notwithstanding, the method and order of the divine programme is ever this, "The evening and the morning were the first day." When God's day's work is done at last it will be morning, not evening; for "there shall be no night there". We are travelling toward a city from which all evil shall be expelled, and ultimately the house of Saul will cease to exist, and great David's greater Son will be King over all the earth, and His dominion shall not pass away.

I intended to pass that over in about five minutes' introduction. But I think the principles wrapped up in it are of sufficient importance to call for just such an extended exposition.

III.

I must now, in a few words, cover the story of Abner, and use it as an illustration of gospel truth.

Here are these two principles, the house of Saul, and

the house of David; and to those two principles every one of us must relate himself. Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul. He did what we have all done in the beginning: he espoused a losing cause. He sided with the enemy of the Lord's anointed, instead of with David. Abner, as we observed last week, was a *man of very many fine qualities*.

Let me pause here to give you an illustration of what is implied in the old theological doctrine of "total depravity". The old theologians never meant, when they spoke of man's being totally depraved, that any man was just as bad as he could be. They recognized that it was a commendable thing to be honest, true, kind, chivalrous, and all the rest of it. They recognized that a man who was not a Christian might be a man of very large capacity, keen intellectually, and of very pronounced loyalties, like Abner. Abner was a magnificent man. Wherein lay Abner's error? That all his powers, good as they were, were turned in the wrong direction. He was biased toward Saul, and against David. That is the meaning of "total depravity" theologically, not that every quality of the human soul is, in itself, essentially and exclusively bad, and that there is no good, for instance, in a mother's love for her child, or in the mutual loyalty of husband and wife. It means rather that even the finest qualities of the natural man are biased in the direction of evil, toward the devil and against God.

Try that out. You say of a certain man, "He would be a splendid fellow if only he were a Christian." Look at the Apostle Paul. He said of himself: "Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." He had many fine qualities, but he said when explaining the change which had taken place, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." All the powers of his mind, all the intricate, complicated, capacious qualities of his personality were directed against Christ. When he was saved, what happened? He said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Many things "contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" before his conversion; soundly saved, he said he desired that every thought should be brought unto captivity to the obedience of Christ. In effect he said, "I do not want to have even a thought that is contrary to Him."

But Paul had the same mental capacity before his conversion that he had afterwards; although it was augmented and sublimed by entertaining God's thoughts, by the operation of His Spirit, but in other respects he was the same man.

Abner was a strong man, but *all his powers were directed toward the service of the house of Saul, and, therefore, against David*.

Then, under a great injury, smarting under a false accusation, Abner's eyes were opened, and he saw he was moving in the wrong direction, enlisted in the wrong cause. To Ishbosheth he vowed a vow, that "as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him". You see how suddenly he was jerked back from the course he was following, and turned in another direction. First everything was directed against the purposes of God: now all his powers were to be devoted to the fulfilment of the purposes of God. That is real conversion. All a man's powers are brought into subjection by and to the Spirit of God.

So Abner sent messengers to David. Here a rebel is brought to repentance, and now petitions his rightful lord for mercy, promising him that henceforth he will be his servant, and that he will lead all Israel, so far as he has power, to swear allegiance to their rightful king.

David received the rebel, granting him amnesty, forgiveness, notwithstanding all he had done against him; just as the Lord Jesus receives every sinner. The Apostle Paul said, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." He never forgot that. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." The faithful martyr Stephen was stoned to death by his consent. Paul never forgave himself for that. But he came to the King at last, confessing his sins. He came to the King and pledged his allegiance, as Abner did.

This is a fine story for young men. This is a young man's lesson. There are thousands of Abners in this city who are going on the wrong road, who need to be brought back to their rightful allegiance.

I cannot help thinking of Abner's influence. All souls are alike before God, but the American Declaration of Independence to the contrary, notwithstanding, all men are not created equal. Not every man is an Abner. Not every man can command the hosts of Saul as did Abner. And not every man can say, "When I come I will not come alone." It is a great thing to win an influential man to God, not because his soul is of any more value, but really to save the Abners, means to save a multitude.

Abner had come to the king, and was on his way to bring others to a like allegiance—when something happened. There is a sinister character always in the background, always apparently loyal. He came, and the people reported, "Abner has been here, and the king sent him away in peace." "What!" "Yes." "Abner!" Joab was always on the alert to discern a possible rival. It would never do to let Abner become servant and friend of David. Joab said "With Abner here, I should lose my position." He sent messengers after Abner to tell him to come back quickly. Abner, the frank, open, and honourable soldier, came back. One cannot help admiring him, so nobly loyal to all his friends, though so terribly mistaken. So unsuspecting, so perfectly frank, that he never suspected treachery in others. Let me give you the story:

"And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died." Abner knew who Joab was, that he was captain of David's host. If he had been received kindly and graciously by the king, he might expect similar treatment from the captain of his host. But the unsuspecting Abner fell down dead.

That is the sorrow of it: "And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him." Some Joab always lies in wait for the penitent Abner. Somebody always tries to thwart the King's plans.

"When David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner." One of the great problems of theology—and you have it suggested here—is illustrated in that simple verse. Is it not said that the Lord willeth not the death of any sinner, "but is longsuffer-

ing to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"? Our gracious God is always ready to forgive the Abners, but ere they have settled the matter our adversary the devil intercepts them as they come. He has the power of death, and unless he be restrained they are slain even on their way to the King's palace.

David said, "I did not do it." Listen: "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." The blood of every sinner who dies in his sins will rest upon his own head—not with Him Who willeth not the death of the sinner. Said David: "Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And King David himself followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth." His death was so unnecessary, so wicked, so wanton! All the people wept, and the king wept with them.

Thus doth God regard the ruin of a soul.

"When all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people." I love that verse. I wish I could talk to you on it for a month—but I will not! There is a saying of George Washington—I fear it was not true until after his death. They idolized him then, but he had most of his troubles with people who should have supported him—it was said of him, he was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen. I do not think the last was true until after he was dead. Now they have a street named after him in practically every city, and statues and monuments everywhere.

"Whatsoever the king did pleased all the people." So ought it be with our glorious King. So must it be when we see His attitude toward the sinner, and His mourning over the ruin of human souls.

Then the king said, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"

Following that is a great verse. I have tried to preach from it once or twice. I will give it to you, and you can preach from it—and succeed where I did not: "I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." It was a day of grace. David said, "I am anointed king. I do not want to hurt anybody. I want to love everybody. It is a day of grace with me. No man shall die by my decree. I live to give life, not judgment. But these men, the sons of Zeruiah, thwart me at every turn. They are too hard for me, but the Lord shall reward them."

There is a day of judgment coming for the doer of evil, "according to his wickedness". In this day of grace, while our gracious King is tender and gracious to all, these sons of Zeruiah are ever busy trying to thwart the King's purposes. And it will be so until the Lord shall come, at the final summing up of things, and shall reward every man according to his work.

It is a full chapter. I wish I could tell you what is in it, but that will be enough perhaps to prime the pump, and to set you thinking.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 9

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 10 SECOND QUARTER March 11th, 1934

GOOD KING JOSIAH

Lesson Text: 2 Kings, chapter 22.

Golden Text: "Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord."—2 Kings, 22:19.

Bible School Reading: 2 Kings, 22:1-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Deut. 31:24-30. Tuesday—Ps. 119:1-16. Wednesday—Eccles. 8:1-13. Thursday—I. Cor. 2:1-3. Friday—2 Tim. 1:1-7. Saturday—Matt. 5:17-26.

I. PREPARATION FOR TEMPLE REPAIRS, (vs. 1-7).

In Josiah we come to the study of another of the good kings of Judah, one who sought diligently to serve the Lord, his God, and who accomplished something in His Name. His father, Amon, had done evil in the sight of the Lord, as had his grandfather, Manasseh, for a considerable time before him; but he as a child had evidently fallen into good hands, and, receiving proper training, developed into a man of sterling worth. He was just a lad when called to the throne, and reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem, (v. 1). During that time he "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left", (v. 2). This implies that his course was undeviating in the cause of righteousness. In these days when so many are turning aside from the right path, it is well to take note of this, in order that we might act in a similar manner. Living in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, (Phil. 2:15), it is the duty and privilege of all servants of God to go straight in accordance with the teaching of the Word of God. Note scriptural examples as Joseph, (Gen. 39:10), Amos, (Amos 7:10-17), Daniel, (Dan. 6:10), Paul, (Gal. 1:6-24), and our Lord, (John 8:46), also the blessedness attached to such service, and the necessary power in view of the difficulties of the same, for in this service we are face to face with the great enemy of souls.

An evidence of Josiah's sincerity of purpose is recorded respecting his preparations for the repairing of the temple. For this purpose a free-will offering was received from the people, and delivered into the hands of those who had the oversight of the work, from whom no reckoning was required "because they dealt faithfully", (vs. 3-7). The house of God had been neglected throughout the preceding years of apostasy. During that time no one in the circle of authority cared for its preservation. When men forsake God they have no interest in that which pertains to Him. Note the trustworthiness of the workmen: a characteristic which should be found in every child of God, the method of raising the money, and the laudable object for which it was raised. A real child of God will certainly do his duty in sustaining the work of the Lord, (Mal. 3:8-10; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7).

II. DISCOVERY OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW, (vs. 8-14).

During the course of the repair operations a most important discovery was made in the temple which had a far-reaching effect on the nation. Hilkiah the high priest "found the book of the law in the house of the Lord", (v. 8). Evidently the book had lain unused in the sacred enclosure, its position unknown, virtually lost in the place where it ought to have been preeminent. We are reminded by this of the sad fact that in many a spiritual temple, (I. Cor. 6:19, 20), the Word of God is unknown, unused, and finds not its place. The heart should be stored with it, (Ps. 119:11), the life should be governed by it, (Ps. 119:9), and others will then be influenced through it.

While difference of opinion exists as to the meaning of the

term "book of the law", it may be taken for granted that it means more than the book of Deuteronomy, as some intimate. It probably implies that which we term the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament known as the law. Whether the original copy made by Moses, as some seem to think, or another made later, its content created quite an effect on the king, who rent his clothes, (v. 11), and inquired of the Lord concerning his duty in the light of the same, (v. 13), sending his servants to Huldah, the prophetess, for this purpose, (v. 14). Such an attitude was commendatory. It meant Josiah was in earnest in the service of God. He was not intent on giving the Lord lip service only, it was his desire to carry out the law in action as well as in word. One must see to it these days that holiness is lived, as well as spoken about. Note the importance of real holiness, (Heb. 12:14), and the reward of the same.

Several additional matters are worthy of consideration respecting this incident. First, the fact of the book's existence, and possession by Israel. This implied privilege, responsibility, and duty. The content of the book gave direction concerning the economic, political, social, moral, and religious life of Israel, and affected them individually and nationally. It was, therefore, literature of the highest order, and having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, containing God's message for His people, it was of the utmost value to them, (Rom. 3:1, 2). Note the privilege of possessing the Word of God these days, and contrast its unchangeable and true message, with the changeable ideas of men. The Bible stands like a rock amid the shifting sands of human opinions.

In the second place it may be observed that the book was read. The mere possession of a Bible will not produce much benefit in the life. Some Bibles we fear are very carefully laid away in drawers, trunks, or shelves, and the leaves are never soiled with the fingers. They may be keepsakes, or forgotten treasures, but they are not sources of divine inspiration for they are not given an opportunity to speak. The Bible must be read if we are to derive help therefrom. Note, in the third place, that the reading of the book of the law was listened to by the king. He might have turned a deaf ear to it on the plea that he was too busy to hear it at that time, or he might simply and politely have engaged in some other matter, while the reading was going on, but neither attitude was adopted. Josiah listened intently, and honestly, to the reading of God's message, and profited from the same.

It may further be noted that the king was convinced of the divine origin of the words read. There was no doubt in his mind concerning their inspiration, and he, therefore, acknowledged their authority. Emphasis may here be given to the fact that the Bible is the inspired Word of God; and, therefore, authoritative for all. Josiah was also convinced that the book had a personal message for him, he sought to understand the nature of that message, and then heartily and to the best of his ability obeyed the same. Observe the necessity for obedience to God's Word. It is only thus that we can hope to please Him, and gain blessing for ourselves and others.

III. HULDAH'S PROPHECY, (vs. 15-20).

The servants of Josiah communicated with Huldah the prophetess respecting the message of the book, and received an answer for the king of a predictive nature. First, it was clearly intimated that the prophetic word contained therein would surely be fulfilled, (vs. 15-17). The Israelites had forsaken God, and they would suffer the consequence of this in accordance with the warning formerly given. Note may again be made of the certainty of the fulfilment of the divine word. God never speaks at random. He means what He says, and intends to carry out His predictions. The second part of the answer referred to the attitude of the king, and promised that judgment would not come in his day, (vs. 18-20). He had humbled himself before God, and manifested a repentant, submissive attitude, and, therefore, was saved from the exercise of divine wrath. It should be clearly pointed out that only in this manner can men of the present day be saved from wrath to come. God has provided this way through Christ, (I. Thess. 1:10), and there is no other way, (Acts 4:12). When the great day of divine wrath draws nigh wicked men will be terror-stricken, (Rev. 6:15-17). Now is the day of salvation, (2 Cor. 6:2). There is no hope for those who die in their sins.

The Union Baptist Witness

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GOOD NEWS FROM VERDUN

Sunday evening, February 11, 1934, the Rev. Arthur St. James preached at the Emmanuel Regular Baptist Church where Mr. Roy Hisey is pastor. At the close of the service an invitation was given when nine souls professed their faith in Christ.

This is a very difficult field in which to work, owing to Roman Catholicism, yet the Lord is graciously blessing His people. We ask all of God's children to pray definitely for the pastor and the work which he is carrying on there.

WITH THE DAVEYS EN ROUTE TO AFRICA

On Board S.S. Aurania, January 6th, 1934.

"The trip so far has been a very quiet one. We had two days of rough seas, some of the passengers were affected. Mrs. Davey celebrated in her usual way, but is now fully recovered. Although the weather has been too cold for us to be on deck for any lengthy periods, yet we have enjoyed the quiet rest, which after the busy round of meetings we enjoyed does not come without appreciation.

"Our babies enjoyed a birthday on board; they had a little party for the children. There are only four children in Tourist class, and of course Master Daniel excelled himself as far as the eating part of the party was concerned. Apart from this the voyage has been fairly quiet and we are looking forward to a real nice time in England.

Later.

Journeyed from London to Liverpool on Wednesday evening, and have been the guests of the S.I.M. home in Liverpool until date of sailing, January 13th, 1934. The people in the home did all they could to make our stay happy, and the fellowship enjoyed will not soon be forgotten.

Later.

We are just leaving Tenerife. We had terrific storms on the 14th and 15th. A gale of eighty-two miles an hour to fight against, and in one spot it was blowing a hurricane of one hundred and forty-two miles per hour. The Lord has mercifully preserved us, but the crew and officers say it was a violent storm. In fact, shipping was held up in many places, and our boat was all awash even to the funnel. Mrs. Davey and the kiddies, also strange to say, myself, have all been victims of sea-sickness. For me this is a strange experience, and I hope one that I shall not have to repeat too often. All the passengers were sick, also the Chief Engineer, and the Chief Steward, so that will give you some idea of the weather. We have not been able to have a service, as last Sunday it was too rough, and to-day the crew have all been working. We have had conversations with the passengers, but they are not generally interested in the gospel.

To-morrow we are touching at Las Palmas, and this letter will be mailed from there. I trust you will get it safely. We hope that all is going along nicely with the work at home, and that the winter will see much done in the consolidation of some of our churches and their work. Also we trust, and pray that many souls may be won for His diadem during the winter months. The conviction grows daily that the days are short and the opportunities soon will be passed. It seems to be more than ever indicated that we can look for gigantic upheavals shortly world-wide. What a joy it is to be ready, but what an awful awakening for the professing church and church members.

Remembering you and the work daily in prayer, and trusting all goes well, Mrs. Davey joins with me in greetings to all."

ENCOURAGING NEWS FROM LIBERIA

In a letter dated January 5th, 1934, Mr. Mellish says: "We have been very much encouraged in the services since we have returned to the station again. In the services on the mission, and especially those held in the towns, the people seem to be taking a deeper interest. Also since returning

we have had three more request baptism, and then just to-day another woman came out from the town especially to tell us that she was a Christian and wished to confess that before her own people in baptism. This makes at the present time eight who have asked for baptism. We expect to be having a meeting very shortly at which we shall examine these candidates. Some at least, we believe, are ready for baptism.

Personal Work

Probably it would be of interest to you to hear of one case which came to our notice just this last Sunday. After speaking, I felt led to make an appeal for any who had never confessed Jesus Christ as their Saviour to do so. After making the people clearly to understand what I meant, one man put up his hand. On talking to this man after, he told me his story. We have known him quite well for some time since he is a constable for our clan chief. Usually the men who act as constables, and go around to certain towns to arrest people who are sued by someone, are very wicked men, and this man was no exception. One day recently this man was either going to the beach or returning from there, and he met a Kpelle man on the path. This man simply asked him if he was a Christian, and if he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. On being questioned, Bodoa-kpa, which is his name, answered that he was not. Then the Kpelle man told him very clearly: 'You live only two days walk from the beach where there are churches and also you have the mission close to your town where you have heard the gospel preached, while I live away back in the bush, and you do not. In the judgment day I will rise up and witness against you.' This was just a small word that this man heard, but it just set him thinking, so that he had no peace till he yielded to the Lord Jesus Christ. I am sure that you will want to rejoice with us too, for this precious soul, and may we ask that you will pray very especially for this man, that he may learn more of the Word and that he may stand true for his Lord. He will have many temptations, and likely he will lose his position as constable which is a more or less honoured position to the native man. His name is very hard to pronounce, but you may tell the people that it means 'cutlas', which, as you know, is a long tool like a large butcher knife, which the natives use for cutting bush, and a hundred and one other jobs every day.

The Gospel of John in Bassa

I am very happy, too, that the Lord has permitted me to complete the translation of the Gospel of John. When I went away the end of November I still had four chapters to complete, and just as soon as possible after returning, Lafayette and I got together, usually all morning, and all afternoon, for several days, and completed it. We do just praise the Lord that He has allowed me to do this work, and now I pray that it may be possible for these people to have this Word so that they can each one read it without having to listen to someone interpret from the English. The written translation will need many corrections, but at the same time it is much more correct than if it is just interpreted to the people orally.

Furlough

I should like to have a few months yet, if it were possible, for I am not through all the language work, particularly, that I should like to do. I should like to do considerable revision work on the grammar. For these reasons I am not in any hurry to go home yet.

**Remember Home Mission Sunday
In Union Churches, March 4th.**

ABOUT THE THREE HUNGRY AND HAPPY CHILDREN

Hungry Because Healthy

Do you know it is a good thing to be hungry? Hunger is often an indication of good health. Healthy people have good appetites. Parents of a family of children know that it requires more bread to feed the family when all are well than when some of them are ill.

How happy the children are at meal-time! When dinner is announced, how eagerly they respond! The joy of anticipation almost equals the joy of participation.

They Are Very Healthy

That is why they are hungry. We do not appeal in discouragement. We are proud of, and thankful for, our children. They are growing splendidly, and we are in no mind to put them on a diet, in the sense of limiting their supplies. The only diet they need is plenty, so that they may continue to grow.

Happy Because Healthy and Hungry

Unemployment is likely to impair one's health and appetite. Our children have plenty of work, and are therefore hungry, healthy, and happy.

The Eldest is Lusty and Popular

His name is Gospel Witness. He has a good voice, and makes himself understood wherever he goes. He is a veritable globe-trotter. Our last report of his peregrinations informed us he regularly visits about sixty different countries. He beats Lindbergh and other travellers, in this, that he visits them weekly. His many friends tell us he is particularly welcomed by ministers and missionaries. He makes many calls on the sick and the aged. He is an industrious evangelist, and has been used of God to lead many to Christ. When occasion arises, he is a bit of a fighter too, for he has a fairly wide and favourable reputation as a defender of the faith.

He receives no salary, but it costs a good deal of money to pay for the paper clothes the printer makes him. He does not travel Pullman, but gets reduced rates on the railways and steamships by being willing to be tossed about in second-class mailbags. But, although he travels cheaply, he does not travel free. He carries no advertisements, hence advertisers pay him nothing.

Will you help us to keep Son Gospel Witness travelling on his missionary journeys?

The Second Boy is Rather Studious

He does not move about, but stays at home with his books. He has unusual tastes. His favourite book is the Bible. He has a passion for the Book of books. The fact is, he selects all his other subjects of study with a view to enabling him the better to understand the Bible. Hence, he has a penchant for Greek, and Hebrew, and English. He delves into church history, is interested in preachers and sermons, and missionaries

and mission fields; and, indeed, in the whole field of human knowledge as it relates to the subject of his supreme passion, the Bible.

He has no gymnasium nor athletic field, but keeps himself fit by exercising himself in teaching and preaching, and working hard at his books. He, too, aims to be a globe-trotter, like his older brother; and while seeing this continent first, he is resolved to carry his message to the uttermost parts of the earth.

This second boy of ours is rather expensive. His older brother, by his much travelling, makes friends who help to buy his clothes and pay his travelling expenses. The boy Sem (queer name, but that is what we call him for short) is not so widely known as yet—but all the world will know him some day. Meantime we are asking his older brother to help him, by making known his need. He is really a worthy and vigorous son, with a prospect of great and ever-increasing usefulness before him.

Please send us a contribution for the boy Sem, and, incidentally, remember him in your will. (But call him by his full name in your will, Toronto Baptist Seminary, Jarvis Street, Toronto.)

The Third Son Has a Marvellous Voice

Excuse us if we seem a little boastful, but really Son Radio is an extraordinary vocalist. Years ago an old man told us of one of the Baptist "elders" of the pioneer days of whom he said, "He was a great preacher. One could hear him clear across three hundred acres!" But that is nothing to our boy Radio. We tested the range of his voice the other day, and from letters received we found he had been heard clearly over an area one million, six hundred and ninety thousand square miles in extent, in which there are living one hundred and four million people. We fear some of the one hundred and four million people were engaged in other matters, but they could have heard him had they listened.

Very few preachers have a voice which combines qualities necessary to speaking and singing, but our boy Radio has. His singing is very popular, and many hearers say he plays the organ wonderfully well. He is heard in countless thousands of homes, hospitals, sanitariums, hotels, restaurants, prisons, in cars on the road, by ships on the sea, in garages and school-houses, and other places where people gather to hear him. As a result of his ministry, sinners have been converted, saints edified, sufferers encouraged, mourners comforted, workers inspired, defenders of the faith strengthened, aged people cheered—and, almost certainly, hundreds of thousands of needy men and women and children of all classes, helped.

Don't you think our boy Radio deserves a substantial gift to enable him to pay expenses as he carries on his work?

LETTER FORM

To save you the trouble of writing a letter we have prepared the following form which you may fill in, tear off, and enclose with your offering.

To Jarvis Street Baptist Church, 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto 2, Canada.

Find enclosed \$..... for your Three Hungry Children, or for Gospel Witness, Seminary, Radio (cross out any not to participate in your gift).

Name:.....

Address:.....