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

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THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 25th, 1934

(Stenographically Reported)

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"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."—Revelation 19:7.

Prayer before the Sermon

We remember as we bow before Thee, O Lord, this evening, the admonition of Thy Word, that Thou art a Spirit, and those who would worship Thee must worship Thee in spirit and in truth. We would not come to Thee in any formal way, bowing ourselves in Thy presence while our hearts are far from Thee. We, therefore, pray that Thou wouldst grant us the ministry of Thy Holy Spirit, that every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and that we may worship Thee the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in a way which will be acceptable to Thee.

We come by way of the Mercy-seat to pray. We come to the place where the blood is sprinkled; that we may bring to Thee the adoration of our hearts. We thank Thee for that atonement which purgeth away the iniquity of our holy things, making our prayers and our praises acceptable to Thee as they are presented in the name of Him with Whom Thou art in everlasting covenant, and for Whose sake Thy grace is lavished upon the sons of men.

Look upon us as a company of needy people this evening. We have ten thousand reasons for giving Thee thanks. Thou hast blessed us in ways that we cannot enumerate. Indeed, Thy mercies to us are without number. Had we the wisdom and discernment to recognize the hand of God in all our affairs, we should praise Thee often for life's greatest disappointments, for those things which have brought us, temporarily at least, our greatest distress; for it is written that our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen and which are eternal. Give us ever more, we pray Thee, eyes to discern the things which are hidden from natural men. Open Thou the eyes of our hearts, that we may know what is the hope of Thy calling, and what the riches of the glory of Thine inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of Thy power to usward who believe. Help us, we beseech Thee, that our affections may be centred upon things above, and not on things on the earth. Wean us away from things temporal and visible. Enable us, like our Lord, to say we have overcome the world. Teach us to overcome it by doing without it, by living independently of it; for we are dead, and our lives are hid with Christ in God.

We thank Thee for treasures in the heavens. We thank

Thee for the inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Help us to reckon up our spiritual possessions, that we may highly prize those spiritual verities which are so lightly regarded by men of this world.

Look upon any who may be in affliction this evening, any who are temporarily laid aside, and especially upon any who have reason to fear that they will never again resume the duties of life, or their full share in the affairs of men. The Lord be gracious to them in their trial, in their time of forced inactivity. Help them to see that there is a joy in suffering the will of God that is not less than the joy of doing it.

Save us all from presuming upon Thy mercy. How graciously hast Thou forgiven! But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared. We would fear Thee with a filial fear, O Father. We would fear, indeed, lest a promise being left us of entering into Thy rest any of us should seem to come short of it. Lead such as are Thy believing people into the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Help us to live as children of the King, as those who rejoice in the earnest of that inheritance which is given us until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of Thy glory.

The Lord look upon all ministers and missionaries of the Cross who proclaim the gospel throughout the world. Prosper Thy truth wherever it is preached. Render effectual every word spoken in the name of the Lord Jesus, and hasten the day when Thy purposes shall be fully accomplished, when the number of Thine elect shall be completed, and when Thou shalt come in all the glory of Thy power, to take to Thyself the kingdoms of this world and reign.

Bless us in our meditation this evening. May our meditation of Thee be sweet! Make us glad in the Lord. If the eyes of any are holden, if as yet they have never seen our Well-Beloved, if they know Him not as the One Who is altogether lovely, the Standard-bearer—Oh that a Voice may introduce Him this evening, that some may see Him for the first time, and seeing Him, receive Him for what He really is, the Saviour of sinners, the Son of God. Hear us, answer our petitions, and accept our praises, because we pray at the Mercy-seat, and worship Thee in the name of Him Who died, Amen.

It seems in some quarters quite commonly to be assumed that the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, Christianity, is a kind of human philosophy of origin and conduct and destiny, that it is of human invention and formulation; and that, therefore, it is subject to all the variations and modifications which characterize all things which issue from the minds of fallible men. In this place we believe that Christianity is simply God's way of saving men through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

The Bible is not an evolution of human thought, but from beginning to end is an infallible record of a divine revelation, of divine plan and purpose. The religion of Christ is no more subject to change than the vicissitudes of day and night, the course of the seasons. Indeed, it is more enduring than the earth itself, because it includes in its purposes the redemption, not alone of the individual, but in its plan there is included a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

We believe the religion of Christ is final. We believe that the Lord Jesus, in His coming to this earth, was, and in His present intercession and sovereign supervision of all things, is still, the Divine Ultimatum: "Last of all he sent unto them his son"; "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The person of Jesus Christ was the incarnation, the manifestation, of the summary of all that God had ever said. The Book is the record that God hath given to us of His Son.

I spoke to you two weeks ago of how the divine Bridegroom makes choice of those who are to constitute the bride, those whom God brings into everlasting union with Himself. We learned that they are divinely selected, and chosen, even as He said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." We observed last Sunday something of how this sovereign Prince woos and wins the hearts of those who are His people, how He makes the bride His own. This evening I have the happiest task of all, that of telling you of the wedding-day, of the marriage of the Lamb: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

I.

This text is A PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT, or of a fact prophetically announced as accomplished. There is no perhaps or peradventure here. John looks into the future. It is given to him to see things which are yet to come to pass. He sees the plans and purposes of God unfolding, until at last there breaks upon his ear the sound of a great multitude, innumerable spiritual intelligences, cherubim and seraphim, angels and archangels—all the higher orders of unfallen principalities and powers, acclaiming the dawn of the marriage day. John records that he "heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.'"

There are some who seem to think there may be some doubt about the ultimate celebration of the marriage. They speak sometimes as though the engagement of the soul to Christ were no guarantee of the ultimate union of the soul with Him in heavenly fellowship. But there is no doubt expressed here. Although long ages must succeed before the day of which the prophet speaks shall dawn, he speaks of it as an accomplished fact: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and her wife hath made herself ready." He speaks as one who is absolutely certain. The plans and purposes of the divine Bridegroom will not fail. When the marriage day shall

come, Bridegroom and bride will both be there. There will be no failure of the plan, and no default of the persons concerned.

That, in itself, ought to be a great encouragement to every believer. Here the union of the soul is celebrated—the actual union of the soul with God. The courtship, as we observed last Sunday, was most interesting; to see how this glorious Prince engages the affection, and disposes the will, of the ones upon whom His heart is set. The engagement, based upon the promises of the divine Bridegroom, is delightfully sweet. But with what gladness believers through all the ages have anticipated the time when the Bridegroom should come for His own! They are numbered among those who "love His appearing", and who anticipate the day with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory".

But this is something beyond that. Here unnumbered intelligences, in the heavenly places, who see things as they really are, who are not uninformed of the divine resources, acclaim the dawn of the marriage-day. My dear friends, let us rest this evening in the happy assurance that our Prince means exactly what He says, and that the day when all separation shall be over will certainly come. Now we see through a glass darkly, now we read His letters, now we receive—I had almost said—his long-distance communications, but that would be scarcely correct: they are communications brought to us by the divine Deputy, by the Spirit of God Himself. There is a sense in which we enjoy communication with Him daily; but the text speaks of a time when we shall see Him face to face. And, as we sometimes sing, verily "that will be glory" for every one of us.

This marriage day will be a day when our Prince will implement His promises, and will redeem His pledged word. What marvellous promises He has given us! They are "exceeding great and precious promises". What presents we have received at His hand! What earnestness of the glory that is to come His redeemed people enjoy even here! But the day is to come when we are to be brought into this closer relationship, when He will actually come in person.

I have heard of marriages by telephone. I have never been called upon to perform such an one. I do not understand how it could be done without there being some risk of mistaken identity. The people might find themselves married to the wrong person—unless there were television. But the marriage of the Lamb will not be effected after that fashion. The divine Bridegroom will come Himself in person to the wedding, and "every eye shall see him".

What wonderful things He has told us of the country whence He came that He might woo and win us! How delightfully He has described the fair mansions which yonder He is preparing for us! With what rapture did He speak of His Father, and of His Father's presence! And even to His bride He said—or to such as were members of His body, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." He was going back home for a while, but He said, "I shall come again. When all preparation is complete, I shall come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

The text tells us of that great day when He will actually come. But I must remind you that the marriage of the Lamb is here spoken of as a triumph of His own power. We are told, in effect, that there were many oppositions to the marriage, there were many enemies standing in the way. It seemed as though it were almost beyond any power to effect such a union as this. What enemies there were! But here a voice of much people is heard saying, "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory,

and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments." It tells of the outpouring of His vengeance upon His enemies, how the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts fell down before Him and said, "Amen; Alleluia." Then he heard a voice out of the throne saying, "Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great". And again he heard the voice of this great multitude leading up to that great climax, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth".

What followed? He has taken to Himself His great power. He has subdued His enemies. He has removed every obstacle in the way of the achievement of His triumphant love, and at last the day has dawned when He is to have His own way; and all heaven says, "Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come".

The Jews of old time had a legend—there is no divine warrant for it, but it is an interesting fancy—that it was when the angels of whom Satan became the chief, discovered that it was the plan of God to select man for His consort, to lift, not angels but men, to the throne; and that when He made man in His own image and likeness, jealousy seized the heart of him who aspired to the preeminence, and he resolved upon the destruction, if possible, of the one upon whom the divine Lover had set His heart. It is almost too horrible to relate, but I have heard of a jealous and rejected suitor throwing vitriol into the face of the one he would have married, in order to mar her beauty and make her unacceptable to, and unwanted by, his successful rival. Something like that lies at the root of all opposition to the divine plan—is indeed the explanation of the Satanic assault upon God's image in man. And how the enemy of souls has piled up obstacles in the way of the consummation of God's purposes of grace! He brought death into the world, and all our woe. He spoiled the divine image in all of us. He made us, not only unlovely, but unloving and unlovable, made us the very opposite of what God designed us to be.

But this divine Lover determined He would not be thwarted, and the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, to undo all the work of the enemy of souls, and to restore in His marred and mutilated creatures the image of His own glory which sin had so completely effaced. And here prophetically all intervening time has been rolled up as a scroll, and the event is acclaimed as actually taking place while all heaven attests the consummation of the divine purpose: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

Oh man, do not reduce the religion of Christ to a merely human scheme of moral betterment. Do not speak of it as though its programme were dependent upon human learning and logic, upon the powers of human persuasion, upon the application and operation of principles of mere psychology. I read an article in a Toronto paper recently which described three men who were said to represent the types of Christianity that would be acceptable to our day and generation! Very probably! But Christianity, *per se*, the religion of Christ, the revelation of a sovereign God, will never be acceptable to the carnal mind. But I preach one in Whom there resides power to make it acceptable, and to remove all obstacles that stand in the way of the consummation of His desire.

You have read Lady Heron's song of young Lochinvar in Scott's Marmion,

"O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

* * * *

"One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near;

So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!

'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow', quoth young Lochinvar."

Not thus does the gospel story run. My Lord Jesus will not steal His bride, and run away with her. There will be no secret elopement, we may be sure. He will meet His enemies in open combat. He will subdue them under Him. He will manifest His great power. He will remove every obstacle out of the way, until the dawning of the day of His desire.

The marriage day was obviously set. We do not know when it will be. I hear there are some people, expert prophets, in Toronto, who can see nothing beyond nineteen hundred and thirty-four! But I will go farther than they: I cannot see anything beyond this hour—nor can anybody else, except what God reveals. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." I care not who the man may be, nor what his record, the man who dares at any time to name the day of the marriage is going beyond his province, and proves himself to be an unreliable teacher. There are many passages in the Scripture that teach our Lord's omniscience, that indicate that nothing was hidden from His view; and yet He said that there was one matter which had been put beyond the realm of His own knowledge—and it is the only thing—the knowledge of His return. He submitted to that for some reason. He Himself names it, sets it apart from all other events, the day of the marriage of the Lamb. That, the Father has kept within His own authority.

The Father has set the day, however, and His set time will come—and nothing can prevent its coming. Though the Bridegroom tarry, He will not tarry beyond the time appointed, but only beyond the time of our expectation. But when His time shall come, He will come with it. Once He said when upon earth, "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready." But He was never behind time. When the fulness of time is come, His purposes will fully be accomplished.

I am glad the hour is set, and that in God's good time the day will dawn. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him, that "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready".

II.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS AN OCCASION FOR HEAVENLY REJOICING AND CONGRATULATION.

Congratulations are usually in order on marriage occasions; but sometimes they are somewhat grudgingly offered. There may be those who feel that the pair are ill-mated: one may be esteemed inferior to the other; or, in the judgment of onlookers, sometimes a marriage may be altogether ill-advised. So do men of the world not infrequently esteem the Christian hope. The newspapers are always eager to publish news of dissension in a church, or anything that is disparaging to the cause of

evangelical Christianity. Indeed, it would seem as though there are those, who, privately and publicly, take special delight in discounting the church and all its activities, and in holding up individual Christians to contempt.

When one professes conversion it brings gladness to spiritually-minded men and women whose ears are trained to hear the hallelujahs of the angels when sinners repent. But no newspaperman will reckon a conversion to be an item of news worth printing.

When the engagement of a soul to Christ is announced the devil never lacks for human agents to endeavour to break it, and to bring a believer's profession to naught.

It seems to be quite commonly assumed in our day that if the Christian religion has any profit at all it can be profitable only by its application to temporal affairs. But one scarcely ever hears in our day of the value of religion in preparing the soul for a heavenly state. Here we have heaven's estimate of the value of the Christian religion. Here heaven expresses its view of what it is worth to be married to Jesus Christ.

Years ago I enjoyed the intimate friendship of a man who, in addition to other fine qualities of intellect, was superabundantly endowed with a gift of humour. At the same time I made the acquaintance of a second man, who was as witty as any Irishman could be. These two friends of mine were unacquainted with each other, and, repeatedly, I remarked to each of them that I should like him to know the other. After a while they met, and also became close friends. After some years the first of these two friends, the gifted humourist, wrote to our mutual friend, who was noted for his wit, announcing his engagement, to which the witty friend replied: "Such a letter as yours ought ordinarily to be answered with a note of congratulation, but I am sorry I cannot send you such a note. My reason is this: I cannot congratulate you because I do not know the young lady; and, on the other hand, I find an equal difficulty in the fact that I am unable to congratulate her because I know you so well."

Only a little pleasantry, I know, but here is heaven's opinion of the wedding, and oh, how heaven knows the Bridegroom! It exists for Him, Who "is before all things, and by him all things consist". And they know the bride, for many of these spiritual intelligences have already ministered to her: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" How they have followed her through all her varying career! How they rejoiced at her repentance and faith! How they have guarded her! How they have held her up in their hands lest at any time she should dash her foot against a stone!

And now the long waiting time is ended, and the divine Bridegroom and His chosen bride are to-day to be united in an indissoluble union. What wonder that the whole universe became vocal with His praises, and with heavenly congratulations as the great multitude exclaimed: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready".

III.

Once more, the marriage of the Lamb is spoken of here as AN OCCASION OF GREAT HONOUR TO THE SON: "Let us . . . give honour to him."

It is inspiring to see a man who has resolution enough to map out a programme for himself, and go through with it. Of course, human programmes must always be subject to the limitations of human abilities and uncer-

ainties. But, provided he has health and strength, and with a recognition of the divine over-ruling, it is invigorating to see a man with sufficient determination to carry out his plans, not allowing anybody or anything to turn him aside. It is the mark of a strong man always that he is able to look into the future—subject always, as I say, to a recognition of human limitation—and then to carry out his projects, refusing to be driven about by any wind that blows.

Nothing is more honouring to God than the effectual out-working of His purposes concerning the salvation of men. When at last His hour shall strike, and the marriage bells shall ring, all heaven will cry, "Let us honour Him Who has done according to the counsel of His own will. Though all the powers of earth and hell opposed, He has fulfilled all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power."

The marriage of the Lamb will honour His wisdom. We are baffled by it to-day. We cannot understand why He should choose us, or why He should choose sinful men at all. I am not surprised that men without divine illumination should look upon the scheme of the gospel, the plan of redemption, as being beyond reason, even foolishly impossible. It is unique. It is unlike anything to be found anywhere. The Prince of Glory setting His love upon what may be called broken earthenware, poor, miserable, marred, vessels, that are good for nothing! What folly it would seem! But when at last His day shall come, all heaven and earth will give honour to His wisdom. Christ crucified is a stumbling block and foolishness to many, "but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." From our point of view, redeemed by His blood, already we get a glimpse at His wisdom; for we are led to admire the manifestation of divine wisdom in the cross of Christ where mercy and truth are met together, and where righteousness and peace kiss each other. But it is a philosophy of things too profound for the human mind to fathom. It outreaches the widest stretch of the human imagination. But some day His wisdom will be honoured, and it will be seen that of all the manifold works—all of them made in wisdom, as the Psalmist said, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all."—of all the manifold works of God, the redemption of men honours His wisdom more than they all.

The scientist tells us of His manifold works. He looks at the infinitesimal through his microscope and says, "It is marvellous. I wish you could see the wonders of nature as I do." Or he scans the heavens with his telescope and tells us of those unseen things that are apparent to his view. He tries to measure the infinite spaces for us. The professors devise all sorts of ways by which to explore the uncharted spaces, and come back to tell us the wonders they have seen. They all confirm what the Psalmist said: "In wisdom hast thou made them all."

But the wisdom of His works in nature will be outshone completely by the wisdom displayed in the selection of mortal man whom He takes up to Himself, whom He clothes with His nature, and with whom He shares His glory and His power. Yes; we shall admire His wisdom then.

I have a friend down in the South who is a very successful minister. He is very popular, and is known to countless thousands. When his enemies would discount his achievements, they said—and I suppose they say it still—"Oh well, it is not Norris: it is his wife. That is

what made him what he is. It is no wonder he is successful with the wife he has." Dr. Norris usually replies, "I will not hold any controversy with you, my friends, on that score. I only say that the difference between you and me is that I recognized that many years ago, before anybody else did." His was a wise choice, and all who know his wife acclaim his wisdom.

And, my dear friend, when God shall receive such a revenue of glory from the bride whom He has chosen for Himself, which shall be greater than that derived from all His other works, heaven will declare that the wisdom of God is supremely manifested by His selection of mortal man to be His bride.

To my radio friends let me say this evening: I had intended to conclude at eight-thirty, but I shall not try to do so now. If you want the entire sermon you will have to get it in printed form. Our friends in Coaticook, Quebec, sent word that they regretted deeply our being cut off by half an hour. So do we. We must continue the exposition for a few minutes.

Greatly to the honour of the Bridegroom will be the marriage of the Lamb, to the honour of His wisdom.

And to the honour of *His love* as well. "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." I have seen a little bit of that in my observation as a minister. I have heard people whisper, "That is another of the marriages I cannot understand. I do not see what he saw in her", or "I do not know what she saw in him." Do not try to understand. It will save you much trouble. But after a while—after a while the same people say, "Well, that was a pretty fortunate union after all."

I was at a birthday occasion once in the United States, when a great man was honoured by a great company of people. His wife sat at his side, and she told a story. She said, "My youngest boy came to me one day and said, 'Mother, I want to ask you a question.' 'All right, son, what is it?' 'Did you not take a pretty big risk when you married father?' 'Do you think so? Do you not think he is a pretty good man, as well as a successful one?' 'Yes, now; but how did you know he would be? Did you not run a risk? How could you be sure how he would turn out?'" I suppose she assumed that risk.

How could the Lord be sure how we would turn out? He knew the power of His own love, and He knew that He could make us to turn out just as He wanted us to: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." That is the programme of the gospel. When it is done, heaven will say, "How wonderful is the love of our God." When they see it exemplified in the multitude of the redeemed which will constitute the bride of Christ, they will honour His love.

How it will honour *His power* too! What power He has exemplified! How He has overcome every difficulty, every enemy! And, acknowledging His power, the intelligences of heaven say, "Let us . . . give honour to him."

His faithfulness will be honoured. Never has He broken a promise. Never will He fail to fulfil His word. He said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." We sing with confidence in this place:

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"

When the marriage of the Lamb is come, the whole universe will say, "There He is, and there she is; and every word that He ever spoke He has fulfilled." What a faithful, covenant-keeping God is He! Let us give honour to Him!

Then there is that great word, the biggest word in any language, the word that is as deep as hell, as high as heaven, and as wide and measureless as eternity, that word that is another name for God, *the great word, grace*. Oh how the many, and varied, and multiform, glories of the grace of God will be manifested when the dawning of the marriage day shall come, and heaven will say, "Let us . . . give honour to him."

IV.

It will be AN OCCASION OF GREAT GLADNESS AND REJOICING TO THE BRIDE, as well as to the Bridegroom. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." He will say, "At last I realize that for which I have travailed, for which I suffered and died."

But how about the bride? We have seen in our earlier studies that she was very reluctant, and *He had to overcome her reluctance*. She was not very willing, and He had to make her willing—but He did it. How slowly we came to Christ! With what hesitation! With what reluctance! We wondered that anybody should be enthusiastic about the matter. Religion, in our view, was a kind of medicine that had to be taken. As for the approaches of Christ, we merely supposed we could get on without Him. Without irreverence I say it: To many he was about as welcome as the dentist or the doctor.

Now everything has been changed. The bride's eyes have been opened. Her reluctance has been overcome. She shares the eager longing of her Beloved. At last His wife has made herself ready. She has given herself to Him now, all there is of her; there is no reserve whatever. I heard King Leopold the Third of Belgium say the other morning, when he was proclaimed king, as did his father before him, "I give myself to Belgium." And the Lord Jesus loved us, and gave Himself for us, without reservation. At last He broke down all our opposition, removed all obstacles, overcame our reluctance, disabused our minds of all our doubts, and all fears—until now we look for the day when we shall see Him face to face, as the one far off divine event to which the whole creation moves. It is no wonder heaven exclaimed, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

"His wife hath made herself ready." That is a task—so they say—to get the bride ready for the wedding. It is a great undertaking. Especially in this case. She had to be trained and educated for her position. Hence she was put to school and subjected to a long discipline which the Bible calls sanctification. At last she was made ready to be the consort of the King of kings. That is a high position, is it not, to be ready for that?

They say it takes some time to get the bride ready as to her wedding garments. But how should we be dressed in that great day? There will be no secret wedding. That cannot be! That cannot be! What is it? It is the culmination of the divine purpose from all eternity. It is the accomplishment of the greatest thing that God ever did. When that hour shall strike, it shall be known in all the universe, for "every eye shall see him", and all heaven shall attend. It will not be a "quiet" wed-

ding. There will be the voice of mighty waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings. All the spiritual intelligences will rejoice in the culmination of this, the divine purpose.

We shall need to be well dressed for that occasion. Where will you get your clothing? Will you go to some New York millinery establishment, some French modiste, for an elaborate Parisian gown? Or will they teach you how to dress at Chicago University? Can you learn there how to get ready for the marriage of the Lamb? Ah, no. We are going to Heaven's court, and the Sovereign there will prescribe the garment we shall wear; and when His wife shall have made herself ready she will have put on all her beautiful garments which His grace has provided: the robe of His righteousness, with all the ornaments and jewels of His grace. Only thus can she be made ready.

Is that not a great salvation? I wish I had language to describe it, eloquence to move you to desire it. But I have neither. Even an angel could not tell you. He could not do much better than I, for there are some things I know from personal experience that even an angel does not know. I know what it is to be washed in the blood—as no angel does. I know what it is to be redeemed by grace—and angels do not. I know what it is to have a Redeemer stoop over me and whisper to me that He loves me. I do not understand it, but I know it. I wish I could tell you what this heart feels about it. I wish I could tell you that it means more to me than all else in life. Poorly have we adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour, poorly have we represented Him to a sinful world, I know. But, notwithstanding all, we love Him, and we know that we are His. We know that the marriage day shall come, and therefore and therein we rejoice.

My question to-night is, Have you received Jesus Christ? Have you responded to His call? Is He really yours? Are you sure of it? If you are, if you rest upon His promises, you may with confidence anticipate the future, and look forward to the day when your whole soul will respond to Heaven's gladness, when you too will rejoice to give honour to Him when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come, and you, as part of His bride, shall be ready. "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, February 22nd, 1934

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

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: II. Samuel, chapters 4 and 5.

We shall begin with the fourth chapter, and go as far as time will permit. But a few words before we begin!

The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the word of God. Hence, it is the word of truth. It is designed to communicate God's thought to men—not to a few, but to all men. It would be difficult to conceive of a father, separated in physical presence from his family, writing to two or three of his children, and forgetting to mention the rest of the family. This is the word of our Father in heaven, and it is designed for the comfort, as well

as the instruction and inspiration of all the household of faith.

We shall not disparage, or in any particular belittle, the value of true scholarship. The more thoroughly disciplined our minds are, the wider our general knowledge, the easier it will be for us, very probably, other spiritual considerations taken into account, to understand the Word of God. But certainly it was not written for a few people of great genius, or for certain esoterically minded scholars.

The recently-appointed Premier of France remarked on assuming office, that politics was the application of common sense to national affairs. A little common sense is of great value in the interpretation of Scripture. We may well be suspicious of any interpretation of Scripture which requires some very special and extraordinary genius to discover it. That would imply that the secrets of the Word of God were reserved for people of peculiar and unusual mental capacity. Of course we are to bear in mind that the Word inspired by the Holy Ghost can be understood only by spiritual illumination. Even those who have had but little advantage educationally, taught of the Spirit of God, may be led into many of the inner secrets of this divine treasury.

But there is a theory abroad that there are some people who speak with the authority of an oracle. A friend told me recently of something of which he had been advised not long ago. Some of the people called Brethren have discovered, that in the New Testament church there was an oracle! Peter exercised that office, according to this theory, for a while; then Paul exercised it; and later, in modern times, a gentleman called Darby—of course, belonging to the Brethren—was the oracle, and that now the man who is recognized as their chief teacher is a man by the name of Taylor. He is supposed to be the oracle. I was very glad to receive that bit of information; it explains much. I had wondered where certain fantastic ideas originate. Evidently with the oracle! Certainly not in the Word of God.

In the use of these Old Testament scriptures I have been specially warning you students against allowing yourselves to be led off into wild and fantastic interpretations. You have but to think for a moment to recognize that if Jesus Christ be as we believe—as most of us here would go farther and say we *know*—if He be the Son of God, then there is no one like Him. There never was anyone like Him. Therefore it cannot be possible that there should be found in the Old Testament scriptures any type which could fully illustrate, or adumbrate, or foretell, the characteristics and unique glories of our Lord. He stands apart from all others. But there are characters, as we observed last Thursday evening, which, implicitly, are named in the New Testament as types of Christ. They are not called types in every instance, but they are referred to at least as illustrating His ministry.

One of the most eminent of these was David. But it is well to bear in mind that even the life of David, strikingly parallel at many points to the earthly life of our Lord as it was, cannot fully illustrate the life of Christ. Therefore, should you take one of these Old Testament histories or characters as a basis for your doctrinal teaching, you would almost certainly be led into grave error. Once the disciples indicated their difficulty in understanding some things the Lord said, because He had spoken to them in parables. When He spoke more plainly, they said, "Now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou know-

est all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." Whether the parable be illustration or type, found in the Old Testament or the New, it was never designed to supply a foundation for doctrinal establishment. You cannot build a stable house of windows only: you cannot build a good house without windows. A house that is all windows may be useful as a greenhouse, but it is a poor thing to live in twelve months of the year. There is a place for windows. There is a place for illustration in gospel teaching and gospel preaching, and the doctrine thoroughly understood and clearly stated, may be lighted up by an historical allusion, by the use of a parable or type. But you must not make a foundation of the windows; that is not their proper place or function.

It is quite possible to find in the story of David many illustrations, not only of the life of our Lord, but of different aspects of the gospel. And that is legitimate; but again let me insist that the Old Testament must be interpreted by the New, and the New will find its most perfect illustration in the Old.

For myself, I have had some hesitation in following the teaching of a good many friends. I am going to ask you a few questions for your consideration. They are really germane to the subject before us, but I refer to the matter only as illustrating the necessity for such caution as I have been trying to recommend. Suppose you had never been taught otherwise. Suppose you came to the Gospels with a perfectly open mind, knowing nothing at all about them. Read Matthew, the parables in the thirteenth chapter, and others beside. Read our Lord's eschatological teaching in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. Do not let anybody say that I do not believe in a millennium, but I ask you this question that you may turn it over in your own mind: from the reading of Matthew's Gospel, would you ever for a moment suppose there is to be a millennium as a parenthesis in the divine programme? Where is it? Or, can you find it in Mark, or Luke, or John, or in the Acts, or Romans? Can you find it in that great chapter, the fifteenth of First Corinthians? Or in Second Corinthians? In Galatians, or Ephesians, or Philippians, or Colossians, or First or Second Thessalonians, or First or Second Timothy, or Titus, or Philemon, or Hebrews, or James, or Peter—a "new heaven, and a new earth"? Yes, but nothing parenthetical. Or the Epistles of John? Revelation? Yes, in the twentieth chapter.

Very well, exercise the greatest care in these matters. If the establishment of a millennial earthly kingdom, and all its accompaniments, were the supreme end of God's programme for the future, can you conceive of all the writers of the New Testament writing from Matthew to the end of John's third Epistle and never specifically naming it? I do not say it is not there, but be careful about formulating certain theories and then coming to the Old and New Testaments to try to squeeze them in.

I sometimes have a little difficulty with THE GOSPEL WITNESS. I find the sermon runs over on to the page beyond where I want it, or the lecture. I say to the printer, "Have you any fat in there that you can take out?" You know what "printer's fat" is, don't you? It is the leads they put between the lines to space them out. Sometimes he says, "I think I can squeeze that in." You cannot squeeze lead very much, but you can a little.

Do not come with your set forms, like the printer, and say, "I have so many ideas, and I am going to

squeeze them in, and make that say what I believe." That is not the way to interpret Scripture. But that is the way many of the most egregious errors have found currency, and frequently persist over long periods of time.

I.

Here is David when Abner is dead. Saul's son, Ishbosheth, who was a nobody, when Abner was dead, became feeble. He could not fight his own battles. Very often in church life some Ishbosheth is blamed for things he is not responsible for. There is an invisible Abner behind him who is the cause of the trouble.

We had many Ishbosheths in the Old Convention. Some of them were Doctors of Divinity, some were professors. They got up in Convention and recited the speeches that had been prepared for them. I knew who made the speeches! I knew who the unmitigated scoundrel was. These poor dupes got up and said, "Dr. Orr said so-and-so." It was a lie. Dr Orr never said anything of the sort. It had been written out for them, a word had been taken from this and that, and been edited in such a way that, by using Dr. Orr's own words, he was made to say the very opposite of what he said in his book. The Chancellor of McMaster University read what Dr. Orr was alleged to have said. I know who prepared his speech for him: he did not. The same was true of Professor Marshall. He got up and quoted a sermon of mine of some years before. I knew Professor Marshall had not been sufficiently interested in me to read my sermons. Someone else had fished out something for him.

Do not be too hard on Ishbosheth. Poor fellow! Poor fellow! It was the strong-minded Abner who put Ishbosheth forward.

And sometimes Abner has to be written in the feminine gender. It is just the same. It may be Mrs. Abner, or Miss Abner. And you remember Kipling?—"The female of the species is more deadly than the male."

When Abner was dead, the back of the rebellion was broken—and poor Ishbosheth went to bed. He was still in bed at noon one day, and two men came in and murdered him, cut off his head, and brought it to David. They supposed they were bringing David good tidings when they told him his enemy was out of the way.

Observe the difference in the conduct of a man who enquired of the Lord from that of the men who slew Ishbosheth. David is described as a man after God's own heart. He has already been crowned king in Hebron. The opposition leader, Abner, had surrendered to him, and then was treacherously slain by Joab. The opposition of which Ishbosheth was the nominal head was now so enfeebled that it counted for nothing, and David's star was in the ascendancy. He was rising. The house of David was waxing stronger and stronger.

Then David found his friends multiplying. There is nothing succeeds like success—and nothing fails like failure. If you are successful in any walk of life, you will find that some discerning people will warm up to you. People like to keep the good will of a man who is successful, or of a man who is likely to get a little money! What are you laughing at? Evidently, I am not the only one who listens to Amos and Andy. But is that not true?

Do you know what would happen if the papers were some day to say that a rich man had died and left some millions of money to the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec? Within a month you

would find many people saying, "I always did believe in those people. I have been thinking of joining them for a long time"! Even churches all over the country would find themselves surfeited with the modernism of McMaster—or is it now Hamilton University? and the old Convention, and would fall in love with our new Convention. Brethren Andy and Kingfish would become Regular Baptists overnight.

When everything seemed to be against David, everyone was inclined to pick up another stone and throw at him. But now that the tide is turned many want to get in on the winning side. Every band-wagon should have wide steps, because many people will want to ride. These men thought they were going to be very popular with the new king by bringing to him the head of his erstwhile enemy. Little did they know the spirit of great David. This is what he said: "As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings; I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings: how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? Shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?" Swift judgment was executed upon these men who slew this poor weakling who, through the influence of another, laid claim to the crown and throne of Israel.

In his spirit and attitude toward his enemy, David illustrates at least the spirit and attitude of our Lord Jesus: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He will not the death of any man: "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" All heaven rejoices when even one sinner repents. David had forgiven Abner: he was quite willing to forgive Ishbosheth. But he too was slain by the hand of treachery.

II.

I will not say it typifies, but there is a sense in which the ascending and progressive success of the kingdom of David illustrates the spiritual progress of the gospel. I have never been able to agree with those who speak as though the kingdom of God were wholly in the future. The manifestation of the kingdom, in its fulness, in its completion and glory, is a thing of the future; but even now, at this hour, Jesus Christ is King. He shares the throne with His Father: "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." I believe there will come a time when His kingdom will be manifested, and when we shall live and reign with Him; but just as David was crowned king in Hebron, and later crowned king over all the tribes of Israel, so I believe the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is being extended with the preaching of the gospel, with the reception of the truth by those who yield to him as Saviour and Lord.

"Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel." David was a king, but he was the shepherd of Israel as well. He was to feed God's people, and to rule over them. We too have a Shepherd Who is, at the same time, our King.

"So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah." And then Jerusalem became, by conquest, the city of the great King. Jerusalem became, for the first time, the capital of a united Israel. David went on, and grew great; and the Lord God of hosts was with him.

I shall read you a passage in Hebrews: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if as much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.) But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Note the tense, written to the Hebrews, "*Ye are come.*" There is a sense, certainly, in which Mount Zion typified the church—"Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David." Then they went up and took Jerusalem, and it became Israel's capital—I say, there is a sense in which Mount Zion and Jerusalem typify and illustrate the New Testament church. "*Ye are come*"—not, shall come, but even now "are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven."

The old expositors found in the Psalms of David spiritual teaching respecting the church of Christ, and saw in the references to Mount Sion a prophecy of the church. I believe they were not far from the truth in so doing.

"And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house. And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake."

III.

In the following verses it is recorded that David is opposed by the Philistines, and again and again he leads the people forth to war. In so far as this portion of David's history provides us with any illustration at all of the progress of the divine kingdom, it has application to present-day events when there are still Philistine powers that register their opposition to the reign of the Lord's Anointed. But on each occasion David enquired of the Lord.

So here we have in truth an example for every one of us as servants of our David. Though the King is on the throne, we shall still have to do a great deal of fighting here. The Philistines are not all dead yet. The old

devil has not been bound and cast into the bottomless pit. He is still walking about seeking whom he may devour. He is not in hell—I wish he were—but as a roaring lion he goeth about seeking whom he may devour. When the Lord asked Satan "Whence comest thou?" he said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." And he is still the greatest of all globe-trotters. He is still at it—still at large. And while, and as long as, he is at large there will be some Philistines to fight.

How are you to fight? David enquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto David, Go up." He fought them, and won the victory. Then "the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And when David enquired of the Lord, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines." In effect God said, "Go up, but do not make a frontal attack as before. Rather fetch a compass behind them."

At your leisure, study those two instances. In both cases David enquired of the Lord. In both cases he was told to go out and fight. In each instance he was promised the victory—but the methods in the two cases were not alike. On one occasion he was to wait until he heard "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees". The Lord said in effect, "You wait. I will go first; when you hear Me, then follow." When David heard "the sound of a going" he was to bestir himself, for the Lord would go forth on the breeze. Some of us would fight the Lord's battles always in exactly the same way. It is well that we should enquire of the Lord. We must have divine direction, nor must we conclude that because some people serve the Lord in a way different from ours that their service can be neither successful nor acceptable to God.

You know the egotistical habit some people have of always telling you exactly how they do. "I always do so-and-so." I know somebody who apparently has not read very much, but who is tremendously fond of quoting herself. That is the highest authority she knows: "I always say so-and-so." I have felt like telling that lady, "Would it not be a good thing for you to hold your peace for a while, and let somebody else say something?" She never made a mistake—could not make a mistake. She never said anything that needed to be revised: "I said it once: I shall always say it." Adam is the only man I ever heard of who was not a boy once, and Eve the only woman who was not a girl once; which means that since the beginning of human history men have had to learn by experience, and revise their decisions and judgments a great many times. But apparently there are some who imagine they were right from the beginning. Unfortunately, they cannot remember all the mistakes they made when they were children.

Let us remember that God has various ways of working. Do you drive a Ford car? If it is this year's model, or last year's, be careful of other cars of the same model. I had a Ford car once. I parked it on one occasion, and when I came out and got into my car I could not start it. I later discovered I was in somebody else's car! It was exactly like mine. It is very clever,

to be able to make two things so exactly alike that no one can tell them apart. God never does that. There is infinite variety in all His works. No two flowers, no two people, no two faces, no two voices, are alike. There is a difference even in twins.

Furthermore, when the Lord has blessed you once in your battle against the Philistines, do not fold your arms and say, "From this forward I know how to fight the Philistines." "How do you know?" "I fought them before, and I won." Perhaps the Lord has some different plan this time. David, the old warrior, who fought in many battles, in his initial, glorious victory used a sling and stone; it is not recorded that he ever used it again, notwithstanding he had four unused stones in his sash. Another time he used a sword; one time he made a frontal attack, and again waited for the "sound of a going". He always enquired of the Lord—and was always victorious. That is the way to do it—and that is enough to-night.

DR. J. W. HOYT

Among the very happy recollections of the early years of our ministry is the remembrance of our years of fellowship with Dr. J. W. Hoyt. We knew him first as Pastor of Dresden Baptist Church, Ontario; later he served in Gladstone; Aylmer; Victoria Ave., Hamilton; Chatham, Ontario; then the First Church, Jackson, Mich.; First Baptist Church, Peru, Indiana; and Belden Ave. Baptist Church, Chicago. In every one of these spheres of labour Dr. Hoyt was eminently successful. Through all the years he has maintained his position as a believer in the infallibility of the Bible, with all its implications; and a preacher of the gospel of grace, which means, of course, salvation through the blood.

Dr. Hoyt is a very fine preacher, and we were glad to learn recently that he is engaged in evangelistic and Bible-Conference work. His permanent address is: 761 North Lake St., Warsaw, Indiana. A visit by Dr. Hoyt to any Baptist church we are sure would bring great blessing. Many "evangelists" we should hesitate to recommend. They have a limited supply of sermons, and have spent themselves at the end of a few weeks. They know nothing at all of the problems of the pastorate, or of the administration of church affairs; and not infrequently many of them leave more trouble than blessing behind them. Dr. Hoyt has spent his whole ministerial life as a pastor, and understands the pastor's point of view.

We are writing this note without Dr. Hoyt's knowledge or consent. It is not an advertisement, not even remotely has such a note been suggested to us. But from time to time we have received enquiries from churches as to where they could find a man whom they could trust to conduct an evangelistic mission without having to fear the after-effects to which we have referred. It is with thought of such churches, and with a desire to be of service to them, we have written this note.

It was our pleasure and honour to serve as Dr. Hoyt's "best man" at his wedding; and we do not fear that he will quarrel with us when we say the only thing about Dr. Hoyt that is just a bit better than himself is his wife! They are a splendid pair! May long years be given them, and blessings be multiplied to them in their future ministry!

CONGRATULATIONS—TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH, TACOMA

We have received two leaflets of four pages each entitled, *Temple Tidings*. They are published by the Temple Baptist Church, Masonic Temple Building, Tacoma, Washington, dated February 1st and February 8th. They tell the story of the emergence of another Baptist church out of Egypt.

But before telling the story of this church's victory we may remark that one of its members is a GOSPEL WITNESS subscriber, and some time ago we received a letter from our Tacoma friend speaking in glowing terms of the faithful ministry of Dr. R. L. Powell, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Tacoma. This subscriber told us of his unswerving

idelity to the Word of God, and to the great principles of the gospel for which Baptists—that is, true Baptists—have always stood. But this friend expressed some doubt as to whether such a biblical ministry would be accepted by the First Baptist Church as a whole. Now we will let the *Temple Tidings* tell the story:

Faith in God

"By faith Abraham . . . went out, not knowing whither he went." We would not be presumptuous enough to compare our experience with that of the great patriarch, Abraham, but we certainly have had some things in common.

"To friends who are outside of the local situation, it would be of interest to know that through a technical ruling in the Constitution of the First Baptist Church, by a minority vote, the pastor's resignation was forced upon the majority, with the result that a strong group of men and women have withdrawn from the First Baptist Church and are organizing the Temple Baptist Church of Tacoma.

"The word has been given to the public that the differences which produced this division were over methods of operation. We would not call in question the veracity of those who gave out the statement, but we do not accept their conclusions. The difference was fundamental and basic. The whole field of Christian testimony and spiritual ideals in the Kingdom of God was involved, and as the months come and go we will see very clearly and unmistakably the evidences of these differences.

"It may be wise to call attention to the fact that what one believes ultimately produces his methods, plans, ideals, and purposes in life. A character, as it is to-day, is the product of what was believed yesterday.

"We have been marvellously blessed of the Lord in our efforts thus far. A fine spiritual atmosphere in the services, a number of souls saved, splendid crowds in all of our services, and a general spirit of optimism, have been the things which have thus far characterized our services. We have spacious and comfortable quarters in the Masonic Temple, which we have leased for a year. We have every reason for feeling encouraged with our present situation.

"As Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went, so we as a group of people were set adrift without even a place to meet. This happened Thursday night, Jan. 18th. We had no organization, no equipment, no organized plan of procedure, but by the following Sunday we had as good a place for our church services as could be found in the city, a completely organized Sunday School and B.Y.P.U., a choir set up and ready to go, and a wonderful crowd of folks in the preaching service.

"We have been criticized for praying and for holding prayer meetings; we have been laughed at because of our faith in God's providential care. It seems to us as if God has given a fair demonstration of answered prayer. It ought to be said in this connection that not only were many spiritually-minded people in our group praying, but there were prayer meetings and special prayers held in our behalf in many other groups, and communions. Just this morning from far-away New York City comes a letter from one of God's noblemen, saying that he is praying for us, and enclosed a cheque for \$10.00. We have had communications from many sources, expressing fellowship and prayerful interest, and multitudes are watching this faith venture with high hopes and sincere good wishes. DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? He most assuredly does!

"In addition to a large group who signed cards to commit themselves to this new organization, we have had eighty-two come forward on the calls at the close of the services within the last two Sundays. Some few have been from the original groups but many have been for baptism—God be praised."

We are always sorry to hear of divisions among the people of God. But there is something worse than division, and that is the compromise which is an infallible symptom of a fatal sleeping-sickness. Moreover, we remember the scripture, "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you".

Nearly twelve and a half years ago Jarvis Street Church passed through a similar experience. It was, indeed, be-

ginning to manifest itself just about thirteen years ago at this time. God has so marvellously blessed us since that time that we cannot now regret the tribulation of those days. God gave us a majority, and that enabled us to retain the building. But they do strange things in the United States. There appears to be little religious freedom in the land of the brave and the free. In the case of Tacoma a minority compelled the Pastor's resignation. In Paducah, Ky., some years ago an overwhelming majority supported the Pastor, but the court decided that in a Baptist church the deacons control the property! And so they gave the property to the minority. Property, however, matters little where principles are concerned.

We congratulate Dr. Powell and those who have formed the new Temple Baptist Church. We are especially glad that they have decided to remain "Baptist". Nothing, it appears to us, is more inconsistent when a lot of religious rogues disturb the peace of a Baptist church, than for the Bible-lovers of that church to attribute the roguery to anything that could properly be called Baptist. The time has come when it is necessary for true Baptists—that is, for those standing for what Baptists have always believed—to redeem even the name, and to start over again a New Testament church, as they are obviously determined to do, under Dr. Powell's leadership, in Tacoma.

We remember that when we were in the midst of the battle we were encouraged by the receipt of communications from hundreds of people from all denominations, who believed the Bible to be the Word of God. And we would pass this bit of information on to our GOSPEL WITNESS family, with the suggestion that as many of them as may be minded to do so should send to this new church a word of Christian fellowship and congratulation. Let us all remember Dr. Powell and his work at the mercy seat. We have not the privilege of Dr. Powell's acquaintance, but having been along the road we are sure great blessing awaits the Temple Church, Tacoma, in the future. The Declaration of Faith of the new church is almost a model one, and some day we may give it space in THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

A BULGARIAN LETTER

A week or so ago when we opened our mail, Rev. David Alexander, of Waverley Road Church, Toronto, was in our office. Among the letters was one from Rev. Paul L. Mishkoff, Gypsy Mission of the Bulgarian Baptist Union, with Headquarters at 18 Sheinova Str., Sophia, Bulgaria. Mr. Alexander informed us that he had known Brother Mishkoff years ago in the United States, when he was a student in Moody Bible Institute.

We publish below Brother Mishkoff's letter in full:

"My dear Dr. Shields:

"THE GOSPEL WITNESS comes every week, and we read your splendid sermons not only to our family circle, but to many other people. Of course we translate the sermons to them, because the people here use only the Bulgarian language.

"Many of the people who heard the sermons expressed the desire to see them translated into the Bulgarian language, and printed by the thousand for free distribution. There is no such literature here, and the people are hungry for the Word of God so well expounded.

"We can publish every month four sermons in one form, and it will cost us only \$46.00 for 10,000 copies. We have not this money at hand, but we pray that the Lord will provide the funds.

"Maybe some of the members of your large church will gladly come to our help in printing your sermons in the Bulgarian language.

"I am happy that I can write all this, and trust that the Lord will help you to stand behind us with your prayers and practical help.

Very sincerely and prayerfully yours,
(Signed) Paul L. Mishkoff."

From the above it will be seen that four sermons can be published in an edition of ten thousand copies for \$46.00. It may be there are some readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS who would like to do a bit of missionary work in supplying the means for the publication of these sermons, after translation into the Bulgarian language. If so, we should be most happy to receive the money and to forward it to Brother Mishkoff.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 9

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 11 FIRST QUARTER March 18th, 1934

JOSIAH'S REFORMS

Lesson Text: 2 Kings, chapter 23:1-30.

Golden Text: "The king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant."—2 Kings 23:3.

Bible School Reading—2 Kings 23:1-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Ps. 119:33-48. Tuesday—Neh. 8:1-8. Wednesday—Neh. 13:1-9. Thursday—Mark 11:11-19. Friday—Matt. 16:1-12. Saturday—2 Peter 1:13-21.

I. THE COVENANT (vs. 1-3).

The scene described in the verses of this section is impressive and significant. The finding of the book of the law in the temple had created a profound effect on king Josiah, leading him to seek direction respecting his duty in the light of the same. Such an effect was neither temporary nor superficial, but led to a nation-wide reformation. As a commencement to this widespread result the king assembled the elders and people together and "read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord", after which he made a covenant before the Lord to obey the teaching of the book. "And all the people stood to the covenant." This implies something akin to a national, public consecration to the service of God. It was a solemn event, and one pregnant with hope of better things for the nation. It signified the beginning of a national reformation based on the word of God. Note the need for such a reformation in the present time. There can be no real spiritual revival on any other basis, and consequently, the public and private reading of the Bible should be encouraged. Observe, further, the power of God's Word, the personal initiative of the king, implying the privilege and responsibility of persons in positions of authority, the wise plan of Josiah, the beneficial effect of the public reading of the Word of God, the wisdom of leading the people to an immediate decision respecting obedience thereto, and the significance of a covenant agreed to under such circumstances.

II. CLEANSING JERUSALEM (vs. 4-14).

Having decided to carry out the will of God as revealed in His law, Josiah lost no time in putting his pledge into execution. Systematically and thoroughly he proceeded about the business. First, he cleansed the temple of all its idolatrous vessels, burning these in the fields of Kidron, outside of Jerusalem, (v. 4). He then put down the idolatrous priests, (v. 5), brought the mystic tree from out of the house of the Lord, and burned the same at the brook Kidron, (v. 6), broke down the houses, or tents of the Sodomites, wherein dwelt the women associated with the sensual, idolatrous rites of Asherah, (v. 7), brought the backslidden priests to Jerusalem, where, although prevented from participating in the temple services, they were given their necessary sustenance, (vs. 8, 9). Topheth was defiled, (v. 10), the horses dedicated to the sun were taken away, (v. 11), and evidently all the altars, high places, and images on which he could lay his hands did the king break down, and reduce to dust, (vs. 12-14).

It is quite clear that the king's object was to crush the idolatrous system of religion out of existence. He believed it to be detrimental to his people, and contrary to the teaching of the law, and, therefore, became its uncompromising enemy. In respect to this we may note his obvious sincerity, his courage, wisdom, decisiveness of character, and wholeheartedness in service. It was a work of destruction on which he was bent, but it constituted a very necessary part of

the whole constructive plan. It meant the clearing away of that which would hinder the proper building of the edifice. It also implied the sweeping away of that which was sapping the life of the people, and which had brought the divine judgment upon the nation. It was too late to avert that judgment, (22:15-20), but the king was doing what he could to bring the people to a place of repentance, possibly with the thought of escaping the evil consequences, but certainly with the knowledge that, in any case, his course was the only right one. We applaud his efforts in thus combatting error, but what of our attitude toward false teaching, and other forms of evil? Are we equally uncompromising and persevering in our conflict with them? Note the necessity for boldness in the face of antagonistic forces, (Acts 4:29-31), and for absolute devotion to the service of God, even to the extent of life itself, (Acts 21:13).

III. CLEANSING BETHEL AND SAMARIA, (vs. 15-20).

Josiah was not content with cleansing Jerusalem of its idolatrous defilement, but proceeded to visit places outside of his realm for the same purpose. At Bethel he threw down the heathen altar, previously polluting the same with bones from the sepuchres. In thus disturbing the graves he made an exception of the tomb of the man of God who had predicted the destruction of the altar, (1 Kings 13:2). He also left undisturbed the tomb of "the prophet that came out of Samaria", (vs. 15-18). Note the exact fulfillment of the prophet's prediction. In other parts of Samaria the king acted with equal energy in extirpating idolatrous worship, even to the extent of slaying the priests who were the leaders of the ungodly system, (v. 19-20). Note again the whole-hearted nature of Josiah's service, his thorough devotion to God, and to the best interests of his people, and his respect for the sainted dead.

IV. OBSERVING THE PASSOVER, (vs. 21-23).

Having overthrown the opposing system, Josiah set up again the worship of Jehovah, making arrangements for the temple worship, (2 Chron. 35:2-6), and observing the passover. Inasmuch as sin had been put away, and a return had been made to God based on the divine revelation of the law, it was to be expected that great joy would be experienced in the change, and this we are informed was the case. Obedience means harmony with God, with consequent peace and joy in the human heart. Emphasis should, therefore, be placed on the necessity for obedience to the will of God, both in putting away sin, and doing righteousness, (Eph. 4:22-32; Rom. 6:13). The passover feast was one of the important feasts of Israel, having its inception in Egypt, (Ex. 12:1-20), and commanded to be observed annually in remembrance of the national deliverance from Egypt, (Ex. 12:27). Typically, it speaks of the Lord our Passover, (1 Cor. 5:7), the Lamb of God, (John 1:29), slain from the foundation of the world, (Rev. 13:8), by Whose shed blood we have been redeemed, (1 Pet. 1:19), and on Whom His people feed, (John 6:53-56), in holiness of life, (1 Cor. 5:6-8), and in the attitude of pilgrims and strangers in this world, (1 Pet. 2:19). Note the prominence of bloodshed in Scripture in relation to salvation. This is God's plan. Man would rather leave it out, but when he does so he rejects the divine way of redemption. Bloodshed brings before us the heinousness of sin, the judgment resting upon it, and the mercy of God in providing a substitute for sinners.

V. COMMENDATION AND DEATH (vs. 24-30).

At the end of this brief account of Josiah's life we are again reminded of his faithfulness in removing every possible trace of idolatry from his domains, (v. 24), and the highest commendation is given him for his devotion to God, (v. 25), although this did not avail to the turning aside of the divine anger, (vs. 26-28). The nation had sinned too grievously in the past to escape the consequences, and the time was near for its exile under the Babylonian power. Note the necessity for living right in order to have an epitaph of the highest order. Josiah served the Lord wholeheartedly. See Moses, (Deut. 34:10-12), Paul, (2 Tim. 4:6-8), and other saints of old. The death of Josiah is related as having occurred in connection with a war between Egypt and Assyria. The army of the former nation probably advanced up the Maritime Plain on its way to Charchemish, leaving Jerusalem on its right. Evidently there was no desire on the part of the king of Egypt to assail Judah, but Josiah esteemed it his duty, as a manifestation of his faithfulness to Assyria, to impede his progress, and so met his death.

WIT, SEM, AND RAD

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, sanitarium, 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:.....