

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

GOD'S ANSWER TO THE MADNESS OF ECONOMIC THEORISTS

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, June 3rd, 1934.

(Stenographically Reported)

Broadcast over CFRB, 690 k.c., as is every Sunday evening service of Jarvis Street Church, from 7 to 8.30 Eastern Daylight-Saving Time.

"God is not in all his thoughts."—Psalm 10:4.

This Psalm describes a wicked man; some of his distinguishing characteristics as being that he is without God: there is no God in his thinking: "God is not in all his thoughts." Or, as the Revised Version renders it, "All his thoughts are, There is no God". With this agrees the New Testament description of the unregenerate man: "Without God in the world."

For some years almost the entire world has been cognizant of the phenomenon of millions of people being in great want in the midst of unusual plenty. There has been no failure of the earth's productiveness. There has been no direct visitation from Heaven coming upon men as a special affliction. Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, have not ceased; and the earth has brought forth abundantly. Yet, perhaps, there has seldom been a time when more people have been in real distress throughout the world than during the last three or four years.

Naturally, men have endeavoured to explain this singular fact. Speaking generally, it has been attributed to the war. It has been described as the aftermath of the Great War. We have been told more specifically by the economic "experts", that the world is suffering from overproduction, the result of the mechanization of industry and agriculture—and of life generally; that man has, by these means, multiplied his productive powers; with the result that the earth has produced not less but more than usual; and with the further result that there is not enough work to go round.

Whatever be the cause, everybody recognizes that a situation obtains which urgently requires correction; but how to remedy it is the problem. The economic theorists, therefore, have set themselves the task of finding a solution. They propose to relieve the want by reducing the plenty! Governments have even taken the initiative in

recommending the destruction of cotton, and the reduction of the wheat acreage of the world; they would create a scarcity of things that are indispensable to life, designing by this means to raise prices and restore prosperity.

I hope my American hearers will not take offence this evening at what I say, for no offence is intended. We are free to form our own opinions of the operations of governments, and of the value of all human attempts which are designed to make things better. Our Southern neighbours stood by for two and a half years during the war while the world was bleeding to death. I forgive individual Americans for that fact, for they were not responsible; I can never forgive the Administration of that day for its crime against the world's liberties. But during those two and a half years certainly the United States suffered less from the war than any other nation. Indeed, they profited by it to an enormous extent. The nation, as a nation, grew rich, fabulously rich, at a price of blood. But she was driven at last to enter the conflict. Her part in it was small, her military contribution was relatively negligible: notwithstanding, the Allies, as defenders of civilization, were grateful for the United States' long-deferred assistance. The strange fact to be faced is that although this depression is ascribed by so many to the war, the nation that had least to do with it, and paid the least for it, has suffered as much, if not more, than the nations which were in it from the beginning. I am sure I am within the bounds of sober fact when I say that the United States has felt the depression not less than others. How is that fact to be accounted for? She was richer than all others, and paid less in blood and treasure relatively than any nation engaged in the War.

The President of the United States is a man of action,

and his policies psychologically, I doubt not, have had a beneficial effect. The N.R.A. has challenged the world's attention. Personally, I have always felt it is very much like the coloured water a physician gives a patient who insists that it is impossible to recover without medicine. He or she takes it—generally it is she—because she believes if she takes something there is a prospect of her getting well. The N.R.A. has had the effect of making people feel that something is at least being attempted.

The N.R.A. is said to be the product of a "brain trust". President Roosevelt is said to be acting upon the advice of certain professors. Most of the trouble in the religious world has come from salaried theological theorists who are under no necessity of reducing their theories to practice and thereby discovering how fallacious they are.

It is easy to theorize. It is a delightful occupation to build castles in Spain. I have done it myself. There is another almost equally entertaining diversion, and that is building economic Utopias in a professor's study. Were I an American, instead of calling the President's economic advisers a "brain trust", I would denominate it a *vacuum trust*. I know that is a daring thing to say—for a minister who is not an economist—and yet I dare to say it because a few people in this country have been enamoured of these principles. I doubt whether anything more destitute of reason, more devoid of any sound philosophic basis, than the N.R.A. was ever foisted upon any company of people. It is a kind of stimulant which I predict will have a terrible nerve reaction. Watch the papers in time to come. May we be preserved from such folly in this country.

But somebody will say, "Something ought to be done. We are badly off here, as there." I admit that it is possible sometimes to suspend the laws of nature, or at least to set in operation forces which will, for a time, overcome the effects of the operations of natural law. You can force water up hill. That is not its natural course, but it can be forced against its own nature. All the rivers run into the sea. Left to themselves, that is the direction they will take; but you can artificially create a situation locally which seems to set the very laws of nature at defiance. You can irrigate a part of a desert, but you cannot irrigate a whole continent. And these economic remedies are, in the nature of the case, only temporary and local. They do not go to the root of the matter, and, therefore, cannot effect a world-wide improvement.

In every quarter men are endeavouring to counteract what we have learned to call the depression by human effort. When unbelief is in the ascendancy, superstition of all sorts becomes rampant. In an evening paper last night I read a story of the black magic of Africa. I do not know how much of it is true: I have a shrewd suspicion that a very large discount is necessary. Another article in the same paper dealt at length with Spiritualism in England, the article included a list of names of men of prominence who have become its devotees. There was the suggestion that it is possible—though the correspondent does not subscribe to it—that he had talked to an Italian doctor who spoke English with a French accent, who had died three hundred years ago! Turning the page I read an interview with certain ministers who had said that they did not believe it was any use to pray for rain, or to pray for divine interference in the course of nature at any point. The

chief value of prayer they believe to be subjective; and that in any case its operation is limited to human activities.

Where lies the real difficulty of our day? Just this, that men are seeking a remedy for the world's ills—and for individual ills, too—apart from God, while leaving God out of their thought. God is eliminated from all their theories and their plans. He is not a factor in their philosophies: "All his thoughts are, There is no God."

In the United States they have a wheat-board, or something of the sort, whose special business is to see that people do not grow too much! The question was asked some time ago in the Canadian Parliament what action the Government was taking to reduce the wheat acreage in the Northwest? The Prime Minister replied in effect, that reports from the West pointed to the probability that the grasshoppers were making governmental action unnecessary. Why not elect grasshoppers to Parliament! It is admitted the grasshoppers have accomplished what the government had contemplated doing. Understand, I am not criticizing the Prime Minister, but his questioner. I commend the Prime Minister for his answer. It indicates, however, a striking state of affairs when authoritatively in the Parliament of the land the Prime Minister declares that the grasshoppers have done something which the government had contemplated doing.

I am aware that I shall be told it is too late in the day to expect intelligent people to believe that God exercises any direct control over grasshoppers; that their appearance in plague proportions is the inevitable effect of certain natural causes. But that is not what the Bible says. The Bible says the Lord has a great deal to do with "the whole realm of nature"—the lilies, the birds, and even grasshoppers. We are hearing of drought nearly everywhere—in England and parts of Europe, in the United States, and certainly to an alarming extent in Canada. What if it continues? Unless I greatly misread the signs, God is taking a hand in reducing production. Many will say that all this can be accounted for on natural grounds. Listen to this from Joel: "The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?"—You see, they had got away from that. These things the prophet is about to speak of belonged to a remote period of Israel's history—if they had any basis in fact at all—"Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten." Again in Amos: "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink. The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. And ye shall go out at the breaches, every cow at that which is before her; and ye shall cast them into the palace, saith the Lord. Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years"—they were most punctilious in the observance of religious ceremonies. People

like to be religious, to go through religious forms and ceremonies—and Israel was never more religious than when she was without God—“And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God. And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest”—I say to my ministerial friends who say it does not profit to pray for rain, that the giving or withholding of rain is in the hand of God, and that the Bible says Elijah was a man of like passions with us, that he prayed that it might not rain—and it rained not for the space of three years and six months; he prayed again, and it rained and prosperity returned. In Elijah’s day, first the famine and then the fulness that followed, came in response, not to a parliamentary committee but in response to the prayer of one man who knew how to talk with God. We are told that he was a man of like passions with ourselves; and here the Bible says—the Lord is speaking—“I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.”

Thus the pen of inspiration in that passage declares that God does control the rain, that He is sovereign over all the forces of nature, notwithstanding human unbelief.

Here then is the indictment: “God is not in all his thoughts.”

I.

THEY ENTERTAIN A CONCEPTION OF THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE FROM WHICH GOD IS EXCLUDED. I have referred to it before, but I repeat it—it needs to be repeated often. I am aware that the so-called wise men will tell me that I am “unlearned and ignorant” when I say that the philosophy of evolution, which is not a science, and is not entitled to be so regarded; for science concerns itself with demonstrated facts—the philosophy of evolution is nothing less than a philosophy of fools. It is a kind of lunacy. It has not an infinitesimal shred of evidence to support it. It is a figment of the human imagination against which all the facts of the natural world testify.

Yet men believe it because it is a theory of the material universe which permits them to exclude God. “God is not in all his thoughts.” If men have been trained to think of the universe thus, I do not wonder that our modern ministers say it is no use to pray. The idea they have of the material order is that it is a kind of car, created by someone, made ready by someone, yet with no owner, and nobody at the wheel, standing at the curb waiting for someone to occupy it and drive it. I tell you that although God may not be in the thoughts

of men, He has never permitted Himself to be excluded from His world: “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.” God lives, and if men will not hear His gospel, if they will not respond to a spiritual appeal, then history must repeat itself, and God will show His hand even in the material world.

God is answering to-day what I have called the madness of economic theorists. The farmers of Iowa have sent to Washington to say no reduction of their acreage is necessary. Hundreds of people in Alberta are ready to emigrate because of the heat, drought, dust and grasshoppers. You may argue that these things come in the ordinary course of nature. So men thought of ancient times because God was not in all their thought. But if they will not hear the word of mercy they must hear the voice of judgment. God spoke to us in the war: and He is speaking to us again.

We need a conception of things that will give place to God; evolutionary godlessness will lead to godless economics. Men will attempt to substitute their economic pumps for rain from heaven;—and lunatic economic hydraulics for the natural lunar movements of the tides. Hence, “It is of no use to pray, no use to invoke the help of God in the realm of nature,” say the religious leaders of our day.

Of course men will assume that attitude who reject the inspiration and authority of the Bible as the word of God. The Bible is full of teaching for this hour. It is the only book that is abreast of the times. It is the only book that can guide any of us from the humblest citizen to the most exalted statesman in wise measures in these days of distress and deepening depression.

II.

“God is not in all his thoughts.” That is true of OUR EDUCATIONAL THEORISTS. No matter what department of life you contemplate, God is to be excluded. Our educational system even in Canada is almost a godless educational system; not wholly so, but it is a system that gives no place to the God of the Bible, because it is a system which inferentially and implicitly denies the Bible. You cannot teach that damnable heresy of Evolution in your schools without discrediting absolutely the inspired and infallible Word of God. The Evolutionary hypothesis is the mother of nearly all heresies. It is the foundation of many false philosophies. It is grounded in error, and involves a denial of every principle of revealed religion: “God is not in all his thoughts.”

III.

What will you do in THE ECONOMIC REALM? I doubt whether you can arrive at the truth in any sphere of human investigation if you eliminate God. I will put it more positively: I am certain that you cannot arrive at ultimate truth in respect to any matter which engages the thought of man if you eliminate God from your thinking. The man from whose thoughts God is excluded can never arrive at truth. That is true of economics. The N.R.A. and all other regulations to the contrary notwithstanding, prosperity will return, if it ever comes, by divine decree. It will come by the operation of laws which are beyond human control. It will come as the tides come: in God’s time. It will come as spring and summer come, by the decree of God.

It will never come by these artificial remedies which ignore the fundamental cause of it all, the godlessness of people who have turned utterly away from God.

Some may say, "That fanatic of Jarvis Street thus speaks." So be it. I preach no other than I preached here more than twenty years ago. Then this church was esteemed as among the most eminently respectable in the city. I dare still to stand for God, and for the God of the Bible. And I tell you that the pulpits of to-day without the Bible, without the God of the Bible, without any adequate conception of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who came into this world to show us that God is accessible to men, and that the arm of God can be invoked for human help—the pulpits that are without that message are without any useful message for this day. Try all your political nostrums—they will do you no good. Try all your N.R.A.'s, or whatever you call your latest manifestation of economic lunacy! Whatever is without God is death-stricken. May we be preserved from such experiments in Canada! I seldom admire anything that is said by William Randolph Hurst, but he said something recently that went to the heart of the matter, when he said in effect that America has made several attempts to recover herself economically, with some prospect of success; but just as soon as business began to get its head above water it was promptly thrown a life-preserver by the N.R.A. in the form of a piece of lead pipe.

Our amateur statesmen are like boys that are given a piece of land to cultivate. They sow their seeds—and tear them up every night to see whether they are growing! Let it alone! The less business is interfered with the more rapidly will it recover. Let its regulation be confined to the principles of the moral law. That is the only "code" modern business needs. Leave it to God. Let the Author of the tides of life have His way in the lives of individuals and of nations and we shall have prosperity. But we can have it in no other way. We can never become prosperous by ruling God out of our thought. The economists are concerned for the welfare of the producers. But the producers are relatively fewer in number than the consumers. Higher prices for the producers will not make them more prosperous while the consumers have no money to buy. We hear of "the ultimate consumer"! I plead the cause of the original Producer! How can any plan succeed from which He is excluded? And how can any man plan the welfare of his fellows, of whom it is true that "God is not in all his thoughts"?

IV.

But worst of all, WE ARE ASKED TO ACCEPT A RELIGION WITHOUT GOD. A religion without God! Little by little professing Christian churches are drifting in their teaching toward the principles of Humanism, a religion that has no personal, transcendent, God in it. What God there is, is a kind of divine dwarf whom evolution has reduced to the status of an impotent spectator of the governance of the cosmos. Even among those who are in some quarters regarded as orthodox, there are those who recommend men to try to lift themselves up to heaven by their shoestraps. "Help yourself", is the motto of our day. A dear brother wrote me a letter recently seriously criticising a sermon I had preached on the sovereign grace of God. He seemed to think that man can do a great deal. Well, this poor man cannot—and I am morally certain that you cannot either. A salvation without God? Impossible!

You cannot think accurately on any subject until you have seen God in the face of Jesus Christ. I believe there is a vastly greater content to that word of His than is generally believed, when our Lord said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Jesus Christ is *the* truth. All truth is embodied in Him. There is no truth that can be known in the absolute apart from Him. You cannot be a master of science, of any department of science, without Christ. "He is before all things, and in him all things consist."

The widow of Zarephath knew more about economics than all the members of President Roosevelt's "brain trust" put together, and all the professors of economics in all our universities everywhere. She knew that she had a little meal in a barrel—and a very little; she had measured it. She had a little oil in a cruse—a very little. She knew exactly how much. She knew these two together were just enough to make a cake for herself and her son—then they would be at the end of everything. They would eat the cake, and die. But there came into her reckoning another factor. When she went out to gather sticks she met a stranger who said to her, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink . . . Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand." When she protested that that was beyond her power, he said, "Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth—when rain comes, He will send it." She did as she was told, and she, her son, and God's representative, together, by the faithfulness of God, lived until the rain came.

You cannot be right about anything if you leave God out of your thinking:

"What think ye of Christ? is the test;
To try both your plan and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him."

Our only wisdom is to accept Jesus Christ as God's thought, as the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us, and Who is full of grace and truth. If we have Him, if we know Him, He will see us through to the end of the chapter.

There is nothing more urgently needed to-day than the proclamation of the gospel that proposes to save individuals, one at a time, by bringing them back to God. May the Lord help us thus to abide in Him, and in His presence; to put our trust wholly in God, for vain is the help of man. May the Lord bless us all for His name's sake, Amen.

Let us pray:

We do not deserve, O Lord, to be permitted to come into Thy holy presence, so grievously have we sinned against Thee, so frequently have we trampled under foot the requirements of Thy holy law. How often have we endeavoured, like the prodigal, to do our own will, to organize our own life! But in so doing we have all come to want in the end, just as he did. Now we pray Thee, O Lord, to help us to remember that Thou art the chief Producer, that Thou art to be supremely considered; for only as we please Thee, only as we are brought into harmony with Thee and Thy laws for us, can we hope to be at peace with Thee. Help us clearly to understand that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself". Help us to see that the blood of the Lord Jesus washes away all our sin.

What mistakes we have made! Of what follies have we all been guilty! How could we hope for better things were it not that God had anticipated it all, and given Jesus Christ to die in our room and stead, so that His blood purges away the iniquity of the past, and deposits His merit to our account to cover all the transgressions of the future? We are saved by grace, and by grace alone. Help us all to return to Thee this evening.

If any have heard by radio who have tried to do without God, let this word, imperfectly spoken, challenge their thought,—the man of business, even the man who is engaged in governmental affairs, whoever he may be, help him to see that he cannot do without God. Help us similarly to realize that truth. Bless us by Thine abounding grace, and glorify Thyself in us all, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET

Sunday in Jarvis Street was just a good summer Sunday. The hot weather affected the School attendance somewhat, there being but 1,120 present. In the evening there was a fine congregation, when the sermon appearing in this issue was preached. The evening service was followed by the

Monthly Communion and Reception Service, when the Pastor gave the Hand of Fellowship to twelve new members. Some of the best days are most difficult to report. Sunday was just a good day; although we suppose if some churches could report such a great gathering as the company that attended the Communion Service it would provide a subject for much writing. But in Jarvis Street it was, as one of the deacons remarked, "another good day".

SEMINARY REPRESENTATIVES VISIT THE CHURCHES

For the next few weeks the instructors of the Seminary will visit the churches of the Union in the Seminary's interests. The Seminary has never been a very successful beggar, but we are driven to the necessity of letting the people know her need; and for this purpose most of the churches will be visited by some representative of the Seminary within the next few weeks. We hope all our Seminary friends will give them a cordial welcome. If you cannot respond to our appeal with a large contribution, please do not hesitate to give what you can. The Seminary urgently needs at least \$4,000.00 from the churches between now and next September.

Proofs of the Progress of Preaching

We believe in the work of Toronto Baptist Seminary, and we think you, Christian friend, ought to do so also. We present herewith our proofs.

First, Faith—We hold Jesus Christ, Son of Man, Son of God, as Saviour, Mediator, King. We accept the Bible as the record God has given us of Him. Our marching orders are His commission: "Make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Trinity, and teach them all My commands". With Luther we can say: "Here we stand; we can do no other; so help us God, Amen."

Second, Figures—In its 7½ years of service, the Seminary has graduated 63 men and women. Of these and other former students the following is a classification:

Pastors in Canada	40
Pastors Abroad	4
Deaconess	1
Foreign Missionaries	10
Total number in full-time work	65
Student Pastors and Evangelists for the summer recess 1934	13

Third, Features—We present now some "samples" of the work our men and women are doing.

The enemies said the work in the village of Crossfield, Alberta, would last a couple of months, but in two years



Pastor C. S. McGrath (class of '30) so enjoyed the blessing of the Lord that this church was built and opened free of debt.

When Mr. McGrath left the work at Crossfield, Alta., it was to succeed Rev. W. W. Fleischer, our teacher of Church History, in the pastorate of the Baptist Church at Stouffville, Ontario, together with the historic First Markham Church. This beautiful village church at Stouffville was erected under Mr. Fleischer's able leadership.



The Saanichton Baptist Church on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, has Pastor E. V. Apps ('31) as its minister. Faithful teaching has deepened the spiritual life of this family church.

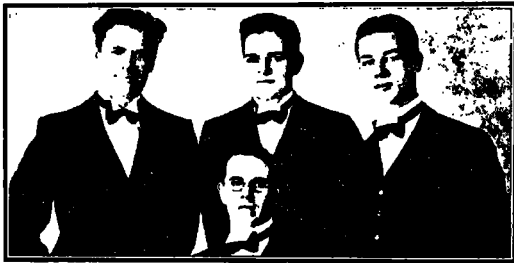


At the O'Connor School House, near Fort William, Ontario, Mr. N. Johnston (class of '33) has been doing evangelistic work. Several have professed conversion.

A church indeed!—with a pastor's study—roofed with canvas—at the rear, was erected for Student L. D. MacAsh



in the pioneer mining village of Pascalis, Quebec. Several were baptized in the nearby lake last summer.



The Invictus Male Quartette, all first-year Seminary men, is doing evangelistic work throughout the Province this summer.

In a run-down condition the Baptist church at Pavilion, New York, called Rev. Adam Galt ('33), with his gifted wife (class of '35). In one year's time the work has revived and prospered and taken its stand against Modernism.

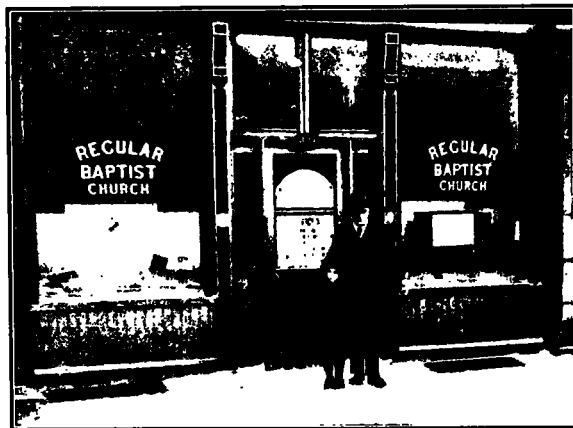


In Edmonton, the most strategic centre in Alberta, Norwood Baptist Church, newly organized with a membership of 24, called Rev. G. W. Searle (class of '30) as pastor in 1930. Since then he has baptized 60. "We have won with Elijah on Carmel and have despaired with him under the juniper tree, but we raise, thankfully and reverently, our Ebenezer."

Most of a Jamaican home! Among such people as these three Seminary graduates minister with real success: Rev. and Mrs. J. W. Knight ('29) (both Canadians) and Rev. O. T. Johnston ('30) (Jamaican). The latter has 9 different charges!



At Belleville and in the nearby village of Sydney, Pastor J. Armstrong ('32) (foreground) has built up the work, with many additions in two years.

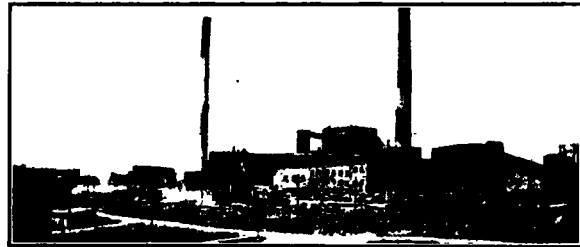


In the ancient city of Jaffa (Joppa), Palestine, from which Jonah took ship for Tarshish, and in the land of the Nile, where Israel was so long in iron bondage, Miss Sydney Bonyun ('29), herself born in Trinidad, British West Indies, is

teaching Mohammedans and Jews the Gospel of the true Prophet of God and Him Whom Moses foretold. One of our most brilliant graduates, Miss Bonyun, learned Arabic, a most difficult Oriental language, without the usual school term. Here we see her (holding the dog) in the midst of a group of Bible School children.



The mining town of Noranda, Quebec, whose chief plant is shown below, knows no depression. Rev. Stanley Wellington ('30) has laboured for four years, and he, with other Seminary men, particularly his two brothers also in the ministry (a sister, too, graduated from the Seminary this year), has been used of the Lord to establish a live New Testament Church. Here where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.



The Agé—grass hut—"dining-room, bed-room, store-room, bath-room, and general repair shed"—where Rev. Wm. McIvor (class of '31) and Mrs. McIvor (née Annie Marks) ('31) have been winning the Yorubas of Southern Nigeria,



West Africa, for Christ. Mr. McIvor is seen standing and Mrs. McIvor sitting at the right. The "boy" in the foreground had to be "fired" for stealing the milk.

At the left is an enormous statue of Buddha (note the scantling for repair work) near the village of Tan Leng, Szechuan, interior China—a well-known symbol of heathen-



ism. (There are more numerous and larger statues of Buddha in the world than of any other religious teacher!) On the right is Rev. Sam Jeffery ('30), missionary of Christ the Deliverer.

(Continued on page 8)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 9

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 27

THIRD QUARTER

July 8, 1934

GOD'S PEOPLE FAST AND REPENT

Lesson Text: Nehemiah, chapter 9.

Golden Text: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Bible School Reading: Nehemiah 9:1-16; 32-38.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Deut. 32:1-9; Tuesday—Isaiah 37:14-20; Wednesday—Proverbs 28:1-13; Thursday—Psalm 145:1-9; Friday—Acts 13:1-5; Saturday—Romans 9:1-5.

I. FASTING AND REPENTANCE, (vs. 1-3).

The reading of the law recorded in the previous chapter led to several beneficent effects, among which are those related in this chapter. The Word of God does not return unto Him void, but accomplishes His purpose, (Is. 55:11); and in the life which yields to its teaching it manifests its power. It makes clear man's condition in the sight of God, (Is. 53:6); and states the divine requirement for reconciliation, (Acts 26:20). Its effect is at first not pleasant, but it is beneficial, and necessary to salvation. The Jews were exercised thereby, and gave evidence of a submissive response.

Several things are mentioned respecting this responsive attitude of the Jews. First, we are informed they assembled "with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them". This denotes humility and repentance before God, implying a realization and recognition of a sinful condition in His sight. It indicates also a desire for forgiveness, and a purpose to be acceptable before Him. A like submissive attitude, though not necessarily with the same outward manifestation, is necessary on the part of all who desire to be right with God. In Old Testament times this was the case, and in the New Testament period John the Baptist preached repentance, (Mark 1:4). Our Lord followed with the same message, (Mark 1:15); and Paul informs us that this is what God requires of all, (Acts 17:30). Sin is looked upon so lightly these days, that it is barely taken account of in the way of personal guilt; and mere intellectual belief is tacitly and sometimes quite plainly, all that is proclaimed as necessary to salvation. Even in Christian realms there is far from being a keen sense of sin. Professed Christians will act in a shameful way toward others, and will say nasty things about others, even to the extent of lying about them—and yet will manifest no compunction about it. They will even continue in the service of the Lord while acting in this manner, and will at no time show sorrow for their evil deeds, but will rather seek to justify the same. Such things ought not to be. May God give each of us a tender conscience. Note the necessity at the present time for national repentance.

A second thing mentioned respecting the actions of the Jews is their separation from all strangers. This was in conformity with the previously expressed command of God, (Deut. 7:1-4); and was necessary to their acceptable service before Him. We have noted on many occasions in these lessons the divine desire for a separated people. The Israelites received clear instructions concerning this, and the saints of the New Testament era are enjoined similarly. The world is at enmity against God, consequently there can be no fellowship with it on the part of those who love God. And if we love the world we give evidence that the love of the Father is not in us, (I John 2:15). All the relationships of life, including marriage, are affected by our attitude in this matter. We cannot serve God and mammon, and a definite choice must be made between God and the world. The Jews, therefore, separated from all strangers, in the marriage relation, and in other necessary ways. Note the blessedness of being wholly devoted to God, as well as its necessity to unhampered loyal service.

Observe in the third place that the people "stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers". Re-

pentance leads to confession of sin, and that again brings forgiveness. There is apt at times to be justification for sin, instead of admission of guilt—which brings greater condemnation, and manifests a lack of sin-consciousness. Note the merciful nature of God in forgiving confessed sin, (I John 1:9). In the fourth place, notice may be taken of the reading of the book of the law for a fourth part of the day, probably three hours, and confession and worship of God for another fourth part of the day. This testifies to their earnest desire to know the word of God, and their devotion to the Lord. The nature of worship might quite beneficially be dealt with, together with the desire of God for genuine worshippers, (John 4:23).

II. PRAYER AND CONFESSION, (vs. 4-38).

The Levites, as befitted their position among their people, took the lead in the public expression of national repentance. Several of them are mentioned by name, after which the call to bless the Lord is given, and the prayer is proceeded with; opening with an ascription of praise, wherein the work of God on behalf of His people is recounted, after which the national sins are confessed, and the mercy of God is extolled. Note the significance of this public confession of sin, not only as a public acknowledgment of guilt, but as a recognition of the national dependence upon God, and of the righteousness of His claim upon His people. Such an attitude is favourable to the carrying out of the divine purpose, and brings blessing upon those exercised thereby. The prayer may be studied from the standpoint of scriptural public prayer. There are times when prayer, both public and private, consists only of a number of sentences strung together, without any real feeling in them, and lacking in praise, confession and supplication. These are found in this prayer, together with other matters necessary to effectual prayer.

The prayer may be said to contain a truthful account of God's goodness and of man's disobedience, with an appeal for the divine mercy. Arising out of the need of the people, awakened by the reading of the law, one can hardly imagine it to have been uttered without feeling. There is manifest earnestness in it, also definite purpose, and consciousness of the presence of a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Such a consciousness is necessary to all prayer. We must believe that God is, and that He is the Rewarder of all who diligently seek Him, (Heb. 11:6). In the prayer God is referred to as the only God, the Creator of the heavens, the earth and the seas, and the God of Abraham. His relation to Israel is then described, the history covering in a brief way the period of the national existence from the call of Abraham to post-exilic times; wherein after referring to Abraham's call and faithfulness, the wilderness experience of Israel is related, followed by an account of the disobedience of the Lord's people on the journey, and the goodness of God in suffering their evil attitude, and blessing them with food, victory, and increase of numbers, (vs. 16-23). Their entrance into and possession of the promised land is then mentioned, together with their continued disobedience, the divine judgments and deliverances experienced by them in consequence of disobedience are listed. The prayer ends with an appeal to God to give due recognition to the national sufferings, an acknowledgment of the justice of God in His judgments, a statement respecting the subservient condition of the people at that time, and a declaration concerning the making of a sure covenant.

Several divine characteristics are evidenced in the prayer, including those already intimated, such as, His goodness, longsuffering, faithfulness, justice, mercy, kindness, grace, and power. His omniscience is also implied, and His eternal purpose. It is worthy of observation that while this prayer relates specifically to Israel, a confession similar in purport might quite truthfully be uttered by each one in the present day. God's goodness has been experienced by all, yet time and again there has been disobedience to the divine will, resulting in loss of blessing. When repentance for sin has been manifest; forgiveness has been forthcoming, and blessing has been restored. Gratitude ought to be expressed for this merciful disposition of God, and care should be exercised lest we wound the Heart which loves us so much as to treat us in this manner. Note the nature, purpose, and effect, of prayer; also the divine invitation respecting that exercise, (Heb. 4:15, 16), and the conditions necessary to success, (John 15:7).

The Union Baptist Witness

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Brantford-Hamilton Conference

The Brantford-Hamilton district Conference will be held Tuesday, June 19th, at the Courtland Union Baptist Church. Afternoon session at 2.30, and evening session at 7.30. The afternoon speaker will be Rev. E. E. Hooper of St. Catharines, and Rev. A. J. Lewis of Kitchener will speak in the evening.

Pastors in this district please announce these meetings on Sunday. Bring a picnic basket for supper.

Stanley Avenue, Hamilton

Sunday, June 3rd, 1934, marked the commencement of the twentieth year as pastor by Rev. Clifford J. Loney, and this was a day of great rejoicing in the church by pastor and people. In the morning there was a great platform service participated in by the members of the Deacons' Board, Deacon R. E. Frid reading the Scripture lesson, and Deacon J. Blair giving a short address featuring tests of the requirements of a pastor. Music was furnished by the Invictus Quartette of Toronto Baptist Seminary. These are splendid young men who are going out among the churches preaching and singing, and have very fine musical talent which was much enjoyed.

At the evening service there was a somewhat different type of platform meeting. The music was furnished by the choir and a solo by Mr. Horace Gittings. The Deacons also assisted at this service, and a special feature was addresses by two talented young ladies. Miss O. M. Gibbard, a graduate of the Toronto Baptist Seminary, gave a splendid message. Miss Minnie Lane, lately returned from the Mission field of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches in Liberia, gave a deeply spiritual address. The pastor preached at both morning and evening gatherings, and reviewed some of the highlights of the past years in the church, and called the people to renewed efforts in the work, and a whole-hearted endeavour in the great work of spreading the gospel.

The Pastor and Mrs. Loney were presented with congratulations and beautiful bouquets of roses and other flowers from the Deaconesses' Board, the Young People's Society, and Mrs. R. Frid's class of young ladies. The following testimonial from the Deacons was read:

"Dear Pastor:

"On the completion of nineteen years' service in Stanley Avenue Baptist Church, as pastor, the Board of Deacons extends to you its heartiest congratulations.

"This is a long period out of the life of any man, and we realize that you have devoted a large part of the active years of your life to this church. As a Board we have to testify to your unswerving devotion to duty, fidelity of service, deep spiritual insight, and your abilities as teacher and leader of the people in the Lord's work. The record of the large number, who through your ministry, both at home and in other fields, have found the Lord would make a long list, and hundreds rejoice in the salvation they have found while waiting upon your ministry. Many beds of sickness have been cheered by your faithful attendance and cases of sorrow and suffering have always found you ready to help.

"Your loyal stand for the truth has not always made the way easy in these difficult times, when an apparent sense of irresponsibility, a tendency to follow erroneous teaching, and a general laxity in the adherence to Biblical doctrines and Baptist principles on the part of even church members, are so wide-spread. Leadership and an absolute stand on God's Word under such conditions means a great deal.

"Your record as a preacher of the Word in all its fulness stands true through the years, and the Board of Deacons expresses its full confidence in you and your work, and stands loyally behind you in your efforts to lead the people according to the will of God, and to propagate the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"We also extend to Mrs. Loney our very best expressions of good wishes, and pray that the Lord may abundantly bless you both in future years to God's glory.

"Signed,

Clarence A. Challen

Jas. Pavey (Honorary Deacon)

Stanley H. Smith

John Bowler

R. E. Frid

J. Blair

Byron L. Cutter—Deacons."

Deacon Challen acted as Chairman at both services, and the large congregations appreciated to the full these anniversary services, and the outlook for the work in this church is very bright.

A very pleasant surprise was given the church in the installation by Heintzman & Co. of a beautiful electric two-manual and pedal organ. A few of the men, realizing the great need in this direction and having the opportunity presented to them of securing this organ, have had it placed in the church as a memorial to loved ones who in years past have been called to their heavenly home, and those who wish to have such remembrance made may have a part in supplying this memorial to the glory of God. This fills a long-felt need, and a service of dedication will be held at a later date, which will be duly announced.

C. A. CHALLEN, Clerk.

Proofs of the Progress of Preaching

(Continued from page 6)



Bo Jesi Town, Liberia, with Miss F. E. Stacey ('29) on the right at the back next to another missionary of our Board of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. In such towns as this are black diamonds being won for His crown.

In Costa Rica, Central America, every town celebrates the carrying of the black Christ! To people in such darkness of Rome, Mr. Gladstone Franklin ('29) is a faithful missionary.



And Now

In 7½ years the Lord has given us 65 full-time workers on the fields at home and abroad. Last year we had some 62 others in training. Will you help us? Our opportunities are great, so are our needs. Pray for us continually. Send us your cheque to-day. Remember us in your will. A copy of this year's Prospectus will be sent on request. Write for further information to Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis St., Toronto 2, Canada.

T. T. Shields, President.

Georgina Lindsay, Secretary.