

# 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

### THE PRIDE THAT PREVENTS PRAYER

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, June 10th, 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.

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."—Psalm 10:4.

We have, O Lord, Thy sure promise that Thou art in the midst of Thine assembled people, for verily we are this evening gathered in Thy name. We have no reason whatever for thus assembling save the expectation that Thou wilt fulfil to Thy servants the word upon which Thou hast caused us to hope, that in all the fulness of Thy saving power Thou wilt be present with us.

We have come this evening that we may worship Thee, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Yet who are we that we dare presume to come into Thy holy presence? We have all sinned and come short of Thy glory, and have forfeited all right to be where Thou art. We marvel at Thy condescension, at Thy matchless grace, in that Thou hast shown Thyself to us in the person of Him of Whom it was said, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

We thank Thee for the Mercy-seat,—

"Ah, whither could we flee for aid,  
When tempted, desolate, dismayed;  
Or how the hosts of hell defeat,  
Had suffering saints no mercy-seat?"

But we thank Thee for the unbroken law, kept inviolate in Him Who was our Substitute in life as in death. We thank Thee for His glorious Priesthood, for the fact that He was both Offering and Priest, and died in our room and stead, the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. We thank Thee for the sprinkling of blood, and for the promise respecting that manifestation of mercy in the Mercy-seat, There will I meet with thee. We know of no other meeting-place, Thou holy One, where sinful men may come where Thou art save the place where the blood is sprinkled, where a full and complete atonement has been made. This evening we rejoice in the fact that He Who is our Saviour was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and that with His stripes we are healed.

Help us, whose eyes have been illuminated by the Holy Spirit to discern this great truth, to rejoice afresh in the finished, the completed, work of Him Who, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. We lift our hearts to Thee, Thou great Intercessor, this evening, rejoicing that it is written, If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the

righteous. We all have sinned, and we need the advocacy of Jesus Christ. Plead once again in our behalf, Thou gracious Redeemer, the efficacy of Thy precious blood, the adequacy of Thy perfect righteousness; and help those of us who are Thy children to hear Thee whisper in our souls, as does the bridegroom to the bride, Thou art all fair; there is no spot upon thee.

Speak also to those who are still in nature's darkness. Well do we know that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are foolishness unto him: they are spiritually discerned. Quicken, we pray Thee, in Thine Own sovereign way, such as are dead in trespasses and in sins; and by the enlightenment of their understanding, the engagement of their affections, and the reinvigoration of their wills, by a quickening of heart and conscience in a graciously natural, and yet supernatural way, that so men whose hearts have been turned against Thee and Thy gospel may be brought to an acceptance of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Look upon this congregation, and according to our individual requirements, and the infinite fulness of grace that is in Christ Jesus, not only supply us, O God, but enrich us so that we may each have enough and to spare. Look, too, upon the larger company—we know not who they are, or where—who listen to this service, whom we see not, but whose hearts are open to the omnivident gaze of Him from Whom no secrets are hid. May this be a night of grace, of abounding grace, to the chief of sinners. May salvation come to many a heart, and to many a home. May there be gladness in the presence of the angels of God over sinners repenting.

To this end, shed light upon the sacred page. Help us to understand the deep things of God. Instruct us this evening. Bring us as little children to the feet of Christ, and help us all so to submit ourselves to Thee that we may share Thine evening benediction. Thou art ever the same: Thou dost never change,—

"Thy touch has still its ancient power;  
No word from Thee can fruitless fall:  
Hear in this solemn evening hour,  
And in Thy mercy heal us all."

For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

Last Sunday evening we gave attention to the last clause of this verse, and we observed that it is characteristic of the natural man that he not only endeavours to exclude God from speech and conduct, but that he excludes Him even from his thinking; that his philosophies, his explanations of things, his predictions, his whole outlook upon life, past, present, and future, is an outlook from which God is excluded: "God is not in all his thoughts."

In this Psalm many evils are charged against this wicked man of godless thinking, and all these evils flow from the fact that "God is not in all his thoughts". But the first clause of this verse tells us why God is not in all his thoughts, why he refuses to seek God: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." So, while the evils of his life are attributed to his godlessness, his godlessness is attributed to his pride. What a strange thing that is, that pride should be named as a cardinal sin, as the sin upon which other evils hinge, as the thing that is fundamental to a godless life. Man, in his folly, is too proud to seek after God.

## I.

Let me begin this evening with this, that PRIDE IS THE FIRSTFRUIT OF SIN'S INVERSION OF THE LAWS OF ORDER; for sin has turned the world upsidedown, it has made everything eccentric, out of centre. It has put man's thinking, his conduct, and his whole life, out of proper relation to God. It has dislocated, disarticulated, his life, introducing fret and friction, and a thousand irregularities.

That is why it is so difficult to convince people of spiritual truth. The natural man sees everything negatively; that is, he sees things opposite to reality, like a photographic negative: the light is dark, and the dark, light; the good is evil, and the evil is good. The enemy spake more truly than he knew when they said of the apostolic preachers, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." That is precisely the programme of the gospel, to restore life to its normal balance, to bring men back into right relation to God: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself", eliminating the discord, the dissonance, the fret and friction, of life, bringing men back into proper relation to God. That lies at the root of that profound yet simple saying of the Lord, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

But the unilluminated mind cannot understand it, for "through the pride of his countenance", the man will not seek after God. He is proud of things of which he ought to be ashamed, and ashamed of things of which he might legitimately be proud:—

"Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,  
Men would be angels, angels would be gods  
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,  
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:  
And who but wishes to invert the laws  
Of Order, sins against the Eternal Cause."

That is sin. It is an inversion of the laws of order. It is a turning of the whole sphere of life upsidedown, topsy-turvy, if you like. "What fruit had ye then", said the apostle to those who had been brought back to God, "in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Thus

conversion is revolutionary. It turns things right-about-face.

But it is with this principle we are concerned for a little while this evening, that pride is the mother of evil, that it is pride which prevents a man from praying. You see the figure? An arrogant spirit manifesting its pride in the look of the countenance, and refusing to turn his head godward. You have met people like that, I suppose, who have suddenly become, in their own estimation, somewhat important? You have said, "He passed me on the street as though I were nothing at all; he did not even look my way." Mr. Newly-Rich! How exalted he has suddenly become! That is the picture, the man who through the pride of his countenance will not recognize or acknowledge God.

The principle of the text is *historically true to fact*. It was so in the beginning, in the tale of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe. It is written that when man had sinned, and by the fact of his sin, his nakedness before God was disclosed to him, he hid himself. Ashamed! Ashamed of what? Of his sin? No! In the pride of his countenance he refused to seek after God. Nor would he ever have sought him if God had not first sought the sinner. That is the gospel: "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." But, left to himself, man is as proud as Lucifer—proud of the very things which ought to bring him down in mortification before God; he "will not seek after God".

This principle is illustrated in many conspicuous examples in this inspired history. I can refer to but one or two. You recall how Moses was divinely commissioned and sent to Pharaoh, how he appeared before him in the name of Jehovah, and how in His name he said, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." And you recall how Pharaoh proudly answered, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Thereafter he was visited with plague upon plague in which the mighty power of God was increasingly, in ever fuller measure, demonstrated; with the result that Pharaoh did but harden his heart. Proud of his position and his power, he refused to seek after God.

Look at the case of Ahab, another outstanding example of one "who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord". He was entreated, as he was instructed, by the prophetic ministry of the great Elijah; he was told of the evil of his ways. But steadfastly, even to the end of the chapter, he refused to seek after God. Instead, he made for himself a religion of his own, hoping to obviate the necessity of coming in humble penitence to the feet of his Maker.

Men will do anything but seek God. They are now resorting to all sorts of expedients, in the hope of alleviating present-day conditions. They are willing to subscribe to acts of parliament, to submit to all kinds of governmental limitations, to allow multiplied burdens to be imposed upon them, in the hope that somehow or another they will extricate themselves from the present confusion. But the one thing that would bring relief, the one thing that Canada needs, that Britain needs, that America needs, that all the world needs, a true humility that will seek the face of God—that, they will have none of. Men are willing to do anything and everything in

order to save their pride. God is sought, when He is sought at all, only as a last resort; for "the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God."

The principle is true to universal observation. We see it everywhere to-day. It is not a matter of history only. Why we should be proud, I do not know. We have innumerable things of which to be ashamed. Instead of that, men strut around as though they were in the highest degree important.

"Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast flying cloud,  
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,  
Man passes from life to his rest in the grave."

Here is a man who has succeeded in business. He has amassed a great fortune. He has done it by a clever manipulation of companies. He has stolen at a wholesale rate out of the pockets of the people by increasing the price of milk, or bread, or something else; and like the man described in this chapter, the predatory man who preys upon the poor, he has made himself rich at the expense of the multitude, and ought to be, like any convict in his convict's garb, ashamed of his successes. Yet he is proud of it, and glories in his achievements, which in many instances, before God, identify him as a sinner of the deepest dye.

I have often wondered at the ethical makeup of a man like, say,—I will not call him famous, but rather notorious—Dr. Cooke who claimed to have discovered the North Pole. When he returned to civilization he was acclaimed as the man who had succeeded where many had failed, and he accepted the plaudits of the people when he knew he was an unmitigated fraud. Every acclaim of the multitude ought to have smitten him like a bolt of lightning, knowing as he did that he did not deserve the praises of the people.

I made a curious study of this phenomenon some years ago, when I had something to do with exposing, in this country and in the United States, the acceptance of bogus university degrees. Men were sending a fee to a certain university, and by correspondence which meant very little, obtaining D.D.'s, and LL.D.'s, and I know not what else. I exposed it rather widely, and I was rather surprised to find how many *Doctors of Divinity* became my enemies, and how the friendship of some people cooled off, whom I had never suspected were clad in false academic robes, or that they were boasting of distinctions to which they had no just title. What is the moral makeup of a man who seeks such distinctions? The predominant thing about him is the pride of his countenance;—he is like a little girl with a blue ribbon in her hair, tripping along in her new shoes, feeling very proud of herself. Many people have not grown up; they are babies still, proud of the things that ought to make them ashamed before God.

I was brought up in a land where they play cricket. We were taught that cricket was a game for gentlemen, and that the desirable thing was not so much to win as to play the game. You can win at any game if you violate the rules. It is not hard to be successful in business if you have no conscience. Conscience, in fact, is a handicap in many directions; but if that be disposed of, it is easy to win. I played cricket with a man who was, at that time, a college president. I never wanted to have anything to do with him afterwards, because he cheated at every turn of the game. All that I ever

learned of him afterwards showed that that was his chief characteristic: he wanted to win, and get the credit of winning, even though he violated every rule. So are there men who would like to win without God: "Through the pride of his countenance, he will not seek after God."

That consideration is of no value unless we make application of it to ourselves, because the principle is true of all human experience. It is true of you: it is true of me. We are all proud; of what, I do not know, but proud we are. Many are too proud to acknowledge their sins. They are not ashamed of their sin, but they would be ashamed of their Saviour. Through the pride of their countenance they will not seek after God. I asked a man some years ago at a certain church if he would turn to the Lord. "Not in this church." "What", I enquired, "is the matter with this church?" "I will not be converted in this church." I do not know what he was proud of, but only that he was proud.

As I came down the street the other day I saw outside a big house a beautiful car. I do not know whether it was a Cadillac, a Packard, or a Pierce-Arrow, but it was a magnificent thing—better than mine! The chauffeur had brought the car up for the business man to go down to his office. He came out of his house, finely groomed, looking a person of some importance, and quite appropriate to the car. On the sidewalk was his little boy of three or four years of age—and he had a car too, one that was propelled without gasolene, richly coloured. That car at the curb meant nothing to the little boy. He indifferently waved his hand to his daddy as he got into his car, and there behind the wheel he went down the street as though he would say, "Do you not wish you could drive a real car like mine?"

Thus do men presume in the presence of the Lord our God. They boast of their wealth, and want to drive their own little velocipede. They would go "on their own". They want to live independently of God. Alas! alas! such dwarfs are we, so limited in our development, that we seem never to grow up until, by a second birth, a new life is imparted; for men of themselves, never become men, and put away childish things. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God."

## II.

THE FIRST EVIDENCE OF RETURNING MORAL SANITY TO ANY ONE OF US IS THAT WE RECOGNIZE GOD, AND THAT WE SEEK HIM WITH HUMILITY AND GODLY FEAR. Sin is a kind of insanity. It is a moral eccentricity, a kind of aberration. It puts all of life out of harmony with the laws of the nature of things. That is why it is so full of fret and friction all the time. I say, the first evidence that a man is beginning to be sane is that he recognizes his own insignificance. That is a great thing, to know how little we are, to know how unimportant we are, to learn how well even our fellows, to say nothing of God, can get along without us.

You read of a great man who occupies a large place in the public eye, a statesman, a soldier, some great man of science, an educator of some eminence, who suddenly is laid hold of by the icy hand of Death, and is carried away. For a day or so there is a stir in the newspapers, but inside of a week the world has forgotten him. It is like some mighty Leviathan plowing the ocean waves. One might suppose she would stir the whole ocean. But she passes, the waters close in her wake, and she leaves no more track upon the trackless

deep than as though she had never crossed the sea. What specks we are! "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers."

I have read several sermons upon this text, "What is man?" and frequently the text is used in a way opposite to its true significance. The marvel of the Psalmist was that God being so great should take account of man; that was the wonder of it. But, "what is man"?

We do not need to minister to men's conceit, they do not need to be told that they are big and important: they admit that! The great task of the minister is to bring to bear upon human life the light of this Book, to teach us how insignificant we are, and then to proclaim that matchless grace which takes account of us.

Religiously, how long it takes us to discover how little, how worthless, how full of sin, we are; and yet through the pride of our countenances we refuse to seek after God. The first evidence, I say, of the return of moral sanity is that man recognizes his own littleness and *God's supremacy*. I do not wonder that men in our day should register their protest against the general principles of that theological philosophy that is usually called Calvinism. Much that goes by that name is not Calvinism. But I mean that view of the Bible, and of the revelation of God in the Bible, that recognizes God as being absolutely sovereign in all realms. It does not accord with—what shall I call it—the idiotic philosophy known as Evolution: Of course, we are the flower of all natural processes! We are "it", the highest thing that has been produced by whatever powers there be. Carried to its logical conclusion, God Himself becomes the product of man's evolutionary thought; and man makes God in his own image, instead of recognizing the truth that the Infinite One made man in His image, and after His likeness. The gospel is not evolutionary: it is revolutionary. It proposes to turn the life upside down and inside out, and establish a new law and authority in the life, making God sovereign over all.

But "through the pride of his countenance", man does not like that. Yet when the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in his heart he recognizes the divine supremacy, and counts it his highest honour to be in submission to Him.

What is it to be saved? It is to be morally and spiritually sane. The evidence of it is that the man has humbled himself before God: then God will exalt him in due time. The proof of it is that he has come to himself, and has seen how little and sinful he is, and hence he confesses his sin. Have you thought of the psychology of that gospel requirement, that those who believe should confess? Have you thought of that? "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The truly regenerate soul, illuminated by the Holy Ghost, seeing his own bankruptcy and the greatness of God and the infinitude of grace, the matchless

measure of His mercy, is glad to acknowledge Him. No woman should be ashamed to adopt her husband's name. I know there are so-called women who like to be the head of the house. So-called women! I do not know what they are: they are not women after the scriptural pattern. It is no derogation from a woman's dignity to be in submission to the husband whose name she bears. A true woman rather finds her highest dignity in wearing her husband's name. She is not ashamed of it. And the true bride of Christ delights to be in submission to Him, desires that He should have all the glory, that she should have none. That is the happy place.

You remember the story of the demoniac of Gadara, out of whom Jesus cast the legion of devils? When the people came out to see they found him where? "Sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind." No man or woman is ever in his or her right mind—or gives evidence of the fact—until it become apparent to all that his or her chosen place in life is to sit at the feet of Jesus Christ.

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all."

Let us pray:

For Thy grace to us as sinners, O Lord, we give Thee thanks. For Thine infinite patience with our folly, we praise Thee this evening. Make us wise unto salvation to-night, if we have not been made wise before; and help us to humble ourselves before God, and to seek salvation at His hand. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

## THE TITHE AND THE BLESSING

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto,  
Sunday Morning, November 12th, 1922

(Stenographically Reported)

(See Editorial Note entitled "This Week's Second Sermon" on page 10.)

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

"And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts."

—Malachi 3:10-12.

I conceive it to be the function of the ministry to bring to the people the message of the Lord. And I want to explain to you why I have selected this text this morning—or, rather, how it was selected for me. It is known to many that something over a year ago this church passed through a great crisis, when those who were known as the principal givers, with many others, withdrew from our fellowship; and left us to maintain this great work, without their assistance. Notwithstanding that, God has supplied "all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." We have undertaken things of which we were formerly afraid. For instance, for years there was a discussion as to how the message of the pulpit might be printed and circulated. Even at a time when this church reported as its revenue for the whole year, \$73,000, we could not find sufficient

money to do it; but as soon as the Lord in His grace made us poor, He made us rich enough to do it; and thus the ministry of this church has been extended; and we say it to His praise, that never a week passes that we do not receive messages from different parts of this continent, and elsewhere, of blessing attending the reading of the printed page. We have had conversions reported, and baptisms, through the reading of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. It has been a silent missionary carrying the gospel to places where there was no preacher to preach. Thus we have learned that there is a real joy in getting things done with help from God.

You know there was a time in this church when we used to organize wonderfully. I think we were so clever at organization, that we almost organized the Spirit of God out of our life: when any money was to be raised, we organized, and we had "drives" and "canvasses"; and it was done in a very efficient fashion; and the money was obtained. But the spiritual blessing did not accompany it, as we believe it should have done. We have learned to take these things to the Lord in prayer in a way in which we had not learned before; and somehow or another the necessary help has come. The "barrel of meal" has not wasted; the "cruse of oil" has not failed; and we have never had to report a deficit of any sort. God has supplied our need. From time to time we have had to tell the people that there was some special obligation in view; but as we have done it, there has always been more than enough to supply our need.

Yesterday we had a meeting of the Prudential Committee, just to see how our affairs were; and we faced some things that we had to give attention to. For instance, during the war about three hundred men went out from the church; and more than forty of them sleep in France and in Flanders. In the Spring of 1919 the church gave instructions to the Finance Committee of that day to erect a suitable memorial, to perpetuate the memory of those splendid men. I can see them now; I can remember when some of them stood up in our services, and volunteered. I remember in those terrible days of blood how, one night, eight went down from this church to the armouries, and went home in uniform. Some of these very men never came back again. We cherish their memory: we are grateful to God for the splendid service they rendered. That memorial tablet was prepared; and just about the time of the crisis in our church life, it was ready, or nearly ready, for delivery. After our friends had separated from us, we wrote them and asked them if they desired to have a share in the erection of this memorial. It was our obligation; we were Jarvis Street Church, and not they; and we were responsible for it; but they very generously assumed nearly half of the responsibility, and notified us to that effect. That left us about four hundred dollars that we were to be privileged to give to complete the amount. It will cost \$900. It is a beautiful bronze memorial, which I expect will be erected where that larger list is hanging, in the south-east corner, and that will be transferred to the other side of the church.

Yesterday we said, "We shall have to ask the church to adopt some means whereby all the people will have the privilege of having a share in erecting that memorial"; and we knew we had only to say the word, and the money would be forthcoming, however great the sacrifice involved.

Then there is a sum of six hundred dollars we have

to raise for our insurance this month. We have had experience with this before: we had only to tell the people, and to tell the Lord; and the money was forthcoming. So then we decided we must ask the people, or ask the church to set a day for an offering, when we would take a special offering of \$1,000 for these two objects.

The Prudential Committee, or rather, in the beginning of our discussion, one member of the Committee, felt that we ought to take an offering for Foreign Missions beside that, and at the same time. Many of our members contribute weekly to missions; but there are some who do not give by the week; but only as they are given opportunity by special offerings.

There were, then, these three things for which we should ask an offering. Psychologically, it seemed very unwise to ask for three things at once. First of all, I questioned the wisdom of it; but we had prayed that God would guide us, and ultimately we decided to ask the church next Thursday if they would approve the taking of a special offering on the 26th of November for these three objects. And I was requested by the Prudential Committee to make that announcement this morning; that when we come together on Thursday we face that matter together; and then prayerfully ask the Lord's blessing.

Well, one day this week a lady telephoned me, who had been converted just a few weeks before; and she said she wanted to see me about baptism. She came into the vestry, and I had a talk with her. She told me how she had dropped into this church occasionally for ten years, and how the Lord always laid hold of her somehow. Then she went away to Vancouver, something over eighteen months ago; and she said the Lord followed her to Vancouver, and actually brought her back across the continent to come to this church. She came in six weeks ago; and a week or so later she was wonderfully converted. She had been a member of a church before; but she had not known what it was to look to Jesus as her Saviour. I rejoiced with her; and then she said something that I have never heard in my years of experience as a minister. She told me that she was a working woman; that she worked for her living; and she had nothing but that which she earned. "But," she said, "you know I have been reading the Bible; and I have come to see that when one is converted, if he has wronged a neighbour, so far as it is in his power, he should make restitution." But she said, "I do not know that I have anything to do on that account. The Lord has not shown me anything there; but," she added, "I have come to see from the study of God's word, that it is our privilege to give a tenth of all that God gives us; and I have not done it. I look back over the years; and I feel that somehow or another I should make up, so far as God enables me to do it, the tenth I have not paid. I am going to ask the Lord to do that—to help me to make restitution to Him in this matter of the tithe. Now," she continued, "I should like to be baptized next Sunday." I said, "Well, will you come and meet the committee on Saturday evening?" She said she would.

We had our Prudential Meeting on Saturday afternoon. We went home about seven o'clock; and I came back again to the prayer meeting, and found her waiting for me. She put an envelope into my hand, saying, "I want you to read that." She said that she had placed this matter before the Lord, and before her bap-

tism she desired to put upon the altar what she was able to give, as some expression of her gratitude to God, and as an act of restitution in the matter of the tithe. There was a cheque enclosed; it was a cheque for \$150 which she desired to give to the Lord before she was baptized.

I had a feeling that there was some very close connection between our afternoon meeting and that act of hers. We had much prayer in the prayer-meeting until about half past ten. Then God laid upon a large number a great burden of prayer, and they wanted to stay—and they did stay until between one and two o'clock this morning. The burden of the prayers of many was that we should be led to bring our tithes into the storehouse; and as that prayer was presented to God again and again, with no suggestion from anyone but from the Spirit of the Lord, I said, "Well, Lord, I have never preached from that particular text; but I will take it in the morning and talk about it, if it be the Lord's will."

I should like to add, that as we prayed about this offering, one young man said, "I have not much money with me; but the lad brought five loaves and two fishes, and there are two dollars." He came forward and put it on the table. Another young man, who is not a member of this church—just a student, and students have no surplus money—said, "I want to give a little too"; and he put down one dollar. Another brother said, "I want to put one hundred dollars on top of that." We felt the Lord was leading us out; and there was a spirit of hilarious giving in all hearts. That was between one and two o'clock this morning. And those who did not contribute then wanted to face this matter before the Lord, and give as the Lord has prospered.

In this text the Lord asks a question, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me." They then say, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" And His answer is, "In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." He is speaking to the people of Israel.

### I.

Let us begin by endeavouring to understand the principle involved here—that GOD DEMANDS OF US A RECOGNITION OF HIS PROPRIETORSHIP. He is not speaking now of what our Anglican friends would call works of "supererogation", or something that is over and above our necessary duty; but He is speaking of a simple obligation, of the rendering to God of that which is His own; and He declares that the tenth is His: it is not ours at all.

I read to you this morning from the New Testament a passage which refers to the priesthood of our Lord as being similar to that of Melchisedec,—that He is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." We do not know who Melchisedec was; but I am inclined to the belief that He was none other than the Lord Himself, Who appeared in that ancient day, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of years; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually." And when Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings, Melchisedec, king of Salem, the King of peace, met him, and to Him Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. And the chapter I read to you this morning teaches us that in that act Abraham recognized the superiority, the Lordship, of Melchisedec. "Consider", says the writer, "how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch

Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils." The giving of the tenth was a recognition of Melchisedec's kingship, of His superiority to the patriarch.

Then you will remember Jacob's wonderful dream: he registered a vow when he set up the stone at Bethel, and said, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God . . . and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

Later still when the children of Israel possessed the land of promise, God set aside the tribe of Levi to minister to Him in the priesthood. Therefore, when they went into the promised land, and they divided the land by lot among the tribes, Levi was given no portion. Levi had no land: it was divided among the other tribes. And every one of them was instructed to give a tenth of all they had to the Lord for the Levites; and so the Levites had a portion in all their brethren. But they had no land. (Num. 18:20-21). And then in turn the Levites also were required to tithe the tithes: they also had to bring into the offering of the Lord a tenth of all they received from their brethren of the other tribes; but the tithe of all, and the tithe of the tithe, was "holy unto the Lord".

I have not time this morning even to enumerate the instances in which spiritual revival and quickening accompanied the act of recognition of God's proprietorship, by the rendering of the tithe. This, however, I must say, the thing that is fundamental to all spiritual prosperity is a right relationship to God.

One said to Jesus: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Do you remember the question? And Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But Jesus did not mean that the first commandment was merely first in order: He meant that God Himself was to be regarded as the chief Creditor, as the King, as the Lord of all: and that a recognition and acknowledgement of that fact is the *sine qua non* of all spiritual good.

In our day the emphasis is laid upon the second table of the decalogue; and as long as men live in right relationship to their fellows, even though they ignore God, we are told that all will be well: if a man is merely moral; if he pays his debts, and recognizes and discharges his obligation to his fellows; even though he never bows his knee to God, all will be well. A half truth is an untruth; and the thing that we need to learn to-day is that God will be God; that He demands recognition as God. And it is our duty and privilege as Christian people so to recognize God that it shall appear to all that we accord Him in all things the pre-eminence. He is our chief Creditor: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." It is the Lord who giveth thee power to get wealth." There is nothing we have which is our own. From Him "every good and every perfect gift" proceedeth; and if He withdraws His hand, then we are poor indeed.

That, in principle, is what God demands of us, that in our business, in our temporal affairs, we shall recognize God by giving Him the first place. A tenth of the flock, and of the herd, and of all the fruit of the land, God claimed for Himself; and it was for Himself alone. It was to be reserved and dedicated to Him; it



was "holy unto the Lord" (Lev. 27:30-33). In this case the people had withheld their tithes. They had not recognized God; and God actually charges them with having "robbed" Him. He does not say, "You have not been generous"; He says, "*You have not been honest with Me.*"

There is a terrible story in the New Testament also,—one of the most terrible stories in the whole Book—of the taking of a collection; and of a husband coming and laying down at the apostles' feet that which he declared was the price of a piece of land he had sold. Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" And he fell down dead at the apostle's feet. When his wife came in later, Peter asked her whether they had sold the land for so much, only to discover that they had conspired together to be untrue to God, to be dishonest with God, to mock God; as if He could be deceived! And she too fell dead at the apostle's feet.

My dear friends, it is a very serious matter. It is important that we should give God His rightful place; that we should put Him first; and that we should recognize that whatever we have, be it little or much, God demands that His claims be given recognition.

Of course, the principle of the first commandment applies to more than the giving of the tenth: it applies to everything: but I am dealing with this especially this morning. I am not speaking of this in order to make an appeal to you. I am just bringing you this text, because I could not get away from it. I have not had time to unlock its treasures. I just want to leave the text with you; because the text is far mightier than any exposition of mine could be. I am persuaded the more we give the people of the Word of the Lord the more effective our ministry will be. Someone may go away and say, "The preacher did not say very much to us this morning." No, he did not. I have told you that I am merely thinking aloud this morning; speaking wholly impromptu, from a text laid on my heart by being quoted in several prayers between one and two o'clock this morning. But God has said a great deal. "Will a man rob God?" Will you rob Him? Will I? Shall we any of us rob Him? or shall we resolve here this morning that there shall be an end of that; and that we will from this forward recognize God in our temporal affairs; and we will do what he has required?

It may be that somebody here this morning will say, "But, sir, you are preaching from an Old Testament text: do you know that 'we are not under the law, but under grace'?" Yes, I know that; but let us consider the relation of these two principles, of the two covenants of Law and Grace. Ponder this text, for instance: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The ceremonial law was abolished; and the law, as an objective standard, and as a means of salvation, is declared to have failed: but the decalogue is not abolished: "the righteousness of the law" is to be fulfilled in us "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit". "Thou shalt not kill": "thou shalt not steal." These and other requirements of the moral law are as binding as ever. The gospel does not license us to do these things. The difference between the law and the gospel is that

God has taken the objective law from the tables of stone, and He has written it in our own hearts, making the renewed soul to desire what God wills.

The tenth is a useful minimum; but my contention this morning is that the standards of the New Testament are, in their spiritual import, if possible, even higher than the standards of the Old: that the gospel requires far more of us than did the law. It demands the submission of the whole man—spirit, soul, and body—to the Lordship of Jesus Christ; and a recognition of Him in all our affairs, spiritual and temporal.

## II.

But let me now remind you that THERE IS ALWAYS A PLACE FOR REPENTANCE. The Lord uses some hard words here. I should not have thought of taking this text, because really I must confess that I have been filled with gratitude for the way God has supplied our need; and for the generous way in which the people have given. And it never occurred to me to think that we were among those who rob God. I do not know that we are. I am not saying that this has application to you. When this young woman came to me last week to tell me of her new-found hope in Christ, it did not occur to me to say, "Look here, what have you been doing with the Lord's tithes during the past years?" It would never have occurred to me to speak like that; but when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon a man or upon a woman, and enlightens the understanding, and quickens the conscience, and takes the first place in our affections, it is perfectly marvellous what God can do.

When, and following upon that, He seemed to open the hearts of the people in prayer, and to lead some of them to quote this text, it seemed to me that it would be wise for me to bring you the text, even though I was unprepared to give you a studied exposition of it. I do not want to lessen its force at all: nor to suggest to any one that we should seek to escape from its tremendously searching inquiry. Let us open our hearts to the Holy Spirit's scrutiny.

"Will a man rob God?" Well, if you have, it is for you, my friend, to acknowledge it. If any of us are conscious of having failed in this particular thing—in our relationship to God; then I remind you that He comes in tender grace to say, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." As though He should say, "If that is what you have done, let Me tell you what you may do from this hour, Recognize Me: it is not too late, bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, begin to make amends, bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and prove me now herewith, said the Lord of hosts."

I do believe that *God desires to be proved as Lord of the material realm.* Modern science has almost excluded God from the realm of the material. The evolutionary hypothesis has become, shall I say, atmospheric. And this atmosphere has coloured all our thinking; so that many who profess to believe the Bible to be the Word of God, are unconsciously influenced by the prevailing miasma, and led to conceive the universe as a machine governed only by processes of inexorable law; that God has so wound the thing up, that it has to go on in its appointed course, and that God is something apart from His universe; or otherwise, that He is locked within, in the sense of the divine immanence: that He has shut Himself up within the things He has made; and He cannot Himself suspend His law. Out of that comes the denial of all miracles. "Why," says the man of

science, "it is nonsense to talk about Jesus opening the eyes of the blind, and healing the leper, and raising the dead, and making water into wine, and multiplying the loaves: it is contrary to law, and He cannot do it." But God waits to prove that He is the Source of law; and that He is superior to law; that while He is immanent,—everywhere present in all His works; He is transcendent too—Sovereign of everything that He has made; and He can stop the machine if need be. For Hezekiah He made the shadow return backward on the dial of Ahaz; and at the word of Joshua the sun stood still. God can lengthen your day if He will: the sun and everything above and beneath it, are still subject to His personal, sovereign sway.

Now, said He, in the realm of the material, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and prove me now herewith, said the Lord of hosts,—give me a chance to show that I am Lord in My universe." Do you not think that the Lord desires to glorify Himself in the finances of a church? Do you not believe that He desires to show what He can do with poor people? I do not know that there is any special virtue in being poor, especially if our poverty is due to our indolence: nor do I think it is specially wrong to be rich, if wealth comes as the gift of God, as the reward of honest toil; and provided that God is recognized. We should serve God where He has placed us; and thank Him for everything He has bestowed upon us. On the other hand, it is true that God has "chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him." Oh, you have dreamed about somebody remembering you in their will, have you not? If I were to ask all those who have not dreamed such dreams as that to stand, I do not think anybody would stand. We have all dreamed of being rich. But, my dear friends, the Lord of glory has remembered you in His Will; and the poor of this world may be "rich in faith, and heirs in the kingdom". God loves to take hold of a congregation of poor people, and show the world what He can do. He loves to take, as I have often said to you, "the weak things of the world . . . and the things which are despised—I think that means a church—and things which are not." Why somebody said the other day, speaking about Jarvis Street,—so somebody told me,—"Nobody goes there." I do not know whether they meant we were a congregation of nobodies. We are at least a congregation of humans of some sort; and if we are nobodies there is a probability of our being used of God. He desires to manifest His grace and power in the realm of the material. Therefore, however poor we may be, let us be ambitious to be "rich in faith".

About three years ago a gentleman from this church came home with me one Sunday evening after the meeting; and as we sat together at my table I asked him about our unfinished building. I said, "Do you think it ought to be finished?" "O yes," he said, "I think so. I think we should address ourselves to that matter at an early date." Then he added: "I would be willing to give you \$10,000 towards it." I was thankful; I remember I was thankful both to God and to him for that generous promise. Of course it was only a promise, but I thought of it as cash; but it did not bring me half the spiritual blessing that that cheque for \$150 did last night. Somehow or another that came to me as something right down out of heaven from God: there was a spiritual accompaniment about it I cannot explain; and I think, as I have told you the story this morning, you have felt that

it was the finger of God. Our Lord still loves to get the loaves and the fishes from the lad; and it is wonderful what He can do with them.

Now, my dear friends, I ask you this morning if we shall prove Him in the material realm; if we shall just accept, shall I dare to say, His challenge: "Prove me now herewith; bring in your tithes; recognize Me; and I put Myself on record—I give you My written promise: I will . . . open the windows—or, the flood-gates—of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

I believe that we have a right to expect material blessing. I believe the text has application there, that God will bless us even in the material realm; He will bless us in our business; He will bless us in our basket and in our store; He will really give us increase in material things. Now as a matter of arithmetic, if a man has a dollar and he needs every cent of it, and he gives ten cents to the Lord, he will be ten cents short. That is arithmetic; but it is not faith. The ninety cents mean more than one dollar when they are put into the hands of God; and I believe He would have us prove Him there: that is the only way by which we can accept this teaching. Otherwise, there are people here this morning who would say, "Well, sir, I can hardly pay my way. If I were to give the Lord a tenth I do not know what I should do." But He says: "Prove Me; take Me into partnership; make Me supervisor; make Me the head of the house; make Me the manager of the business; recognize Me; and see if I will not make the concern grow: I will pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

This is, of course, especially true in the spiritual sense. Somebody said last night, "Is that the reason why we have not had the floods of blessing for which we have been praying? Perhaps God in His providence has led us to see this evening, in order that He may open the flood-gates of heaven." I do not know. I just bring you this simple message.

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake." Do you know what the "devourer" is? Well, there were the locust, the caterpillar, the cankerworm, and these devoured the fruit of the field.

What is the "devourer"? There is somebody here this morning who says, "But sir, I have had sickness in my home. I have had all kinds of trouble." Yes, these things come; in the Providence of God they are permitted; but sometimes it may be that some of these "devourers" would not come, it may be that we should be saved from a good deal of expense, if only we gave God the first place. In the spiritual realm the seed is sown, and the birds of the air come and catch it away. Does it not mean that the Lord will build a fence about His garden; that He Who is the Gardener will take care of His vine? We shall not sow and another reap; but we shall sow, and ourselves shall reap; and we shall see the fruit of our toil in the name of the Lord.

I have not said much to you this morning. I have just given you the text, and I want to read it to you once more with a prayer that God may write it in our hearts: "Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive



it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts."

I told you that we would take the offering after the message this morning instead of before. It just occurred to me that perhaps the Lord has another plan—that today and next Sunday we may have this thousand dollars put on the plate; and that we may observe November 26th as a great thank-offering day to send the gospel to the regions beyond. But I do ask you prayerfully to take this message, and lay it on your hearts; and let us hear what God the Lord will say to us.

## SPURGEON—DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

By Albert G. Johnson, D.D.

(An abstract of an address delivered at the Pre-Convention Conference on Fundamentals in Rochester, reprinted from "The Watchman-Examiner" of May 31, 1934)

Spurgeon held that body of truth that is "most surely believed amongst us" as fundamentalists and Baptists. I would be false to the memory of the life and labours of Spurgeon if I did not emphasize the fact that he was diametrically opposed to the prevailing notion in his day, and which notions are still held in certain places, that the truth needs no defense. The name "Spurgeon" is synonymous with the Scriptural injunction, "Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

### Spurgeon Stood for the Infallibility of the Word of God

Spurgeon's faith was primarily a faith in a Person, but a Person revealed in the Book. He believed in the Christ of the Book because it is the Book of Christ. Spurgeon believed that to ignore the authority of the written Word ultimately leads to certain denial of the authority of the Word Incarnate. He submitted to the authority of the Book, because it is the expression of the authority of the Christ of the Book. Spurgeon was a thorough Baptist in this respect. To him the Bible was final authority, because it records the facts which create our belief, and yet this Book never treats the conclusion as an open question. It assumes from the first to its final declaration, that the central figure is indeed the God-man, our Saviour and Lord. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

Spurgeon took his stand, and like the rock of Gibraltar, there he stood, unmoved amid the waves of doubt and criticism. There this Book of Christ is most valued, the Christ of the Book is most honoured. This was demonstrated in the ministry of him, the memory of whose life and labours we honour to-day.

### Spurgeon Stood for the Lordship of Christ

Spurgeon was transparently honest in his declarations of the faith. He despised a dual vocabulary. With him there were no mental reservations. He would admit of no haggling between such terms as "divinity" and "deity". To him Christ was Lord—the virgin-born Son, the Saviour of the world, the Lord Christ, with Whom the right of redemption lay. To Spurgeon, Jesus was God, our Saviour blessed forever. Spurgeon stood for the crown rights of Jesus, not merely "the Christ-like God", but the Christ of very God; not alone the "Jesus way of life", but Jesus "the way, the truth

and the life." Spurgeon would express a righteous indignation at the implication that "to deify Jesus is more heathen than Christian". He would stand by the "manhood of the Master", providing He was the master of man, the *despotees*, to whom there is no higher appeal, wearing the crown of Deity. Spurgeon firmly stood for the essential Deity of Christ. He would have been horrified at the serious implications of the "perils of worshipping Jesus", and with loyal Baptists of the centuries, he constantly re-affirmed that Jesus was very Son of very God, and, therefore, very God of very God, or else, He was the greatest deceiver of all.

### Spurgeon Stood for a Saviour Who Died as Our Substitute

Spurgeon believed in an objective atonement. While he believed that Christ suffered with us, he verily believed that He also suffered for us. Spurgeon believed in substitutionary atonement—he stood for this doctrine of the cross. He believed that this was what Christ meant when he spoke of "giving his life a ransom instead of many", and that Paul's doctrine of the cross was an elaboration of the statement of Christ Himself. Here again is the issue of a supernatural Christianity as opposed to natural religion, and applied to the doctrine of the cross, the penal element in the atonement. Spurgeon faced in his day those who sought to explain Calvary on merely natural grounds. Spurgeon preached a substitute Saviour, One who takes our place "and bears our sins in his own body on the tree." Modernism speaks of the vulgarity of this doctrine of the cross because sin is reduced to merely a matter of selfishness—the Word of God is reduced to the level of Shakespeare, and the precious blood of the atoning Christ is degraded to the spirit of self-sacrifice that may be exemplified in any man and that compares the "love of Christ which passeth knowledge" to the love of one man for another. To Spurgeon the doctrine of the cross was the central truth of revelation.

### Spurgeon Stood for the Supernatural in Personal Salvation

He believed that the divine life must be implanted; that it is not native to the soul; that Christ is first the Saviour of man who by nature is a sinner, before he becomes teacher and example. Spurgeon stood for the new birth. His ministry was a constant challenge to the natural religionists of his day, who, as in our day have substituted human psychology for the regeneration of the soul, and religious education for evangelism. Spurgeon stood for the Bible doctrine of regeneration, as true Baptists have held through the centuries. His faithful ministry was a remarkable demonstration of the results of that doctrine translated by the operation of the Holy Spirit of God in its transforming power on life in the community.

The supernatural Christianity of Spurgeon, as expressed in these four fundamentals of the Christian faith molded his entire ministry and gave power to that preaching which was a veritable, consuming passion for the souls of men. It was the defense of this body of truth that cost him his life in the warfare of the down-grade controversy. His sermons were rarely polemical. They were, however, as the proclamation of truth conflicts with error, in this sense constructively controversial, the symbol of *The Sword and Trowel*. This periodical, of which he was editor, echoes

from which were sometimes heard in the House of Commons, describes perfectly the ideal worthy of emulating as contenders for the faith. The trowel was always in hand to build up; the sword was constantly drawn in defense of the gospel. He preached without apology. He proclaimed the evangel without fear or favour. His ministry was a ministry in the power and demonstration of God's Holy Spirit.

Let me conclude with a part of the tribute of Dr. Alexander McLaren on the first Sunday morning after the death of Mr. Spurgeon.

He was as good as he was great; he was as sweet as he was good. His genius for forcible, racy speech sets him by the side of the great masters of our English tongue. His fervour of devotion and intensity of love for the Lord Jesus Christ blazed through all his work. He was absolutely self-forgetful, thinking nothing of himself, and everything of his message. His pathos and his humour, his sagacity and his kindness, were equal. His power of cheery work was unexampled, and all that he gave to his Lord, with rare and beautiful simplicity and faithfulness. He had no peer; he can have no successor. Such lives are not given twice to a generation. We shall honour him best if we try to fill our little places as he did his, and to cleave to the Master whom he magnified and now beholds.

### THIS WEEK'S SECOND SERMON

This week we publish a second sermon of nearly twelve years ago. It was preached just about fourteen months after our revolution. A few days ago a pastor told us of another pastor who had kept all his GOSPEL WITNESSES on file, and had recently been reading this particular sermon with great blessing to himself, and indirectly to his people.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS family of June, 1934, includes great numbers of people who had never heard of the paper in November, 1922. We thought it wise therefore to reprint this sermon on the subject of giving, in the hope that it would prove a blessing to many. The Pastor recalls with thankfulness the circumstances of its delivery. It was preached at a time when life in Jarvis Street Church was very strenuous, when our enemies were many—when, indeed, we all were like Nehemiah and his men, who, while they builded the wall, had their swords girded at their sides.

This sermon, as we now remember it, was almost an impromptu delivery, and at the time was marvellously used of God. Although preached twelve years ago, it still represents the attitude of Jarvis Street Church toward the question of money. We are convinced there is a close relation between giving to the work of the Lord and receiving spiritual blessing from Him.

Twelve years ago there was no Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec: we were still in the Old Convention, and giving our testimony against the Modernism of McMaster. Since that time our new Convention has been organized; and we venture to say to the Pastors thereof that it is just as much a minister's duty to give the people correct teaching respecting giving as it is to teach them on any other matter. We believe if the Pastors of the Union would earnestly take this matter to heart, and carefully and constantly instruct the people, even without the addition of other members, the present membership of the Union would vastly increase its missionary efforts.

It is with these things in mind, combined with the conversation we had with the Pastor before referred to, we have felt led to publish this simple deliverance on, "The Tithe and the Blessing".

### POLITENESS IN CHURCH

Character displays itself very often in little things. One can sometimes form a fair estimate of the character of the man behind the wheel of a motor-car by that man's behaviour in traffic. We see people pushing their way through, sometimes imperilling the lives of others, and generally inconveniencing everybody, for no other reason than that the man wants to be first, and considers his own interests and nobody else's. Any man who would elbow his way through a crowd as some men push their way through a traffic jam would be considered anything but a gentleman.

Christian people are never off duty, and there ought to be something distinctive about the driving of a Christian man, even as there should be something distinctive about his manner of business.

But of all places, surely Christian people ought to be polite in church. They ought to consider other people's comfort. They ought to be ready to make way for others. They ought to be ready to cooperate with the ushers, and with the minister. Although very little is said about impoliteness in church; you may be sure it seldom passes unobserved, and the person who disregards the interests of others marks himself out as one who has not learned to reduce the principles of the gospel to everyday life and practice. We should remember that the church is the house of God where all His children should be made welcome.

Next time you go to church see if you cannot pass someone a hymn-book, or do something to make others feel that you are glad they are there, and that you hope they will receive benefit.

### THE UNION BAPTIST WITNESS

(Continued from page 11)

helped them, too, because their customs are good. You must pray for us and we will be praying for you, and may our mission continue to exist. We have believed, and you must believe, too, because Jesus not only died for the black people, but for the white people, too. He died for everyone." The names of those sending this message are: Nyinodiga, Toga; Gawi, Widdi, Joe, Ji, Gadua, Ge, Johnny, Glebo, Ben, Charlie, Ze, Bodoo and Payne.

The message from the women is:

"Altogether we thank you for our brother and sister for their custom is good. You must pray for us and we will be praying for you." And their names are: Tekumo, Whiyema, Diama, Nanna, Deewhe, Menji and Wedetti.

This interesting greeting was brought home by Rev. and Mrs. Gordon D. Mellish, and the churches will be given opportunities to see it when they start their itinerary, after they have regained their usual health.

### Calvin Regular Baptist Church, Toronto

Pastor Frank Roblin and his loyal band of workers have launched out in a tent campaign. The opening service on Monday, June 4th, was well attended, and a glorious time of fellowship was enjoyed. The Secretary-treasurer of the Union preached the opening message from John 3:16. Services will continue each evening at eight o'clock in the tent, at Gerrard Street East and Highfield Road, first block east of Greenwood.

### Bobcaygeon

During the absence of Rev. M. B. Gillion, who is assisting Rev. Leander Roblin of Courtland and Otterville churches in special meetings, the work goes on as usual. Two services a week are being held at Nogies Creek; Prayer and Bible study Wednesday evening at eight o'clock, and a regular gospel service on Friday evenings. Another service is held at Silver Lake each Lord's Day afternoon, where a company of isolated men, women, boys and girls meet for Bible School and a gospel service. It was a joy to minister to these and to watch their eager faces as they listen to the gospel of God's grace. At the same hour a service is also conducted at Galway Road Schoolhouse under the direction of some of the workers from Bobcaygeon. It is no small task to carry on these outside appointments and have charge of the Bible School at ten o'clock in the village, preach at eleven o'clock, and again at seven-thirty. It is a joy to record the faithful efforts of one of our Home Mission pastors as he endeavours to fulfil the ministry committed to his trust.

### St. Catharines

The Bethel Baptists of the Garden City are also engaged in a special evangelistic effort. Rev. E. E. Hooper has secured a large tent, and has pitched it on Lake Street near Russell. The Invictus Quartette of the Toronto Baptist Seminary are assisting the first week. Meetings will continue every night during the summer months, and the people are desirous of the earnest prayers and sympathetic support of this their initial effort for the enlargement of the work of Regular Baptists in St. Catharines. Pray for them.

# The Union Baptist Witness

Is the Official Publication of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Send all communications to the Secretary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

## Sunderland District Conference

The Sunderland District Conference will be held on Wednesday, June 20th, at Bethel Baptist Church, Colborne Street, Orillia. The afternoon session will start at 3 o'clock, Day-light Saving time, and the evening session at 7.30. The afternoon speakers will be Rev. Robt. Guthrie, London, and Rev. C. J. Loney, Hamilton. Rev. James McGinlay, President of the Union, will bring the message of the evening.

Pastors of this district are requested to announce these meetings.

F. L. FAWCETT, Sec.-Treas.

## Beneficent, Montreal

The work of the Beneficent Baptist Church is progressing not only in number, but in spirituality. On May the 13th five people confessed their faith in the Saviour, and one, a lady, was baptized in St. Paul's Baptist Church. Four more, previously Roman Catholics, but very sincere and earnest in their new faith, are awaiting baptism. Among the men who attend the services are an ex-Franciscan monk, and an ex-priest. The Roman Church is losing power on the people, and many are eager to hear the preaching of the gospel. Pray for this work, of which our Brother, Rev. Jules Danthony, is pastor.

## Hespeler and Galt

Through its Radio Ministry the Hespeler Baptist Church has been privileged to reach out with the gospel message into many of the nearby towns and cities. As a result of this ministry, calls have come in continually from individuals in the city of Galt, asking that meetings be held there. Just three months ago, the pastor, Rev. W. N. Charlton, was able to begin cottage meetings, and from the very beginning the attendance was above all expectations, and the blessing of God was upon the gatherings. The response was so good that it was soon seen that the time was ripe for the holding of Sunday services, and Mr. Donald Dinnick, of the Toronto Baptist Seminary, was asked to come and assist in this work during the summer months. Thirty-five people were present two weeks ago to greet Mr. Dinnick, and in spite of stifling heat there was a good attendance at last week's meetings. Mr. Dinnick has already proved himself to be a "labourer together with God", and all felt that God had answered prayer in sending him to us. But now we needed a building, and in a most remarkable manner the way was opened up for us to secure a small but very beautiful church building at a reasonable rental. Next Sunday, June 17th, Mr. Dinnick will conduct the opening services in the church. Pray for God's blessing.

On Thursday evening, June 21st, at 8 p.m., an official opening will be held, and pastors and members of the churches of the Union are asked to make an effort to be present for this meeting. The church is located at the corner of Cambridge and Rose Streets.

The Invictus Male Quartette, of the Toronto Baptist Seminary, opened a week of meetings in the Hespeler Baptist Church on Sunday. Large congregations were present at both services. After the evening meeting the first open-air service of the season was conducted by the pastor, and in spite of the fact that the air had become exceedingly chilly, a large crowd gathered to hear the gospel message, and to listen to the singing of the quartette.

These open-air meetings will be continued throughout the summer months under the auspices of the Young People's Society of the church. A portable screen and necessary electrical connections have been provided by the young people so that the hymns, etc., can be shown on the screen, thus adding to the interest of the meetings and helping to gather large companies of people to hear the gospel.

## Liberia

We have good news of the work in a letter from Rev. Edward Hancox, dated May 8, 1934. Mr. Hancox had just re-

turned to New Cess from seeing Mrs. Hancox on her way to England when he wrote.

"The work goes along very happily here," he writes. "It was indeed good to get back again for service last Sunday. The Lord gave us a very fruitful day. It was a busy day, but truly worth while. In the morning we had the joy of baptizing one of my house boys, Wilmot. This makes both boys members of the company of baptized believers. Wilmot has been one of the school boys almost from the very beginning of the school. He is the highest boy in the school, being in the fourth book. We all rejoice in his coming right out for the Lord. Mr. Davey performed the ordinance, speaking first on its meaning.

"At the gospel service which followed we had almost one hundred town folk present, mostly men, of the adults. Farm season has again begun, which means that the women are not likely to be present in the same proportion as we have seen them. Brother Davey insisted that I must speak, having had a holiday for four Sundays. The Lord was present to give His own message, and to open hearts to His Word. Mr. Davey felt constrained to do what he has not done before out here, that was to give an invitation. I am sure that it was of the Lord, for five men stood to their feet, two of whom actually desired to join the Church, professing to have been saved previously. Of the other three, one is a young man we know but slightly, although he has attended services for three or four years. One of the boys has been working for the Mission for over a year, while the other boy is one of the school boys. The latter had a testimony that interests us very much. When Mr. Davey cabled us from the steamer that he was due in Bassa the next day, Mr. Shuttleworth sent this boy up at once with the message. It was evening when he arrived, so he stayed at the Mission for the night. He attended evening prayer with the children, and in the morning before going to Bassa he again attended the prayer service. He then went down to the beach with Mr. Clubine and myself, along with the boys we were taking. At the Beach he asked me if he could come back and be a school boy. He seemed rather big, but was anxious to come, even to sacrificing his steady job with the Paterson, Zochonis Co. In the end he came back. On Sunday he accepted Christ as his Saviour. He told us that the reason he wanted to come back was to learn more of God's Word, and he knew that as a school boy he would have the best opportunity. Our hearts rejoice that the children's prayer service, conducted by the native interpreter, should be such as to draw a boy in this way.

"In the afternoon of Sunday last we held the monthly Communion service, welcoming Wilmot into the fellowship of the believers. From that we went to a funeral service for a little four-day old baby girl, sister to one of our school girls, whose mother died giving birth to twins. The two babies were brought to Mrs. Davey, but one was seen to be very weak, and little hope was held out for it. It passed away before two days had gone, and so we had the service in the church for her, and then laid her away between the two graves which now comprise our cemetery.

"We continually join with you in prayer that the Lord will lay the whole work of the Union upon the hearts of His people, leading them to still more earnest prayer and fellowship in the work, and that every need of the treasury may be met from week to week."

## A Bassa Greeting

We publish below a message from the members of the Regular Baptist Church of the Canadian Regular Baptist Mission, Geah-bar Zondo, Liberia, which was written on a piece of board in Bassa script. It is addressed to the members of the Churches of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. The message from the men is as follows:

"We all thank you for what you have done and given to us here for the missionaries have helped us, and we have

(Continued on page 10)

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 9

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 28      THIRD QUARTER      July 15, 1934

### PLEGDED TO SERVE AND COOPERATE

Lesson Text: Nehemiah 10 and 11.

**Golden Text:** Nehemiah 10:39. "For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God."

Bible School Reading: Nehemiah 10:28 to 11:2.

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Judges 5:1-9; Tuesday—Numbers 18:25-32; Wednesday—Lev. 23:9-22; Thursday—Psalm 122:1-9; Friday—Mark 8:27-38; Saturday—Matthew 19:23-30.

#### I. SEALING THE COVENANT, (10:1-39).

At the conclusion of the Levitical prayer we are informed of the making of a covenant, and the sealing of it. This evidently was a written document containing a record of the duties which the Israelites bound themselves to perform. Such a record signed by their elders, and sworn to by all the people, would be a reminder in future days of the solemn engagement entered into at that time to do the will of God. We are reminded by this of other covenants entered into by saints of God, such as that of the seventeenth century in Scotland, when the imposition of prelacy on that land was protested, and the right of unhampered worship of God was asserted; and some of recent days, drawn up in opposition to Modernism. The motive in all cases was the public affirmation of one's decision to be true to God. Note the necessity for a decision, whether written or unwritten; and the essential nature of a clear understanding of one's belief and practice.

Information is given respecting the persons who sealed the covenant, (vs. 1-27). These evidently were representative leaders of the people who signed on behalf of the whole congregation. It would obviously be a somewhat difficult matter procuring the signatures of the thousands of returned exiles; nor would this be necessary. The signatures of the leaders, and the swearing by oath of the rest of the people, would be sufficient, (vs. 28, 29). That to which all agreed to adhere was to "walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe to do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes". This meant obedience to the revealed will of God. There could be no dispute as to its content, nor could there be difference of opinion concerning the duty of obedience thereto. It is the privilege of God to command, and the duty of man to obey. Note the application of this to the teaching of the Bible, which is God's revealed will. It is of interest to note the reference to Moses in the light of the late dating of the Pentateuch by modern critics. Evidently the people of Nehemiah's day believed that Moses received the law from the Lord, as do all those who accept the plain statements of the Bible at their face value, (Ex. 34:28; Luke 24:27).

After the general statement respecting the observance of the law, certain specific parts of it are mentioned in this connection. First, that in relation to intermarriage with the heathen, (v. 30), which we have noted in former lessons was condemned, (Deut. 7:3); and which here the people promise to forego. Second, that in relation to the sabbath, (v. 31). The observance of this day was enjoined upon the Israelites, (Ex. 20:8). It was to be a day of rest, of complete cessation from all labour, with only the very necessary affairs being attended to, (Matt. 12:11). But this law had been broken, and among the heathen there was no pretence at observing it. It was, therefore, necessary for a strong stand to be made respecting it. In the present day, while the Jewish sabbath is not observed, the first day of the week is set apart, in accordance with scriptural sanction, in memory of our Lord's resurrection. Its proper designation is the Lord's Day: its proper observance is in keeping with its designation, (Acts 20:7). We fear that in these days it is observed more as a holiday than as a holy day, even by many professed servants of God. A strong stand must be taken by the Lord's people respecting this, as with the loss of the original intent of the day there will be a constant diminution of interest in spiritual things, with a consequent

hardness against the appeal of God, and an increase of sinfulness. May God enable us to put Him first, and be willing to bear witness to Him before the world.

Promise is made to let the land rest in the seventh year, (v. 31; Ex. 23:18; Lev. 25:1-7), a very necessary procedure for the land's sake, that it might not be weakened through continuous bearing. Both nature and man require systematic and regular rest. Exaction of debt is also forsworn, (v. 31), in accordance with explicit command, (Deut. 15:1, 2), and in memory possibly of recent trouble respecting the enforcement of usury, (5:1-13). The offering for the support of the Lord's service is next mentioned. This is stated as a specific sum, to be given yearly to cover the expenses of their worship. Mention of money in connection with religion is not always appreciated by some, yet finances have a close connection with spiritual work, and are not only necessary to the carrying on of such work, but reflect the condition of those participating in it. If we are really sincere in our love for the Lord we shall give to His cause to the utmost of our ability. We are enjoined to give liberally, systematically, and in accordance with the prosperity granted us by God, (I Cor. 16: 1, 2; II Cor. 9:7).

A record is then given of the arrangements made for the supplying of the wood necessary for the fire of the altar, (v. 34), for the bringing of the first fruits to the temple, for the reception of the Levitical tithe. The record closes with the statement, "And we will not forsake the house of our God." A splendid promise, yet how soon broken, (13:10). It is so easy to backslide that we must always keep in touch with God to save us therefrom. Emphasis requires to be laid upon the duties of all saved persons respecting the service of God. They should not only support the work financially as intimated, but should regularly attend the services, when possible to do so, and in every way by example and precept seek to advance the cause. God expects this, and nothing short of it is worthy of Him, or productive of genuine blessing and satisfaction.

#### II. THE RESIDENTS OF JERUSALEM, (11:1-36).

In this chapter a record is given of those who dwelt at Jerusalem. Affecting ordinary times this might be of interest, but it would not contain the significance attached to it under the circumstances described in the Book. These are familiar to us due to our studies. Jerusalem was the city threatened by the enemy, and, therefore, the place of danger. It was necessary to populate it in order to guard against its possession by the enemy, and provide free and safe access to the worshippers at the temple. Lots were cast for the choice of those who would dwell therein, in the proportion of one to ten with the other parts of the country. Some, however, willingly offered themselves as its citizens, and those were blessed by the rest of the people. It would appear as if there was no great wish to live in this city. While it was recognized that it was necessary to secure inhabitants for it, most of the people were willing to allow others to fulfil the task. They had no desire for trouble, sacrifice, or martyrdom. Those who were willing to brave these were consequently looked upon as persons deserving of praise. Their voluntary service was commended.

In the spiritual realm there are places of especial danger, where occupants are exposed to the more vicious attacks of the enemy. Aggressive evangelical leaders occupy such places, together with those who stand with them. There are many who do not care to run the risk of coming out boldly for the Lord; they fear the result of such temerity, and consequently remain in a position and condition where they are comparatively safe from enemy attacks because they are not in any way hindering him in his purpose. Several things may be noted respecting this aspect of the Christian life. First, as the Lord's own we are in the midst of enemies, Satan being the leader of these, (Eph. 6:12). Second, we are called upon to be soldiers, wholly given up to the King's service, (II Tim. 2:34). Third, there is a need for garrisoning the spiritual Jerusalems at home and abroad. Persons are needed who are willing to stay in these places, and hold them for the Lord, even to the point of sacrifice. Too many fail to settle any place, and are of little use either to God or man. It means something just to stay in one place and work, and nothing of a lasting nature can be accomplished otherwise. It is those who manifest sticktoitiveness who really do the worthwhile work. Fourth, our great Leader is always found in the place of danger. He never asks us to go where He will not go. And where He is, we should not be afraid to go. Observe the blessed satisfaction of standing with the Lord in the face of the enemy.

## III.

Let us look at A PICTURE OF THE OPPOSITE OF ALL THIS.

One night when Mr. Moody was preaching he laid upon the hearts and consciences of parents present the responsibility of witnessing to their children. There was a Christian man there, the father of a large family, all of whom were grown young people. He was a Christian man; he lived respectably, lived as a Christian; did honestly, and so on. But he had never actually witnessed to his children, nor urged them to come to Christ.

As Mr. Moody spoke that night the arrow of conviction went to his heart, and he said, "I will not sleep tonight until I have asked every one of my children to forgive me for my neglect, and I will ask them to come to Christ." He got home late from the meeting, and most of his children were in bed. But he went from room to room, knocked at the door and said, "It is father. I want to come in." He went to one daughter and said, "I am sorry; I have been a Christian for many years, and never have I asked you to accept Christ. I have not done a father's part, and I want you to forgive me, and let me pray with you now." He knelt at her bedside and prayed. Then he went to a son's room, and so through his whole family, and before the sun rose in the morning that whole family had been won to God, every son and every daughter had given himself or herself to Christ. Then, instead of the children gathering wood and the father kindling the fire, and the mother kneading the dough to offer sacrifice to the queen of heaven, the whole family co-operated in the study of God's word, praying and witnessing to each other, thus making the home a Christian home.

I do not think there is anything on earth better than that. I like to see a church working together for God. How delightful that is,

"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see  
A whole assembly worship Thee;  
At once they sing, at once they pray,  
They hear of heaven, and learn the way."

It is a great privilege to come together as we have come this morning to sing the praises of God, to hear of the salvation that is in Christ. But there is something that is even better than that, if possible; and that is to see a whole family a unit, just one in Christ Jesus. That is the nearest thing to heaven upon earth that I know.

I beg of you this morning to receive this simple message, and let us, who are Christians, try to be whole-hearted in the service of the Lord every day of the week, and all the hours of every day. Let us try in our social life, in our play as well as in our work, in our hours of recreation as well as in our hours of toil, to be what Christians ought to be. Gather no wood to make a fire to heathen gods. Say of these things that lead people astray, "I am going to give the Lord Jesus the benefit of the doubt, and stay away from them."

I heard a story of a man who came to Dr. Jowett one time seeking to join the church. He was a man of some prominence in life. He said, "Dr. Jowett, I would like to ask you a question before I become a member of your church. Do you think it is inconsistent for a professing Christian to attend the theatre?" Said Dr. Jowett, "Why do you ask me that question?" he replied. "I wish to have your opinion." Dr. Jowett replied, "Let me ask you a question: do you think it is wrong for a

Christian to ride a horse?" The man laughed and said, "Of course not. I do that all the time. I have a riding horse, and that is my recreation. I go for many a gallop into the country." "Well", said Dr. Jowett, "you have not any doubt about that?" "None whatever. I can do that any time with a clear conscience." "Then why do you ask me whether it is wrong for a Christian to go to the theatre?" "Because I have some doubt about that." "Then", said Dr. Jowett, "give the Lord the benefit of the doubt." "Thank you, Dr. Jowett", said the young man, "that settles it."

Of course, give the Lord the benefit of the doubt. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin"; that is to say, if you are not sure that a certain course is in accord with the word of the Lord, although it may not be inherently wrong, if you are in doubt about its legitimacy, incur the risk of doing wrong, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Therefore, of whatsoever you are in doubt say, "I will leave that alone as long as I am not sure about it. There are other courses to take about which I can be perfectly sure." Do not skirt the edge of the precipice: keep as far away from the edge as possible.

Let us pray that we may each as individuals be true to Christ, and whatever our position in the family, parents, brothers, sisters, children, whatever our position, let us try to live as Christians ought to live, so that some day—that day to which Mr. Whitcombe referred in his prayer—when the Lord shall come, He shall gather us all home, all the members of His family, a united family to stand before the throne of God.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that Thou dost not only come to our hearts, but it is Thy good pleasure to come to our homes as well. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob we know, but Thou dost love the dwellings of Jacob too; Thou dost love the places where we live. Thou hast designed that our houses shall be houses of prayer.

Bless these dear children. If there is a boy or girl here whose father and mother are not Christians, may that boy or girl receive Christ this morning. If there is a father or mother here who is not a Christian, oh, claim entrance to that heart, we beseech Thee. There may be some who have been playing in the streets of Jerusalem; if they have not actually gathered wood to kindle a fire to burn incense to the queen of heaven, perhaps they have had something to do with helping others who were gathering wood. Lord, separate us from all iniquity, everything that would impair the effectiveness of our witness. Make us, who are Thy children, strong. Oh may this church be insulated, so that Thy power may flow through us to a needy world.

Now bless us this morning. Give courage to any who ought to confess Thee, and make this service one of gain to our souls, and glory to Thy great name, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

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## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 9

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 29

THIRD QUARTER

July 22, 1934

### DEDICATION AND SEPARATION

Lesson Text: Nehemiah 12 and 13.

Golden Text: "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord."  
—I Cor. 10:11.

Bible School Reading: Nehemiah 13:1-22.

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—I Chron. 25:1-7; Tuesday—II Chron. 29:1-11;  
Wednesday—Psalm 30:1-12; Thursday—Mal. 3:7-12; Friday—II Cor. 7:1-11; Saturday—James 4:1-10.

#### I. DEDICATION OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM (12:1-47).

Jerusalem was the holy city (11:2), the Lord's city, because He had set His name there (I Kings 14:21). It belonged to Him, and as an acknowledgement of His claim the rebuilt walls were dedicated to Him. Such an action was wise and beneficial, directing the attention of the people toward their divine Lord, and impressing upon them the necessity and privilege of submission to His will. There should be due recognition on our part, with or without appropriate ceremony, of the claim of God upon all that we possess. Our bodies are His (I Cor. 6:20), and should be dedicated to His service (Rom. 12:1, 2), and our possessions likewise belong unto Him. Everything comes from Him, and should be used for Him.

Before giving information concerning the dedication ceremonies, the names of the priests and Levites who returned with Zerubbabel are given. Their various duties are stated, and the orderly service maintained in the temple is clearly evident. Respecting the dedication service several things are manifest. First, it was a time of great joy. The service of God, while solemn, is not sad. One must participate therein with becoming earnestness, but this does not exclude the experience and manifestation of gladness. No one has a better right to be joyful than the one who is right with God. His sins are forgiven, he has received the new life from above, his eternal future is assured, and in the present he is blessed with the help of God. Heaven is a place of joy, and those who live in the heavenly realms are affected by the spirit thereof (Eph. 2:6). Arising out of the spirit of the occasion we find the service of dedication was one of praise, "with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps". This was but the mode of expressing the inward gladness. God had done much for His people. He had permitted them to return to their own land, the holy city was again in their possession, its walls were rebuilt, its temple services were being carried on, and while as a people they were still under a foreign yoke, they had yet much freedom in living their own life. The future looked bright, and they gave God thanks for all.

We may observe further the national and public nature of this thanksgiving. It was a gathering of all the people, and a public recognition of indebtedness to God. The world has forgotten God, and is suffering the consequences of this sinful attitude. Therefore there is a necessity laid upon the children of God of recognizing God in all the affairs of life, and of giving expression to such recognition. The orderly nature of the service may be noted (vs. 31-38), together with the purification of the people prior to participating therein, and the offering of sacrifices. The service was dignified, carefully planned, properly carried out, and anticipated with effective preparation. The people were divided into two great companies, thanksgiving was expressed, sacrifices were offered, and a circuit of the wall was made. The act of previous preparation is worthy of consideration and application. Too many of our services are lacking in power because of failure in this regard. Saturday night ruins many a Sunday service. There is neither anticipation nor preparation for the spiritual activities of the coming day.

#### II. SEPARATION FROM HEATHEN (12:1-9).

Two things are mentioned in this section affecting the subject of separation from heathen defilement. First, there

is the general statement of separation from the mixed multitude (vs. 1-3). This separation came about as a result of reading the law, and manifests the willingness of the people to obey the declared will of God. It requires to be emphasized that God's commands contained in His Book are meant to be obeyed. Second, an incident is related respecting the defilement and subsequent cleansing of the temple (vs. 4-9). Note the nature of this defilement (v. 5), the reason for it (v. 4), wherein we see the evil of mixed marriage, the absence of Nehemiah from Jerusalem during the time of this offence (v. 6), implying that it would not have occurred if he had been present, and the drastic remedy applied by Nehemiah's order (vs. 7-9). The temple was erected for the service of God. Every part of it was dedicated to His use, and to give a room over to the use of another meant contravention of the will of God. Nehemiah did right therefore in casting forth the household stuff of Tobiah. Spiritually, may we learn our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 6:19, 20), and that each part of them belongs to Him, and is set apart for His use. Sometimes Tobiah is permitted to bring his furniture into some chamber, and we are not greatly disturbed because the other chambers are devoted to the service of God; but such is a wrong attitude to take. God owns each room in His dwelling, and will not share it with another. We should act justly, and give Him His due, and cast out Tobiah's furniture if we have at all permitted him to impose it in God's human dwelling-place. Many of the buildings of stone and lime require also to be cleaned. Cards, dancing, theatricals, and merchandising, have no place in the home of God.

#### III. RESTORING RELIGIOUS DUTIES (vs. 10-14).

The people had promised not to forsake the house of God (10-29). They had separated from the heathen in obedience to the command of God. They had mourned over their sins of omission and commission. Yet on the return of Nehemiah from Persia he found the services of the temple suffering for lack of support, and the ministers of God's house had been compelled to engage in secular labour to sustain themselves, and secure a living. This implied a serious situation, and manifested a state of backsliding. Human beings are so weak, and so much subject to temptation, that unless they keep near to God continually, it is possible for them to make the most earnest protestations of loyalty to Him, and shortly after forsake His service. Nehemiah remedied this grave condition by bringing the people back to God's plan, and caused them to resume their support of temple services. Note the necessity for present-day material support of the work of the Lord, and the grave dangers involved in neglecting this.

#### IV. ENFORCING SABBATH OBSERVANCE (vs. 15-22).

In the person of Nehemiah the returned exiles were blessed with a conscientious, fearless, leader whose only desire was to see the will of God carried out in the midst of His people. On his return to Jerusalem he had remedied the temple desecration and neglect; and then, observing the breaking of the sabbath law, he enforced obedience thereto. Note the purpose of the sabbath, the danger in its neglect, and the energetic manner in which its proper observance was enforced.

#### V. STRANGE WIVES (vs. 23-31).

The fearlessness and energy of Nehemiah are again evident in the last recorded incidents of the book, in relation to those who had married strange wives. One result of such marriages was the speaking of a kind of mongrel language by the children. This was due to the influence of the mother, and gives evidence of the ultimate result upon the nation of such intermarriages, not only in the loss of purity of speech, but in the lessening of loyalty to the national ideals. Added to that, it was in direct disobedience to the command of God, as we have seen in former lessons; therefore we are not surprised at Nehemiah acting so energetically in remedying the situation (v. 25). He points out how Solomon sinned in these matters (v. 26, I Kings 2:1), emphasizes the sinfulness therein, chased one of the sons of the priests from him (v. 28), prays to be remembered by God (v. 29), and concludes with a reference to the work which he had accomplished (vs. 30, 31). Note Nehemiah's devotion to God, his singleness of purpose, his knowledge of the law, and his courage in doing his duty. He sought the favour of God, and cared not for the applause of men.