

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 GREATEST THING A MAN CAN DO

A Sermon by Dr. P. W. Philpott

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

(Stenographically Reported)

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:
"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—John 3:1-3.

Prayer before the Sermon

Eternal God, our heavenly Father, once again we approach the throne of grace with a sense of our own unworthiness, pleading only the merit of Jesus Christ, our Mediator; Thine own beloved Son. We come with an assurance from Thine own Word that we are accepted in the Beloved—

"With confidence we now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father, cry."

We bring Thee the adoration of our hearts for Thy goodness, Thy mercy, and Thy truth. We would say with one of old that we are not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies; yet Thy mercies are new every morning, and great is Thy faithfulness. If we were to try to enumerate all Thy loving kindnesses we should find them more than the very hairs of our heads. Thou hast been gracious in spite of our failures. We have forgotten Thee, but Thou hast been patient as well as loving. Thou hast permitted us to come again into this place of prayer, and better still into Thine own presence. We do not have to ascend into heaven to bring Thee down, nor descend into the depth to bring Thee up: Thou art nigh unto us. Give us a consciousness of Thy presence to-night, we beseech Thee.

Some in Thy presence bow beneath a heavy load; some stagger under a burden too heavy for human shoulders to bear; some are here whose hearts ache with an unspeakable sorrow. O Thou Saviour of men, we pray Thee to comfort all such to-night. Let the light of Thy countenance shine upon them.

We are conscious of our own weakness as we stand before this people. We know that without Thee we shall fail. But it is in Thy name we come, and with Thy word. Forbid that we should fill the horizon with ourselves. Let Jesus Christ be before the vision of the people. May they go forth from this place with the consciousness that they have been in the presence of the Lord. And could it be that some who have hitherto sat in darkness should see the great Light, how great would be our rejoicing! By Thy Spirit cause some in this audience to behold the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world.

Then, Lord, we would pray for greater things. We ask Thee to send a great spiritual awakening to this city, to this land; and to the uttermost parts of the earth. Our hearts cry out for a real spiritual revival.

Bless the Pastor of this church as he ministers in the Old Land. May there be a great turning to the Lord there, and a quickening of Thy people, through the preaching of the gospel!

Hear us as we stand before Thee, and humbly ask these mercies in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, Amen.

I shall talk to you for a little while this evening about the conversation our Lord had with Nicodemus. This man is before us three times in John's Gospel—indeed, we are indebted to John for all we know about him. And he is an interesting character. In this chapter we have his desire for Christ, his seeking after truth. In the seventh chapter he is shown as a defender of Christ. Certain officers had been sent to arrest Jesus Christ, and to bring Him to the chief priests and Pharisees; and when they were questioned as to why they had not brought Him, the officers replied in effect, "We dare not—never man spake like this man." Then said the Pharisees, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" Nicodemus spoke up and said, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" To which they replied, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Then you meet Nicodemus once more, after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It was he who went with Joseph of Arimathaea to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus, to take that body down from the cross and give it loving burial. Nicodemus provided a hundred pounds of spice,

very costly; and it is evident he was an earnest disciple of Jesus Christ.

Many preachers make much of the fact that Nicodemus "came to Jesus by night", but I do not think that is the high light in the story. The fact that he came to Christ at all is what really matters. We are profoundly thankful that he did come, and for the questions he asked the Master that elicited from Christ answers that have meant much to those who seek after truth, who desire to have assurance concerning their salvation.

I never address a Sunday evening meeting with a simple gospel message without a great sense of my own unworthiness, and with a trembling because of weakness. You will be surprised perhaps to know that although I have been preaching fifty-one years, and for at least forty years have made it my business to preach the gospel of the grace of God every Sunday night with the one view of bringing sinners to Jesus Christ (I have tried to bring a simple, direct, message; for I believe with Paul that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"), I have never been free from a sense of weakness—sometimes an almost overpowering sense of weakness and unworthiness.

Paul felt something like that when he preached the gospel, the message of the cross. When he emphasized the fact that only through a belief in Jesus Christ can sinners be saved, he was conscious of his utter unworthiness to be entrusted with the gospel message. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians you have him coming to a company of scholars at Athens asserting that he "came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God". I think "excellency of speech" has been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel, and has prevented its getting into the hearts of many people. The cross has been hidden by human philosophy. Paul said, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks (scholars) foolishness." He was addressing scholars at Corinth. But listen: he says the preaching of the gospel is "unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God". Who would be ashamed to preach such a gospel, one that is the power of God, and the wisdom of God?

In the next chapter Paul says, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Why did Paul tremble in the presence of those scholars? Was it that he feared he could not give them intellectual entertainment? No! He trembled lest he should be tempted to do so! That is always a temptation: if a fellow has intellectual fireworks he likes to let them off! If ever there was a man who could have matched their wits and intellect, it was that man Paul. There was never a mightier mind in a human body than that of Paul. But he declared, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." I think this feeling of fear of mine is somewhat akin to that experienced by the Apostle Paul at Corinth, a feeling common to all true heralds of the cross.

I have a desire to be simple and direct to-night, so that even the children can follow me in the presentation of this great truth. I want them to understand it, and yield themselves to Christ. Will you follow me then as I make a proposition, and later support that proposition by the

Word itself, that it may be clearly understood that it is not Philpott or Shields you have to do with in these eternal verities, but with the Word of the living God. As we support that proposition with Scripture, I shall ask a question for you, and endeavour to answer it out of God's Word.

What is the proposition? According to the Scripture, the consequences of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ or of refusing to do so, are incomparably greater than the consequences of anything else a human being can do or not do. May I repeat it? According to the Scripture, the consequences of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, or of refusing to believe on Him, are incomparably greater than the consequences of anything else a human being can do, or refuse to do. Putting that in other words, according to the Word, measured by consequences, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest thing a human being can do. Conversely, according to the Scripture, not to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest tragedy that can come to a human life.

I will confine myself almost wholly to the words of Jesus Christ in my quotations. Jesus Christ said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already"—and notice the reason—"because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Man is condemned, not because he is a drunkard, not because he is an outcast from society, not because he is a thief or a liar; but because "he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God". "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Do you see how those passages support our contention?

Take another verse from our Lord's teaching, in the fifth chapter of John: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life." That was the first verse of Scripture I ever learned, and for fifty-one years I have been standing on that word. I would not dare tell you to-night that I have eternal life because I am a preacher, or because of any good that I have done, because of any virtue of my own. If you ask me how I know I am a saved man, my answer is that Jesus Christ tells me I am. I believe that God gave Him to die for me on the cross, and He tells me that if I believe that truth I shall have everlasting life, and shall never come into judgment.

I used to believe I would stand before the judgment-bar of God, and be judged as to whether I was going to heaven or hell, whether I was a sheep or a goat; but the man or woman who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is never to be judged for sin. Your debt, if you are a believer, has been paid; the trial is over. Another took your place; Another paid the debt—and you will never come into condemnation; that is past. We pass out of death, *into* life.

Let me quote one other verse. After Christ rose from the dead He commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel, adding, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." I make no apology for that word: it fell from the lips of Jesus Christ.

Do you see the force of it, beloved friends? Surely these passages of Scripture support the proposition that the greatest thing a human being can do is to believe on

the Lord Jesus Christ, and the greatest tragedy that can befall any one of us is to refuse to believe on Him.

One thing is plain to me in both the Gospels and the Epistles, and that is that this eternal life that the Bible speaks of is in the Son. Eternal life is not a thing: it is a person. It is not a blessing, it is not a power: it is Jesus Christ Himself. In the last chapter of the First Epistle of John we have what John calls "the testimony of God". (Paul spoke of the same thing when he told the Corinthians he was declaring unto them "the testimony of God"). What is the testimony according to John?—"This is the witness of God that he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Salvation is not a question of joining the church, it is not a question of baptism, or of any other ordinance—not that. Salvation is the matter of the soul's relation to Jesus Christ.

A man said to me not long ago, "What I object to about you fellows (referring to those of us who are simple enough still to believe the Book) is that you make a man's salvation depend upon the acceptance of certain dogmas." We do nothing of the sort. Your salvation and mine depends upon our acceptance of the Son of God. Eternal life is in the Son. If you have the Son, you have life; and if you have not the Son, no matter what else you have, you have not life. We may differ about a hundred things and come out all right at the end of the day, be in the Lord's presence at last together; but there can be no diversity of opinion at this point: Jesus Christ Himself is our only salvation. Christianity is the one and only religion of all history that is bound up vitally with one person. You can be a Mohammedan, and do what you will with Mohammed; you can accept Confucianism, and speak as you will of the person of Confucius; you can adopt Buddhism, and think as you will of Buddha. But Christianity is Christ, and you must accept Christ Himself; Christ and His teaching stand or fall together.

When Jesus Christ was a baby a few weeks old, His mother brought Him to the temple, to meet certain requirements of the law. In Jerusalem there was an old man living by the name of Simeon, to whom it had been revealed that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. When Joseph and the mother of Jesus came in, Simeon who "came by the Spirit into the temple", knew that he looked upon the promised One, and "then took he him in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people." What was that salvation? It was a Person. It was Jesus Christ. He is your salvation and mine.

What a beautiful illustration we have of that principle in the story of Zacchaeus. The Lord had told Zacchaeus to make haste and come down from the tree into which he had climbed to see Him as He passed by, saying, "For to-day I must abide at thy house." As they went down the road together and crossed the threshold of that little Jew's home, what new thing had come into that house? A Person! Jesus Christ. Salvation is not *it*: it is *He*; not a blessing, but a Person:

"He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joys we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known."

Salvation is a very real experience, and it means we may have a consciousness of His presence all along the pilgrim pathway.

My question is, If eternal life depends upon my belief on a Man called Jesus Christ Who lived here two thousand years ago, what does it mean to believe on Him? In a general sense, we all believe on Him. If I went out on the street seventy-five out of every hundred would say they believed in the historical Jesus, that such a man lived; and many of them would say they believe He went to the cross, that "by wicked hands he was crucified and slain". If salvation depends on my believing in a Man Who for many years worked as a common artisan, and was only three years before the public preaching and teaching, what does it mean to believe if eternal life depends on that belief?

It certainly means something more than belief in a historical Jesus. Nicodemus believed that before he came. It surely means more than believing He was a good man. Nicodemus believed that. He said, "We know thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." He believed all that, yet Christ said, "Ye must be born again." Notice where He places the emphasis there. Yet Nicodemus paid Him all those compliments. I think Christ Himself made it very plain when He answered Nicodemus' question, "How can these things be?" His reply was, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." That answer, to my mind, is satisfactory to those who are ready to accept the authority of God's Word. It seems to me that the fourth Gospel is God's written guarantee for our faith, and what more could one ask than a divinely-written guarantee?

You have it here. We spoke of it the other night. Our Lord directed Nicodemus' mind to something he would understand. He referred to a period in Israel's history when the people rebelled against God, and He sent "fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died". When they acknowledged their sin, God provided a remedy for their healing. He said to Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live . . . and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." And it is equally true that all who refused to look, perished. "Now", said Jesus, "you ask me how a man can be born again when he is old; here is my answer: As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up"—our Lord seldom used the imperative mood, but He did on this occasion—"even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; "Ye *must* be born again"; and "I must die in order to make that new birth possible." That is the plain teaching of Christ.

Sometimes those words "lifted up" are used to inspire preachers and singers to lift up Christ in sermon and song. In a sense, that is legitimate; but that is not the meaning here, or elsewhere in this same Gospel. Each time the term is used it refers to the crucifixion of our Lord, His being "lifted up" upon the cross. You remember His saying?—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me", and John says, "This he said, signifying what death he should die." His saying is interpreted for us under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so that there can be no mistake.

In our day there has come over men and women, many of them in the church of God, a tremendous opposition to the doctrine of the vicarious death of Christ. I do not know why men object to that teaching, for they believe in vicarious suffering and death. Yes; they do. That is why there are so many monuments and memorials to the soldiers who died in the Great War. Why should you object to the teaching of the Book that Jesus Christ came one day as God's Lamb, and laid down His life? That is the heart of the gospel, and if you take that away you have no gospel. The crucifixion of Christ was not an afterthought. Christ implied at the very beginning that He came to die, and in His Gethsemane darkness said, "For this cause came I unto this hour." John knew it, for his introduction of Christ was, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The Lamb (was) slain from the foundation of the world." He declared that He must be lifted up, He must be crucified, to make our salvation, the new birth, possible.

I want to go back to that event that Christ used to illustrate His crucifixion. Let us imagine that we stand in the midst of those Israelites who were dying by the score of that poison. What would you want to do? What would be your first impulse? To get everyone to look at that brasen serpent! We would not try to argue with them as to why God made that serpent the one and only way of healing, why the serpent was made of brass rather than of some other metal: our chief concern would be to get those stricken people to look.

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee;
Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved,
Unto Him Who was nailed to the tree."

My concern to-night is not to explain the depths of the meaning of the Atonement, the mysteries that are associated with that great truth—for there are mysteries; there is much that I cannot understand; I have never pretended to understand it. It is beyond the range of my comprehension. If it were not, I would scarcely consider it adequate for my salvation. This I do know, that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross satisfies God; and if it satisfies God, it ought to satisfy me. If it satisfied God, the holy, righteous, God; if He said every debt was paid and the law fulfilled, it ought certainly to be a sure foundation for my faith.

Paul asked some pertinent questions. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" John MacNeill, the great Scotch preacher, for many years Pastor of Cooke's Presbyterian Church in this city, used to say, the elect are the "whosoever-wills", and the non-elect are the "whosoever-won'ts". Who shall lay anything to the charge of the believer? "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand

of God, who also maketh intercession for us." His salvation satisfies the claims of just equity, and nothing great or small can prevent our salvation. Jesus Christ paid it all long ago. That is the message of the cross of Christ, "I, if I be lifted up."

But there is a limitation here, a solemn limitation. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." We read that "he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." We read that He tasted death for every man. But will everyone be saved? No! In this teaching of Christ on this particular point there is a solemn limitation. "I must be lifted up, and as a consequence of my being lifted up, whosoever believeth on me shall not perish, but have everlasting life." There is the limitation. Those who accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord shall be saved.

John says in his first epistle, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." The key-word of John's Gospel is *believe*. Ninety times you have that word in the fourth Gospel. The key-word of his Epistles is *know* or *knowledge*, or their equivalent. "These things have I written unto you . . . that ye may know." I want no better assurance of my salvation than God's testimony, the testimony that is written that "we may know"—"For this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

There is another aspect of this truth. What I have been talking about the theologians would call the judicial aspect of salvation. It relates to my standing before God. But what about the practical life? What about the every-day life? What effect does this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have upon the man? What change does it make in the sinner? Jesus Christ said it is like being born again. Paul, by inspiration, likens it to resurrection from the dead. Again he says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." A great change comes to the man who puts his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. A complete revolution takes place, and the man is enabled to live triumphantly in Christ. It is not struggle against habits and appetites that have been dragging the man down; it is not the worshipping merely of a Christ in heaven: it is Christ in the heart. The whole man is changed. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

I used to think the testimonies of some of the people of God were rather extravagant. They talked about things being "different" after conversion: the snow was whiter, the grass greener, the birds' singing sweeter, and the trees seemed fairly to clap their hands. But it all came back to me when I was saved, and I declare to you everything did seem different. I used to work in an old blacksmith shop, and the night before I was saved I was working on an old sleigh, trying to get it repaired for the owner to use early the next morning. The nuts were rusty, and everything went wrong—and I lost my temper. I did not get it fixed that night. The next morning I went to work on the same old sleigh, in the same old shop—but everything was changed. There

was a joy in my heart, a ceaseless song of praise. There is a "joy of the Lord" that is felt only by those who believe in Christ and His Word:

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

Salvation is a real experience, something we can enjoy.

When I was Pastor of the Moody Church, Chicago, about four years ago, one night when it had been announced that I had resigned and was leaving, at the close of the service a young man and his mother came to the front when I was shaking hands with some friends. The young man said, "Mr. Philpott, I want to introduce himself, and then tell you something." He told me how, when overseas, he had contracted the drug habit. His mother had tried to have him cured, and had spent great sums of money toward that end; but the habit more and more enchained him until he was a slave. He said, "I could not free myself in any way. One night mother and I were walking through the park (Moody Church looks over Lincoln Park), and as the light shone on and off indicating this was Moody Church, we turned and looked at the building. I said to mother, 'Let us go in there, and see what they do.'"

He told me they came in, and heard the sermon. He remembered the text. The church has four thousand individual seats, and it is practically always filled Sunday evenings. They were right at the back, under the balcony. "While you were preaching," he said, "there came to me a new hope"—and say, if I can put a new hope into somebody's heart I will keep on preaching the gospel so long as I have breath. "I turned to my mother," the young man continued, "and said, 'Mother, we have tried everything else, and everyone else but God: let us give Him a chance.' Preacher, you did not know what was taking place, but right in the service mother and I leaned our heads on the back of the seat; mother offered a prayer, and I prayed in the name of Jesus Christ Whom you were preaching, for God to set me free of that damning habit." He had grasped the plan of salvation, and had claimed deliverance from sin.

"When I got up and staggered out of that building with the crowd, my hand went to my pocket where the drug was. Then something whispered, 'You have tried that sort of thing before; you will have to have the drug before you can get to sleep.' When we came to the corner of the street where we were to take the street car there was a sewer, and as we stood waiting I reached in my pocket, took out the drug, and threw it into the sewer. Preacher, what I wanted to tell you is this, that many weeks and months have gone by, but I have never touched the drug since—and better still, I have never wanted it."

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood atones for everyone,
His blood atones for me."

May He break the fetters that bind some hearts here to-night, and lead many out into the liberty of the children of God.

"HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL"

By the Editor.

This was the verdict of a multitude of people who were wonder-struck when they beheld the works of Jesus. They observed that whatever He did was done thoroughly, perfectly. The miracle they had just witnessed was but typical of His whole career: He not only made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, but He did all things well.

We have here a great doctrine. The truth is that whatever Christ does is well done. This will appear from an inspection of Nature's workshop. Look at the perfection of Nature's order: the correlation of its multitudinous and widely varied systems; the coordination of means with ends; the interrelation of different forces; the conservation of energy; the facilities for repair; the utilization and transformation of wastes; the combination of utility and beauty; the beauty of the useful, and the usefulness of the beautiful; the marvellous reproductiveness of nature: its perfection of balance; its media of light and sound, its optical, and acoustical adjustments; the invariability of the order of the procession of the seasons, the fitness and essentiality of climatic productions, and the consequent general adequacy of its commensarial supplies; and over all and through all the universality of the reign of law. Survey this wide field and what is the judgment of intelligence? Get your answer from a little child who wonderingly views the beauty of flowers and fields; or from some humble worshipper, the ears of whose soul are attuned to catch the music of wind and wave, and of all singers with whose melody the earth and air are vocal; or from the cool, calm, careful and dispassionate man of science, as he magnifies the infinitesimal, and examines the nervous system of an animalcule, or projects his vision through some mighty telescope for the study of immeasurably distant planetary systems—the universal verdict is this, "He hath done all things well."

And if you bring under review the sphere of divine activity which we call Providence, you will observe the same faultlessness of design and perfection of execution. The book of Esther contains no mention of the name of God. And yet if you read its story from Mordecai's bringing up of Hadassah, her entrance into the royal palace, the wickedness of Haman, the sleeplessness of the king, the subsequent exaltation of Mordecai, and the ultimate conquest of evil and the triumph of righteousness, you will understand the saying:

"Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell,
That God is on the field when He
Is most invisible."

Esther is as full of God as the Psalms or the Gospels. And Esther is an epitome of all history. There is an invisible Hand which shapes, as there is an unerring Mind which plans the affairs of men, and by that plan and purpose, Haman is judged in the end of the day, and Mordecai is exalted. And it is always true: the law has not been repealed which decrees, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

(Continued on page 7)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

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No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 44 Fourth Quarter November 4th, 1934

BILDAD'S SECOND SPEECH

Lesson Text: Job, chapter 18.

Golden Text: "How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak."—Job 18:2.

Bible School Reading: Job 18:1-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Psalm 73:18-28; Tuesday—Proverbs 13:15-25; Wednesday—Jer. 6:18-30; Thursday—Math. 7:7-20; Friday—I. Thess. 2:13-20; Saturday—Titus 2:9-15.

I. BILDAD'S REPROOF (vs. 1-4)

In Bildad's reply to Job there is manifest resentment at the latter's statements. The pride of this friend is evidently touched, and his temper is aroused; and upon the afflicted one he pours out his reproof. He still considers Job guilty, and deserving of censure for his stubborn attitude—therefore care is taken to point out the calamities afflicting the wicked. This was a mistaken attitude for any friend to adopt, and had not the Lord intervened it might have been persisted in indefinitely to the detriment of the helpless object. As it was, it must have brought much misery to Job. He was not perfect, and was taught later concerning his imperfections; but the attitude of his comforters was not helpful to his enlightenment. He must have felt like praying as others have since his day, "Lord, deliver me from my friends".

In the opening words of Bildad's speech referring to making an end of words, or empty speeches (v. 2), there would seem to be a censure of all the former speakers. Evidently his estimate of their contributions to the discussion was not a high one. He believes his own address is more to the point, and calls upon them to listen to what he had to say: "Mark, and afterwards we will speak." It might have been better if this friend had been more ready to listen than to speak (James 1:19), and more willing to consider advice than to reject it (Ps. 50:21-23). His comment on Job's speech betrays his hasty spirit. Job had not counted his friends as beasts (v. 3). He had recommended them to learn from the beasts; and any person may legitimately do this without lowering his character. The Holy Spirit would have us consider even the insects (Prov. 6:6).

The concluding part of these opening remarks contains a direct reference to Job. He is referred to as tearing himself, or his soul, in anger; and questions are asked relative to the earth being forsaken, and the rock being removed, because of him (v. 4). In the first clause there is given an intimation of Job's great exercise of spirit. His trouble stirred him deeply, but the expostulations of his friends aggravated his condition. Note the effect of the emotions, either for good or bad, on body and soul. The questions imply that Job, as a sinner, was suffering the just punishment of his sins; and could not expect the operation of divine law to be suspended for his especial benefit. No one can expect the suspension of divine law for his special benefit, for sin brings its own punishment (Job 6:7, 8; Romans 6:23); yet God forgives sin (I John 1:9), and miraculously makes of a sinner a new creature (2 Corin. 5:17). Note the wonders of God's grace in this respect (Eph. 2:8).

II. THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE WICKED (vs. 5-21)

In continuation of his speech Bildad describes the miserable condition of the wicked. We are inclined to think sometimes that evil persons have a good time in the midst of the world's pleasures, but if we could examine the private life of each one we should come to a different conclusion. Sin never gives real happiness. It is always deceitful and fruitful of misery (Heb. 3:13). Bildad mentions several things relative to such misery, and these are worthy of note. We are informed first of the end of the prosperity of the wicked. His light shall be put out, the spark of his fire shall not shine, his tabernacle shall be dark, and his

candle shall be put out with him. Such statements imply a condition of utter desolation. There would be no fire of hospitality to which to welcome friends; the evening candle, or lamp, which burned all night, would be put out; and darkness would reign in his habitation. Such will be the ultimate end of all unrepentant sinners. They will go out into darkness (Matt. 22:13). And spiritual darkness is their condition now (Eph. 5:8). It is only as we receive the light of God within that we are changed from darkness into light (Col. 1:13). Note the awful condition of one spiritually and eternally in darkness; and the blessing of light here, and hereafter. The reason for men remaining in darkness is that they love darkness as a cover for their evil deeds (John 3:19, 20). An explanation of the way of deliverance therefrom is ever necessary (I John 1:5-10).

We are next informed of the way in which utter destruction comes upon the wicked. His strong strength shall be straitened, implying he would not be able to walk about at will (v. 7). His liberty of movement would be curtailed through lack of strength: "And his own counsel shall cast him down." His own plans shall be the means of his fall. No one in a lost eternity will be able to blame God for his presence therein, nor can anyone cast reflection upon Him now for his miserable condition. Man himself is to blame for his condition. He has chosen his own way which is contrary to the divine way, and leads only to death (Is. 53:6; Prov. 14:12). Pursuing such a course he falls into a trap, and is held fast (vs. 8-10). Note the various traps laid for unwary feet in beer parlour, gambling den, and other places of sin—and some not outside the circle of religion. The worldly church with its polite gambling, its dancing, card-playing, acting, and wine, on the side, is a snare to many who might otherwise serve the Lord. The great need is for divine guidance (John 16:13), and human submission to the divine will (Rom. 12:1).

"Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet", implying possibly the pricking of an evil conscience which makes cowards of the bravest (John 8:9; Matt. 14:1-3). It comes as a conqueror scattering the foe before him. Note the terrors of an evil conscience here and hereafter. Destruction is certain to attend such an one; being ever ready at his side, devouring his strength. His confidence is rooted out, or torn away from his tabernacle; and death, the being of terrors is brought to him (v. 14, 15). Death is a terrible thing to the unsaved, for it means the departing from all that they hold dear, to go out into utter hopeless darkness and despair (Matt. 25:30). Our Lord has given us a picture of one man in that condition (Luke 16:19-30), and we are warned of the reality of such an experience, and enjoined to flee from it. In contrast therewith, note the blessed condition of those who depart in Christ. They are absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

CABLE FROM THE EDITOR

A cable received this morning (Thursday) from Dr. Shields, who is now in Belfast, says that deep interest in the services is manifest everywhere. Meetings in Ireland are crowded out, some places an hour before the time announced for the meeting; with tremendous enthusiasm displayed on all sides.

BEVERAGE ROOM PROTESTS

To date, we have received 35,184 signatures to the protest to be presented to the Government against the beer parlours. But we still need the co-operation of our readers. If your friends have not yet signed, send to THE GOSPEL WITNESS office for slips, and secure their signatures. If you have names you have not forwarded, let us hear from you at once. Two letters received to-day asked for five hundred blanks each, one asked that two hundred and fifty be sent at once; another, two hundred; and several requested smaller quantities. Address: THE GOSPEL WITNESS Office, 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto, Canada.

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS ST.

The week-end in Jarvis St. was one of great blessing. The prayer meeting was well attended Saturday evening, and was a time of earnest waiting upon God. There was a fine Bible School at 9.45 Sunday morning, and large congregations at both preaching services. Several responded to the invitation at both services; and baptism was administered in the evening.

"HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL"

(Continued from page 5)

We say, therefore, that in the wide realm of Providence, concerning the divine actions, the verdict is the same: "He hath done all things well."

And in that part of it which particularly concerns us, there is no room for other judgment. We know that life to us, at close range, is a noisy, clanging, loom, wherein we see a thousand strands which appear to be inextricably tangled; but if you will go behind the loom and lift a little corner of the finished web, and look back upon the years gone by, you will join in the approving verdict of the people of the coasts of Decapolis, and declare, "Here, too, He hath done all things well."

And to the host of believers who will read this article we need only mention the third sphere of divine opera-

tions: In the realm of grace, perfection is absolute. Read again the record of the eternal planning and the long unfolding. Then behold the star, and follow it until you bow in adoration at the manger-cradle with the wise men from the east, and worship with the shepherds to whom the angels sang. Then follow that prolonged Manifestation of divine kindness in its ministry to human need, which culminates in the Cross, and the open grave. Behold the opened heavens—the Christ ascending and the Spirit descending; and follow once more the path along which redeeming grace has journeyed with its abiding benedictions. And as you follow the footsteps of God through the centuries, observing the triumph of the gospel in all lands, you will be constrained to say again, "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. He hath done all things well."

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.

SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

Central Baptist Church,
London,
The Convention Church,
October 23, 24, 25,
1934



(Left)
Rev. Jas. McGinlay,
Pastor of Central Baptist
Church,
The Convention President.



(Right)
Rev. P. W. Philpott,
Toronto,
The Convention Speaker



Seventh Annual Convention of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec

To be held in Central Baptist Church, London, Ontario, October 23, 24, 25, 1934.

SPECIAL SPEAKER—Dr. P. W. Philpott, Toronto

PROGRAMME

PRE-CONVENTION MEETINGS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1934

Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union at 2 p.m.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1934

11.00 a.m.—Registration of Messengers.

Allocation of Messengers to Billets.

2.30 p.m.—Inspirational Conference in charge of Rev. Jas. Hall.

ADDRESS—"The Place of the Holy Spirit in Christian Life and Work."—Rev. Alex. Thomson.

4.30 p.m.—ADDRESS—Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, M.A., "Christian Work as I saw it in Europe this Summer."

TUESDAY EVENING

First Session

SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

7.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. R. D. Guthrie of London.

8.00—Opening of Convention—Rev. Jas. McGinlay, President, presiding.

Words of Welcome—Deacon D. H. Gillies.

Reply—Mr. Morgan Baker, M.P.P.

Report of Revision Committee and Adoption of Tentative Constitution.

Appointment of Committees.

ADDRESS—Rev. Jas. McGinlay, President of the Convention.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1934

Morning

SECOND CONVENTION SESSION

9.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Pastor J. Watt of Courtright and Wilkesport.

10.00—Rev. Jas. McGinlay, President, presiding.

Presentation of the Annual Report of the Executive Board of the Union by the Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. W. E. Atkinson.

11.00—ADDRESS—Rev. W. E. Atkinson.

Afternoon

THIRD CONVENTION SESSION

2.00—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. E. E. Hooper of St. Catharines, Ont.

2.30—Rev. Jas. Hall, Vice-President, presiding.

HOME MISSIONS

Representative speakers:

Rev. H. H. Chipchase, Guelph.

Rev. M. B. Gillion, Bobcaygeon.

Rev. E. C. Wood, Chatham.

4.00—ADDRESS—Dr. P. W. Philpott.

Evening

FOURTH CONVENTION SESSION

7.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. H. C. Slade of Timmins.

8.00—Rev. Jas. McGinlay, President, presiding.

ADDRESS—Dr. P. W. Philpott.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1934

Morning

FIFTH CONVENTION SESSION

9.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Pastor C. S. McGrath of Stouffville.

10.00—Rev. Jas. Hall, Vice-President, presiding.

Discussion of Executive Board's Report.

10.30—Reports of Committees, and Nomination and Election of Officers and Board Members.

11.15—ADDRESS—Rev. David Alexander.

Afternoon

SIXTH CONVENTION SESSION

2.00—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. W. E. Smalley of Baker Hill.

2.30—Rev. Jas. McGinlay, President, presiding.

EDUCATIONAL SESSION

TOPIC—The Relation of Toronto Baptist Seminary to our Work.

Speakers:

1. "The Seminary and the Pastor"—Pastor R. E. J. Brackstone (graduate of '33), Cannington, Ont.

2. "The Seminary and the Church"—Pastor C. S. McGrath (class of '30), Stouffville, Ont.

3. "The Seminary and the Union"—Rev. H. C. Slade ('30), Timmins, Ont.

4. "The Seminary and the Future"—Instructor Rev. W. W. Fleischer, Brantford, Ont.

Evening

SEVENTH CONVENTION SESSION

7.30—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. H. S. Bennett of Hamilton.

8.00—The President presiding.

Introduction of Officers and Board Members.

FOREIGN MISSIONS

Addresses by:

Rev. G. D. Mellish.

Mrs. G. D. Mellish.

Miss Minnie Lane.

Adjournment.

Benediction.