

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

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

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Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsam, Canada.

Vol. 13, No. 29

TORONTO, NOVEMBER 29, 1934

Whole Number 654

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

HEPBURN THE LAWLESS

A Review of the Four Months' Record of the Honorable Mitchell F. Hepburn, Premier of Ontario

An Address by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

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

(Stenographically Reported)

"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

"And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

"And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

"And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen; a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

"And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing."

—I Kings 3:5-10.

OMIT

I read those verses as representing a great example which everyone entrusted with the leadership of a nation, or part of a nation, might wisely emulate.

I want it to be understood quite clearly this evening that my special business is the proclamation of the gospel. It is for that we stand in this church, for the salvation of individuals through personal faith in Christ. I have no hope of an ideal society being brought about by any educational or legislative process. A house is no better than the bricks or the stones of which it is composed; and a state is no better than its individual citizens. They make a large contribution to the public weal, therefore, who spend their time bringing individuals into personal relationship to the living Saviour, so that they will go out into all walks of life as regenerated men and women bearing witness to the mighty power of God to make men new. But if we are really saved, then we ought to be saved for seven days of every week, and Jesus Christ should be just as truly a man's Master on Monday as on Sunday.

I would give nothing for a man's religion that does not accompany him to the office, and that does not lead him to recognize his supreme obligation to God

in all the relationships of life, making him a better citizen, a better employer, or employee, as the case may be, a better neighbour, better father, better son, better husband,—better everything, if indeed he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. I have greatly misunderstood the religion of Christ if it permits any man who professes it, to shut his eyes to the evils that are about him; or, observing such evils, to make no effort to remove them. I would not follow the example either of the priest or of the Levite who "passed by on the other side". It is well to minister to the man who has fallen among thieves, and, having done so, it is a still better thing to catch the thieves, and lock them up. As I conceive the duty of a Christian man, he should apply the principles of the gospel to every duty, in every relationship of life.

And so of the Christian minister. He ought to be alert. He ought to be sensitive to all the tides that flow about him. He ought to be informed on public questions, and on all matters of human interest and welfare in all walks of life. The prophets of the Old Testament carried God's message, not only to the people, but to the rulers of their day; and they warned them of the consequences of ignoring the divine law.

I would fain preach the gospel to the drunkard and the debauchee, and try to save men out of the gutter, and from the lowest depths of the horrible pit. But I think I should be recreant to my task, and sadly fail in my duty, if I did not try to cover up the pits which men dig, or which demons through men dig, into which women and little children may fall.

I have already protested in this place against the iniquitous beer and wine measure. I protested against it before it was passed. I sent from this congregation nearly a thousand protests to the late Government. I am taking no new position. I have never been other than the open enemy of the liquor traffic and all its works.

The liquor traffic has always been—and always will be—an enemy of the state, an enemy of the home, an enemy of women and little children. Personally, I would take much stronger ground than some others on that matter. But I think he is not a wise legislator who will try to enact legislation in advance of public opinion. We have been asleep, and the enemy has sown tares among the wheat. As I have remarked before, the cause of temperance has been turned back fifty or sixty years; and we who are Christian ministers and members of Christian churches must bear our full share of the responsibility, because we did not continue to warn people against the possibility of the return of this menace. But now it is here! And here in its ugliest and most dangerous form.

My protest originally was not against Government Control—although I do not like it. But that at least received public endorsement, and you cannot legislate beyond public opinion under a democratic form of Government. I am probably in the minority in that matter, but as Government Control has become a law of the land I pay it due respect. But this wine and beer measure was never asked for by the people. There has never been any demand for it. So far as I know, there is not an organization in the entire province of Ontario that ever asked for it—unless it be the liquor interests themselves. No church, no lodge, no fraternal organization of any sort, asked for it. The thing itself, in essence, though not technically, is a lawless measure—if, indeed, democracy be for the people, for the people were never consulted. However, even when it became a statute, and was proclaimed by the present Government, surely there was no justification in morals or in politics for such wholesale distribution of licenses or authorities.

I am glad to know that this place across the corner that was called *The Ambassador Hotel* has lost its license. I am informed the same is true of *The Frontenac-Arms*, and of *The Atlanta Hotel*, and of *The New York Hotel*. Four of them have been cancelled in the region of Jarvis Street Church. That is all to the good. There are still too many. However, my objection, primarily, was to the manner of the administration of this law; and as a citizen of Ontario, and as a taxpayer, I have a right to protest; and as a representative of this congregation—which is not, I think, one of the least in this city—I think I have a right to be heard.

As a result of my protest I have here on the premises more than forty thousand signatures protesting against the continuance of this measure. I have not yet presented them to Premier Hepburn because I do not propose to expose myself to that person's insolence. I

have the names, and I think those names can be put to more practical use than they would be by handing them to the Premier at this juncture. Perhaps when he is politically a little older he may be a little wiser—and though I have little hope of this latter, a little more polite.

I am very glad to observe that public opinion has been aroused. I take no credit for it. I have, perhaps, done a little. But the beer parlours themselves chiefly have awakened the people to the danger. Anyone who cannot see that they are only evil must be utterly destitute of moral discernment. The beer parlours have been in operation for four months, and already there is a rising tide of temperance sentiment which in due time will be crystalized into action. Organizations among churches, and among people who belong to no church, will come into being; and the present Government will learn—as other governments have learned—that they cannot flout the people, and treat as a lot of imbeciles people who have spent their lives in seeking the moral welfare of the community where they minister. I have no apology to make to the Premier. I have stood on this platform for nearly twenty-five years. I know a little about public life. I venture to say, I know vastly more than Mr. Hepburn does. I have something to say to him to-night. I wish he were here. But what I say to him to-night is only the beginning of what I shall have to say in future unless he repents.

The beer parlours have been in operation about four months. Here and there a license or "authority" has been cancelled, but only to be given to other absurdities called "hotels". Why is not the Government frank? Why should they allow men to patch up an old shack that everybody knows is not a hotel, and grant a license? Why this political hypocrisy calling them hotels when they are nothing but drinking saloons? Yet they are being multiplied rapidly throughout the Province. My latest information is to the effect that between fourteen and fifteen hundred authorities have been granted.

And now we have the report of the Liquor Control Board. I learn from a certain publication that the beverage rooms of Toronto have an estimated capacity of about twenty thousand people. Twenty thousand people can be accommodated at one time, and I understand they must sit down to drink. In some places order and decency have been observed, but in many all the worst features of the old bar have re-appeared, with all their demoralizing accompaniments. According to press figures, for the month of August, 1934, Windsor had six more killed than in August, 1933; Hamilton, seven; Toronto, eight. There were one hundred and twelve more accidents on country roads than in the same months of 1933. In August and September of last year three hundred and seventy-one persons were injured on the streets of Toronto: this year, for the same period, with no increase in cars, five hundred and fifty-three have been struck down; and four times as many people have been killed. In the record of Toronto only, for August and September, 1934, seven hundred drunks were convicted, as against five hundred and sixteen for the same months of last year.

A writer in *Maclean's Magazine*—and I would recommend you to get a copy and read it all—who has made a survey of all Ontario, says this:

"What startled me, in this survey of the whole province, was the strength of the feeling against the Beverage Rooms as they are now constituted. Outside of the beer parlours, I did not hear more than a dozen favourable comments on the change, while literally hundreds of protests reached me. 'Going backward'—'What did they change the system for?'"

"To help me account for my finds, on my return I got out my Canada Year Book. There I discovered that the Province of Ontario has about two million adults—people over twenty-one years of age. Then I looked at the last report of the Liquor Control Board and saw that only fifteen per cent. of Ontario's adults had taken out liquor permits—of all kinds. Almost an even 300,000. At once I had part of the answer.

"Eighty-five per cent. of the people—with beer, wine and whisky at their elbows in Government Stores—never bought a drop."

A trained investigator, who covered the entire Province, going into hundreds of beverage-rooms, studying the matter thoroughly, says he did not hear more than a dozen favourable comments on the change, while literally hundreds of protests reached him. Hundreds over the whole Province. We have here within these walls more than forty thousand signed protests. When all the churches move, Premier Hepburn will move too!

This writer says people ask, "Why did they change the system?" Then he examines the number of liquor permits under Government Control, and compares that with the population of the Province, only to discover that not more than fifteen per cent. of the adult population of the Province of Ontario had ever asked for a liquor permit. Why then were the beverage-rooms opened, with eighty-five per cent. in Ontario not wanting them?

Of course the answer is perfectly obvious, that they might sell more liquor. There is not the shadow of a doubt that the inspiration of this whole movement has come from the liquor interests.

We have the Annual Report of the Liquor Control Board which includes two months, I think, of the beverage-rooms. It shows a ninety-five per cent. increase in beer consumption, and if the present rate of consumption continues—and it is more likely to increase than decrease—the province will spend for beer alone in twelve months twenty-five millions of dollars; and for the same period the bread bill of Ontario is about nineteen millions. By the establishment of *Beverage Rooms*, licensed by the present Government, this Province is to spend, in a time of depression, when there are hundreds of thousands of people out of work, and hundreds of thousands of people dependent upon public support—in the liquor business this Province is to spend *twenty-five million dollars, or six million dollars a year, or five hundred thousand dollars a month, or roughly, one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars a week, more for beer than for bread!* Can any man with a conscience, or with a modicum of sense, justify that folly, not to say iniquity? Surely this is a fine way to bring back prosperity. Oh, yes; it will bring back prosperity to the distillers and the brewers, and to those associated with them—but to nobody else.

Against that record, the Hepburn Government professes to have inaugurated an era of great economy. They may have cut down the cost of Government in some directions—that ought to be very easy to do, for Government in this country costs altogether too much.

We could dispense with a great many people who are engaged in various forms of Government service without any loss to the country. But let us, for the sake of argument, assume that economy has been exercised. Let us suppose that is exactly what the Premier is doing, reducing the cost of Government. Very well. Has Mr. Hepburn himself ever claimed as yet that such measures of economy as he has instituted will save this Province as much as twenty-five million dollars a year? Have you ever heard that? I know it has been published abroad that they are saving a few thousand dollars here and there, readjusting the courts and so on, in the name of economy. But I have never read—I may be in error—but I have never yet read that Mr. Hepburn or any of his representatives have claimed that they have found a way of reducing the public expenditure by as much as twenty-five million dollars.

But again, for the sake of argument, let us assume the Government's economy to approximate that great sum. What has been accomplished if you have saved as much as twenty-five million dollars in one direction only to squander it in another? "Robbing Peter to pay Paul?" Not at all. *It is robbing Peter and John to give Judas Iscariot his thirty pieces of silver.* "All that a man hath will he give for his life." What advantage is it to reduce a man's taxes if you run him down on the highway and kill him, and leave his widow and children to be cared for at public expense?

Can you estimate the moral damage effected by this deluge of beer? Perhaps some man will say, "I do not care anything for the moral side of the question." But you must care about the moral side of it. Is there any employer of labour here? You do not need to be told that the man who wastes his substance in riotous living is incompetent to earn his wage. After a while such a man is dismissed, not because his employer is an "offensive temperance crank", but because he cannot afford to employ an incompetent workman. You cannot play with a man's conscience without impairing his usefulness in any walk of life. And the liquor traffic is demoralizing in that respect. The Hepburn beer-parlours stand condemned, with nothing good to be said in their defense.

But is the present Government conducting a campaign of economy? A few economies may have been effected, but in the main the Hepburn Government is furnishing the most flagrant example of the spoils system in the history of the Province of Ontario. It is the more reprehensible because it is hypocritically carried on in the name of economy. Under the guise of economy the Hepburn Government is dismissing public servants by the wholesale, and is filling their places by Hepburn henchmen.

The liquor traffic is getting ready for the next election, and is "digging itself in" in every department of our Ontario life. I do not mean to say that the men who are replacing the men dismissed are liquor men—they may be prohibitionists. But they are politicians first, and when a crisis comes in the life of this province they will be altogether for the Government, even though it spells ruin for thousands of people.

I venture to enter the realm of prophecy. You will find the Hepburn interests trying to secure control of all the municipal machinery of this Province. You will have it in Toronto at the next municipal election, in

order to make Toronto the tool of this Government. An example is already before us, though I fear few people see it. The Province has offered to share its beer and liquor profits with the municipalities. Some of you remember a few years ago one of the arguments raised against the cancellation of licenses in hotels was that hotels could not afford to operate, and provide the travelling public with the necessary accommodation, apart from the profits derived from the sale of liquor; and that if the bar were closed the bedroom and dining-rooms would perforce close too, and there would be no accommodation for the traveller. The travelling public were told, by implication, that the poor man who drinks his wages away with liquor was helping to provide the traveller with bed and board. I said at the time that I would rather sleep on the sidewalk than in a bed provided at the cost of a poor man's soul. A similar principle is involved in the proposal to share the profits of liquor sales with the municipalities. For when the question of local option is raised in various parts of the Province, or when a referendum is taken—as it may be taken in spite of what Premier Hepburn says—the advocates of the Government and of the liquor trade will say, "If you vote against liquor, you will cut off the revenue which the municipalities receive from the Government, and by doing that, you will increase your own taxes."

Years ago in England the liquor interests broke up their stock into small blocks and sold it from door to door—retaining, of course, a controlling interest—making as many of the people as possible shareholders in the business, in the expectation that those who had a share in it would be likely to vote for its continuance. That is the kind of thing that we have already seen. Let us all be on guard against what I dare to call the corrupting influence of the Hepburn Government.

Another matter emerges. I refer to the Sorsoleil speech before a Presbytery of the United Church. I have absolutely no first-hand information on the subject discussed. I only hope it may prove to be not so bad as at first appeared, particularly in the newspaper headlines.

Incidentally, of all the exaggerators on earth newspaper headlines are the worst. I have read the headlines again and again, and said, "What possessed the man to say that?" I have read the text, and could not find to what the headline was alluding. In some cases the headline made it appear the man had said exactly the opposite of what he really did say. I think we ought to pray for the conversion of newspaper headlines! I should like to have a congregation of them, and would use this as a text, "Wherefore putting away lying." I have been victimized so often that I have the profoundest sympathy with others.

But whatever the facts of the case, such an experienced and trusted public servant as Dr. Sorsoleil is entitled to a respectful hearing. It is difficult to see what motive such a man as Dr. Sorsoleil could have had for such a speech other than a sincere desire to serve the interests of the young people, the rising generation of the Province. The statement of the case made by him to the Minister of Welfare ought surely to be enough to assure the Province of that.

I regret the remark of a distinguished religious leader—as does he who made it—respecting the race

of the Minister of Welfare. The remark ought not to have been made, and I am glad to see that Dr. Little has suitably and manfully apologized. I only regret that the papers did not give the same prominence to the apology that they gave to the original remark complained of. With that objectionable remark thus deleted, I agree entirely with Dr. Little's objection. Please do not say in the headlines to-morrow, "Dr. Shields agrees with all Dr. Little said." I entirely disagree with that objectionable remark—as does Dr. Little himself now. I have never met Dr. Little, but I was half inclined to get in touch with him and ask him frankly to say he was sorry. But he did not need anyone to ask him: he did it of his own accord.

I come now to discuss, in the interests of the moral welfare of this Province, Premier Hepburn himself. That is a great subject! Depending, of course, upon what one means by "great". Perhaps I ought to have looked for another adjective. However, it is a subject that will necessitate a little time adequately to discuss it.

In the beginning of my protest against the present iniquity I tried to make every allowance for the political exigencies which seemed at the time to necessitate the course which Premier Hepburn took. I supposed that he had sincerely endeavoured to take the liquor question out of politics in order that he might discuss matters which, in his judgment, were of still greater importance. I tried to make allowance for him, and expressed the hope that the Government, if they were made to see that public opinion was not in agreement with their policy, would be prepared to revise that policy. But scarcely had I spoken than I was labelled "an offensive temperance crank". You cannot profitably discuss anything with a man whose only answer is an offensive epithet. A man who is so utterly destitute of the first instincts of a gentleman as to talk in that way, cannot be argued with by reasonable men. The Premier himself introduced personalities. Do not blame me for it. Premier Hepburn introduced personalities, and since he delights in that sort of thing he is likely to receive enough of it before he is a great deal older.

It will not be very long—and try to remember what I now say, even though you may not agree with it—until the supreme issue in the life of this Province will not be the beer-parlours, nor the Welfare Department, nor any other department of the Government: *it will be Premier Hepburn himself. He is the issue now, and I will tell you why.*

I heard by radio Mr. Hepburn speak the night of his election. I had gone out that afternoon to vote. I had voted, not for Mr. Hepburn, but for a representative of his party. I did not even know his name until I went to the poll, and found that the Liberal candidate in the riding in which I live was Mr. Roebuck. I cast my vote for him, not because I knew him, not because I specially trusted him: but I cast my vote for a change of Government. And in that I was representative of thousands of people in this Province, I am sure. The people did not go to the polls to vote for Mr. Hepburn. Anybody could have won that election who was against the Government—I could have won it myself!

But I heard Mr. Hepburn's speech over the radio that night, as he spoke about the great honour that the

Province had conferred upon him. After he had uttered the first few sentences I said, "What have we here?" He appeared to be under the impression that all the electors of Ontario had gone to the polls especially to "honour me"! I never heard a greater exhibition of egotism in my life as in that speech. A friend who sat with me said, "Did you vote for that?" I said, "Yes; I did. But I am half sorry now. Still we must make allowance for him. I know what it is to be nervously overwrought. He has been speaking all over the Province, and he has wrought himself up to a great pitch of nervous excitement. He himself is surprised by the overwhelming victory. Do not blame him. Perhaps you would do the same. He will calm down tomorrow. Almost any man might be excused for what he says on election night."

I made allowance for Mr. Hepburn—I made too much allowance. I thought it was only an occasional eruption, but the volcano has been erupting ever since! Look how he has treated everybody who has dared to criticize the beer and wine measure, or differ from him on any subject. "Gross exaggeration"! I noticed a day or so ago he paid his respects to me. He said while he was talking about exaggeration he would say a word to Dr. Shields. What I had remarked was this, that I had spent four weeks or so in London, that I had been in Cork, Dublin, Belfast, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, and back to London again, and that on the tour I had seen less drunkenness than I have seen while standing on the steps of this church. "Gross exaggeration." Of course he knows everything. He does not need anybody to inform him on any subject. He has an answer ready always—denunciation and insult for everybody who ventures to differ from his opinion.

But I repeat it. I spoke in the past tense. I said that I had seen—and the remark was made in Montreal as I got off the boat, before I came on to Toronto. I did not yet know what conditions were. But a friend was in my office last week. Then he went outside for a few minutes, and when he came back he said, "I counted seven drunken men across the street." That was this past week. But Mr. Hepburn does not want the facts. When they are presented it is always "gross exaggeration".

His treatment of the Sorsoleil matter is a case in point. I do not discuss the merits of it, but I repeat that I cannot understand how any man would make such a statement if he had not some basis of fact upon which he based his judgment. He may have been speaking of a narrower range of things than was generally supposed by the headlines, but I am reasonably certain that a man in a responsible position of that sort would not, even in a confidential meeting of ministers and other Christian workers, who have the community's welfare at heart, say such a thing as that if he had not some foundation for it. But even suppose he had made a mistake, even suppose he had been astray in his estimate of things at some points, to what is public life in this Province coming if every man who dares to open his lips is to be treated as this honoured public servant was treated by the Premier of Ontario?

I shall not speak of Mr. Hepburn's remark about the souls of men. I have divine warrant for refusing to discuss it: "Answer not a fool according to his folly."

I read an editorial in *The Toronto Star* last night. If you want a bit of real humour, read it. It was splendid. It was a word of advice to the Premier of Ontario, and was to this effect, that he had done some good things, and *The Star* wished him well, and wished his Government well; but that he was a young man who had his way to make. It offered him a little friendly advice, suggesting to him that if he thought on Monday, the people of Ontario would be quite willing to wait until Tuesday for an expression of his views—and that even sometimes he might wait until Wednesday before opening his mouth. *The Star* told him it is a difficult matter to estimate the size of a man's soul, and that it involved an effort of the imagination that in the end was likely to be futile. I thought it implied that he deserved the cat-o-nine-tails, but, making allowance for his inexperience, gave him a gentle spanking. *The Star* referred to the trigger-finger, and advised the Premier not to go off at half-cock.

That would be appropriate for a boy at school, but to offer that advice to the Premier of the Province is entirely another matter. Why should the people of Ontario be expected to make allowance for the Premier's indiscretions? If he does not soon display greater ability and self-control than he has evidenced thus far the Province ought to ask him to retire, at least until he has acquired a little more sense. Until now Mr. Hepburn has behaved like a small-town barber-shop wit whose local reputation for ability to make what are colloquially called "wise-cracks" has so puffed him up as to lead him to imagine he has the wisdom of a Solomon.

I saw a man in the dining-room of the ship on which I came home from England, and asked my steward who he was. "The pilot's apprentice", he answered. "What does that mean?" "He is with the pilot, but is not the pilot-in-chief." "Tell me about him." "After he has obtained his master's papers, and is competent to command a ship, he has to spend ten years learning this river before he can be a full-fledged pilot." Ten years to qualify to be a pilot! No allowance is made for a pilot. But a man with no record of public service, and no experience of the amenities of public life, becomes Premier of Ontario and distinguishes himself as a modern Nabal, whose wife said, "He is such a son of Belial that a man cannot speak to him."

I make no allowance for Mr. Hepburn. He ought to have more sense than he has displayed as yet, or else retire until he gets it. We make no allowance for a locomotive engineer. He is supposed to know his business before he puts his hand to the throttle. You make no allowance for a man who drives a car: he ought not to be on the road if he cannot drive. I venture to think that a man who has no more balance than the Premier has shown, a man who has no more self-control than he has displayed in his treatment of Ontario citizens, is not fit to be Premier of this Province. And before long that fact will be recognized by the entire Province.

If it were possible to reduce this important personage to a chemical analysis, as is possible with a wholly material body, and to show of what he is composed, I think such analysis would show him to be about five per cent. ability, and ninety-five per cent. conceit.

But my subject is "Hepburn the Lawless". First of all he ignores the people's representatives. Mr. Hepburn was elected on June the nineteenth, and I suppose he assumed office not later than July nineteenth. The beer-rooms were opened on the twenty-fourth of July. It did not take him long to do that. A few days to open the beer parlours, but more than four months have passed and he has not even had a Caucus to consult his own followers in the Legislature, and, of course, the Legislature has not been summoned yet. In other words, the entire Province has been dis-franchised for four months, except those electoral districts represented by members of the Cabinet. The men whom the people elected to represent them have never been consulted. This Rehoboam needs nobody's counsel. Even his shadow Cabinet cannot speak for themselves. In the Sorsoleil matter the Premier is the only spokesman, relieving the Minister of Welfare of personal responsibility.

You cannot argue with infallibility. It is useless to hope to improve upon perfection. There is hope of a Solomon who says he is but a child, but Mr. Hepburn knows everything, and answers every question with insult. To that deplorable condition have we come in the Province of Ontario.

This last week Mr. Hepburn has committed the greatest of all his indiscretions, nay, rather, the greatest of all his offences,—the Premier of Ontario actually suggests to the young people of the Province that they would be justified in riding Dr. Sorsoleil, the Deputy Minister of Welfare, on a rail. And for what? Because Dr. Sorsoleil, before a Presbytery of the United Church, warned the Presbytery of certain moral conditions among young people in certain schools. Immediately, without investigation, Mr. Hepburn declares Dr. Sorsoleil's address to be a "gross exaggeration", and under the euphemism of "suspension" dismisses him from office, and says the young people ought to ride him on a rail. By so saying the Premier incites the young people to violence, and certainly to an utterly lawless course. Any man capable of making such a suggestion is not fit to hold public office in this country. The remark was unBritish, and unCanadian. It would be unworthy of any ordinary citizen, not to say of any public official, in any country where the British flag flies.

Dr. Little apologized for what he said respecting the race of the Minister of Welfare: the Premier of Ontario owes an apology to all the law-abiding citizens of this Province for that utterly inexcusable remark.

If the followers of Mr. Hepburn want a second term in office, I respectfully suggest to them that they had better find another leader. If he has done this in the green tree, what will he do in the dry? If he has done this in the first four months of his tenure of office, to what excesses and extravagances will his impulsiveness, his uncontrolled tongue, lead him if he is permitted to continue a year or so?

I am sorry to speak in this way. It is written, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." When a law becomes a law, even though we do not agree with it, we ought to respect it. But the reason I speak as I do is that it has been by just such lawless utterances on the part of men in responsible positions, the United States has been reduced to its present state of lawless-

ness. Men who ought to have felt under obligation to set an example of obedience to law have held the law up to contempt by teaching men to disregard it.

Why have I spoken thus? Not because I am a politician. I suppose if I were a politician I should not speak so. I half wish I had a seat in the Legislature that I might answer Mr. Hepburn in the House. If there are any seats going begging, invite me to fill one. I will give the sessional indemnity to some charitable institution and serve for nothing. I would like to have one session in the Legislature for the purpose of answering this gentleman on the floor for I fear that I speak the sober truth when I say that in several generations this Province has never known a more demoralizing influence than has already been exerted by Premier Hepburn. I am humiliated as a citizen of Ontario. I am ashamed, utterly ashamed, that it should be possible for such a vulgarian, so hopelessly incompetent, to come to such a position of prominence. My one vote helped to put him there, but if I live until next election I solemnly promise to bring forth fruit meet for repentance.

That is my strange work. I would rather preach to sober people than to drunkards, I would rather see the hearts of men changed than merely to wash the outside of the cup and the platter. But there is nothing inconsistent with the gospel in what I have now said. There is no hope for any of us apart from the grace of God. What we need is a great religious revival. All the churches need it. This church needs it. Every church needs it. The United Church needs it. The Presbyterian Church needs it. The Anglican Church needs it. We all need it, so that men and women who form these churches will once again be as the salt of the earth, making their influence felt in all the relationships of life. Let us spend and be spent in that task. Meanwhile, let us do our utmost to cover up the pits dug for the feet of the unwary, and to remove temptation out of the way of the weak. We do not expect the millennium by legislation, but we must not sit supinely by while the enemy works for the multiplication of the evils of the earth.

Let us pray:

O Lord, Thou hast taught us in Thy Holy Word to pray for our rulers, to honour the king; and we do pray for those who are in authority over us. We pray for the Government of Ontario. Thou art able by Thy sovereign power to compel even ungodly man to recognize Thee. We pray that Thou wilt stir up the people in this country, and over all this Province, that they may stand for righteousness.

Bless any good thing this Government may have done; overrule, we pray Thee, all the evil which they have released upon the Province. Raise up stalwart men who will be willing to contend against them. Oh, if Thou wilt, let Thine hand be upon the Premier himself. Teach him the fear of God, and make him to know, O Lord, in some measure, the responsibilities that are his. Thou didst give Solomon wisdom, Lord; and if Thou wilt make this man wise we will rejoice.

We beseech Thee to bless this congregation. We know not who are here, nor what interests they represent. Some may live in very small circles, and touch but a few people. Others may be tremendously influential in some sphere of life. We beseech Thee, O Lord, help us, in Thy fear, and with a solemn sense of our responsibility to God, to live our lives and do our duty in every sphere of life in which we may exercise influence.

If there be any here this evening who feel the necessity for a work of regeneration in their own hearts, O Lord, by the power of Thy Spirit, convince us all afresh of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of our great need of the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus, and of the indwelling,

energizing power of God the Holy Ghost. Make us strong to do Thy will everywhere.

Bless any who seek to know the way of life. Hast Thou not said, God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?

We thank Thee for the cross, and for the empty grave. We thank Thee for the ascended Saviour Who intercedes in our behalf. We look to Thee, and ask Thee to bless this our protest against what, in our judgment, seems to be a flood of iniquity let loose upon this Province. Where we have erred, if we have, from Thy truth, overrule, and forgive; and grant that one and all we may be willing to be spent in the cause of righteousness. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

A VICIOUS OX AND AN OPEN PIT

In the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, from the twenty-eighth to the thirty-sixth verses, there is a very instructive piece of legislation. The verses read as follows: "If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; the owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his. And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide. Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own."

We have here an interesting law. An owner must not be held responsible for the first act of wounding by his irresponsible ox beyond taking such steps as would prevent a repetition of the act. The ox was to be stoned; but "if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in", the owner was held to be guilty of the death of the persons the ox had killed. In such case both the ox and the owner were to be put to death.

Or, if the ox had not killed but only injured someone, the owner was required to compensate the injured persons with money and to kill the ox to prevent the recurrence of the offence.

Then further, a pit left uncovered was held to be a menace to public safety; and any damage resulting from such carelessness was charged to the owner of the pit.

A further law provided for the protection of property. The owner of a vicious animal was responsible under the law for any damage inflicted upon his neighbour's property.

The principles of this legislation apply to us: the state is no better than its individual citizens. A self-governing people must hold themselves responsible for such evils as they are able to prevent. The state is obliged to remove every menace to human welfare, from a mad dog to a level railway crossing; from a street excavation to a Beverage Room.

I.

The Liquor Traffic is an ox which has gored many to death. It is unnecessary to argue this point. It has been the cause of poverty, disease, violence of all kinds, and of indescribable moral and spiritual degeneracy. Anyone must be totally blind who cannot see that the Liquor Traffic has long been one of the worst foes of humankind.

This law in Exodus decrees that when such facts are established, means must be taken to prevent their recurrence. It is not provided that the ox's stall should be a little narrower, nor its rope a little shorter, nor that an extra man

be engaged to restrict its depredations. It must be killed. Nothing is more self-evident than that the Liquor Traffic ought to be banished from civilized communities. It is as deserving of death as any other murderer; it ought to be shot like any mad dog.

If it be objected that the Traffic has some good deeds to its credit, it may be said, that such an ox as is here sentenced to death, may have ploughed a field or drawn some grain to market; but as that did not entitle it to live if it had shed human blood, so the pleasure the Traffic may have given a few moderate drinkers is more than counter-balanced by the wholesale destruction for which it is responsible, for the hearts it has broken, the lives it has blasted, the families it has cursed, the homes it has ruined, the bodies and souls it has destroyed.

II.

By the principle of this law knowledge of such a devouring evil involves responsibility for its continuance. A man is to be held responsible for the lessons of history: "If the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death." This is the judgment of the divine law,—that every man is responsible for the perpetuation of such evil as he has power to prevent. This principle makes every one who supports the Liquor Traffic, or fails to do his utmost to destroy it, responsible for its deeds.

This statute provides for certain compensation—not for the owner of the ox on account of its loss. On the contrary, he is required to indemnify those who have been gored by his vicious beast. Who is to compensate the widows and orphans and young people generally for the misery inflicted upon them by the Liquor Traffic?

Once more: We have here a law relating to an open pit. Not now a dangerous beast looking for his prey, but only a pit into which a man or beast may fall to his own hurt. But the man who opens the pit, or leaves it open, is held responsible for any damage to those who fall into it. That principle is recognized in our day in the law requiring that an excavation in a public highway be protected by a red light at night. Why do we not require a red light to be placed over every building where the Liquor Traffic is housed? It may be said that a man is not obliged to go in, that the Traffic does not pursue him, and he ought to have nothing to do with it if it does him harm. But this law provides protection for an ass: surely the state is under an equal obligation to provide protection for its weaker and weakest citizens.

The owner of the pit is permitted to keep the dead body his pit has slain, and to pay for the damage. The only compensation due the Liquor Traffic is to be charged with the maintenance of hospitals, asylums, orphanages, and jails, for which it is responsible.

The next stipulation touches the economic aspect of the question. It has to do with the protection of property. No business can flourish long which permits a continuous waste of its resources. The effort of every branch of manufacturing is to turn the waste to wealth. What is true of a business concern is true of a nation. Every care should be exercised to get the maximum of labour out of our oxen and asses. It is still more important that the nation's human assets should be maintained at the maximum of efficiency. This law made no provision for the maintenance of a state officer to care for those who were injured by a mad ox, nor to care for the ox: it provided, rather, for the killing of the beast. Why should the state pay for hospitals, asylums, orphanages, and jails, for the accommodation of the products of the Liquor Traffic? Why bear all this expense? Why have we not sense enough to kill the mad ox?

Such an ox might be difficult to capture, which was only an additional argument for it being destroyed. In some families the boy with the ugliest temper is permitted to have his own way. The rest of the family is subjected to the strictest kind of discipline; but the innate selfishness and lawlessness of the Liquor Traffic should constitute a challenge to every right-thinking citizen which should be answered by a determination to destroy it—root and branch.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

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

First in the 1934-35 Series of Thursday Evening Lectures
on Biblical Theology, which is included in the
Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: II. Samuel, chapters fifteen to nineteen.

For three Seminary years on Thursday evenings we have addressed ourselves to a consecutive study of the Bible. Each address has been reported and printed. During the last session of the Seminary we reached the fourteenth chapter of the Second of Samuel. If we can continue our expositions long enough we shall have a continuous commentary upon the whole Bible, but that will require some years to accomplish.

The chapter before us this evening marks a very important, and terribly tragic chapter in David's history. It contains the story of Absalom's rebellion. That history is covered by chapters fifteen to nineteen. We may glance at these chapters this evening—or the events they record—and then we must cover the same text again on several consecutive evenings; because I suggest to you students and teachers of the Word that you may repeatedly approach the same scripture and find new lessons therein entirely distinct and different from each other, and yet in perfect agreement with each other.

David is one of the outstanding illustrations—I think we might even go so far as to say Old Testament types—of Christ. Certainly his life-story very strikingly parallels the record of the life of our Lord.

David was first of all a man, a man of like passions with ourselves, who had to meet all the exigencies of life common to humankind. I propose, therefore, to look at this story this evening with a view to learning therefrom such lessons as may be applicable to any man or woman who is a servant of God.

We observed but a little while before the close of last session that David, in the mercy of God, had been brought to a period of tranquillity, when the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies roundabout. He had been a man of war "from his youth". His life had been spent very largely in conflict—albeit, such conflicts as his devotion to God, to the principles of righteousness, and to his duty as a servant of God, forced him to engage in. But even he, the soldier, was given a furlough, and was permitted for a little while to have rest from external enemies. You remember how then he desired to address himself to the task of building a house for the Lord. As he was not permitted to build it, he spent much time in assembling materials which would be ready to the hand of his son and successor, Solomon.

Now, when he is no longer a young man, when his sun has passed its meridian, trouble breaks out again. I suppose that belongs to human life. Thank God for the times when the Good Shepherd leads us beside still waters, and in the green pastures. But these periods are likely to be rather brief in the experience of a servant of God. We shall have our difficulties and our troubles, and a great many that will greatly try our hearts.

On this occasion David finds disloyalty in his own family; his own son, to whom he had shown such great mercy, such long patience, such consideration in every way, lifted up his hand against him. Endeavour to keep in mind, as we go through this story, the effect of all these experiences upon David himself, and to observe how the Lord, by divine grace, enabled him to keep sweet in his own soul in the midst of great trouble. That is a great lesson to learn, for we shall have our tribulations whether we like it or no.

Some of you think you are going to be saved out of the *great* tribulation—I hope you will be. If you are, I shall be glad to go with you. I am not anxious to have any more tribulation than I have had. But whatever may be said about the *great* tribulation, if we are to be worthy Christians we shall have to learn somehow to glory in tribulation, for this side of that great tribulation—if indeed it belongs wholly to the future, which I personally doubt—but if it does, we shall have our full share of it now. During an examination period of one session one student said he was quite sure now the church is not going to escape the great tribulation! He thought he had had a taste of it. That, of course, is a mere pleasantry, but it was long ago written, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." You may say, "It has escaped me", if you will; but it will not escape you long—especially if you find yourself thrust into a public position, as David was, and into a position of leadership be it great or small, obscure or prominent. If you are charged with the responsibility of leadership, you will be sure to pass through experiences analogous to those of David. You will have trouble upon trouble, battle upon battle, war upon war; and will have to learn to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

David might easily have said, "Surely after the long experience of conflict I have had, a man of war from my youth, I might have hoped providentially to be spared this greatest of all tragedies now that the evening hours of life are drawing on." That would have been reasonable enough, I suppose; but the fact is, we may none of us wholly escape.

David, you will find, in the midst of all this, looked to the Lord. It became necessary at last for him to leave his city, and to go out into the wilderness, as he had gone in younger days. Yet he committed his soul wholly to the Lord, and left all the interests of his kingdom in the Lord's hand. We must learn to do that, to commit our souls to Him Who judgeth righteously.

One of the sad things in David's experience was the *defection of people whom he had trusted*. First of all, there was Absalom himself. As you read the story you will not be disposed to blame David for Absalom's defection. The fact is, Absalom wanted to be king himself. Mr. Moody said that more damage had been wrought in the church of Christ through all its history by the human passion for prominence and pre-eminence than by any other cause.

You will meet with many Absaloms who want to be king, members of the choir who want to sing solos, and others who want to wield the baton, men who want to hold office in one place or another in the church—more especially if they have no qualification for the office they desire to fill. If a man is utterly destitute of the first essential of leadership, he is all the more

likely to be appointed to something. It is usually those who cannot sing at all who want to sing solos. You will have Absaloms to deal with—and they will not all be little men. Absalom was a very clever man. He was a very handsome man too: "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." You will learn not to be deceived by appearances as time goes on. You will not be half so sure of your ability to judge men when you have had twenty-five years' experience, as you are now. You will find that human nature is a very complex thing. It is difficult for anyone to say what a man will do under given circumstances. You may well beware of the Absaloms.

Then there was Ahithophel, the great counsellor, the man who had a reputation for great wisdom. He had been David's right-hand man. He had been David's Colonel House. He had consulted him about everything, and Ahithophel's word was regarded in Israel as the highest expression of wisdom. And yet, when the crisis came, Ahithophel forsook David. Ministers will be wise to disperse with the services of Ahithophel at the beginning. They will be better without a personal counsellor, or intimate friend. It is wiser to consult with those who are officially appointed as counsellors.

Then, too, you will find some men like Shimei who will take advantage of a disturbed condition of things. This man-cursed David as he went up. You will find that when you have a little ripple on the surface of the life of the community in which you dwell, or the organization to which you are related, there will be elements in it the presence of which you never suspected before, that will come to the surface, and will take advantage of the situation to endeavour to further their own interests. Anybody can drive a car on a wide road when there is no traffic, and no fog. Anybody can manage himself when things are easy and comfortable. But it is the crises of life, the emergencies of life, that prove what kind of metal is in a man. David nowhere appeared so strong a man as when all the tides were against him, and he was able to possess his soul in patience, and to act with consummate wisdom, so as to make it possible to retrieve his fortunes when the tide should turn.

When it comes to examination time on these chapters we may ask you to tell us something about the characters to which I do not directly refer to-night. I wish you would study these chapters with a view to analyzing the characters of the men who gather about David, the men whose records are written here because of their relation to David, the men who were against him, why they were against him, how they manifested their antagonism, as well as the men who were for him; for the study of such scriptures as these is of great practical value. Here you have an analysis of human minds, the Lord showing us how and why men act in certain circumstances as they do; and if we familiarize ourselves with this psychology it will add to our knowledge of human nature enormously, and enable us to act wisely in times of difficulty and of stress.

In the course of this rebellion, David quietly retired from his city. It required a little courage to do that. It would have been far easier for him immediately to have mobilized his army, and challenged the pretensions

of Absalom on the spot. But he deemed it wiser to withdraw, and to let the rebellion take its course in order that all the elements which made it possible might be revealed in their true character, so that that which seemed to be against him would have the effect at last only of purging his kingdom and surrounding him ultimately with men who could be loyal to the kingdom's highest interests.

Sometimes you will have to learn to let things run their course. A surgeon must learn to distinguish between a tumor and a cancer, between the thing that is merely inconvenient, and the thing which is malignant and which has in it the power of death. As a principle of leadership, you will have to learn to recognize what things may be allowed to take their course, and spend themselves in a vain effort to effect their malign purpose; and what things will need to be dealt with immediately in order to save the interests of the organization you serve.

Things looked rather dark for David when Ahithophel and others turned against him, but at last the tide turned, and the story tells us of David's return in triumph to his city. The rebellion was put down, and he was re-established in Jerusalem. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him"—which does not mean that he will not have enemies. He will have plenty of enemies. But his enemies will at last be converted into friends, and they will see the folly of their course, and will be made wise enough to reverse their attitude. It is well to act as David did, and make it easy for people who have turned against you to come back and be for you. When people forsake you, and say "all manner of evil against you falsely" for the Lord's sake, do not answer reviling with reviling: leave them to the Lord. Leave the door open for the prodigal to come back again.

I have known some people to go out from this church, and after a while to return. They were mistaken, and they had grace enough to admit their mistake. But I have been able to say to them when they came back, "I am glad to see you. I never did anything but love you anyway, and you are as welcome as anyone could possibly be." Do not clench your fist and fight everybody the moment they disagree with you. Learn to be as unlike Premier Hepburn as possible. Stand for principle always; but when people become disaffected toward you personally, as these men did toward David, it is better to allow things like that to take their course, and to let the Lord settle the matter; and in due course you will be brought back to Jerusalem again.

But, on the other hand, let us observe this, that God *never leaves His true servants without helpers.* Paul wrote on one occasion, "Only Luke is with me." He said again, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Again, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works." Paul records the names of people who boldly opposed the gospel he preached, and the course he pursued. But read his epistles again, and you will see how gratefully he acknowledges that even in the darkest hour God graciously gave somebody to be in fellowship with him, and to stand with him.

I am sure that, by this experience, David's life was greatly enriched; for he had his friends. There was Ittai the Gittite. David came back from Gath with six

hundred Gittites. They were not of Israel: they came from Gath. Ittai had come but recently, and yet when the storm broke Ittai stood valiantly by David's side. David said, "You should not jeopardize your whole future. Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I, this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren." Ittai answered the king, "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be." Ittai was a true friend.

And in your experience as ministers and Christian workers you will find the mightiest Christian apologetic in the record of your own experience of godly men. I have had many disappointments as a minister, but I can look back over a number of years and call the roll of a great host of men and women of whom I can say that they made the religion of Christ real to me. They proved themselves to be true Christians, genuine friends, loyal in the hour of emergency.

Then there were two of the priests, Zadok and Abiathar. They were ready to follow David, but David said, "Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him."

There were also the two sons of the priests, Ahimaaz and Jonathan. They too were faithful to David, and they remained in Jerusalem. Then there was Hushai, who had a reputation for being the staunch friend of David. So outspoken was he in his devotion to the king that when he went back to Jerusalem, Absalom said, "Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?" Absalom had counted on Hushai, but he stayed in Jerusalem in order that he might assist the king. David had those six stalwarts, Ittai and Hushai, Zadok and Abiathar, Ahimaaz and Jonathan. There were also Shobi, and Mephibosheth, and Machie, and Baryillai; and doubtless a multitude of unnamed friends besides.

You student-preachers have not had much experience as yet, but you have had enough already to understand what I am talking about, and to learn especially to value the men and women who know how to stand steadfastly for principle in the hour of storm and stress.

Furthermore, at such times there will be those who will endeavour to exploit you, as did Ziba. Ziba, you remember, was the servant of Mephibosheth, who had brought David news of Mephibosheth's need, and who had introduced Mephibosheth to David. When David left the city Ziba came with two asses loaded with provision. And David said, "What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink. And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." Ziba lied about Mephibosheth—and David being unable to read his heart, believed the lie.

Be very careful what you believe in times like that. Be on your guard against Ziba, against people who bring you tales about other people. You had better be sure, and not lend your ear too readily to such reports. The fact is—and I may as well touch it now as later—Mephibosheth was unswervingly loyal to David. And when at last David came back, Mephibosheth hobbled out to meet him, and David said, "Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?" He answered and said, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king." The fact was, that from the day David left until the day he returned, this faithful soul had not trimmed his beard nor dressed his poor wounded feet, but had mourned the king's absence. In due time the king discovered it, and he was justified by the king.

Some of you have been long enough in association with Jarvis Street Church to know that in reciting this history of Absalom, I am only telling the story of Jarvis Street Church. We have had the Absaloms, and the Ahithophels, and the Zibas, and all the rest of them. Every character in this history I can find written on the membership roll of Jarvis Street Church of days past, people who behaved exactly as these people behaved. Often it has been a source of encouragement to me to find the whole story of our struggle for deliverance, the whole story of the gospel, pre-written in the pages of the Old Testament. As you study these things, young men, you will find yourselves forewarned and forearmed, and able to meet the emergencies as they arise.

Here is a little paragraph that I want to read to you: "And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim (incidentally, when you see a list of hard names like that, do not pass the verse by and assume that it means nothing; there is a reason for writing down these names), brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness."

These men, in that dark hour, went out of the city to David, and carried these provisions to him and those who were with him. They gave practical help. I remember back in nineteen hundred and twenty-one, when nearly all the offices of this church were held by the enemy: the Finance Committee, Treasurer, all of them, for six months young men used to come into the corridor back of the pulpit and wait until the collection was taken—they did not come to church, they did not make any contribution: they waited in the corridor until the offering was taken. Then they took it into that little reception room next the study, which used to be a library, and counted it. They left a memorandum on my desk of the amount, locked the money in the safe, and went home. The money of the people who were supporting the ministry of this church was locked up by people who did not contribute a cent for six months. We had no money to carry on with, and no liberty to do anything until the day should come when the decision should be taken. But I recall with the profoundest gratitude the Shobis, the

Machirs, and the Barzillais, who, by a sort of divine instinct, found out all about it, and came with their wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter—oh no; not literally. But they sent in money directly. I used to get cheques for the work, and sometimes money sent anonymously, to me directly, not through the official channels, because then it would pass into the hands that would not release it. But we were able to meet the emergencies of the hour. We had to wait six months until the final decision was taken.

How refreshing it is to recall how God raised up friends—and he will raise up friends for you. You will be disappointed in some, but you will be inspired and encouraged by others; and you will be made to feel that the religion of Jesus Christ must be real when it can produce such stalwart characters as will gather about you—if, indeed, you will stand for the things of God as David did.

Then there were Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruah. Joab was the captain of the host, and Abishai was his brother—sons of David's sister Zeruah. Joab was a strong man, a very severe man, a very extreme man; and when Shimei cursed David, Abishai's hand was on his sword at once. He said, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." But David would not allow it: "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" David at that time, when he needed all his strength to deal with the enemy, had difficulty in restraining the extremists among his own followers.

You will have that problem too. You will have the Abishai's who will want to cut somebody's head off. There is a time and place for that, but let it be done by due process of law and not by impulse—not as Abishai wanted to do it.

These men were ready to do the same with Absalom too for a while. It is sometimes said that if you give the devil rope enough he will hang himself. He is a long time doing it, if that be so! But Absalom did that very thing. He was suspended in the bough of a tree, and it led to his death at the hands of Joab. Study this record for its psychological value, and try to put yourself in David's place and ask yourself, "What should I do were I in like circumstances?"

I suggest also another line of study. I have not time to go into it in detail, but look at the various characters that are brought into prominence because of their association with David. Study for instance the character of Absalom, his splendid physique, his extraordinary attractiveness, his undoubted powers of leadership. What a great man Absalom might have been if only his native powers had been consecrated to the cause of righteousness, if only he could have been enlisted in the Lord's service! How many people there are like Absalom—dangerous men unless they should be saved by grace; there is no telling what they might accomplish if enlisted in the Lord's service.

Study too the character of Ahithophel, the man of great wisdom, who was so shrewd that his voice was as the voice of the oracle of God. The priests, Gadok and Akiathar, and their sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan. There was Hushai also, and these other humble men who could

not fight, but who brought what they could, thus making their own contribution.

I was called one day to go to a home which death had visited. An engineer had been killed in a railway accident, and I went to offer what comfort I could to the widow. She was sitting there in the home: the body has not yet been brought in. An inquest was to be held. The widow sat in an arm chair, dumb with grief. She had nothing at all to say, and could make practically no response to anything anyone said to her. She seemed to be in a semi-conscious state. She had a little boy of five or six years of age, and he sometimes earned five or ten cents by running errands for the neighbours. In that way he earned a little, and, boylike, he used to spend it for candy or whatever took his fancy.

This day when I was sitting by the widowed mother the little boy came in. He had been out running errands. He did not fully realize the calamity that had come to the home, but seemed to have some little understanding of it. He had in his hand the few cents he had earned, and he came in, took off his cap, looked about, went up to his mother and buried his face in her lap for a moment. Then he took her hand from the arm of the chair, opened it, and put the coppers in the palm of her hand, closing her fingers over them. He said, "Mother, I will give you more some day." Then the tears began to flow, and that woman felt that she had a little man growing up who would some day perhaps take his father's place. How it cheered her! How it warmed her heart!

Sometimes we may have times like that, when everything seems to go awry. Then from a quarter we never expected it, someone will come and with a kindly human touch say, "I am with you. I will stand by. You may depend upon me."

But, my dear friends, *the secret of David's steadfastness through all this dreadful trial was that he was able to look to God.* When they came to him and said, "David, have you heard the news? Ahithophel has joined affinity with Absalom! Your best friend, your right-hand man, your trusted counsellor, is gone over to the enemy's camp." Read what David did. He had nothing to say, but out of a broken heart he cried, "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." And he did!

In those dark hours you will find people with whom you can do nothing. There is only one thing you can do, and that is to hand them over to God and let Him bring their wickedness to naught—and He will answer your prayer.

This has not been a very cheerful lesson, has it? But it is part of our course. It was not a very cheerful experience for David while he was going through it. It will not be cheerful for you when you have to pass through a like experience. I have been through many of them; and I think I can humbly say, it has qualified me in some measure to help others. For I have had people come to me as a Pastor and say, "Do you know what so-and-so said about me?" "No; I do not." Perhaps it was only a little thing, and I have been able to say, "When you have had a thousandth part said about you that I have had said about me, you may begin to grumble." Be thou an example to the flock over which the Holy Ghost may make you overseer. Learn to rise above these difficulties. "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied

(Continued on page 14)

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.

ORANGEVILLE

The Lord is blessing the faithful testimony of Rev. A. C. Whitcombe in Orangeville. Three were baptized on Sunday, November 11th. One of these was a father who has been coming to church for years, but who has only now put on Christ in baptism. Souls are being saved, and the saints built up in their most holy faith, for which we praise the Lord. The interior of the church has been decorated this summer and greatly improved.

SECOND MARKHAM

Rev. W. E. Smalley baptized a man and his wife on November 4th, and the following Sunday they were received into the membership of the Second Markham Baptist Church. This makes a total of ten baptized since Mr. Smalley became pastor two years ago.

VISITING THE CHURCHES WITH THE MISSIONARIES

During the past month the missionary party has visited a number of the churches of the Union. On October 15th we went to Timmins, going by train and returning with the pastor, Rev. H. C. Slade, by motor, on the following Monday. Timmins is situated over five hundred miles north of Toronto, being the church farthest north in our Union. It is a wonderfully spiritual church, where a real testimony is given forth, and souls are being saved. Timmins Church is very fortunate in being able to broadcast over the radio both morning and evening every Sunday, and by this means many are hearing the gospel who never enter a church. While we were in Timmins, Mr. Slade spoke to the manager of the radio station, and discussed the planned hook-up of the Timmins station with stations at Kirkland Lake and North Bay, and the manager asked if Mr. Slade would mind if they put his services over the whole hook-up without any extra charge! Surely the Lord is leading in this matter, and it is worthy of the prayerful support of all Christians.

In connection with the Timmins Church a Mission is conducted at South Porcupine, six miles from Timmins, by Pastor Wilfred Wellington, and we were privileged to speak there to the Children's Meeting on the Tuesday evening. Mr. Wellington puts in a great deal of hard work at this point, visiting the people every day, and holding cottage prayer meetings. Souls have been saved, but the work is still very hard and discouraging. Most men would have abandoned such a work long ago on account of the hardness of the people, and the very small apparent results; but there is need, and Mr. Wellington continues.

At Timmins we held two large meetings on Wednesday and Friday evenings. Miss Lane and Mrs. Mellish spoke to meetings of the ladies on Thursday afternoon and evening. This is the first time missionaries have gone to this church, and so the people manifested an intense desire to hear everything possible about the work in Liberia. Sunday was a great day for the Lord: The people at Timmins are a praying people. Surely the Spirit of the Lord was with us in the services both morning and evening, and the Sunday-school in the afternoon. The Sunday-school was the largest they have had yet, 263, including 67 adults in the Bible Class taught by Mr. Slade. There were over 240 people at the evening service, overflowing from the church auditorium into the Bible Class room. Mr. Slade pays a great tribute to the work of Rev. Morley Hall at Timmins, who was pastor there before Mr. Slade. Mr. Hall laid a splendid foundation for the work, and Mr. Slade has built very well on that foundation, and the work is continually growing.

The Convention Sessions, October 23-25, being held in London, brought back pleasant memories of the Convention of

four years ago also held in London, when we were accepted for work in Liberia. These Sessions were a time of real spiritual refreshment which we miss so much when we are out in Liberia.

Friday evening, October 26th, we visited the Happy Sunshine Hour for the children at the Briscoe Street Church in London, and then Saturday afternoon we went to Hespeler for the services there on Sunday. Rev. W. N. Charlton continues to give forth a good testimony in that place, and we were happy to hear that the work is progressing, and more people are coming all the time to the services.

On November 1st, Mrs. Mellish spoke to a group of women at the Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, Toronto, and in the afternoon and evening the pictures of Liberia were shown to a very interested audience in a United Church near Meadowvale.

Early Friday morning, we left by car for Miner's Bay, where services were held at three of the appointments on Sunday, in the morning at Buller, afternoon at Moore's Falls, and evening at Norland. This gave us an opportunity of speaking to a number of the people we did not reach when we visited that place last summer. Also the people were happy to have the opportunity of hearing Miss Lane, who had not visited that district before.

Monday evening a meeting was held at Corson's Siding, in an Independent Church adjacent to the Miner's Bay field, where Pastor Ross Almas is in charge. We are happy that a real gospel testimony is being sounded forth throughout the whole Miner's Bay district, but there are still many who are indifferent to the preaching of the Word. Pray for Mr. Almas and for Mr. Boomer as they minister to this field, especially in the winter months when the roads are bad and the travelling very hard.

On Tuesday we went down to Cannington, where a meeting was held in the evening. We have passed through Cannington many times, but this is the first opportunity we have had of seeing inside the church, and we found it a very nice building, well-fitted for the good work being done there under the leadership of the pastor, Robert J. Brackstone. Pastor John Cunningham of Scotch Line, and Pastor Charles McGrath of Stouffville, were also present at the well-attended meeting where a real prayer interest of the people in the work of Liberia was strengthened as they heard of the triumphs of the gospel in that land.

Wednesday we again started out in a different direction, west of Toronto, along with Mr. Atkinson, to Springfield, where a splendid meeting was held in the evening. Mrs. Hancox accompanied us on this trip as well, and a number of people attended the meeting at Springfield from Gladstone, at which point Mr. Hancox was pastor before going to Owen Sound.

Thursday afternoon Mrs. Hancox, Miss Lane, and Mrs. Mellish, spoke to a meeting of the ladies at Brownsville, and in the evening another good meeting was held. The churches at Springfield and Brownsville are both under the charge of Rev. J. K. Yalland, and the work is in a very flourishing condition, and the Christians are being strengthened in the faith.

A well-attended meeting was held at Courtland on Friday afternoon, and in the evening at Otterville. Rev. Leander Roblin is in charge at both these points, and the work is progressing in spite of the fact that there is another Baptist Church at each place.

Sunday, November 11th, we expected to be a free Sunday, but we went along with Mr. Atkinson, since he was preaching at the Briscoe Street Baptist Church, London. On arrival there, however, we were asked to speak to an open

session of the Sunday-school. Mr. Atkinson delivered a heart-searching message at the morning service, on Malachi, Chapter Three, and we are sure that the Lord was present in the service. In the evening we attended the Central Church and heard Mr. McGinlay preach there on the Second Coming of Christ. At this service eight in all, we believe, came out for the Lord, making a total of twenty-one conversions in Central Church since the Convention.

We were privileged to visit the Chatham Church on Monday, where Rev. E. C. Wood is the pastor. This church meets under difficulties, in an upstairs hall over a store on the main street, but in spite of this the work is growing. Many people have become familiar with the work in Chatham through the open-air services conducted by Mr. Wood in the park on Sunday evenings during the summer, and also through the radio broadcasts which go out every second Sunday afternoon at 1.45. One class in the Sunday-school, calling themselves the Joy Club, has already done a great deal for the work in Liberia, and now they have heard more intimately of the work we are sure that their interest will be doubled.

Tuesday evening a meeting was held at Wheatley, where Pastor Walter Lempriere is in charge. A good group of people attended this meeting from Campbell's Side Road, a point near Wheatley where Mr. Lempriere has recently started holding services, and where already a number of conversions have taken place.

Wednesday morning we went on to Essex where we called for a few minutes to see Rev. J. Fullard. We did not hold a meeting at Essex this time owing to the fact that they are having special meetings, with Rev. Neil McIntyre, the blind Scotch Evangelist, as speaker.

On Thursday evening a good meeting was held in the Calvary Baptist Church, Windsor, where Rev. F. S. Kendall is in charge. This meeting was also attended by the people of the Ambassador Church. Calvary Church has been meeting for a few months only in their present location, but the work is growing. Twelve have been baptized since last spring, and there are great opportunities in the district. The building was crowded on the night we were there, and some had to stand at the back.

Friday we went on to Courtright, which church is linked with the Wilkesport Church, and in charge of Pastor Jack Watt. Mr. Watt has been doing a great deal of visiting in this district, and as a result more people all the time are coming out to the services. A keen competition is being held between the Sunday-schools of the two churches, and at present Wilkesport is ahead.

From Courtright we returned to Toronto again, and then Sunday, November 18th, we went up to Alton, while Mr. Atkinson went on to Kincardine, to preach in the newly-opened work at that point. Mr. LeDrew, pastor of the Alton Church, took Miss Lane over to his other appointment at Hillsburg, while we conducted the service at Alton, and then in the evening we were all together again, and a good company of people gathered for the service, including some from Hillsburg. The work at Alton, under Mr. LeDrew's ministry, is being built up, and especially we praise God for souls who are being saved.

The accounts given of the meetings above are not long, but are just intended to remind the people again of the work being done at each place in order that we may be in prayer for one another. We believe that the Lord has great blessings for us, and that we are on the verge of greater things. In all the churches the Christians are getting closer to the Lord, and along with that there is deeper interest in the spread of the gospel to the lands beyond the sea. As we get that interest for the souls of men in Liberia, souls will be saved in our churches at home, too. This has been a busy time visiting our churches, but it is a joy to tell of the Lord's work. We praise God for His care over us as we travel from place to place. Probably few realize the distance that the Secretary of our Union, Rev. W. E. Atkinson, is compelled to drive when he takes us out, and as he goes without us at times, arriving home in Toronto very often in the early hours of the morning.

GORDON D. MELLISH.

GALT

On Friday evening, November 16th, the first of a series of Happy Hours for boys and girls was held in the Galt

Regular Baptist Church, under the direction of Rev. W. N. Charlton of Hespeler. Cards of invitation were distributed at the nearby schools, and two hundred and forty-eight children were present at the meeting. Before the time announced for the commencement, every seat was filled, and children had to be accommodated on the platform, while many stood at the back of the hall. As a direct result of this meeting the Sunday-school was doubled in attendance the next Sunday. One child brought her mother to church and the mother took her stand for the Lord. Two responded to the invitation on Sunday evening. The pastor, Mr. A. J. Burnham, writes concerning the work: "I write at this time to see if you will enter a plea on our behalf in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, for chairs. We should like, if possible, to arrange for a loan of about thirty from some church that at present has a surplus. The present seating capacity has been taxed for the past two Sunday evening services, and if the present attendance is maintained it is essential that we provide extra accommodation." Who will help?

EMMANUEL, VERDUN

A time of real blessing is being experienced in the Emmanuel Baptist Church, Verdun, under the ministry of Pastor Roy Hisey. On Sunday, November 11th, two confessed Christ as their Saviour, and on November 18th a baptismal service was held. Christians are being revived, and they are looking for great things this coming winter.

RECOGNITION AND ORDINATION

At the call of the Calvin Baptist Church, Toronto, a Council convened at the Waverley Road Baptist Church, on Tuesday, November 20th, 1934, to consider the recognition of the Calvin Baptist Church, and the ordination of the pastor, Mr. Frank Roblin. Twenty-four churches were represented by fifty-three messengers. Rev. David Alexander was appointed Moderator, and Rev. P. B. Loney as Clerk.

A review of the history of the Calvin Baptist Church was presented by Mrs. Theirs. Here were revealed the fruits of real pioneer work and faithful efforts of a young man with a vision, a passion for souls, and a willingness to start from the ground up, "building upon no other man's foundation". This work started with tent meetings and a Bible School. By the blessing of God and the faithful co-operative efforts of pastor and people, it has steadily grown to a self-supporting church in a few years. The Council heartily and unanimously endorsed the work and the doctrinal position of the church, and voted to fellowship the Calvin Church as a Regular Baptist Church within the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec.

Mr. Roblin gave a very clear, concise, able and refreshing statement of his conversion, call to the ministry, and views of doctrine. His statement of doctrine revealed a splendid grasp of the Scriptures, much of which he has committed to memory. The candidate was thoroughly questioned by the Council, and in a satisfactory and efficient manner acquitted himself. In conference the Council unanimously and heartily voted to fellowship Mr. Roblin in his threefold statement of conversion, call, and view of doctrine, and it was then voted to proceed to ordination and also to the recognition of the Calvin Baptist Church.

The evening service was largely attended, and opened with prayer by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe. The charge to the candidate was given by Rev. Alex. Thomson; the charge to the church by Rev. L. Roblin, and the hand of fellowship was extended by Rev. A. C. Whitcome. Rev. P. B. Loney led in the ordination prayer. Dr. T. T. Shields delivered the ordination sermon, which was a strong presentation of the truth of the gospel based on Romans 4:16. Following this the benediction was pronounced by Rev. Frank Roblin.

—P. B. LONEY, Clerk.

KINCARDINE

What a coincidence of circumstances surround the beginning of a two weeks' campaign of evangelistic meetings in the Town Hall, Kincardine, by Rev. R. D. Guthrie, of Briscoe Street Baptist Church, London! Through his radio ministry he had been in touch with a number of Baptists who have long since given up hope of a revival under the old auspices.

They had written relative to something being done, and it occurred to him to write and ask his brother Thomas Guthrie if he would be willing to undertake such a mission. At the same time this was going on a young man in Jarvis Street Baptist Church was praying that something might be done about Kincardine. Thomas heard his prayer, and wondered if something might not be done if he offered his services. He wrote to Robert, and their letters crossed. The outcome of it was that Thomas went to Kincardine, rented the Town Hall and advertised the meetings.

The first week was blessed of the Lord and a few souls came to Christ. By Friday more than two hundred souls were gathering. Rev. R. D. Guthrie had to return to London for his broadcast on Sunday, and the services of Rev. W. E. Atkinson were sought during his absence. On Sunday afternoon about one hundred and fifty gathered to hear a message by Mr. Thomas Guthrie and also to listen to special music from the Quintette from the Jarvis Street Baptist Church. In the evening the hall was crowded; more than three hundred and thirty-five persons were present. Two publicly responded to the invitation when the appeal was given by Mr. Atkinson, and they gave every evidence of accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord. Services were carried on every evening of the next week, except Friday and Saturday. The discouragements seemed great during this second week until Thursday, when the very heavens seemed to be opened. Brother Guthrie of London preached and the very atmosphere seemed charged with the presence of the Spirit of God. A call for consecration and dedication of life was given for Christians, when twenty-two men and women came forward declaring their desire for a closer walk with God. Following this another appeal was made to the unsaved, and twenty-one walked the aisles expressing their desire to know the Lord. It was like a spiritual deluge. Many wept their way to the Cross, and as the workers dealt with them they were convinced of their sincerity and they have every reason to believe that all of them found peace through the blood of His Cross. All of these have since been visited, and according to their own testimony they have passed from death unto life. The last Sunday came, and about two hundred and seventy-five gathered, when others indicated their desire to follow the Lord.

A meeting was held, looking to the future, which was attended by forty persons who expressed a desire to have the work continue. A suitable place has been obtained in which to carry on this testimony, and the prayers of God's people are coveted for this new cause springing up out of the spirit of revival. In all, more than thirty souls expressed a desire to receive Christ as their Saviour. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow! Mr. Thomas Guthrie will be in charge of the services each Lord's Day.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION

(Continued from page 11.)

and faint in your minds." Sometimes you will feel like giving up, but when you do, read the concluding chapters of your gospels over again; and remember how, when Judas had betrayed Him, when Peter had denied Him, and when all the disciples, without an exception had forsaken Him, and when in the court He needed somebody to speak for Him, of all the multitudes whom He had fed, whose eyes He had opened, whose diseases He had healed, whose lives He had blessed, whose minds He had instructed, whose characters He had enriched—in that dark hour, there was not one who opened his lips to say a good word for the Lord Jesus! But He did not turn back! He went on, fulfilling the prophecy, "I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me."

You will never be strong until you have learned in some great trial of life to stand absolutely alone for God, and with God. The Lord will not suffer you to have any more of those experiences than you are able to bear, but be ready for them when they come. And when they

do come, remember the text I quoted just now. I repeat it: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, least ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

LAST SUNDAY EVENING IN JARVIS STREET

The extent of the interest in last Sunday evening's subject discussed in the address appearing in this issue was shown by the enormous crowd which sought admission to Jarvis Street Church. Every seat was occupied, with numbers of people standing upstairs and down, and in the vestibules and corridors, a considerable time before the hour of commencement. People began to assemble more than an hour before service time. It is always risky to attempt to say how many were turned away, unable to secure admission; but when it is remembered that the greater part of any Sunday congregation assembles ordinarily in the last fifteen or twenty minutes before the commencement hour, when a building is practically filled at that time, it may generally be assumed that about as many people were turned away as gained admission. Not far from two thousand people were inside the church,—the janitor, a very conservative and careful man, says at least nineteen hundred. But if the standard of estimation employed in buildings not two-thirds the size of Jarvis Street were applied here, Sunday's congregation was bigger than could be put into Massey Hall. But however many were here, the place was full.

Although the address dealt with a moral question relating to provincial politics, we are sure the presence and power of God were manifest. Three believers were baptized before the sermon.

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Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 9

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 51 Fourth Quarter December 23rd, 1934

JOB'S EIGHTH ANSWER

Lesson Text: Job, chapters 28 and 29.

Golden Text: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."—Job 28:28.

Bible School Reading: Job 28:1-28.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Proverbs 3:13-26; Tuesday—Deut. 4:1-6; Wednesday—Psalm 31:1-8; Thursday—Psalm 113:1-9; Friday—Matt. 13:53-58; Saturday—II Cor. 12: 1-10.

1. MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF NATURE (28:1-11)

Continuing his speech, recorded in the previous chapters, Job shows that while man has a remarkable knowledge of nature, which makes him the master of its products, yet he has not been able to discover the divine wisdom (v. 12). Man has diligently sought out the secrets of the natural realm, but he cannot similarly seek out the divine secrets. God reveals Himself to men, and is not found by searching (Job 2:7; Matt. 11:27). Divine wisdom is a gift, and is not gained by man's efforts (2 Peter 3:15). Note the privilege of contact with such wisdom, and the manner of its impartation through Christ (I Cor. 1:30).

Man's knowledge of nature has led to his discovery of its products. He has mined the silver, the gold, the iron, and the brass or copper; and by the use of artificial light he has dispelled the darkness in his search for these metals (vs. 1-3). He has overcome difficulties in his mining operations, connected with the stemming of the flood in the workings, and the descent by rope into the depths. In our day pumps take care of the water, and the steel rope and cage give access to the mine. The fields produce their fruit, while the miner is busy at his occupation (v. 5), and gems are found in their places. Men in their search for earth's products have gone where no bird's eye has seen, or lion's whelps have trod (vs. 7, 8). They have overturned the rocks, cut channels to drain off the water, and restrained the floods in the depths, that they might discover the precious things (vs. 9-11). Man has done, and is still doing, remarkable things. His inventions and achievements in the various realms are wonderful. And all are an evidence of the goodness of his Maker in furnishing him with such powers. God should receive the glory for this, but only too often man takes this to himself and denies God that which rightfully belongs to Him.

II. WISDOM THE GIFT OF GOD (28:12-28)

After referring to that which man has found in the earth, Job asks the question, "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" Divine wisdom cannot be found in the same manner as that in which the precious metals of the earth are discovered. That being so, man cannot set a price on it. "Neither is it found in the land of the living." It is not found in the depths, or in the sea. And it cannot be bought for gold, or silver, for its price is above rubies (vs. 15-19). Wealth may purchase many things, but it cannot buy anything of a spiritual nature. Wisdom is priceless in value, and among the greatest of gifts. Fools despise it (Prov. 1:7; 23:9), and die for lack of it (Prov. 10:21); while the man who finds it, is happy (Prov. 3:13). We are further instructed to incline the ear, and apply the heart to it (Prov. 2:2); and to "walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Col. 4:5). It was promised to the disciples (Luke 21:15), and is stated as a qualification for Christian service (Acts 6:3-10). Its importance therefore cannot be over-estimated. It affects man in all the relationships of life, and is a guide to him in his words and deeds.

Having stated the fact that man cannot discover wisdom, Job asks whence it cometh, and "where is the place of under-

standing?" It is hid from the eyes of all living, and has been heard of in the place of death; but "God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof". God is the source of wisdom (Prov. 2:6). He gave wisdom to Bezaleel (Ex. 31:3), and Solomon (I Kings 4:29, 5:12); He instructs us to ask Him for it (Jas. 1:5), and He imparts it through Christ, Who is made unto us wisdom (I Cor. 1:24, 30); and in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom (Col. 2:3).

Note some of the characteristics of the wisdom that is from above: (Jas. 3:17, Rom. 2:33); also the manifestation of it in our Lord's earthly life (Luke 2: 52, Matt. 13:54), and the exhortation to cease from earthly wisdom (Prov. 23:4), because of its foolishness (I Cor. 1:19-21), and seek divine wisdom (Prov. 4:7). It is better to get wisdom than gold (Prov. 16:16); therefore we should heed the counsel, and secure the blessing. It should further be observed that in Christ we not only secure this blessing, but we are blessed with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). Truly God is good unto His own. The concluding verses of the chapter (vs. 24-28) relate to the manifestation of God's wisdom in connection with His omniscience (v. 24), and His creative and sustaining power (vs. 25-27); ending with a declaration respecting the nature of wisdom (v. 28). Note the divine control, and use of wind, waters, rain, and lightning. All the forces of nature are held in leash, and regulated for the good of men. We can easily imagine the result if the winds were allowed to blow without restraint, if the waters were not held in bounds, or the rain or lightning permitted continuously to prevail. The earth would simply become uninhabitable. Thank God then for the manifestation of His omnipotent power. And this God is our God; the heavenly Father of all the saints.

III. JOB'S FORMER PROSPEROUS CONDITION (29:1-25)

After dwelling on the wisdom of God, and making clear his understanding of the pre-eminence and omniscience of God, Job reverts to his own condition, lamenting the departure of his former prosperity. He couldn't understand why God should so deal with him. He later learned the lesson of his affliction, and no doubt looked back upon his unpleasant experience as one that was not devoid of profit. May we not become impatient when things are not going well, but trust the loving care and gracious purpose of our Lord. Note the purpose in our Saviour's trials (Heb. 4:14-16), and the usefulness of experience in our case in the helping of others. Job wishes that he were as he had been in months past, "as in the days when God preserved" him, when by the divine light he walked through darkness, and the secret of God was upon his tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with him, and his children were about him (vs. 3-5). By contrast Job's loneliness stands out as great: his children are gone, and the hand of God is heavy upon him. He is yet to learn, what we now know in greater measure, that God is the refuge of the afflicted (Ps. 46:1), and underneath His own are the everlasting arms (Deut. 33:27).

In his earlier life Job was prosperous, as indicated by the reference to butter and oil (v. 6). He also occupied a prominent position among his fellows. He prepared his seat at the gate of the city, where the judges sat. The young men and the aged honoured him; the princes and nobles respected him for his good work in delivering the poor and fatherless (vs. 8-12). He thereafter describes this good work, and the blessing it was to those who were helped (v. 13). He gave righteous judgment, helped the blind, the lame, and the poor, and expected a long life; anticipating that he should die with the members of his family, and not go prematurely before them (vs. 14-19). He was then in good health. Men listened when he spoke, and accepted his counsel without question (vs. 21, 22). They waited for him as for the rain, intimating their eagerness to receive his instruction. And he sat as chief among them. In this record Job makes clear his former greatness, and the high respect in which he was held by those among whom he dwelt; yet the Lord permitted him to be humbled, afflicted, and forsaken. Such a fate seems a poor reward for doing good, but we must not be short-sighted in our judgment of God's purpose. It is the whole experience, with its attendant consequences, which must be examined, and not simply a part of it. God is all-wise, never makes mistakes, and can be trusted.

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