

# The Gospel Witness

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### INARTICULATE BUT EFFECTUAL PRAYER

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, Sunday Evening, May 26th, 1935

(Stenographically reported)

"And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

"And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

"And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."—Ex. 2:23-25.

I want to deal this evening with an aspect of truth which may possibly lead some of you at the outset to think that I am rather heretical. Yes; even the supposedly old-fashioned, static, evangelically-orthodox, Pastor of Jarvis Street, heretical! It would have this advantage anyhow: it would be something new under the sun. But suspend your judgment for a few minutes.

Some years ago this church had a Pastor who was very fond of fishing, and he was a somewhat expert fisherman. He and others used to go into the north country for a holiday, and spend their time fishing, working out from some central camp. One morning the other friends, several of them ministers, rose early and went some distance to fish for trout. Dr. Thomas said he was a little tired, and thought he would not go that morning. He stayed by the tent—tarried by the stuff. After a while he put on his fishing clothes, and went out into the stream near by. When his fellow-campers came back some hours later, having taken nothing, they saw the Doctor standing in the stream pulling them out! After a while Dr. Thomas found he was entangled in some roots under the water. (He was noted for his liking for words of many syllables. He was not pendent: he was one of the most transparent men in the world. But it was a habit of his never to use a word of one syllable if he could find one of three or four, yet meaning the same). Finding himself entangled, he called to the men, "Will one of you brethren come and extricate me from this entanglement." Almost with one voice they answered, "No! Any man who uses language like that at

camp ought to be allowed to drown"! Of course it was playful, and by and by he waded to shore. I expect there was not wanting a touch of jealousy on the part of the others that he had been successful where they had failed. Anyhow they had a good breakfast on the trout the Doctor had caught.

Some of us are disposed at times to talk about "extricating" people from entanglements. We forget that there is a background of Christian knowledge that makes certain aspects of truth seem to be very simple to us, while to some others, they may be most obscure. I suppose the advanced mathematician forgets that he ever had to labour with the multiplication table; or the man of letters, that he ever found difficulty with the alphabet. They mastered these elementary principles so long ago that they forget they ever had to strive for them. And it is possible for Christians to assume that people, who are in other respects intelligent, are thoroughly instructed in the fundamentals of the gospel, and thus to credit them with knowing more than they really do.

When travelling by motor in part of the country which you were not familiar, have you ever asked direction of someone? And have you observed how few people are able to give direction? After you have asked the way to a certain place, and someone has directed you, you are more in the dark than before; because he assumes you know the locality. He says, "Go down to Smith's and turn to the right and go straight ahead until you come to Brown's schoolhouse, then turn to the left." But who is Smith? There are plenty of them,

and we ought to know them, and Browns too. But the fact is in such case, we do not know where to begin. And in our endeavours to point men to Christ we ought not to assume too much; for many who are well instructed in other matters are ignorant of the alphabet of the gospel. Hence we need to define our terms, and to begin at the very beginning. And I shall not be really heretical this evening, although I may, at the outset, seem to be.

## I.

I shall speak to you first, finding an illustration in the incident to which our text refers, of THE PRAYER THAT IS INARTICULATE, the prayer that is not carefully phrased, that is not expressed in any exact verbal form, the prayer that is nothing more than a sigh, a cry, or a deep groan—and yet a prayer that reaches the ear of God.

Is that unusual? I know that it is very easy for us, knowing something of the gospel—if, indeed, we have been taught the truth as it is in Jesus—to lay down certain principles and to say, This is the way to pray. Ah yes. But I desire to show you how people without such advantage may pray—and how nearly all of us really began to pray.

The people of Israel, although they had a goldy heritage, a history that was punctuated with miracles and with revelations of God's mercy to them, had been so long in bondage, so long under the heel of the oppressor, that life had become almost intolerable. They "sighed", they "cried", and they "groaned"—and that was their prayer.

Will God hear prayers like that? Look at our text for a moment. I do not say that these people recognized in the beginning that there was anything—let me use a broad term—that there was anything distinctively religious in their groaning. It was not the sort of exercise in which they would engage as in some formal act of worship. They were slaves. They were subjected to the most bitter bondage. They had had to make bricks, and they had had to make them under difficult circumstances. They had felt the whip of the task-masters upon their backs, and there was something in them that revolted against that bondage. Therefore they cried out against it. But theirs was primarily a physical bondage. It does not appear that they were even aware that there was a religious element in their cry. Do people ever thus begin their approach to God? Are men brought by physical means to an apprehension of spiritual truth? Look at this story. That is really all the people of Israel did: they complained of their lot, of their material circumstances.

There are many people in our day who never go to church, and who may not be distinctly religious; but who do a good deal of sighing, and crying, and groaning. I wonder if more groans ever ascended from this sin-cursed earth than ascend to-day? Men are troubled. I do not say that they are religious—far from it. But they are at least dissatisfied, out of love with life as it is, scarcely desiring to continue to live, groaning and crying. Can that sort of thing ever be the beginning of the salvation of the soul? Oh yes! These people did not express in words any particular desire. Their prayer was negative rather than positive. Their groans and cries were a protest against what they had, rather than an articulate expression of desire for something better. They were full of complaints of their temporal state.

It may be that someone here to-night is as they were. There is a mental and spiritual bondage, that very often grows out of one's material condition, and *vice versa*. It is easy to say that we ought to live above the bread-and-butter question; that we ought to live on a high spiritual plane, and not worry about these temporalities. But we are still men and women in the flesh, and these physical necessities cannot be ignored. When the bondage of it all grips you, and harrows you, it gets into your soul sometimes; and it is difficult really to pray as one ought to pray.

Is there anyone here like that to-night, rather hard up? You do not know how to pray—but you have done a good deal of groaning.

Sometimes people are brought into this condition by a surfeit of godlessness. They may not have any deep consciousness of moral wrong-doing. They may not as yet be penitent of heart in the sense of being weary of their own sin. But they say, colloquially, that they are "fed up". They mean that for some reason or another life has lost its charm; there is nothing in it that ministers to their satisfaction; they would gladly be rid of it. They may not have an intelligent reason for that weariness of mind and spirit. They may not know what is the root-cause either of their mental attitude, or of their physical state: they only know that they have come to a place where this world has nothing to offer them that presents any attraction. Sometimes in the providence of God a mental condition of that sort may be but the beginning of the breaking of a wondrous light that will lead into life and liberty.

I say, these people *did not frame their prayer in words*. It is said that they sighed, and cried, and groaned. That is all! Can a man pray like that, without words? Will God hear an inarticulate prayer? Did you ever see and hear a child pray without words? A child cries, when it has hurt itself, or when it is hungry. It is but an infant of days, and its only way of making its desire known is merely to cry. And how they do cry sometimes! Is there any answer to a prayer of that sort? Of course mother knows what that cry means. If the child has been hurt, or is hungry, or is sleepy, she knows—but the child does not. Nor does it need to put its desire into words: its mother knows what the child wants, and she interprets that cry as a prayer.

Do you think our gracious God is less considerate than a mother would be of her child? There are people who would shut one up to a verbal formula, and tell us how to approach God. I remember years ago a little girl whose teacher asked me to talk with her. The teacher was a godly woman, and she had dealt with the child; and the child had said she was trusting Christ. The teacher said, "I wish you would talk with her, and see what you think of her." We talked together, and I said, "Now tell me all about it." "I knew", said she, "that I was a sinner." "And what did you do?" "I asked Jesus to forgive me, and I saw in His Word that He promises to forgive people who confess their sin." "You believe you are a Christian?" "I am sure I am. I asked Him to forgive me, and I know He heard my prayer." The teacher went to see the child's mother, and her mother said, "I should not like her to join the church until her grandfather has had a talk with her."

The grandfather knew his Bible. He took this little girl of twelve years of age for a ride one day, and after-

ward came to see me. He shook his head and said, "I fear the child does not understand." I asked him, "What is your ground for saying that, sir?" He replied, "I quoted this text to her: 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life', and I asked her, Have you the Son? and she said 'I don't know grandpa'." The grandfather was sound enough, and soundly said. He held fast the form of sound words; but I fear was too particular about exact verbal definition. He had his theory, his clearly defined doctrinal view; and he expected that a little child who had grown weary of her sin, who had asked God to forgive her, should know all that he knew. But really I would just as soon believe in the reality of that child's religion as in the reality of his. Her heart was full of Christ; but so far as I could discover his religion was largely of the head. We ought to believe with both heart and head, but "it is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness". That is where the miracle begins.

Let me assume another case. Here is a man who has been injured, by accidental means, or is suddenly overtaken by illness, and is in a semi-conscious or delirious state. The doctor is called. With anxiety, loves ones enquire what is wrong, and the doctor assures them he will do his best to find out. But the man cannot talk: all he can do is groan. The doctor feels about, and touches some tender spot, and the man almost screams. What does the doctor do? Close his bag, and say he can do nothing? No physician would be so foolish as to pursue such a course. Nobody needs a doctor so much as the man who cannot tell what is the matter with him. Dare anyone to say, therefore, that if a sin-sick soul is so sick that he cannot even pray intelligently, but can only sigh, and cry, and groan, that God will not hear? They sighed! They cried! They groaned! And thus, as we shall see, they prayed most effectually.

## II.

But look at THE RESPONSE OF LOVE to that inarticulate prayer. It is said, "God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." Are you not glad of that? The ear of God has a delightful affinity for the cry of contrition. God can always hear the cry of a broken heart. Always!

I remember a friend bringing to me an old man, eighty-five years of age, to whom he had testified. He had brought him from the country, over a hundred miles to talk with me. He had a long beard—was a veritable Abraham in appearance. I talked with him about Christ, and he said, "Yes; I should like to be saved. But eighty-five years have gone, and I have never prayed once." "Then", said I, "there is no better time to begin. We will kneel down here, and I want you to pray." We knelt down together, and I said to the old man, "Will you now pray?" He bowed his head, but after an extended silence, said, "Mister, I cannot pray. I never have prayed. I do not know how to pray. In all this long life of mine I have never once prayed. I cannot—I do not know how." I said, "Then tell God you do not know how to pray. It does not matter so much how you pray, so long as you sincerely pray." And like a little child that old man of eighty-five years stammered out a petition. He told the Lord he was ashamed that

he had neglected Him and refused to listen to the gospel for four score years, but that now he wanted to be saved. He talked in such a simple fashion that I was deeply moved. Then I showed him the word of God, "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"; and the light that never was on sea or land dawned upon that old man's face, and he said, quietly, "He has heard me."

A month or so later he came back and said, "I want to be baptized." Thus, when his heart was broken, and he longed to get through to God—his groaning came up to the ear of God. God inclined His ear, and heard his cry.

But I must go to the Word of God for my illustrations; for this is the authoritative Book. If this principle I am discussing be true, we shall find it in the Book itself. Let your authority be the word of God that cannot lie.

Go back into Genesis. There was a woman called Hagar, who had a son named Ishmael. She had been turned out of house and home by her own husband. She was given a bottle of water and some bread, "and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba." There came an hour when "the water was spent in the bottle," when there was no further refreshment. She put the child under one of the shrubs, and withdrew herself that she might not see him die. But this quaint old records says—and I remind you that it was not written of Isaac, but of Ishmael that, "God heard the voice of the lad." Ishmael was the progenitor of that Arab race for which Colonel Lawrence did so much. Ishmael cried, and the Lord heard his cry; and "God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink." Thus they were succoured in the wilderness, and went on their way. Ishmael did not ask for water: he only cried—but "the Lord heard the voice of the lad."

Let us come to the New Testament. Look at the case, for example, of the Syrophenician woman; the Canaanite, the woman who, like Ishmael, was without the pale. She came to Jesus with her sick daughter, and she prayed a very short prayer, for something specific. Most people pray short prayers when they are in desperate need. This woman said, "Lord, help me." And the Man of Nazareth treated her sternly; He said a strange thing: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." She said, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. If I may not have a piece of bread from that which has been reserved for the children, may I not take the place of one of the dogs, and have a few crumbs?" Jesus answered, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." He found great faith outside the pale altogether, a needy woman who was willing to be classed with the dogs if only she might get her crumb of mercy.

Remember also the paralyzed man who was brought by four men to Christ, who, because they could not get nigh for the press, carried him to the roof and let him down in the midst of the crowd, at Jesus' feet. What did he come for? He did not come: they brought him. Why did they bring him? For physical healing. But our Lord said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." He did not ask for forgiveness: he did not pray, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." But there he was. He had consented to be let down into the midst where Jesus was. Then

the Pharisees said, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" "And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all." God was infinitely better to him than his faith, and better than his prayer: He gave him what he did not ask for.

Glance for a moment at the story of the man of whom I read to you this evening, a blind man who had no hope of ever seeing the light of the sun. But some of the religious vivisectionists of that day apparently regarded him as an interesting subject, and seeing him as they passed by, "His disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents"—by which He did not mean that neither he nor his parents were sinful, but that the man's blindness had no direct relation to his own sin, nor to that of his parents—"but that the works of God should be made manifest in him . . . When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent. He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

Then the controversy began! There are many people who do nothing to open people's eyes, but when they are opened, they are ready to dispute about it, as to whether it was done in a proper way. The man gave his own account of his healing. "But the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight", and questioned them. They answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not; he is of age; ask him." As soon as his eyes were opened, the very people who had known him as a blind man refused to believe that he had been born blind. And his parents, who should have been filled of joy, "feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him."

They asked him again, "What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples." Mark the story. They said, "This man is a sinner." What did that man know whose eyes had been opened? He tells us: "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. There is a nut to crack. Solve that problem if you can. Do not talk to me about what He is, or whence He came. He opened my eyes. I know that." But he did not even yet know that Jesus was the

Son of God. But God responded to the cry of a broken heart.

Perhaps you will say, "If that be so, it does not make much difference what we believe. Anybody who sighs, and cries, and groans, will receive salvation. All your contention for the faith, your insistence upon the doctrines of the gospel, are folly." But consider a few moments.

### III.

Look at THE GRACE WHICH EFFECTED SALVATION. The Israelites who groaned and cried did not know very much; but I remind you that *God did not save them anonymously*. He never does. He said of Pharaoh, "He shall know that I am Jehovah." And He was just as determined that Israel should know Him as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as that Pharaoh should know Him. It is all-important that we should know God. However we begin with Him, He will make Himself known: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

What did He to these groaning, crying, sighing, people? How did He save them? He heard their groans, He looked upon them, and "had respect unto them". He interpreted their cry, He estimated their whole situation; and He arose for their deliverance.

Very well, let me say further that *God did not save them without enlightening their eyes*; He did not save them in their ignorance, but gave them such illumination that their ignorance departed. God never superimposes salvation upon anyone. He informs the mind, He enlightens the understanding, and makes us to know the truth; enabling us, by the enfranchisement of our wills, to receive Him. He opens our hearts as He opened the heart or Lydia. He does not break in like a burglar: He comes with His master-key, for He Who made the human mind knows how to enter it. He heard their cry, He knew their need, and He came to their rescue. Read the story of their deliverance. "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." God had had him in training in the wilderness for forty years. He sent Moses—and observe this very significant word: Moses was sent to the people with the word of the Lord, and he was a type of another Preacher; for he said later, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." But when first Moses went to the children of Israel, and told them of what God planned for them, of His purposes of grace, it is said, "They hearkened not unto Moses"—why?—"for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." They said, "Moses, Moses, life is so terrible to us that we cannot understand what you say. There is no use in preaching to us. Your first approach has made matters worse than they were. Leave us alone. If that is religion, we do not want it. It was hard enough before, but now we have to make bricks without straw. Every day is a week, every hour a day. Away from us. We cannot listen to you."

There are times when people cannot listen to preaching. There are times when people need something else than preaching. Moses was not discouraged. He went on with the work God had commissioned him to do; and in due time he led the people to liberty. I cannot trace all the steps of the outshining of divine power. God

said to Moses, "What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." With that rod He sent Moses to work miracles, and the people saw it, and little by little they began to recognize that there was Somebody working for them. Pharaoh refused to believe or to let them go: he hardened his heart, but Israel were made to know God.

There came at last that great miracle of darkness when God said He would make a difference between the land of Goshen and of Egypt. There was a thick darkness like a London fog over the land, but in Goshen there was not a shadow. "But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." When God undertakes to save men, He makes His light to shine. All the children of Israel ultimately have light in their dwellings. Then there came the judgment of the firstborn, the Lord's passover, the sprinkling of blood, the girding of the loins; rendering obedience to God—and they were saved through the blood, intelligently saved. They took the blood and sprinkled it upon the lintel and the door posts, and they believed what God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." When that company of people went out of Egypt, they went out as a company of divinely-enlightened people who knew the truth that Jehovah had arisen for their salvation. They believed God, and were saved just as we are saved. It was because their hearts were broken that they responded to the successive revelations of God, until at last they became what God willed they should be, children of light.

Let me return to my New Testament reference. Carefully mark if you please the psychology of it. The man whose eyes had been opened at the pool of Siloam, the man without religious instruction, came into grips with the doctors of the law, and he argued with them. Who could have made a better answer than he, this ignorant man who but yesterday had been in the darkness?—"Why herein is a marvellous thing, what ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. I match your agnosticism with my experience of His grace. Wherever He came from, He opened mine eyes." When he had finished his argument they said, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out." He did not know why he was cast out. He did not know who Jesus was. But mark this word: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto them, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He who had received his sight, replied, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? I am hospitably disposed toward Him. Now that my eyes are open, I find in my heart some strange affinity for the truth. I do not know, but I should like to know who He is."

"Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." He said, "Lord, I believe"—and down on his face he went, and worshipped Him. I think afterwards he must have said, "I might have known it. He unlocked my heart, and little by little He came in; and when at last He identified Himself, I said to myself, It was for Him I have been groaning and crying all my life. Now I know it was Jesus Christ I needed all the time."

I wonder if there is someone here like that? You have tried everything else,—

"I've tried the broken cisterns, Lord,  
But ah, the waters failed;  
E'en as I stooped to drink they fled,  
And mocked me as I wailed."

The truth is, none but Christ can satisfy. If indeed your heart has been touched by the Spirit of God, you will always welcome a larger measure of illumination, the fuller light of the gospel, for truth has always affinity for truth; and it will be your distinguishing characteristic before all people that loving and doing the truth you come to the light. As a child of grace, you will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But you have not to be a trained theologian—and I do not disparage theology—in order to be saved; you need not know everything, in order to find salvation. Our gracious God will listen even to a groan, or a cry.

Shall your sighing, and crying, and groaning, be changed to songs of praise to-night? Pray this prayer out of a broken heart,—

"Just as I am, though tossed about,  
With many a conflict, many a doubt;  
Fightings and fears within, without,—  
O Lamb of God, I come!"

## MORE ABOUT PIONEERING

### A River, a Cheese Factory, and the Gospel

The task of a student on a "summer field", often his first pastorate, is a very difficult one. Last week we received a letter from one of our men who have gone forth in the name of the Lord to attempt such work. For obvious reasons we omit names, but we cannot refrain from sharing parts of the interesting letter with our readers:

"Here I 'is' after much travel by rail and automobile. I arrived Sunday morning, but it was impossible to have a service Sunday evening since there is no telephone here. The homes are few and far between.

"..... have come under Mr. ....'s influence, who claims to be 'undenominational,' whatever that may mean. With this work at ..... the first great difficulty is the ..... River, a large river which must be crossed by boat. Then after one crosses the river, there is a mile's walk back home, over rocks, stones, barbed wire fences, ploughed fields, etc. There is another way of crossing and that is by the toll bridge, a couple of miles away, but if one takes a car it costs \$1.00—rather 'steep'! . . . Pray that I may be given wisdom with this difficult situation.

"I visited the members of the ..... Church. Including children with adults they number fifteen. I walked about six miles and made seven calls to-day. The work is going to be difficult here, too. There are seven groups or denominations represented in this district. Mr. .... has secured the old cheese factory for a church. We are to scrub it out and make seats and pulpit after the old man who is living there moves out this Thursday.

"When I came and carefully viewed the situation, I felt like Ezekiel (37) when he looked into the great valley of dry bones. The first thing he had to do was to get the bones together, then God breathed life into them. In the first place it is going to be difficult to get the people together, but we know, if we do meet in His name and honour Him, that He will bless us.

"I suppose you will begin to think that I am inclined to be downcast or pessimistic. Not at all. I just relate the facts as they are. Remembering what John Eliot said, I feel that God will bless us: "Prayer and pains through faith in Jesus Christ will do anything."

Mr. Geo. Hicks has supplied for three Sundays at the Gospel Mission, Tottenham, Ontario, with evident acceptance.

Our Jamaican student, Mr. S. Black, has supplied several times at University Ave. Baptist Church (Coloured). A week ago Sunday evening he also preached at Grant A. M. E. Church, on Soho St., Toronto. At the close of his sermon two women came forward, one a backslider and the other signifying her desire to accept Christ.

#### After Twelve Years

Pastor and Mrs. Duncan Macgregor, both graduates of our Seminary, have been doing heroic work at the little Hillcrest Baptist Church, Oakwood Ave., Toronto. The membership is very small, but visitation by the pastor and other workers has gradually increased the attendance at the services. During the last two School terms Student T. D. M. Carson, now at Cumberland, Ont., for the summer, has greatly assisted by playing the piano and teaching in the Bible School. Student Leila M. Boyd, in addition to her Sunday morning class in the Jarvis St. School, has had another in the afternoon at Hillcrest. One interesting case we must report: in one family the mother had not been in church for seven years, the father had not been for twelve, and the little girl had never been in Sunday School. Miss Boyd met her on the street, and was successful in getting her to Hillcrest Sunday School. At the Christmas "entertainment" the parents were present, and then they, after so long a time, attended Gospel preaching. When they got home that evening, Father said: "My dear, we shall never pass another Sunday as we have done for the last twelve years, each Sunday will see us in our places at church." Let us pray God that the gospel faithfully preached by Pastor Macgregor and his fellow-workers may be fruitful to the conversion of those who are now regularly hearing the Word.

#### "Curate" to "Bishop"

Back in 1928 Baptists of Orangeville, where he assisted the writer for the Summer, fondly called him "the Curate", and "the cure of souls" was on his heart. A year before, Mr. Gordon W. Searle, son of missionaries to China (where he was born), who had for a time ministered in what was then a Congregational Church, had been baptized in Hespeler and had entered Toronto Baptist Seminary. The Summer following he spent in Fort William, where his gracious personality was used of the Spirit of God to unite believers, convert sinners and establish Evangelical Baptists in a building of their own. (There Rev. F. Wellington now preaches.)

Then the Great West called, or rather, God called to the West. A band of some twenty-two Baptists, weary of the shallow modernism of the "Old Convention", had formed the Norwood Regular Baptist Church of Edmonton, Alberta, under the inspiring leadership of Rev. Morley R. Hall, pastor of Westbourne Baptist Church, Calgary. To this group Mr. Searle came. Among them he was ordained, there he brought his charming bride to the home he had bought and furnished, there the baby girl was born and named Joy, and there, alas, a few months ago, she met a fearful accident, being almost scalded to death. Thank God she is now well again.

During the five years of his ministry in Edmonton, Alberta's capital, the Lord used Brother Searle to the conversion of many, both in the city and the country around,

to baptize some seventy, to increase the membership from the original score to about a hundred, and to establish them as a New Testament Church.



REV. G. W. SEARLE

Pastor Searle is a confirmed and confirming Baptist. Of the Fellowship of Regular Baptists of Alberta, he was, last Convention, elected president. Of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, he has proved a loyal friend. In Edmonton, he persuaded the Bible Class to subscribe to THE GOSPEL WITNESS so that the homes of the Church might have this paper. Last Easter the Young People's Society, paying the small cost of bringing the slides of our missionary work in Liberia, the pastor lectured on them, and the offering, taken from people suffering under the depression, far exceeded his best hopes.

And now the Orangeville "Curate" has become its "Bishop"! When Rev. A. C. Whitcombe moved to Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church, Brantford, Ont., the Orangeville Baptists immediately thought of Rev. G. W. Searle. They called him. He said he would come. It was not easy to bid farewell to Edmonton, but the pastor and his wife believed it the Lord's leading. According to the "Edmonton Journal", the Norwood Baptists gave them a fine send-off:

"The oldest member of the church, Mrs. James Young, on behalf of the congregation, presented the retiring pastor with a purse of money and an illuminated address, beautifully prepared and bound, the work being done by Mr. Wilfred Dow . . .

"The pulpit will be supplied for a time by Rev. Howard Phillips, of Drumheller."

Last Sunday, after a three-thousand-mile journey by Ford, Mr. Searle was heartily welcomed in Orangeville. He was accompanied by Rev. Lawrence Collins, late of Benalto, Alberta. The writer had the great pleasure of introducing the new pastor to enthusiastic congregations of members and friends. In the evening Mr. Searle preached a fine gospel sermon on "Christ the Way—Life for the lost, Light for the blind, and Liberty for the captive". We predict a fruitful ministry.—W.G.B.

## ANOTHER GREAT RALLY

On Friday, May 24th, there gathered in the Jarvis Street Baptist Church hundreds of people from all over the province of Ontario. Quebec was also well represented, and the enthusiasm of the gatherings made it one of the greatest days in the history of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. One of the largest delegations came from Hespeler, Ontario, led by the pastor, Rev. W. N. Charlton. Visitors were present from as far west as Fort William, and as far south as West Virginia. All other parts of the constituency were well represented, and the services were all well attended.

Dr. J. Frank Norris, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, had been invited to speak, but owing to unforeseen circumstances he was unable to keep the appointment. The disappointment of the Committee was very keen, and they were at a loss to know what action to take. Dr. Palmer Muntz of Buffalo was the other speaker, and he really began his ministry on Thursday evening by giving a great and comprehensive message on the incoming, upspringing, and outgoing of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, in Jarvis Street Baptist Church. This message was greatly enjoyed by all, and no doubt had much to do with bringing out many of the Jarvis Street people to the morning session of the Rally on Friday at 10.30. Dr. Muntz spoke at this session with great clearness and in the liberty and power of the Holy Spirit. The people were fed upon the finest of the wheat, and the Lord manifested Himself to their hearts through the ministry of the Word as it was given out by our Brother.

The Kinsman Quartette rendered special music and they delighted the hearts of the people by their presentation of the old time quartette songs. Miss Mary Jeffery, violinist, played most acceptably, after which Rev. R. D. Guthrie closed the morning session with prayer. Rev. A. Thomson, President of the Convention, was in charge, and the speaker was introduced by Rev. W. E. Atkinson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union.

Dinner was served by the ladies of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, and a large number remained to fellowship around the table where a goodly repast was partaken of. Miss



Brownlow and Mr. and Mrs. Cullington were in charge of this part of the programme, and to them we owe much in making the day one of great profit and helpfulness.

The afternoon session was in charge of Rev. P. B. Loney, of the Runnymede Road Baptist Church, and after a couple of selections by the Kinsman Quartette, and a violin solo by Miss Nellie McGhie, Mr. Loney called on Dr. Palmer Muntz to bring the message of the afternoon. Dr. Muntz spoke on the subject, "Hallelujah and its significance in the Word of God". In every instance he pointed out that it meant "Praise ye the Lord", and that it was used twenty-eight times in the Scriptures, but especially in the Psalms and in the book of Revelation. The large audience which gathered was enthralled with this presentation of the glory that belongs unto Christ alone. All teachers and teaching paled into insignificance when compared with the Teacher of teachers and the Lord God Omnipotent Who knows all things and does all things after the counsel of His own will.

At the close of the afternoon session a picture was taken of those present, and it will give some idea of the large attendance at the afternoon session. The spirit of the meetings seemed to be that whatever else happened the presence of the Lord in the midst of His people was the most important of all, and that in spite of our keen disappointment in the absence of Dr. Norris, the Lord Himself was present in great power and in great glory.

The Committee in charge reported at the afternoon session that they had been able to prevail upon Dr. Shields to take Dr. Norris' place at the evening meeting. It seemed most fitting that this should be so, as a climax to the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of Dr. Shields' ministry as pastor of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church. He was reluctant at first to acquiesce with the desire of his brethren, but after giving it careful thought and consideration, he agreed to speak as the Lord led him.

The closing session of the Rally was one of spiritual fellowship, and the inspiration of that meeting will be felt for many days to come. It began with an organ recital by Mr. Penney, the organist of Jarvis Street, and a song service conducted by Mr. W. J. Hutchinson, choir leader, and assisted by the Jarvis Street Choir. The Scripture was read by Mr. Chas. McGrath, pastor of the Stouffville Baptist Church, followed by prayer by Rev. C. J. Loney of Hamilton. The Chairman then called upon Rev. G. D. Mellish to present some pictures of the work in Liberia, and also some which had been borrowed from Rev. H. Dancy, showing the construction of houses in the tropics. The burning of the New Cess Station has called for a special enquiry into this matter by the Executive Committee, and Mr. Dancy has assisted greatly in helping the Committee to arrive at a decision.

The Kinsman Quartette again delighted the congregation with their message in song, and Mr. Fred Syme sang "The Stranger of Galilee". The Chairman then called upon Dr. Shields, making reference to the Silver Jubilee services which had been held on Sunday and Monday of this week. A great ovation was tendered Dr. Shields as he rose to speak, and as he acknowledged the greetings of the capacity audience at the evening service. Dr. Shields spoke from I. Kings 20:28, "And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." It was a great message, and only those who heard it could appreciate it in all its fulness. The great audience was moved several times to utter, "Amen", and "Praise ye the Lord". Following the message Dr. Shields called upon Mr. Fred Syme to sing "Thy God Reigneth". It was the climax of a great day, and the hearts of the people were glad that they had come up to the house of the Lord and enjoyed His presence.

The Committee in charge of the Rally wish to thank all who participated in any way in making the meetings a success. Dr. Palmer Muntz was accompanied by his father, Rev. John Muntz, of Forestville, N.Y., and brought greetings from the brethren across the line. Mr. O. L. Raymer conducted the song services at the morning and afternoon sessions. To the Jarvis Street Baptist Church and other helpers the Committee wishes to express its gratefulness to God and thanks to them for the assistance which was rendered

throughout the day. After all expenses had been met, a substantial sum will be applied to the outgoing of our Missionaries to Liberia.

## NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

### Mitchell Square

The Mitchell Square Baptist Church held its Anniversary services on Sunday, May 26th, with Rev. John Byers of Orillia as special speaker. Large congregations greeted him, and his inspiring messages were greatly enjoyed by all.

### Beneficent, Montreal

Word has been received from the Pastor, Rev. Jules Danthony, of a fire which did considerable damage to the Beneficent Baptist Church on Sunday, May 19th. The fire started in the shed of a rag shop next to the Church, and in a few minutes the fire had spread to the Church, but luckily the firemen arrived in a few minutes and soon had the fire under control. The Church suffered damages to the amount of about fifty dollars. All the carpets are ruined, and most of the hymn books and French Bibles also. It will take this small group time to get back on their feet again, and they request the prayers of our readers that God will provide their needs. If any should feel led to assist financially we shall be glad to receive same at the Union office and forward to the friends in Montreal.

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## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 24

Second Quarter

June 16th, 1935

### THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE

Lesson Text: Psalms 81 to 83.

Golden Text: "Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah."—Psalm 81:7.

Bible School Reading: Psalm 81:1-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Deut. 5:28-33; Tuesday—Job 21:28-34; Wednesday—Is. 48:16-22; Thursday—Jer. 44:1-10; Friday—Luke 2:44-54; Saturday—Rev. 2:15-19.

### PSALM EIGHTY-ONE

This is a festal psalm connected possibly with the passover feast. In it, after a call to sing, and blow the trumpet, reference is made to the work of God in Egypt, to the disobedience of the people, and to the blessing which they forfeited in forsaking God. If the passover feast be the background for this psalm, it will be of interest to note the nature and purpose of it (Ex. 12:1-28); or if it be the feast of tabernacles as some think, it will be equally of profit to notice the inception of that (Lev. 23:33-44). These both commemorated important events in the history of Israel; the first relating to the deliverance from Egypt; the second, to the dwelling in booths on the wilderness journey. It is of further interest to note that there was a specific celebration connected with the blowing of trumpets (Lev. 22:23-25).

The psalm opens with the call to sing aloud, and make a joyful noise with voice and musical instrument unto the Lord (vs. 1-3). The Israelites were forbidden to use images in their religious services (Ex. 20:4-6), but music formed a prominent part of the same (I. Chron. 6:31, 32). And the saints of these days are enjoined to express themselves in a similar manner (Eph. 5:19). We have much for which to thank God, and praise should continually be in our hearts, ready to express itself at suitable times. The feast was "a statute for Israel and a law of the God of Jacob", connected with the deliverance of the people from Egypt (vs. 4, 5; Ex. 12:26, 27). After this, the voice of God is heard in the psalm, testifying to the emancipation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. They were removed from the burden, and delivered from their trouble. Note the spiritual likeness of Israel's experience to that of the child of God at the present time; saved from the bondage of Pharaoh and Egypt, representative of Satan and the world; and proved or tested on the wilderness journey (Ex. 17:1-7), and indicative of the Christian's course after setting out on his pilgrim journey (I. Pet. 2:11). There is another phase of spiritual life which may be experienced by all who follow the Lord, pre-figured in an illustrative manner, by the entrance into and possession of the promised land (Josh. 3:17), intimating a deeper kind of life, resting in the enjoyment of the promises and presence of God (II. Pet. 1:4).

Continuing His message God forbids His people to worship strange gods (vs. 8, 9); draws their attention to the fact that He was the One Who had brought them out of Egypt, and promises the supply of their needs. It is a sad commentary on human nature that instead of worshipping the true and living God, men should bow down to false gods. Note the many in civilized lands who put other things in the place of God; also the great possibilities in the life of each one who steadfastly obeys God. We think of Old Testament saints such as Enoch, Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, and others in this respect; and in the New Testament era, of Peter, Paul; C. E. Finney, C. H. Spurgeon, and D. L. Moody. God is willing to use all who surrender wholly unto Him, and obey His will. The disobedience of the Israelites is then referred to, together with the attitude of God toward them, and His lament over the blessings which they lost (vs. 11-16). Observe the significance of being given up to one's

own heart's lust (v. 12; Hos. 4:17). God cannot be trifled with, without dire consequences ensuing. Note also the victory lost through disobedience, and the tender care of God cast aside for that reason. Those who are true to God receive of His very best; the finest of the wheat, and honey out of the most unlikely places. How may we show gratitude to God for His goodness to us? What do we miss in this life when we disobey God?

### PSALM EIGHTY-TWO

In this psalm a judgment scene is depicted with God standing "in the congregation of the mighty"; judging "among the gods" or judges. Note the solemnity of the occasion, together with the significance respecting time and eternity. The wicked must meet God some day, and give an account of their deeds, and receive punishment for their sin (II. Pet. 3:7; Jude 14, 15). The righteous also must go before the judgment-seat, that they may receive the due reward of their deeds (Rom. 14:10). It should make us very careful in life to know that we are making our own record on high which will later influence our place and position in eternity. Salvation is in accordance with grace (Eph. 2:8), but eternal reward is a result of consecrated work (I. Cor. 3:12-15). The judges referred to in the psalm were of the unjust kind. They judged unjustly and accepted the persons of the wicked (v. 2). Note the responsibility and privilege attached to positions of leadership in church and nation. When Israel's leaders acted righteously the nation was blessed, but when they did evil the nation suffered (I. Kings 21:20-22; II. Kings 23). The standard of private and public conduct is the will of God.

The duty of the judges is to defend the poor and fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and needy, and deliver them; and "rid them out of the hand of the wicked". When wicked judges are in office, the poor and needy have little chance of justice, except under extreme circumstances (Luke 18:1-5). Under righteous judges both rich and poor receive justice. As a result of wickedness in high places, anarchy ensues (v. 5). Like leaders, like people; when the shepherds are heedless of their duty, the sheep scatter and suffer privation (Jer. 50:6). For such wickedness punishment is promised (vs. 6, 7); and the psalm ends with a call to God to arise and judge the earth. Emphasis requires to be laid on the reality of sin, and the certainty of divine judgment for it. How may we keep true to God in the midst of a crooked generation? What is our duty toward those in authority in the state? (Rom. 13:1; Acts 4:19; 20:5-29).

### PSALM EIGHTY-THREE

This psalm describes a confederacy of enemies gathered against the Israelites in order to destroy them; and records a prayer to God to deal with them in judgment. It opens with an appeal to God to act against the enemies, and then describes their wicked ways in reference to Israel. They are the enemies of God as well as the enemies of Israel. They raised a tumult, and make conspiracy against the Lord and His people. Their identity is then stated, showing a confederacy of several nations, and indicating that Israel was surrounded by her foes (vs. 6-8). God was the only hope of His people, for vain was the help of man under such circumstances (Ps. 108:12). Our hope is also in the Lord for time and for eternity (I. Pet. 1:21). Note the enemies of the Christian (Eph. 6:12), and the way in which they should be met (Eph. 6:13-18).

The prayer of the psalmist has as its theme the defeat of the enemy, with its consequent liberating of Israel, and vindication of God (vs. 9-18). Historical allusions are made in the plea for the overthrow of the enemy; reference being made to Midian (Num. 31:7-8; Jud. 7:22), Sisera (Jud. 4:15-21) Oreb and Zeeb (Jud. 7:25); and Zebah and Zalmunna (Judges 8:21). God destroyed ancient enemies, and the petition is that the foes of the psalmist's time be dealt with in a like drastic manner. Continuing the prayer, God is requested to make the enemies like stubble blown before the wind, and to destroy them utterly with His tempest, that men might know that He was the "Most High over all the earth". Note the lessons from divine judgment, and the purpose of that judgment, as manifested in the experience of nations. Observe also the sovereignty of God, and His almighty power in nature, and among men. Why do men hate and seek to injure each other? How may we overcome dislike of others?