

# 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

"BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD"

A Sermon by Rev. E. E. Shields, of Chicago

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 13th, 1935.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."—Psalm 46:10.

Prayer by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe.

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Thou hast set Thy glory above the heavens, and unto Thy footstool do we come, for Thou alone art God. Thou art the Author of all things; Thou art the Giver of every good and every perfect gift. We can worship no other than Thee. We give Thee thanks, too, that:

Plenteous grace with Thee is found—  
Grace to cover all my sin.

We rejoice in Thy promise, and remember that Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We thank Thee for that place where mercy and truth are met together; and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. We thank Thee that Thou hast made provision that the rebel may become a priest, and the exile a son.

We glory in Thy bounteous grace; we rejoice in our exalted standing in Jesus Christ in the heavenly places. We rejoice that Thy hand has been upon us for good. We know that Thou dost guide us by Thine eye, and that every step is ordered of Thee. As we look back over the way we have come, we see Thy goodness to us. Thou hast given us bread from heaven in dry places. Thou hast caused water to gush out from the rock. Thy presence has been round about us, a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that in distress of all kinds, in sickness and in sorrow, in temptation and in trial, Thou hast been near us, giving us grace, yea, glory too. We know that even these things are ordained of God, and that our times are in Thy hands; that Thou Who hast begun this work in us will not cease until the day of Christ. Therefore we rejoice to know that we are in Thy hands; that Thou dost care for us; that even the very hairs of our head are numbered. We thank Thee that Thine everlasting arms are always about us. We thank Thee, too, that these things are but the earnest of greater blessing, of greater things yet to be:

Oh, Christ, He is the fountain,  
The deep, sweet well of love!  
The streams on earth I've tasted,  
More deep I'll drink above.

There, to an ocean fullness,  
His mercy doth expand,  
And glory, glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

Brighten this vision, O Lord, and let it never become dim to our sight, that we may purify ourselves even as Thou art pure.

Once more we would pray that Thou wouldest break to us the bread of life. Our needs are known to thee. Thou knowest with what matters our thoughts have been engaged; the particular burdens that each one bears; the cares that oppress, the problems that must be faced. Thou hast been dealing with us in these things. So now, take Thy truth and teach it to us; apply it to our hearts so that we may be strengthened and comforted for the daily tasks before us.

Draw us closer to Thee. Make us to wonder, as they did of old, at the gracious words that proceed out of Thy mouth. So may we hear Thy words, and, by faith, lay hold upon them.

May the lips of the one who speaks to us be touched as with heavenly fire, that we may hear Thy truth, and that it may come in the power and demonstration of Thy Holy Spirit!

We remember our Pastor to-night. We thank Thee for His ministry, and we pray that Thy presence may be very near to him, blessing him and keeping him always.

Bless, we beseech Thee, all those who proclaim Thy truth this night. For all the household of faith, near and far, we pray. And we pray especially to-night for those to whom Thou hast been speaking, and whom Thou hast brought to this place. As Thou hast spoken in the quietness of the hearts of men, speak now through Thy messenger; and grant that men and women may be won to Thyself. May the gospel be preached in simplicity and plainness! May the Lord Jesus Christ be exalted.

We ask these things in His name, Amen.

Men in their blindness, endeavour to blot God out of their lives. Others in varying degrees level the divine attributes until God becomes to them little higher than a man. Some who stand in Christian pulpits, have reduced God below the measure, not only of earth's geniuses, but of that of ordinary men. They do not be-

lieve in God; and in their unbelief they seek to order the affairs of the world as though there were no God. "There is no fear of God before their eyes." They say, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?" They do not know His name, and therefore do not put their trust in Him. They are full of fuss and fretfulness because they do not believe that the Lord reigneth. They do not conceive of God as being on the throne, or of His being Almighty.

Human society everywhere is in a state of turbulence as though rocked with an earthquake; individual men the world over are groaning or shrieking their fears like the waves of the restless sea when whipped into fury by the gale. And it is to nations, and to men, who have forgotten Him that God says: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

### I.

**GOD IS THE GOD OF NATIONS.** He is the Judge of nations. He speaks to nations as well as to individual men, and He calls upon nations, as well as men, to be still and to know that He is God, and that He has determined upon His own glory, by the exercise of His own almighty power. He has sovereignly determined: "I" saith God "will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

In this Psalm *God is calling nations, as well as men, to see what He has done.* Hear His challenge: "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth." The teaching in the universities to-day and in our high schools, that is, the evolutionary hypothesis, obscures, if it does not obliterate the idea of God making of Him, at best, but a remote impersonal creative Impulse perpetuated in an automatic universe. But God, a personal, transcendent God is still in His world; He is over His world; He still orders and rules the affairs of the world: He is the Judge of nations still. Some there are, even amongst Christians, I am afraid, who confine God's judgments to the great day. They forget that as there is a future wrath so there is a present wrath. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." He is now judging in individual lives, and has done so since the dawn of creation. He is judging in individual families, and has done so ever since the first baby was born. He is judging nations, and has done so ever since the first king wore his crown, and ruled his subjects by his sceptre. It would be profitable therefore for us, in harmony with this text, to see what desolations God has wrought in the earth; and thus learn to accord Him His place as God of the world, and of the lives of men.

How solemn the reflection that *there were empires that have been so completely obliterated that they have been forgotten of men*, nations that have so entirely ceased to be that one can hardly find out anything about them? Why? Because they forgot God. Because they did not fear God. Because they did not give Him His place. God "uttered his voice", and "the earth melted." He spoke the word, and His enemies were blotted out of His world.

*Babylon!* Do you recall what God said about Babylon? I am not sure but that Babylon was the greatest empire—that the world's first empire was, in some real sense, the world's greatest empire. You remember that Daniel's interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar was, "Thou

art this head of gold". The rest of the image was silver, and brass, and iron, and clay. May we not have an intimation in that interpretation of the fact that Babylon was the greatest nation of all time, a mighty empire? It is said that it had walls three hundred and fifty feet high, and eighty-seven feet broad, pierced by a hundred brazen gates. Who would have thought it possible that Babylon should ever bow before a conqueror? How could such an empire be subdued? And yet when Babylon was in the heyday of her glory, God said: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there." One travelling in the east tried to get his Arab guide to go toward Babylon, but he would not go. The shepherds were afraid to go there. God said of Babylon, when it was in its glory, that Babylon should become "as heaps". And it has come to pass that Babylon at this time is "heaps" and nothing more—and the archaeologists are not quite sure of the "heaps" in all cases! There is no reason why Babylon should not be flourishing to-day, except that it forgot God; that it did not remember that He is God, and beside Him there is none else. "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth."

In similar fashion God judged *Nineveh and Tyre*. He said of Nineveh: "I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee, vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock." For many a long day the "abominable filth" had so covered up Nineveh that men could not discover its site. Now they have dug it up, and parts of it are set as "a gazingstock" in the British Museum at this very hour.

And Tyrus, great merchant city with its ships sailing the seas of the world, dominating the earth! God said: "They shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." One travelling in the east noticed the fishermen spreading their nets on the rock, and he enquired and found that it was on the site of ancient Tyrus—judged by Almighty God because it did not remember the truth of this text, that He is God, that He "will be exalted among the heathen", that He "will be exalted in the earth".

And *ancient Rome* went the way of other empires. We have the remains of it, but Rome has gone.

Some of you have been in Paris. When there some years ago, I saw, amongst other things, the tomb of Napoleon. It is marvellous. It is said that no nation in the world has been able to equal France in erecting fitting monuments to those whom it desires to honour. The tomb of Napoleon is one of the marvels of the world. It is laid in a kind of pit with a dozen angels of heroic size around the great casket, and in the middle where you cannot see the casket—the casket, of course, is within—there is a massive sarcophagus that is truly magnificent. It is not large, and yet it symbolizes the massiveness of the one whom it is intended to honour. In viewing that memorial one appraises the French appreciation of the mighty Napoleon, who bade fair at one time to conquer the earth—but he did not do so! You remember David's lament over Abner: "Died Abner as a fool dieth?" When one thinks of the life of Napoleon, one marvels how so great a genius could be so foolish as to write his plans, that might fall into the hands of the

enemy in a letter to his empress. The result was that the enemy was on his way to Paris while he was somewhere else. Napoleon at last came to his end. And standing by the tomb of Napoleon one remembers that though he had some appreciation of Christ, he had no regard for the God of heaven, and he died as all other conquerors died.

When in Germany some years ago I visited the Kaiser's palace in Berlin. I saw the place where the mob had broken into the palace, and smashed things up just before the Kaiser went away. I saw the balcony from which the Kaiser addressed the populace on the outbreak of war. I went through the palace, through the crown prince's rooms, and the other rooms of the palace. I stood in the grand ball-room where the Kaiser had stood underneath the canopy draped with red plush curtains such as I have never seen and never felt before. Such marvellous colour! Such marvellous texture! I went out to Potsdam, and to Sans Souci. I saw the historic mill, and the graves of the dogs of Frederick the Great, those graves which were within sight of the window of that lonely monarch that they might minister some cheer to him as he looked at the graves of his friends. I walked, and talked, and sat down in places that had been the meeting places of kings in other days. I went on Sunday, to the great church of the Kaiser, seating about four thousand people. There were several galleries. In one, a choir of two hundred voices, and other choirs; one for the members of the Reichstag; one for the other reigning houses of Germany; and one for the Kaiser's own family, with a throne-like chair, with the imperial arms, if you please, still above it. And as an evidence of the spirit of the man he had gone without exercising the grace or courtesy of waiting to receive me—he was away on holiday in Holland! As I sat there—it was the first Sunday after the election of Hindenberg—I meditated upon the sabre-rattling of other days; of the influence of this monarch, of his efforts to dominate the world, and I remembered that once again God had judged a monarch and had sent him into exile, from which, I suppose, he will never return.

Now we have another one, several of them in fact, one in Russia, one in Germany, another in Italy. Great men they are, but men who are forgetting God. They have not regarded the truth of this text: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

If Mussolini would only go out under the stars and spend a quiet moment, and remember that those stars look down upon Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome—and they have all gone! Notwithstanding, here is another man of boundless ambition who dreams of conquest, and perhaps of world domination. He is aping the Caesars, even to their scowl. He has made a little god of Napoleon, but he seems to forget that the scowl of the Caesars did not preserve their empires to them; nor did the genius of Napoleon enable him to conquer the last enemy, Death; nor save him in his lifetime from ultimate defeat. Why is it that men in their blindness will not read history, or reading history, will not learn that there is a God Who taketh vengeance?

"Far-called, our navies melt away;  
On dune and headland sinks the fire;  
Lo all our pomp of yesterday,  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!  
Lord God of hosts! Be with us yet!  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!"

Here is the solemn warning, and this message is for us as much as for anyone else: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

Read also the record, past and present, of *the Jewish people*. There is something about the fate of the Jewish race that does not appear in any other judgment which God has wrought in all the earth. I call your attention to the Jewish people, and to the Jewish land for a few moments. You remember that when Jesus went up over against Jerusalem, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" In the year A.D. seventy the armies of Titus encompassed that city, and, after a long and terrible siege, in which the Jewish people were reduced to cannibalism, as they had been in such sieges in other ages, at last the city was taken. A thousand crosses dotted the hillside, each with a writhing victim upon it. One million one hundred thousand Jewish people were put to the sword; the blood ran in rivers down the hill of Zion.

The Lord Jesus said: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Crusaders, Saracens, Romans, Turks, have trodden Jerusalem down, and not even to this day has Jerusalem been restored to the keeping of the people to whom it really belongs. And it will not be until God's hour strikes. In the meantime the Jewish people are a witness to the justice, to the holiness, to the faithfulness of God throughout all ages. It is written, "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Think of it! You cannot extirpate them. You cannot blot them out. No nation has succeeded in doing that. They go everywhere; they grow everywhere, and wherever they go, in spite of persecution, they prosper. Strange, is it not? And what a marvel! Do you know why Germany persecutes the Jews? It is half jealousy; perhaps it is all jealousy. One hundred chairs in the universities of Germany were occupied by Jews. Of the twenty-six hundred or so of lawyers in Berlin, the majority were Jews. Travel in Europe and you will observe some of the reasons for the jealousy of the Jew. If one travelled on the trains through Germany before the Hitler regime he would observe that the people who travelled in style, who had ample means, whose baggage was the envy of everyone else, and who were dressed to the limit of style and quality, were Jewish people.

One Saturday night I walked the streets of Lodz, a city in Poland, which is called the Manchester of Poland, a city of five hundred thousand people, and I saw what I venture to say can scarcely be duplicated in the world unless amongst the Jewish people. Can you imagine a composite of Beaconsfield, Gladstone, Asquith, and all the other statesmen of England who had particularly distinguished physiognomies, together with Washington, McKinley, and some others of like physical distinction? Combine with them a number in this country—there may be some here, I have not time to look at you!—Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Wilfrid Laurier—I name a representative from each party in order to escape criticism—and some of those who are leading in the affairs of the country just now! I say, imagine a composite of all these in their youth, and you will appreciate what I saw

on the streets of Lodz that Saturday night. I said to my companion, "Who are these men?" He quietly replied, "They are Jews."

You may see them everywhere; you may find them in Chicago, of the same type. In some of the stores in this city the same type of man will greet you as in Lodz, Chicago, or elsewhere.

When in Europe observe the orchestras in public places.

I always observe the orchestras to mark the number of Jews. In hotels, on shipboard, wherever you go, the Jews will be there. France is no exception. In Germany before Hitler came to power, the Jews were ubiquitous. In Poland, in Latvia, it is the same. In a store in Latvia I found the tailor was a Jew. In London the barber I "sat under" was a Jew. Travel in Wales, and perhaps the man in the compartment across from you will look up and say to you: "Vell, how is business?" Wherever you go the Jew will be there before you. Take the Irishman out of his country and he ceases to be an Irishman. And the Scotsman—well, no! but after a generation or so he ceases to be a Scotsman, and his speech becomes like that of the Canadian. As for the Englishman, he is easily adopted and absorbed by any country. Ere long even his speech will not betray him. But the Jew! The Jew! He is only a Jew always and everywhere. What is the explanation? It is the fulfilment of the word of the only God, Who said to the Jewish people, as He says to all nations: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." He said of the Jewish people—not of Christians, I beg you to notice: It may apply to us in principle, but it is said primarily of the Jewish people—"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord", witnesses to the faithfulness of His covenant promises. Has He promised a blessing? Then a blessing it shall be! Does Israel forsake the covenant? Does Israel go counter to God's law? then accursed it shall be! Does Israel reject God's own Son, and crucify Him, then the judgment of Almighty God shall rest upon that nation, for now for nineteen hundred long years blindness in part—not wholly—has happened unto Israel; blindness visited upon them because of the rejection of God's only Son, Who is the Light of the world.

I speak to you, my unbelieving friend. I want to introduce to you the Jew. I beg you to weigh this statement that if it had not been for the special judgment of God upon that race, the Jewish race must have dominated the earth at the present time. And were it not for God's special preservation, and His faithfulness to His covenant promises to Abraham, that race, because of its persecution, would have been blotted out of existence. In the Jew we have a demonstration of God's faithfulness to His eternal word. I ask you, If the Bible be not true, how will you explain the Jew?

## II.

Now then, HE COMMANDS US TO THINK OF HIM AS GOD. God is calling upon us, not only to see what desolations He has wrought in the earth, but to think of Him, to meditate upon Him, to think about Him as God. Oh, that men would be still! Oh, that they would be still long enough to meditate upon the Majesty on High! that they would think about Him.

There was a day when people meditated. But one wonders whether that time has not passed. People live now in a perpetual rush, hurrying hither and thither,

and not even pausing to think about God. "Mine eyes prevent the night watches", said David, "that I might meditate in thy word." "My meditation of him shall be sweet." Ah, yes! to know God means that your meditation of Him will be sweet! You who are Christians are not looking for judgment, but for blessing. Mourning because judgment must fall, you yet rejoice that even His judgments are an evidence of His faithfulness. But let us think of what He says about Himself! Let us think of how He has demonstrated His power in the salvation of His people. Recall the plagues of Egypt, and the Almighty God's bringing of His people out with an outstretched arm in the face of all their enemies! Remember the plagues of locusts, and flies, and of fire, and hail, and blood, and darkness? The rolling back of the sea! Behold the water gushing out of the rock! See our gracious God spreading a cloud for His people for protection by day, and going before them in a pillar of fire by night? How marvellously God wrought for His ancient people! How could such stupendous miracles ever be forgotten?

Surely we Christian people must be held responsible by and by for not searching into the deep things of God's word, and thereby discerning what a God we have. And that means the Old Testament as well as the New. See Him in the Old Testament days, marching forth for the salvation of His people on innumerable occasions, and hear His declaration as to His Godhead: "I AM hath sent me unto you." Think about what He says of Himself. He makes it clear that He is the Creator; that He is the Preserver; that He knows all things from the beginning to the eternal future. He has all power in heaven and on earth.

You and I would not live for one instant but for the special preserving care of God. Scientists tell us that the mean temperature of the earth is so nicely adjusted that if it should change by only two degrees, the glaciers would melt and the great cities of the world would be blotted out. By two degrees! God preserves us in life. Our breath is in His hands at every movement of the wind: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." He says: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." He declares the end from the beginning. He calls the things that are not as though they were. He magnifies the foolish things, and brings to nought all human wisdom by the exercise of His power even through the weakest of human instrumentalities. God speaks to men in the stars: "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all."

Can you take, unbeliever—or you Christian either—even a glass of cold water and drink it and not think of God? Can you behold the glory of the flowers, the beauty of the woods at this season, touched by the hand of God, and not remember the Majesty on High? I exhort you to remember that "He is God, there is none else beside him." "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

And all that is said of God, is true also of Jesus Christ: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,

whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things hold together"—including this building, including our bodies, including the union of our spirits and our bodies. We live by the favour of God, and by His longsuffering mercy.

### III.

And now I would direct your attention to this fact, that **THE WHOLE GOSPEL PLAN, THE WHOLE SCHEME OF SALVATION HAS BEEN FORMULATED IN HARMONY WITH THE TRUTH OF THIS TEXT:** that He is God, and that His name shall be known: He will be exalted among the heathen. He will be exalted in the earth.

You cannot be saved by any plan or principle which you may evolve, and by means of which you imagine you will get some glory. You can be saved only in harmony with the principle of the absolute supremacy of the Most High; for the eternal God has engaged all His power to see that He in all things shall be glorified: "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another."

The fact that some of you are not saved to-night is not on account of intellectual difficulties. You flatter yourselves, some of you; that your mind is so much superior to the mental calibre of common men that only some special scheme of salvation designed for your particular benefit, and by which you may maintain your pride in your mental and moral stature, and which will therefore commend itself to your reason, can avail. Possibly you are looking down—for I know that is very common in this day—upon people, like the majority in this place, who are simple enough, and foolish enough, like Abraham to believe God. You think you are wiser than they. But the word of God says that He has made foolish the wisdom of men, and that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

And further: Be not offended when I frankly tell you that behind the imaginary intellectual superiority which makes you reluctant to accept the gospel of God's grace, is a stubborn heart and will. The only reason for your being unsaved is that you are unwilling to come into harmony with the truth of this text; and to recognize and acknowledge the divine preeminence. As soon as you are willing to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, as soon as you are willing to worship God, as God, if you do not know the way of salvation, God will in His mercy make it known to you.

Cornelius prayed to God always, and gave much alms. But he did not know the way of salvation. A revelation was given him. He sent for one Peter who came and told him words by which he and his house should be saved. And there was another revelation to Peter, to which Peter responded, and came and preached the gospel of salvation, and the Holy Ghost fell on them, and the whole household believed, and were baptized. But notice this fact: notwithstanding his blindness, and his ignorance, Cornelius "feared God". Then the knowledge of salvation came to him. On the other hand, one may know, in the abstract, that all men are sinners; that there is a God Who taketh vengeance; that God will be just if He condemns the sinner; that Jesus Christ, God's only Son, Son of man, and Son of God, came in the fulness of time, bore in His own body our sins upon the tree; died the Just for the unjust that He might bring

us to God—you may assent to all that; you may be in intellectual agreement with it all, and yet miss the priceless gift of eternal life, unless you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and thus come into harmony with the truth of this text, and in all your glorying, glory in the Lord. And when the story shall have been finally told, when the last sermon shall have been preached, when the last sinner shall have repented and believed, when the number of His elect shall be accomplished, and the Lord shall have taken His redeemed to glory—when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, this will be the theme of their mighty chorus, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

Our Lord Jesus said: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." You may be saved, saved to all eternity if you will only humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.

Do you delight to hear the praises of the Lord Jesus? Is your soul thrilled when you contemplate the time that is coming when all creatures in heaven and in earth, and under the earth shall sing praises unto Him? Is it agreeable to you that the Scripture says that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"? Does that please you, or are you jealous of it, and not willing that He shall have the glory? What saith your heart, man? Can you rejoice that there is but one God? Salvation will come when you do. God forbid that this scripture should find fulfilment in your case: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God."

You young men and women, and older men and women, have had some knowledge of God's Word in the past. But you have rejected it. You have seen that word effective in other lives. You have seen lives transformed thereby. You know it to be true; and even yet you have not repented. And because you have not repented, of course, you are in darkness. You cannot believe. Let me read the word of the Lord Jesus Himself in proof of that fact: "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." There is something deeper than belief, you see. Are you willing to let God have His way? Are you willing to get right with God? I do not know when the Lord is coming, but suppose He were to come to-night, are you ready to meet Him? I do not know when I am going to die, nor do you know, but suppose this should be the hour, are you ready for the hour? Are you ready to close your eyes to the light, and go out to meet God? Will you not flee from the wrath to come? And there is only one place to flee.

Nineteen hundred years ago there was a Man on a lonely hill outside Jerusalem, Who was nailed to a cross. I don't quite know how they did it, but they nailed Him to a cross. They drove nails through His hands, and through His feet, and He hung there suspended between earth and heaven. And there came a darkness over all the earth for some hours. Then that Man cried, and said: "It is finished!" and He gave up the ghost. They buried Him; and the third day they went to the tomb

and found it empty. As they went out they met this Man walking along the road. Later some of His followers had gathered in a house there upstairs. The door was shut "for fear of the Jews". Suddenly, there was no footfall upon the stairs, no turning of the handle of the door,—but suddenly Jesus stood in the midst of them, and He said: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." He was with them for a little while, and then He went out. And one day when His disciples were with Him He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and as He did so they watched Him, and it seemed as though He were ascending. They watched more carefully, and they said: "He is going away. This is the thing He told us about." And He went away. "A cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Then these men went away, and they waited, and there came a day when "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." That day there were three thousand people converted. And that story went throughout the earth, and that is why you are here to-night. If you are converted, that is the reason. That is why I have been speaking to-night. It is because He died and lives again that you were saved.

The death, and resurrection, and ascension, and crowning, and the final glory of Christ are in harmony with this text. It must be so. God is God, and "commandeth all men everywhere to repent" and believe on His Son, and by the grace and power of His Spirit to acknowledge Him to be the Lord.

What will you do about it? How many are there here to-night who have accepted Jesus Christ? You set your seal to the fact that the Book is true. You know you are saved. If death should call you, or if the Lord should come to-night, it is all right with you. He has taken away from you the fear of death. How many are there? Will you raise your hands in testimony, simply to help any here who perhaps are not saved? I do not want to put you in an awkward position, but how many are there here who have repented and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? who know you have eternal life? who know you are saved—well, because you were there when it happened, and because God's Word tells you so? How many will raise their hands in silent testimony to the power of the saving Christ to-night. (*A forest of hands upraised*).

If there is an unbeliever here to-night, you have nothing whereby to justify your unbelief. You are in rebellion against God. You have no right to live on the earth another day without God. You have no right to engage in any business transaction. You have no right to go to school. You have no right to eat another meal, to transact anything on earth until you have accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Will you do it to-night?

O God, help us to come to Thee to-night. Why not, Oh, why not now?

## THE BEGINNING OF THE SIN OF JEROBOAM THE SON OF NEBAT

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
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(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: I Kings, chapter 12:25-33.

Deuteronomy, chapter 12:1-12.

I have visited, on several occasions, a few of the great art galleries of the world, and have observed here and there art students, each with his easel, endeavouring to copy some great picture, the work of one of the great masters. I have seen such pictures in different stages of production, some of them when nearing completion, but almost invariably there was a manifest difference between the original and the copy. Once, when going through the Palace of Versailles, a guide showed us a number of pictures by the great masters. Later we went into a great room decorated with war scenes. The guide said: "Until now I have been showing you pictures by the masters. I will show you now pictures by the meters"—by the yard. There was a great difference between the pictures by the masters, and the pictures by the meters.

To anyone of spiritual discernment there must always appear a vast difference between the Word of God, and any imitation of it, any paraphrase of it. This Book is the work of the Master. The Bible is written in pregnant speech. The words of God, like the works of God, will always be found to be manifold. There is a meaning within a meaning, and it is never safe to assume that you have become so familiar with any portion of Scripture as to have exhausted all its meaning. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?" That well must have been a long time in use, but there was still plenty of water within it. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation". The word of the Lord is as a well: "Spring up, O well"! You can never empty it; you may come to it again and again. It is as "the river of God, which is full of water", and as the trees of the Lord which "are full of sap".

The chapter before us this evening is not only one of great interest, but it is peculiarly condensed. It is an anticipation of history. There are packed into its few words principles which unfold through all the subsequent history of the kingdom of Israel, and which, I venture to believe, are still bearing fruit.

We saw last week how Rehoboam in his folly accepted the counsel of the young and inexperienced men who had grown up with him, and returned an insolent, almost an insane, answer to those of his subjects who came with courtesy, and with much moderation, asking for reform. He not only denied them their request, but promised that the evils against which they complained would be multiplied during his reign, and that they might entertain no hope whatever of relief from their burdens. The result of that foolish answer was that the kingdom was split, Ahijah's prophecy was fulfilled; and Jeroboam, the man of special industry, whom Solomon had promoted, found himself carried on a wave of popularity to the throne of the new kingdom.

Jeroboam became the first of Israel's kings. Hereafter we shall find always two kingdoms, the northern kingdom of Israel with its capital in Samaria; and the kingdom of Judah with its capital still the holy city of Jerusalem. The kingdom of Israel is known frequently by the names of Samaria or Ephraim.

## I.

WE SHALL EXAMINE THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF JEROBOAM, THE NEW KING. When he had built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and made for himself a dwelling place, he surveyed the political situation. I venture to think that this chapter would be exceedingly useful, had they the spiritual discernment to see the great principles involved, to almost all our political leaders, and to all who aspire to any place in a country's government, as well as to all who would lead, religiously, in our day.

*Jeroboam is faced with a divine requirement, which, according to his judgment, is likely to bring him into great difficulty, and almost immediately to alienate the sympathies of the people of the new kingdom from him, for it was according to law that the tribes went up to Jerusalem annually.*

I read to you this evening (Deuteronomy 12:1-14) the regulation laid down by Moses when he said, in effect: "You are a pilgrim people. You have been journeying through the wilderness. You have had no settled place of abode, and so the Lord has dwelt in a tabernacle, and all arrangements have been made for its rapid transfer from one place to another. But when you shall come to the land which the Lord has promised you, you shall destroy the symbols of all false religions. You shall destroy their temples, and their altars, and break down their high places, and make an end of idolatry. When you get there the Lord will choose a particular place, and in that place He will set His name, and when the Lord has made choice of such a place, and has established a national shrine, a centre of national worship, you shall no longer do whatsoever is right in every man's eyes: but you shall do as the Lord shall command. You shall keep the law of God, and you shall come up to the place of divine appointment."

"Now", said Jeroboam, "these people have been accustomed to going to Jerusalem. Just now they are in rather bad humour. They are angered by Rehoboam's answer. But if they go up to Jerusalem and get back to that city which is so full of holy and happy memories of the past, they will soon forget their antagonism toward Rehoboam, and their affections will be weaned away from me, and they will make Rehoboam their king, and I shall suffer death at their hands. Their going up to Jerusalem is a divine requirement; but if they do what God requires them to do, I shall be in a very bad way."

Many a man has found himself in a situation like that, when, to the carnal judgment, and with the short perspective of the finite mind, it appeared that obedience to the divine law, to principles of divine revelation, were bound to react to his disadvantage. It does not always appear to be profitable to do the will of God. If honesty were not only the best policy, if it were always manifestly so, there would be no thieves. If it were always apparent that untruthfulness never pays, and that wisdom is always involved in the truth, no one would be deceptive. It is because that to our poor, distorted, judgments it so frequently appears the paths of righteousness are not paths of peace, men turn away from them.

You have only to think of the varied relationships of life to remind yourselves that in business transactions, in social relations, in the domestic sphere, and even in our religious undertakings, it is not unusual for that which is plainly and unmistakably required by the Word of God, to appear to our judgment almost impossible of obedience. "Why, if I take that course, I shall be ruined!"

A young man is required by his employer to do something that is not strictly honest. He says: "I do not want to do it, but it is as much as my job is worth to refuse." Many things are being said to-day in political circles. They do not call each other liars exactly, but that is what they mean, and they might just as well say it. Why all this? Because men imagine some advantage will accrue to them by being a little politic, and here and there compromising with principle.

What was the divine requirement in the case before us? First of all, a *particular place of worship*. You remember that even in the days when our Lord was upon the earth, the Samaritan woman raised that question of location—whether in Jerusalem or on mount Gerizim were the proper place to worship. It was the old question which Jeroboam had raised. It originated in this chapter. What does location matter? It is not important; save that behind it was the principle of a divine choice. Whatever be the reason, God had so ordained that the tribes should go up to Jerusalem.

We are accustomed to boast of our intelligence, and of our right to know something of the philosophy of things, the why of a divine command. I grant you that the revelation of God puts no premium upon ignorance; nor does it ever require us under any circumstances, to stultify our reason. But our course is determined for the greater part of the time without reason, for most of the things we do we do because we must, and without knowing why we must. You accommodate yourselves to the weather. You accommodate yourselves to many laws which have to do with physical health, when you do not know why. We find ourselves doing a great many things because we have come to recognize that there are certain laws in operation, and it is wisdom to obey them, whether we understand why they are in operation or not.

I remember reading years ago a sermon by Dr. Joseph Parker, as I recall on the text, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." Dr. Parker insisted the text involved an inexorable law. Then he assumed some man to object to the justice of it, saying, "I do not believe in that." Then Dr. Parker said something to this effect—I do not recall his exact words, but only the substance: "Very well, you don't believe it. I ask you, Is it a fact? Are the iniquities of the fathers visited upon the children?" "Oh, yes." "Then, be sensible, and accommodate yourself to the fact, even though you cannot understand it." That was the voice of wisdom.

There are a thousand facts of life to which we have to accommodate ourselves, which we do not understand. Is it to be assumed that every divine requirement in its ultimate purpose can be accurately appraised by these finite minds? In the very nature of the case we must be required sometime to exercise faith, and to yield obedience to that which is manifestly of God, even though we do not understand it. The point is this: whatever the reason for it, the will of God had decreed in that stage of Israel's history that a certain place was His choice whither the tribes should go up. And Jeroboam

was face to face with that fact—an item of divine ordering.

It is amazing how *Holy Scripture anticipates the exigencies of life, and prepares for situations long in advance of their arrival.* For instance, Moses said: "Now every man does whatsoever is right in his own eyes, and God permits it in this pilgrim stage. But then ye shall not do it. You shall not substitute your wisdom for the wisdom of God, but you shall do exactly what the word of God prescribes."

It is of no profit, let me interject, to study this merely as a record of history, unless we see in it principles which are still operative, or principles which flowing from that are determining human character and destiny to-day. I am convinced that we can never be safe as Christians until we come to that place of assurance respecting the Word of God where we know, as the New Testament tells us we may: "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you"; "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." There are some things which a man or woman, who is born again, knows, and knows to be irrefutable, settled truth. Just as surely as a child instinctively knows its mother, so a true believer has imparted to him at the time of his birth a divine instinct. Not that that instinct must not be regulated objectively by divine authority, do not misunderstand; but there are some things which a true Christian knows. Sometimes we smile at the habit of certain women—I think men are equally as bad sometimes, or as good. Which is it? You ask a woman sometimes for the reason for her attitude respecting certain matters, and she answers: "Because",—the reason understood, unstated!

I think both the Old and New Testaments teach that there is a place in the renewed nature of man for that principle, that intuition, that divine instinct, that something which comes to us when the Good Shepherd calls: "My sheep hear my voice",—they know it; they recognize it—"a stranger will they not follow". There is not a Christian here this evening who has not at some time faced a sudden emergency, when you had no time to think; you had no time to reason, but like a flash you said: "It is wrong." How did you know? There was something within you that rebelled against it; it was wrong! On other occasions perhaps something has come to you, and a course has flashed into your mind, and you knew instinctively it was right. For example, a Christian does not need to argue as to whether it is right to pay his debts; as to whether it is right to tell the truth, and all the rest of it. There are a thousand things that we know because we are saved. Now I say, it is not until our minds are given that settled attitude toward eternal principles of truth and righteousness that we can be safe, because until then we must always be disposed to consult with ourselves, and indisposed to accept what God says, simply because God says it. And one can never be safe until that mental attitude toward the divine is acquired, because there will always be sinister voices whispering: "Is there not an easier way?" If we trust to the judgment of the carnal mind we shall certainly be entrapped, even as was Jeroboam.

That applies to individual life. We shall be tempted to substitute something else for what God has said. Think of that! There is a course which that inner voice attests to be right, which is corroborated by the objective authority of Scripture, and the man knows

that a voice from above speaking in the Book, and speaking by the Spirit to his heart has said: "This is the way, walk ye in it." Will he do it, or will he say: "That is the objective, but is there not a detour? I think I can reach it just the same by going around." How often may it so appear even in our religious life, in our relation to other believers in church life!

I remember a church some years ago that was made up of Highlanders. There were two tribes in the church, two clans, and their histories went back across the sea. They got across with each other for some reason, and it seemed impossible to bring them together. One of them talked to his pastor one day about the difficulties, and what a terrible man So-and-So was. "Well now", the Pastor said: "Mr. So-and-So, do you believe the Bible?" "Oh, yes, Pastor, I believe the Bible." "Well, take that regulation, for instance, in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew: 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.' Now, you just go to see this offending brother. Why not?" "Well, you know, Pastor, I just wonder"—and he was a deacon of the church—"if the Lord took people like these into account when He said that." What was he doing? Only looking for some other than God's way. That is always our disposition.

Here is a bit of the Oxford Group. You did not know that the Oxford Group was in the Old Testament did you? But the human mind has always been the same, and the constitution of the human mind does not change. Jeroboam, beyond doubt, knew that it was written in the law that the tribes should go up to Jerusalem. He knew that, and he was afraid of it. So Jeroboam had his "quiet time", and he pondered in his heart, he "said in his heart".

If you sit down with yourself you can think almost anything, if you sit long enough. You can persuade yourself of almost anything if you ponder things in your heart, and nothing more, for "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Men are all—except ourselves!—extremely selfish. We are not, are we? No, no! but everyone else is! The fact of the matter is, we are all selfish. Unless grace triumphs in our case, and only in the measure in which it does triumph, the ruling principle of most people is, The greatest good to the greatest number—and the greatest number is always number one. And they live for that. Therefore, because of that, it is a dangerous practice to begin thinking things through of yourself without anyone to help you. Jeroboam "said in his heart".

Where did all these troubles he anticipated originate? In his heart. Nobody ever said that the tribes were likely to become disaffected by going up to Jerusalem. He might have left that matter to the Lord. But of himself, and with no one else to counsel him, he said, "I am sure that if they do as the law requires, I shall lose my kingdom."

I warn you students against a certain sort of cant that is most objectionable. There are certain very pious people who have a habit of saying, "I have prayed about it." I have had a good many people come to tell me that they have prayed. You may think I am irreverent, but I have told some that they did not need to pray on the subject. No inquiry was necessary. You have heard of the minister who was called to a certain church, and when his little boy was asked if his father were going to accept the call he said he did not know, that his father was in the study praying about it, but his



mother was upstairs packing up. Well, sometimes you get father and mother in one.

Let us be honest with ourselves. Let me ask you something: Do you always pray when you think you are praying? Do you always really pray when in the attitude, in the posture of prayer, and when saying words that imply that they are intended as a prayer? Or, are you something like the little boy or girl with a toy telephone, having a merry time with themselves saying, "Hello", and making up a conversation with no one listening? This question and answer will originate in the same mind. Let me ask you another question. Did you ever go to sleep when you were praying? I have, literally. I wakened up one morning about six o'clock, on my knees. I had not been to bed all night. I was very tired, and I knelt to pray, and while I was praying I went to sleep, and there I stayed until six o'clock in the morning. I am afraid I ceased praying before I fell asleep.

I knew a very pious woman who tried to keep up with a very godly husband. He was godly; she was pious;—there is a distinction. She related in a certain company, of which I was a member, a very harrowing experience she had had on shipboard crossing one of the lakes. The ship was in a terrible state, apparently, and she did not know how she could have endured it if it had not been that she knew that her husband in his cabin was praying for her. He looked at her for a moment, then said: "I was not praying for you: I was fast asleep"!

What a lot of cant people talk, and especially those who are determined to have their own way. They come to you and say: "Now, no argument. I have prayed." And very likely they had sat down like Jeroboam and turned things over in their own heart. You have heard of the preacher of whom it was said that "The Rev. Dr. So-and-So delivered the most eloquent prayer that was ever delivered to a Boston audience." I suppose it was delivered to a *Boston* audience! Solomon said: "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive."

I am pointing out to you that subjectivism, turning things over in your mind until you have reached the conclusion that certain things are right, may be of the devil. The Lord may have nothing to do with it. I have known many people who assumed they have the mind of God because they had prayed. But it does not necessarily follow. The law of God was there. In order to bring it up to our day, let me put it in this way: Jeroboam knew exactly what the Scripture taught. He did not need to pray; he needed only to obey. And his turning these things over in his mind was only a subterfuge, a way of discovering some way to avoid the course of obedience, which is the only safe one.

There are people who boast of praying all night. Have you ever been at an all-night prayer meeting? I have. There may be times when we ought to pray a great deal, and a long time, if we have many things to pray for. But there is no use telling the Lord things more than once. We are not heard for our much speaking. I remember somewhere Mr. Spurgeon said he had heard some of his brethren talk about praying all night, but for himself, he said, he had found no necessity for it. Perhaps he was right. At all events when we have presented our case before the Lord we may surely safely leave it there, and take Him at His word, and assume there remains nothing for us to do but obey.

My reason for thus speaking is that so-called extended

prayer very often becomes an extended argument with oneself. I have heard many men argue in their prayers until they had evidently succeeded in convincing themselves of the rightness of their petition whereupon they proceeded to challenge God to do so-and-so. But that is not prayer. That principle inheres in many types of emotional religion: but it is very dangerous.

## II.

Do you not see JEROBOAM'S MISTAKE? There was the plain requirement of the word of God, but he would take anything but that. What did he do? *He provided a substitute.* If you go to a druggist and ask for a certain article he may say, "I am sorry but I have not that article. I have something that is just as good." And usually that which is "just as good" is his own make. It is "just as good" because he makes it, and it provides a larger profit. That is nothing new. The devil has always been offering substitutes for that which the law requires. So did Jeroboam. He made two calves of gold, and set one in Dan in the north, and the other in Bethel in the south, and he said: "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

Beware of the disposition to find a substitute for what God commands. *Let it be an established principle with you that there cannot possibly be anything just as good as that which has the divine trademark on it,* and whenever you are offered something else in place of that, refuse it. Whether it be a form substituted for what the Bible teaches, baptism, or some new doctrine that is propounded to you, whatever it is, look for the hallmark, the trademark, saying, "I want to know is this scriptural?"

I came upon a statement quite recently in answer to someone who had objected to the teaching of Mr. Darby, the founder of the Brethren. The reply was: That a man so holy as Mr. Darby could not possibly have accepted anything that was not of God. Beware of accepting anything that stands between you and Headquarters. Demand the trademark on whatever you accept, and especially on anything you get from this platform, particularly you students. Accept the teaching of no man unless and until you are sure it is supported by the authority of Scripture. Demand a "Thus saith the Lord" for every man's teaching; and accept no substitutes for that which is divinely enjoined.

*Jeroboam devised an easier religion.* That thing is always easier to apply, or it is cheaper, or it is a little bit better. He said: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Get a church nearer where you live." Those principles of yours! It is too much! "Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself." That is always the popular appeal. But mark you this: the religion which Jeroboam offered in substitution for that which was divinely enjoined *is specifically said to have been devised in his own heart,* exactly the opposite of what Moses by divine warrant enjoined. Moses said: "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes." But Jeroboam's religion was "devised of his own heart." If modern religions, so-called, were brought to the standard of the divine revelation, how much we should find men have devised after their own heart. And that is why we need always to come to the law and to the testimony lest we be led off into a detour.

## III.

There is so much in this chapter that I have not time to say what I wanted to say. I must be content to NAME THE PRINCIPLES and ask you to work them out, and we shall see in our subsequent studies how the seed of Jeroboam's work bore fruit at last in the nation's life. It is said here: "This thing became a sin", and we read subsequently "of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel to sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger."

No man can sin without making someone else sin: whoever breaks one of the least of Christ's commandments, must, by so doing "teach men so." We lead others in the direction in which we walk ourselves, as by a shortcut across the corner of the lawn. One takes the first step, and others follow, until at length there is a beaten track. Jeroboam led the way, thinking he was very wise. And through all Israel's subsequent history his successors "walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat," and of some it is said, "They departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin, but he walked therein."

And what else did he do? *He substituted human wisdom for divine revelation.* He substituted the product of his own mind for the product of the mind of God. That is the sin of our day. Not what God has said, but what men have thought! Jeroboam attempted to clothe a mere experiment with historical authority. Mark that principle! Of these calves of gold he said: "Behold thy gods"—What else?—"which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." He tried to link this new idolatrous religion with the historical record of divine deliverance and miraculous power.

There is scarcely a modern Jeroboam who offers you his new religion to-day who does not try to clothe it with historical authority. Every faddist endeavours to invoke the authority of Jesus Christ for his fad. Would-be reformers of all sorts pervert history and Holy Scripture, in an endeavour to clothe their theory with the authority of a great Name. In THE GOSPEL WITNESS of last week I quoted Professor Marshall. On the floor of the Convention he took a volume of Spurgeon and quoted a few lines from one of Spurgeon's sermons on the atonement, and, amid great applause, he said: "That is my position. I stand with C. H. Spurgeon." There never was a greater untruth told in the world. In the same sermon Spurgeon teaches the very opposite of Professor Marshall's view of the atonement. It is ever the way of the errorist to invoke the authority of some great name to give their vagaries sanction. They say, Spurgeon said this, or Moody said the other. These calves did not bring Israel up out of the land of Egypt. Nor did Jeroboam mean that they did: he meant: They are but representative, they are the symbols of the God Who did it; and they will be good enough for us. Beware of even the smallest departure from principle.

Jeroboam *subordinated principle to policy.* Ministers have said to me: "I know what I ought to do, but—but—don't you think—?" What they ought to say is: "What ought to be must be, and shall be, so far as I am concerned, if the heavens fall. And if I fall I must fall, but I would rather go down to temporary defeat in the cause of righteousness, fighting with clean hands, than win unrighteously." It is no disgrace to lose if you have fought in a righteous cause with clean hands.

He also *subordinated future security to temporal advantage.* "Jeroboam, don't you know that you are

making a break in the dam, that by and by the flood must come?" "Not in my day," he would have said, "I think that will do for my day." Men sometimes say, "That will last as long as I need it. It will last long enough to serve my convenience. So long as it profits me, I shall not trouble about the future." He thought nothing of the security of the kingdom for his successor. He said: "For the present this expedient will avert disaster. It will keep the people away from Jerusalem, and it will bind them to me."

Let me now for a moment anticipate our future studies so that you can see the last chapter of our history from the beginning, by telling you this: when centuries have unrolled, and every succeeding king of Israel, without one exception, has walked in the ways of Jeroboam; and when at last the nation that has turned its back upon God is brought to utter ruin, the prophet says: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."

That scripture, by the way, is almost always misinterpreted. It does not mean that God is going to let Ephraim alone. That is the great Physician's quarantine order. It is a divine injunction to separate from people who have the plague. The Lord said to Judah: "Ephraim is joined to idols. He has the plague. It has infected the whole nation. Let him alone. Keep out of bad company, lest you get it too." That is the justification for people who believe the Book separating themselves from people who do not. Let them alone; do not be corrupted by them. And when at last the prophet, looking a little further, saw the temple destroyed, the land in the hands of the enemy, the king and the princes carried away captives, and the land trodden down, and become the habitation of wild beasts, he cries: "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off."

It did not pay. It never pays. It always means ruin to depart from the ways of God. It may develop slowly. It may seem profitable for the present, but in the end "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth"—whatsoever a nation soweth—"that shall he"—shall it—"also"—ultimately—"reap". If we substitute anything for God and His word, we shall find that our calf will cast us off. On the other hand, there is One Who says: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Let us cling to Him.

For our closing hymn we shall sing,

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!  
What more can He say, than to you He hath said—  
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"

"The soul, that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not—I will not, desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,  
I'll never—no, never—no, never forsake!"

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## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 44

Fourth Quarter

November 3rd, 1935

### WISE AND FOOLISH SPEECH

Lesson Text: Proverbs, chapters 17 to 19.

**Golden Text:** "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—Prov. 18:24.

**Bible School Reading:** Proverbs 17:1-28.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS:** Monday—Ex. 23:1-8; Tuesday—Lev. 19:11-19; Wednesday—Dan. 1:8-17; Thursday—Mark 4:21-29; Friday—John 15:14-20; Saturday—Heb. 6:11-20.

#### CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The proverbs of this chapter relate, in the main, to quietness and its blessing, the wise servant and his reward, divine testing, the attitude of the liar and the mocker (vs. 1-5), the crown of old men, speech and its significance, the effect of a gift, the attitude of love (vs. 6-9), the wise and the foolish in the presence of reproof and strife (vs. 10-16), the attitude of a friend, the man void of understanding, the lover of strife, the merry heart, and the broken spirit; bribery, the man of understanding, and the control of the tongue (vs. 17-28).

Several of these proverbs may be referred to specially. First, that relating to quietness, as opposed to strife. "Better is a morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife." Note the supremacy of the spiritual over the physical; and the blessedness of peace, with its implication of righteousness of heart and life, and its opportunity for meditation. Second, the reward of the wise servant, who "shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren." This implies recognition of faithfulness, and enlarged opportunity for service. Observe the necessity for faithfulness on the part of servants (I. Cor. 4:2). Third, divine testing: "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts." Note the purpose of testing, and the manner of it (I. Peter 1:7). Fourth, the attitude of the true friend, covering a transgression, and loving at all times (vs. 9, 17). A true friend always seeks the highest welfare of the other, aids in overcoming weaknesses, and stands by in times of distress. His attitude is characterized by love, unselfish purpose, self-sacrifice, reliability, and kindly consideration. Fifth, contention: "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with." The child of God is enjoined to live peaceably with all men as far as possible (Rom. 12:18). Note the dangers of contention, in the spreading of it as rolling waters. It is the wise person who minds his own business, and meddles not with the affairs of others. There are times when contention is forced upon one in defence of the gospel (Jude 3). Thus the line of duty bids one stand his ground despite consequences (Acts 5:29). Sixth, the blessing of a merry heart. It "doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones." This intimates the influence of the spirit over the physical being. And, seventh, the control of the tongue. A wise man uses few words. How may we live wisely in all things?

#### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The proverbs of this chapter relate to selfish gratification (v. 1) the attitude of the fool (vs. 2, 6, 7), the tongue (vs. 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 21), the wrong attitude toward the wicked, slothful, the name of the Lord, wealth, the heart of man (vs. 5-15), the gifted person, the necessity for hearing both sides of a question, the power of the lot, the offended brother,

marriage, the attitude of poor and rich, and friendliness (vs. 16-24).

It is of significance to note the frequent references to the tongue in these proverbs; wisdom being indicated by its proper control; and foolishness by lack of control. The power of the tongue is emphasized throughout. Several things are found in this chapter respecting this small but busy member: "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook." This indicates the continuous beneficial nature of wise speech. Foolish speech, on the other hand, brings contention and destruction. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of our being; or, they are "as sweet morsels" which men gladly swallow. It is surely an evidence of man's fallen nature that he so readily gives ear to the whisperer of evil tales. The result of hasty speech is then pointed out: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly, and shame unto him." Such speech betrays thoughtlessness and self-conceit; and is deserving of rebuke. The power of the tongue for good or evil is emphasized, together with an intimation of the reaction thereof. Observe in this the nature, use, misuse, and power of the tongue. In connection with individual security, an interesting contrast is instituted between the strong tower of the righteous in the Lord; and the strong city of the rich: in his wealth. It is quite evident which is the stronger of the two, even for the affairs of this life, and there is only one which is effective in eternity. Note the real safety of the righteous, together with the communion and satisfaction resulting from his position, in contrast with the insecurity and folly of the rich. Wealth is powerful, and may be used in the service of God, but it is futile to trust in it, as it cannot give satisfaction, or save from the power or penalty of sin. The last proverb of the chapter deals with friendship: "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." The "Friend of sinners" is the One intimated in the latter part of the proverb. Note our Lord's attitude toward sinners, as made known in Scripture (Matt. 9:10, 13; Mark 2:17); and in experience. He is the Friend in need, therefore the Friend indeed; ever near, able, dependable, faithful, loving, and loyal. How may we show our gratitude to this Friend of friends?

#### CHAPTER NINETEEN

The proverbs of this chapter relate to integrity, knowledge, wealth, false witness, gifts, poverty, wisdom (vs. 1-9), anger, the foolish son, the inheritance of fathers, slothfulness, the commandment (vs. 10-16), the poor, chastening, counsel, the fear of the Lord, the scorner, the undutiful son, and the ugly witness (vs. 17-29).

Our Lord has informed us we would have the poor always with us (Matt. 26:11), and it is remarkable the number of references to them in proverbs: "Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool." Poverty is not a sin, and it is possible for the poor to live well-pleasing to God: "A poor man is better than a liar." And God takes special note of those who help such an one (v. 17). Any help given to man for the Lord's sake will, in due time, receive its reward (Matt. 25:33-40). Note the necessity for cultivating the habit of helpfulness. The foolishness of a man in departing from God is emphasized: he "perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord". He has gone in his own way (Is. 53:6), esteeming it to be right in his own eyes, but travelling all the time toward destruction. False witnessing receives strong condemnation throughout the book: "A false witness shall not go unpunished." God takes note of the words of men, and judgment will be meted out later in accordance with their words and deeds (Matt. 12:37; Rev. 20:12). Some interesting things are stated respecting anger. The prudence of a man defers it (v. 11). This implies self-control. Much harm has been done through the hasty word. Rather, as here, there should be the forgiving spirit. "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion." Due to his exalted position, and bespeaking the necessity for submission thereto, as unto constituted authority (Rom. 13:1-7). And kindness is lost upon the ill-natured person, "for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again". Slothfulness, as in previous lessons, receives condemnation. The slothful one "shall suffer hunger." We reap in accordance with the way in which we sow (Gal. 6:7). Note may also be made of the benefit of chastening, and of the need for it. How may we live the self-controlled, godly, helpful, life?

## UNION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC

### EIGHTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

to be held in

JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, TORONTO

October 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, 1935

#### SPECIAL SPEAKER

DR. W. H. HOUGHTON, President Moody Bible Institute

#### PROGRAMME

##### PRE-CONVENTION MEETINGS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21st, 1935

2.00 p.m.—Meeting of the Executive Board of the Union.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22nd, 1935

11.00 a.m.—Registration of Messengers.

Allocation of Messengers to Billets.

2.30 p.m.—Inspirational Conference in charge of Rev. P. B. Loney.

ADDRESS: "The Place of Prayer in Christian Life and Service"—Rev. John Byers.

Followed by Conference and a time of prayer and intercession.

##### TUESDAY EVENING

###### FIRST SESSION

7.30 p.m.—Prayer and Praise Service led by Rev. M. B. Gillion, Bobcaygeon, Ont.

8.00 p.m.—Opening of Convention, Rev. Alex. Thomson, President.

Adoption of Tentative Constitution.

Appointment of Committee on Nominations.

Reception of New Pastors and Churches.

ADDRESS: Rev. Alex. Thomson, President of the Convention.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23rd

###### Morning

##### SECOND CONVENTION SESSION

9.30 a.m.—Prayer and Praise Service led by Pastor A. J. Burnham, Galt.

10.00 a.m.—Rev. Alex. Thomson, President, presiding.

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

11.30 a.m.—Home Mission Address—Pastor Chas. Hardie, St. Amedee.

###### Afternoon

##### THIRD CONVENTION SESSION

2.00 p.m.—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Rev. Bernard Jeffery, Long Branch, Ont.

2.30 p.m.—Rev. P. B. Loney, Vice-President, presiding.

Foreign Missions: Rev. and Mrs. Edward Hancox, Miss Florence E. Stacey.

4.00 p.m.—ADDRESS: Dr. W. H. Houghton.

###### Evening

##### FOURTH CONVENTION SESSION

7.30 p.m.—Prayer and Praise Service led by Rev. W. N. Charlton, Hespeler, Ont.

8.00 p.m.—Rev. Alex. Thomson, President, presiding.  
ADDRESS: Dr. W. H. Houghton.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24th—Thanksgiving Day

###### Morning

##### FIFTH CONVENTION SESSION

9.30 a.m.—Prayer and Praise Service led by Rev. H. E. Buchner, Shedden, Ont.

10.00 a.m.—Rev. P. B. Loney, Vice-President, presiding.  
Reports of Committees.

10.15 a.m.—Election of Convention Officers and Executive Board Members.

11.30 a.m.—ADDRESS: "Regular Baptists in the Western Provinces", Rev. Gordon W. Searle, Orangeville.

###### Afternoon

##### SIXTH CONVENTION SESSION

2.00 p.m.—Prayer and Praise Service, led by Pastor John Cunningham, Scotch Line Baptist Church.

2.30 p.m.—Rev. Alex. Thomson, President, presiding.

##### EDUCATIONAL SESSION

The Seminary and Missions

The Seminary and the Foreign Field—Miss Florence Stacey, '29—Liberia.

The Seminary and the Home Field—Pastor John Armstrong, '32—Maple Hill Church.

The Seminary and the Student—Student-pastor J. Scott, President of the Student Body.

The Seminary and the Future—Dr. T. T. Shields, President of the Seminary.

###### Evening

##### SEVENTH CONVENTION SESSION

7.30 p.m.—Prayer and Praise Service led by Rev. Leander Roblin, Otterville, Ont.

8.00 p.m.—Rev. Alex. Thomson, President, presiding.

Introduction of newly-elected Officers and Board Members.

ADDRESS: Dr. W. H. Houghton.

Meeting of Officers and Executive Board Members for purposes of organization.

#### NOTE

The Union Office will be glad to receive word from any of our Toronto friends who may be able to supply billets for the Messengers to the Convention, October 22nd to 24th: Telephone ELgin 6849.

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