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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### "RECONCILED TO GOD"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 19th, 1936  
(Stenographically Reported)

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."—Romans 5:10.

We live in the midst of a generation which habitually denies the most elementary truths of Evangelical Christianity. There was a time when those who professed and called themselves Christians believed the Bible to be the word of God; and Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. They accepted the revelation of God in Christ, with all its supernatural implications, as the ultimate word from God. But now even the very foundations of faith are called in question; and that, not by atheistic agencies without the church, but by unbelievers within the church. It becomes necessary therefore to declare over and over again even the first principles of the gospel.

I desire this evening to speak to you of the Christian doctrine of reconciliation, what it means to be reconciled to God through the death of His Son.

The word "reconciliation" is used in at least one instance, and perhaps more, in the New Testament as though it were almost synonymous with "atonement". The idea of propitiation, of expiation, is there implied. I refer particularly to Hebrews the second chapter and the seventeenth verse, where Christ is described as "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God; to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." But generally speaking, the word is used in the New Testament to signify something other than atonement itself. It is rather the firstfruit, the result, of atonement, than atonement itself. The two principles are brought together in the text I have announced; and perhaps if we study them in juxtaposition and contrast, we shall be able, in our own minds, and for our spiritual comfort, to distinguish between the two, and to receive from both the grace they are designed to confer.

#### I.

So that we may lay a foundation, we begin with the enquiry, IN WHAT SENSE ARE MEN GENERALLY THE

ENEMIES OF GOD? In what sense can men be accurately described as enemies to all that is divine? It is rather a serious charge to bring against anyone, and we need to examine the teaching of the Word of God, that we may know in what sense we are, by nature, said to be "enemies" of God.

It may be there are some here this evening who do not profess to be Christians, who make no claim whatever to having been born again, or recreated by the power of the Divine Spirit, but who yet perhaps would say of yourselves, "I am not an enemy of God; my very presence here this evening, with interest, is itself a disproof of that suggestion." Then what does it mean?

Certainly *not necessarily* that a man is an open and flagrant wrong-doer. Sin must be defined, if it is defined scripturally, in other terms than merely the open violation of the Decalogue. A man may be of sound moral character, of unblemished reputation, one whose conduct indeed will bear the closest scrutiny, and of whom it would be difficult to say wherein he does that which is wrong in respect to his relation to his neighbour. Honest and honourable in the recognition and discharge of all his neighbourly obligations, he stands among his fellows as a man respected—and worthy of respect. Yet he is not a Christian. In what sense is he an enemy of God?

Of course there are such wrong-doers as I have referred to, there are those who are viciously, even criminally, godless; and they are included in this category. I point out only that the moralist, the man of outwardly circumspect character and behaviour, is not excluded. Even though you belong to that class, you may still be described scripturally as an enemy of God.

*Nor does it necessarily mean that a man is anti-religious, or irreligious.* There are people, particularly in our day, who seem to hate every form of religion, and

sometimes to cherish a certain hostility toward all who profess religion. There are others who, while not openly and positively antagonistic, are yet utterly indifferent to religion. They are without religion; they are irreligious. Of course, all such are included within the term "enemy" employed in the text, with those who are anti-religious, such as we heard of this morning in Russia, who have developed a very bitter, implacable hostility toward the very idea of God. The people who utterly neglect God, and live as though there were no God, are naturally included in this category.

But there are others who are devoted to certain forms of religion, and may be devoted, too, to certain religious ideals. Indeed, there may be people to whom religion, of a kind, has become the supreme passion of life, whether it be Mohammedanism, or Hinduism, or any form of paganism; or many forms of religion that bear the Christian name. Religion, of a kind, may be, I say, the ruling passion of their lives; and yet, in the biblical sense, they may be the enemies of God. The point upon which I here insist is that while it includes the anti-religious and the irreligious, it does not exclude the religious devotees. A man may be very religious, and at the same time an enemy of God.

It does not necessarily mean that a man's life is characterized by acts that are hostile toward religion, that a man is deliberately and proudly disobedient to, and even defiant of, the divine law. There are a few such, atheists so-called; but there are many whose lives are not characterized by any such outward manifestation of religious hostility, and yet they may fall within the limits of this definition, and be the "enemies of God".

What, then, does it mean? *It is something that has to do with nature, what men are, not of their own volition and act only, but what they are by virtue of their birth.* When two countries are at war, the nationals of each, whether they wear uniforms or not, by virtue of the fact that they are of the race and nation, are looked upon by the other as enemies. They may be guilty of no hostile act, but because of the blood that is in their veins, they are called "enemies".

The Word of God tells us that our natures are alien to His, that we are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others". Man, in his natural state, until he is reborn, is, at the very core of his being, an enemy of God; though it may not outwardly appear.

I talked with some friends recently about the proper way of living, and they recommended the eating only of "compatible" foods. That is a good thing, I have no doubt, the blending of foods that are chemically in agreement with each other, so that, after one has eaten, they will not fight and precipitate a gastronomic war. I dare say that is wise. But I am sure of this, that the heart of the teaching of our text is that our natures, until we are born of the Spirit, are incompatible with the divine nature; they are alien, and enmity itself against God: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be".

It may be difficult sometimes for us to examine ourselves microscopically. It may not be easy to search into the hidden motive, and discover what a man really is in his heart—as difficult, and even more difficult, than it would be for one of us, as a layman, to understand the true nature, and perhaps the malignant nature, of some secret malady from which, all unknown to us, someone here may even now be suffering, a malady that is in its insipient stage, that by and by will disclose that in the

man's physical nature there was something that had death at the heart of it. Given time, it develops and brings him down to the dust. So is there that in man's natural constitution, an inherent sin, that is part of him, that makes his whole nature sinful, and that is in itself—not at enmity with God, but is essentially "enmity". In its very nature and essence the carnal mind, with all its faculties, "is enmity against God".

That is to say, *there is that within us which is antagonistic to all that God has willed for us, and the world.* There is not a man or woman here who, if he or she will review life's experience, and reflect upon those occasions when you have surveyed the record of your life, or perhaps faced its immediate prospect, and when you have seen, in the light that never was on sea or land shining from above, what a man ought to be, who has not found welling up within you a spirit of rebellion against that requirement. We are by nature, respectable as we may be—as I hope we all are—and, many of you amiable, attractive and winsome, loving and loveable to many, yet in respect to that which is deepest in us, we are, or were, by nature, "enemies of God".

## II.

When we were enemies, our text says, "WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON". Mark carefully, will you: *it does not say that God was reconciled to us, but that we were reconciled to God.* It is not suggested that God was unwilling to be on terms of amity, and even divine affection, with His human creatures. It is not suggested that there was anything in the divine nature that was antagonistic toward us, as human beings, but that for some reason it was necessary that we, who were enemies, should be reconciled to God.

Very well, then; *this reconciliation, whatever it was, was effected by the death of God's Son.* Someone will say, "You said a moment ago, that there is a distinction and a difference between reconciliation and atonement." Quite true, as I think we shall see presently. But the death of Christ effects the reconciliation of the soul that is naturally an enemy, to God, by the death of His Son.

Does it mean that the death of Christ, and the full-orbed revelation of His love, the disclosure of the heart of the Infinite at the place called Calvary, *had the effect of disarming our enemy nature, and changing us at the very core, so that when we saw the cross we ceased to be enemies, and became friends?* Hear me. It is true that we love Him "because he first loved us", if indeed we love Him at all. The inspiration, the origin, of our love was in God, not with us. Our love to Him was but a reciprocation, the response of His love to us. But is there nothing more in the death of Christ?

If that were all, *it would imply that the barrier to reconciliation was exclusively on the human side, that it was because of our alien natures, and nothing more, that God could not receive us, and that when at sight of the cross our hearts were broken, and we fell in love with a God so revealed, all cause of dissonance was removed, and we were attuned to the divine, "reconciled to God".*

That is a popular theory, that if that be not all there is in the cross of Christ, a supreme manifestation of the love of God, it is the major element. It was all that, but we need ever to remember that a half truth is very often the most subtle and effectual kind of untruth. You and I need something more than love to redeem us.

*Is it true that the Cross had the effect only of changing our natures?* It cannot be assumed that the divine

nature needed to be changed, for God is eternally the same. "I am the Lord", said He, "I change not." He never changes. Was it then that the death of Christ somehow effected the removal of that which put sinful man out of harmony with God? *And was that something only in us?* I think we do not get to the heart of this principle of reconciliation unless and until we recognize the necessity for some *reconciling agent which shall minister mutually both to the divine and the human.* Sin is not merely the transgression of an abstract law. Tomorrow you may see in your newspaper the account of a lawsuit in one of our courts, *ReX versus So-and-So.* The crown is represented. Someone is prosecuted for having committed an offence against the crown—against the King. But the King knows nothing about it. The statutory standards and regulations which someone, civilly or criminally, has violated, may bear no relation to the person of His Majesty—he may care nothing about it. But it is not so with the laws of God. The laws of God radiate from His own proper person, and they are what they are because God is what He is. There are no divine enactments which are arbitrary, whether in the natural or moral realm. God does not say, "Don't", like a petulant mother. He does not forbid only for the sake of forbidding. God's laws always have to do with the nature of things.

Drop a little poison in this glass of water—it may be a colourless poison, and this might still look like a glass of clear water. Someone proposes to drink it, and a man, knowing its content, that it contains something which, in its very nature, will kill, dashes it from his hand, and shouts, "Don't". Why? Not because he wants to drink it himself, not because he is selfishly disposed. There is a direct relation in that prohibition to the nature of the thing that is prohibited. He says, "Don't", because if the man *does* he will die.

The laws of God, I say, are centred in Himself. The laws of God are holy as He is holy. It is not possible for anyone to break one of God's laws, even the least of them, without, by so doing, doing violence to the very nature of God Himself. Sin is an outrage upon the divine nature. You cannot define sin philosophically, nor shut it up to verbal definition—if you would know what sin is, you must go to the place called Calvary, and remember that Jesus Christ was "God manifest in the flesh". He came into this world that in Him men might see God. He came into this world that in Him men might see what God requires every man to be. He came into this world to show us that no mortal falling short of His perfection could, by any possibility, dwell with God. And when men saw God in the person of Jesus Christ—for He Himself said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"—the native enmity, the enmity that was in their hearts said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." They hastened Him to the cross. They nailed Him there; they drove nails through His hands and feet, and a spear to His heart.

As Professor Neprash told us this morning of the anti-religious attitude of Russia, and showed us that cartoon of Bolshevism climbing a ladder, with a sledge-hammer to destroy God, even as he said it, I saw some people shudder, as though they would say, "That is horrible." Why is it terrible? Why is it horrible? That is no new thing. That is exactly what sinful human nature did when it took Incarnate Deity to the place of a skull, and nailed Him to a cross; and, with their hammers, killed

Him. But no! They could not take His life from Him: He laid it down of Himself.

But that is what sin does. It violates, not the moral constitution of the universe merely, but the very nature of God Himself. Sin drives a spear to the very heart of Deity, and exchanges the crown of universal dominion for a crown of thorns.

What did the death of Christ accomplish? *It ministered something to God.* I said just now that God is not described as an enemy who must needs be reconciled to men. Listen: you have heard it a thousand times, but here it is again. "God"—all there is of God—"so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son"—why? That He, the Infinite, might make up the deficit, might balance the account, might restore the moral equilibrium of the universe; and thus make it possible for a holy God to be just, and yet "the Justifier of him that believeth on Jesus".

And, having thus paid our debt, fulfilling our obligation to the law of God, the death of Christ made it possible for God to release such divine energies as were necessary to change our nature. You remember Peter's explanation of that marvellous phenomenon, when the Spirit of God was poured out, and filled both the place and the people, and "they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"? Peter said the explanation of it all was that the Crucified had been exalted: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." The Spirit of God, the creative energy of God, the Power that made the world—nay, the worlds—that same power comes, what for? To attune this discordant element in the universal music, to reconcile all things unto God "by the death of his Son". That is the gospel.

### III.

And, "BEING RECONCILED, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE." We have a living Saviour. The value of the death of Christ cannot be too strongly emphasized, but it is possible to under-estimate the importance of the truth that He lives, that He is ascended into heaven, and appears with His own blood in the presence of God for us—"we shall be saved by his life".

What does it mean? *Preserved*; "being reconciled"; He will keep us in tune. In His great high priestly prayer, addressing the Father concerning His disciples, He said, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world; that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word." This Saviour of ours is living still, to superintend these little lives of ours.

I still believe in a superintending Providence; in a God Who has His hand upon all the affairs of His children, so that we are able to say, "And I know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." This Saviour of ours will put us to school, and teach us, and subject us to discipline; for "if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons"; "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." He does

not "spare the rod". The Christ Who died lives to save us "by his life"—in the ordering of events, in the illumination of our hearts, in the illumination of the Sacred Page.

All that, but very especially and specifically, *by the communication of His own life*. "He gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." There is exactly the same kind of life in my little finger as in my head; the same blood animates the whole body. "The life of the flesh is in the blood." As we saw last Sunday, "Spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have," said the Risen One. I like to believe that that glorified body of Jesus Christ, is animated, not by blood, but by spirit. "Sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." He, our exalted Head, representing us before the throne, pours His life into these impoverished lives of ours, and makes it possible for us to "put off the old man, and to put on the new".

It is often hard to put him off. I do not know a better figure than this. I have some oak trees in my garden. They carry their leaves to-day, as they did last Fall. They are dead, sear—but although we have had a severe winter with plenty of ice and snow, and many strong winds, they still hang there just the same. But they will not stay much longer. In a little while the sun will warm the roots, and the life-sap will go up through the trunk, and out through the branches to the utmost twig, and as the tree is filled with new life, the old leaves will all drop off. That is how Christ enables us to put off the old man. "We are saved by his life." As we throw open every avenue of our being to the incoming of the more abundant life He came to give us, we shall be saved for time, and saved for eternity. That is a great salvation, is it not? It is all of grace; and to say a thing is all of grace means to say that it is all of God. He does everything: the bankrupt sinner can merely acquiesce.

What is it to believe? Faith is not so much an act as an attitude. It is an act, growing out of an attitude. But faith is the recognition, by an enlightened soul, of God as God. The man says, "I thought Jesus was a man, I thought—I thought—I thought." But when the Spirit of the Lord takes the scales away, like Thomas, we see in the crucified and living Jesus, the eternal Son of God and fall on our faces, crying, "My Lord and my God." We are justified and reconciled to God by Christ's death, and being reconciled we are saved by His life.

## Dr. Shields' Address on the Separate School Question

A Booklet of 32 Pages

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## GOOD AND BAD AMONG THE KINGS

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
Thursday Evening, April 9th, 1936.

*Seventh in the 1935-36 Series of Thursday Evening  
Lectures on Biblical Theology, which Subject is  
Included in the Curriculum of Toronto  
Baptist Seminary.*

(Stenographically Reported)

Lecture Text: I. Kings, chapter 15.

In the Books of Kings and Chronicles we have the history of the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel. The Second Book of Chronicles parallels very largely the First and Second Books of Kings; as the First Book of Chronicles is largely parallel to the First and Second of Samuel. Our lesson text opens with the story of Abijah, who was the son of Rehoboam, king of Judah. In this book he is called Abijam: in Chronicles he is called Abijah. There was another Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, whose life was early terminated because there was found some good thing in him toward the Lord God of Israel. He was one of the righteous taken away from the evil to come.

In the Book of Chronicles this king of Judah has rather a worthier record than that which appears in Kings. That is to say, it records to his credit a certain victory which he won, and shows that at the beginning of his reign he did at least profess a trust in Jehovah, he was not as bad as some of the other kings; but in this record of Kings he is called Abijam—he is deprived of the name of his God Jehovah Whom he so greatly dishonoured in the latter years of his life.

It is worthy of note that these histories are written from the divine standpoint. The principle and fact of divine inspiration are everywhere implied and assumed in these records, for we are told how certain men behaved, not in the sight of men, but what they did, and what they were, in the sight of God. These histories are written by men who were moved by the Holy Ghost, and who wrote as they were divinely directed to write, portraying men's lives, not as a man would write it, but as it appears in the sight of God.

That, in itself, is suggestive. The Bible is written in condensed and pregnant speech. It is not elaborate. Long years are compressed sometimes into a sentence or two; and the record of half a century is written down in a few words. It is what men are in the sight of God that determines their true worth. You and I may live in such a way that much might be written by our fellows. Men may live before the public eye so as to fill many pages of the newspaper day after day, and month after month; and yet accomplish almost nothing that is worth writing down in the sight of God.

Our Lord Jesus, when the disciples returned to Him, speaking with gladness and gratitude of the spiritual power that was theirs, that the devils were subject to them in Christ's name, that they had been able to accomplish much, said to them, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." There is a record written yonder that is the only accurate appraisal of the value of a life. You will recall when Job was suffering so much from the criticisms of his

friends, and when in his own heart he knew that he did not deserve their strictures at many points, at last he broke out and said, "Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high." That is where our true record is written; God knows what I am—and what you are. And you and I ought, so to live our lives before God that when He shall open His books, and come to reward His servants, there may be found written to our credit something worthy of those who profess and call themselves Christians.

This man "walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father". Perhaps some of you, reading a statement like that, might not immediately recognize what is implied in the statement. You and I cannot read each other's hearts. We can judge only of each other's actions, of our speech and our general conduct. But God does not look on the outward appearance: He looks upon the heart. He is spoken of as a "God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed"—put in the balances, and their exact moral quality and value determined.

The explanation of what Abijam, as he is here called, was, is found in the fact that "his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God". We are admonished in the Book of Proverbs to "keep the heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life". The Psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Again it is written, "For as he (man) thinketh in his heart, so is he." It will not help us much to pin mottoes upon the wall, to hang a motto above our desk, to set some objective ideal before us. It may do us no harm, but we shall probably fall far short of it. The only place where the Word of God can really do us good is when it gets into the heart, when it regulates the issues of life, when it determines our thinking, and moves our conduct. Then, indeed, the outward character will be what it ought to be.

In the providence of God, for David's sake, the Lord gave Abijam—really David—a lamp in Jerusalem. Abijam did not deserve it, but God had said that the house of David should not want a man to sit upon his throne. Therefore, for David's sake, mercy was shown to Abijam; and notwithstanding his sinfulness, he was permitted to continue. That principle runs all through Scripture, finding its supreme illustration in the vicarious death of our Lord, and in His imputed righteousness, as the ground of our salvation. But earlier, you remember how Abraham prayed that Sodom might be spared for the sake of the righteous that were therein. Later we shall find a prophet saying to a king, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." But for the sake of one good man, God blessed others.

What an unspeakable blessing it is to be the children of godly parents! What a priceless privilege to be the heirs of the prayers and intercessions and godly example of godly parents! We cannot prize it too highly. We cannot be too grateful, those of us who have been reared in Christian homes, for having such an heritage. On the other hand, how ought we to seek to live before God—that we shall not only receive

blessing ourselves, but that we may be the means of blessing to other people.

I think it is possible for fathers to call down blessing upon their children. Perhaps the fruit of their intercessions will appear long after they are gone. David was no longer in the flesh, but all that he had been, the record of his true and loyal obedience, was before God; and for his sake, blessing descended upon other generations. It is possible, even in our day, not only to bring blessing to those who are about us now, to be channels of blessing, as we sometimes sing, but so to impress the memories of others, so to write the record of our lives, that we shall be a blessing to others long after our earthly career is ended.

I think of books that I have on my shelves, written by men who died, some of them, two or three hundred years ago. The influence of Luther still persists. The influence of Oliver Cromwell, severe as he was, but a godly man, still persists in British history. And the influence of the saints all down through the ages is cumulative, and we have fallen heirs to the testimony of past ages, to the goodness of God; and for the sake of those who have gone before us, God blesses us still.

"And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?" We shall come to that later, but there is not much in this brief record written to Abijam's credit. It is significant that in the record we find in Chronicles—a much longer one—of what Abijam did in the earlier years of his reign, there is much more that is praiseworthy. But he was there called Abijah; there his God was with him. And be assured of this, nothing ever happens in your life or mine worth preserving for posterity that is separated from God. In the measure in which God is with us, and we abide in Him, and only in that measure, shall we be able to live for a single day a life that is worth writing down.

"And Asa his son reigned in his stead." Asa was one of the good kings of Judah. But again, he was far from being perfect, as we shall later see. But though he lived forty and one years, his history, so far as this book is concerned, is compressed within the space of a few verses; for even in his life there was not much worth recording. His mother's name—called his mother, really his grandmother—was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom—very probably, Absalom. "Asa did that which was right"—again you have it—"in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made."

Asa was a reformer. Asa recognized that, in order to build, one must sometimes destroy; and, in order to plant, one must sometimes pluck up. When he succeeded to the throne he found certain evils prevalent in Judah, altars that had been erected under the influence of his grandmother and others, and idols which had been raised to false gods; and Asa began by destroying them all. Asa would have been very unpopular in our day. If *The Mail and Empire* had been reporting him it would have said that "Asa was on the rampage again".

It is a good thing sometimes that someone should go "on the rampage". I am "going on the rampage" again next Tuesday evening. I shall speak in this building

—because it is a religious question—on this subject, "The Hepburn Government's Outrageous Betrayal of Its Trust in Selling the Province of Ontario to the Roman Catholic Church." Do not come if you are nervous. Do not come if you like soft speech. You may have heard me say some strong things occasionally, but you never heard me use such strong language as I shall use next Tuesday. There are some things that need to be spoken against. There are some evils that need to be denounced. There are altars that should be destroyed, idols that should be torn down. There are some things that must be intolerable to men of conscience.

Asa began by destroying. I believe we need to do that to-day. There is a popular theory that the proper way to do is to leave the altars there, and be so kind that everybody will like you.

This idolatry had crept into Asa's own family, into his own home. It is easy to criticize your neighbour. It is easy to find fault with some other denomination than your own. It is another matter to find fault with yourself, to clean your own house. How we all have seen in our day people influenced in the direction of evil because they are dominated by a desire to avoid giving offence to a relative, or near friend. I have heard women, professing Christian women, say, "I think it is a wife's duty to go with her husband." But in this spiritual relationship, if we are going to live our lives in the sight of God, and do what is right in His eyes, we are not to go with husband, or wife, or anybody else: we are first of all to do that which is right in the sight of God. If father or mother, or wife or husband, or children or friend, disapprove, we are sorry. We do not intend to give offence. But our first loyalty is to the Lord and His truth; and we must be true to Him though the heavens fall.

Asa removed his mother (grandmother) from being queen because she had made an idol in a grove: "Also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron." That was a worthy act. Finding evil in his own house he esteemed it but the more deserving of destruction.

In this matter that is before the Province to-day there are many people who will say, "Oh well, I know Mr. So-and-So, and he is a very nice man." He may be. And do you know the "nicest" man who ever lived, the most polite, most gentlemanly, most courteous person that ever appeared before men? He is the devil himself. He knows how to be "nice". But we need discernment to recognize principle, and to stand for principle at all costs—even if we have to stand alone. I am glad to believe that the members of Jarvis Street Church, because they believe the Book, will with absolute unanimity, take the same position. But I mean, in the matter of next Tuesday night, if I had this whole church packed with the members of the church, and if someone should move that this meeting disapprove of the Pastor's action, and it were seconded, and carried—do you know what I should say? I should say, "Take your church; it makes no difference to me."

My dear friends, men have had to die for principle before now, and we live in a day when men have no moral sense, no conscience, care nothing for right and wrong. The same is true of all denominations. It is

bound to be true when men put the Book of God aside. If that is not true, there is nothing to stand for. We may as well make as little trouble in life as possible, and let the world go to the devil. But if we are taught of God, we shall remember that the New Testament, quite as much as the Old, insists that God must be first. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Discipleship consists in the enthronement of Jesus Christ, in making Him preeminent, and following the Lamb "whithersoever he goeth".

It was well that Asa did as well as he did, but he did not go far enough. "The high places were not removed." Mark, the altars that were erected to idol gods were destroyed, the idols also were removed; but high places had been erected where sacrifices had been offered to Jehovah at other than the appointed place. There was no repudiation of the worship of Jehovah: there was only a variation from the divine method of worship. The high places were not taken away.

I have known a great many people who say, "I believe the Bible from cover to cover. I am a Fundamentalist." Very well. What is that you have there? "That is a font." What do you do with that? "We use that for christening." You still believe the Bible, do you? "Yes." You preach the gospel? "Yes." But you do not take away the high places; you mix with your orthodoxy a good many things that have no warrant in the Word of God.

How many people there are who become quite eloquent in their denunciation of the distinctively anti-Christian cults—Christian Science, Russellism, Roman Catholicism! "Oh horrors, no! I would not be a Roman Catholic." But they go to some church where they hear their minister make light of the Bible, and of a great many things in the Bible. They go so far, but they do not go far enough. What is needed to-day is a reform that will take away the high places, those practices that are given Christian sanction, when in reality they have no Christian warrant. If we are going to be followers of the Lord, let us follow Him. If we say we believe the Bible to be the Word of God, let us obey it.

A certain evangelist I know, a very earnest, orthodox man, read the eighth chapter of the Acts, about Philip and the Ethiopian: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." But someone said, "Why do you not finish the chapter?" "I never read the rest of it in a public assembly." Blessed is the man who can open God's Book and read any chapter of it anywhere. Whenever we find ourselves in a situation where we are required to withhold a testimony of this Book, we had better attempt a reorientation of ourselves. It is not enough to destroy the idols: we must take away the high places as well.

"Nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days." That seems a strange statement in the face of all the facts; but his power may have been limited. Perhaps he did the best he could.

"And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and

vessels. And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah"—there you have the Rhineland occupation. He builded a better city, a great fortress, so that it should be a stronghold that "he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah".

Will you observe how a good man, a man good in many ways, may make a mistake, and blunder? We ought to be afraid of ourselves. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." When the Lord told Peter that he would deny him, Peter declared, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." And Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter did not believe he would—but he did. There was a certain other man who was told what he would do to his master, how he would murder him, and reign in his stead. When the prophet told him, Hazael said, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" He believed himself incapable of such a deed. He may have been sincere, or it may have been a disguise, but he did it. You do not know what you might do under given circumstances. Men sometimes resort to strange courses under severe pressure.

Here was Asa faced with a great war, and he did not know how to meet the emergency of the hour. What did he do? We shall read later of one—of more than one—but we shall read of Jehoshaphat who, on receiving a threat of a foreign invasion, took his trouble before the Lord, Who promised to undertake for him, and fight for him. Hezekiah, receiving a threatening letter from the enemy, spread it before the Lord, Who sent a message to Sennacherib, saying, "Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." God promised Hezekiah that he need not trouble: He would look after Sennacherib.

Oh, that we might meet the emergencies of life in faith! You young men will sometimes face, when you become pastors of churches, a critical situation; and it will appear to you that by taking a certain course you can get out of trouble. You will not like to take it, to accept help from certain people. You would rather be independent of them, but you say, "This is an emergency, and I should surely be justified in resorting to this expedient under such pressure as I now feel." Let me advise you, in those emergencies of life there is one question only which you and I have a right to ask, What is right? When you have the answer, take the right course no matter what the consequences may be. Leave the consequences to God. Do not temporize or compromise.

Asa said, in effect, "I wish Benhadad would help me. He has a good army, and he is not a bad man. If I could secure his help I should be a match for the enemy." "Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servant: and king Asa sent them to Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha

king of Israel, that he may depart from me." Thus Asa the good king took the treasure of the house of the Lord to pay a heathen king to help him fight his battles.

When you are hard up for money in your church, and there is someone near who is not a Christian, but a generous man, you may think, "I believe it would be wise for me to get on the right side of that man and ask him to help us." You may do it, and get some money, and think you are very clever: "Benhadad is on our side; we shall win now; we have met the crisis safely and wisely." Do not be sure of that.

"So Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan and Abelbethmaachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah"—when Baasha heard of Asa's reinforcements, he left off building his Rhineland fortification, and dwelt in Tirzah.

"Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"

Keep that in mind, for we shall come upon it again; we shall meet Benhadad again—and we shall find Benhadad on the other side next time we meet him.

"Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet." That may have been the infirmity of age, I do not know. But I warn you of this, young men—and those who are older—there are many people who suffer spiritual decline as they grow old. There is a pestilence that walketh in darkness as well as a destruction that wasteth at noonday. Do not forget the perils of middle life. The devil will follow you to the end of the road, and so pursue you that you may be diseased in your feet morally and spiritually. Look back, and think of men who were zealous for the Lord, how full of spiritual power they seemed to be. But they seem to have lost most of it now. I have repeatedly said to you that one of the wonders of the career of C. H. Spurgeon was this. I have read of many men who began well, who were zealous for a time, but whose zeal cooled, and whose faith lagged. But the marvel of Spurgeon was that from the day he put his trust in the Lord Jesus until that day when his wife sent a cable to his son Thomas in Australia, a message of five words: "Father in heaven: mother resigned", there was never any diminution of power, never any breach in the long years of fellowship with his beloved; from beginning to end his bow abode in strength.

Someone told me that the last time they heard Moody speak in the chapel of the Institute as he passed through Chicago, he stood and wept as he told them it was his constant prayer that God would not suffer him to outlive his usefulness, that He would not allow him to live long enough to lose his power to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Beware of the eveningtime.

"Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead."

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

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### THE MESSIAH'S MISSION

Lesson Text: Isaiah, chapter 42.

**Golden Text:** "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."—Isaiah 42:6, 7.

**Bible School Reading:** Isaiah 42:1-16.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS:** Monday—Gen. 1:1-8; Tuesday—Ps. 33:1-12; Wednesday—Is. 52:7-15; Thursday—Matt. 3:13-17; Friday—Matt. 12:14-21; Saturday—Phil. 2:1-11.

**THE IDENTITY OF THE SERVANT (v. 1)**—The teaching of these verses undoubtedly finds its application in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew it is applied to Him (Matt. 12:17-21), and in Philipians we are informed He took upon Himself "the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men". He humbled Himself in His incarnation in order to accomplish our redemption. And He has also left us an example which we should follow. He "came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"; and by the washing of the disciples' feet He taught them how to behave toward each other (John 13:3-17). He came to do the will of the Father (John 6:38), to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), and our duty is to follow Him (Matt. 16:24; I Pet. 2:21).

The attitude of the Lord (vs. 1-4)—Several things are herein intimated respecting our Lord in His incarnate state. First, that He would be upheld by the Father (John 4:31-34). Second, that He would be the elect of the Father. As such, He was chosen before the foundation of the world for the great work of redemption (Eph. 1:4). Third, that the Father would delight in Him. On three occasions a Voice was heard from heaven testifying to this effect: at His baptism (Matt. 3:17), at His transfiguration (Luke 9:35), and at Jerusalem, just prior to the crucifixion (John 12:28). Fourth, that the Spirit would come upon Him. We are informed the Spirit without measure was given unto Him, and that through Him, He did His work (John 3:34; Matt. 12:28). Fifth, that He would bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles, intimating the worldwide effect of His mission. To some, His coming has meant salvation, while to others it has brought condemnation, depending in each case on the attitude of the individual to Him. He is the Judge of all men (2 Tim. 4:1). Reference is then made to His calm, self-denying demeanour. He would not be found striving, and manifesting a self-assertive spirit in the streets. His tenderness of spirit is intimated in the statement that He would not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. And His successful continuity of purpose is set forth in the statements referring to the bringing forth of judgment unto truth, the absence of discouragement in His attitude, and the waiting of the isles for His law. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe (Rom. 1:16), and since the day of Pentecost multitudes have come under its influence. Note our Lord's power to save (Heb. 7:25), and the encouragement herein given to come to Him (Matt. 11:28-30).

**The Work of the Lord (vs. 5-7)**—In the previous verses we are informed of certain things pertaining to our Lord as the Servant of God; in this section He is addressed directly by the Father in relation to the work which He was to perform as Saviour. First, the power of God is emphasized to inspire the confidence of the people in Him as He sends forth His servant. He is the Creator of heavens, earth, and man (Gen. 1:1, 27). Second, the call of the servant is intimated. He was called in righteousness. He was the righteous One (I John 2:1), and came to declare the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:24-26). He was upheld by the Father. He was given "for a covenant of the people". He was the Mediator of the new covenant (I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 12:24). And He was "for a light of the Gentiles" (Acts 13:47). The work referred to is first, "to open the blind eyes". Our Lord

opened physical eyes (Luke 7:21); but His purpose related primarily to spiritually blind eyes. The unsaved are in a condition of blindness due to the power of Satan (2 Cor. 4:4), and need to be brought into the light. A second phase of our Lord's work is to liberate the prisoners from prison. These include all who are outside of Christ, for such are in the prison house of sin, being subject to sin (Rom. 6:16). At Calvary, victory was gained over sin, and now through faith in Christ the sinner may be delivered from its power, and brought into the light of God.

**The Song of Praise (vs. 8-12)**—Turning from addressing the Messiah, God speaks to the people. He refers to Himself as the Lord, or Jehovah, his most sacred name. He then informs them that He would not give His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images. Idolators were giving worship to persons, and inanimate objects, condemned alike by God, and warning is given here, and elsewhere, respecting this (Deut. 7:4, 5). The Lord is a jealous God, and will not suffer another to take His place (Ex. 20:1-6). And as the only God, He has the right to expect the gratitude and praise of men. The servants of God should be very careful to give God the glory due unto Him in all things pertaining unto them. Reference is then made to the fulfilment of the prophetic word, such fulfilment being an evidence of the divine source of the prediction; and an exhortation is given to sing unto the Lord. The song is a new one. It is in contrast with the world's songs, which relate to the things of earth. It is in praise of God. The psalmist knew what it was (Ps. 40:3). The saints of God are enjoined to sing it (Eph. 5:19); and in eternity we shall sing it more perfectly (Rev. 15:3). Every one is urged to sing it, and everyone has reason to do so, but it is only as the heart is touched by the divine power that the spirit gives expression to its gratitude in this manner.

**Divine judgment (vs. 13-16)**—God deals in a most gracious manner with His enemies, but there must be no presumption as to the continuance of this attitude, for some day judgment will displace mercy, and punishment will take the place of kindness. In this section, such an intimation is given. "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man. He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; He shall cry, yea, roar; He shall prevail against his enemies." When He arises in this manner, it will be a fearful time for those who are opposed to Him (Heb. 10:31). He has in the past taken vengeance on the enemies of Israel (Ex. 14:30, 31), on men in general (Gen. 7:21, 22), and on cities in particular (Gen. 19:24, 25). And in the future, all the wicked shall appear before Him to be judged (2 Tim. 4:1). There will be no escape from such judgment, and it is certain that the same will be in accordance with the standard of justice. In the judgment indicated in this section, affecting the enemies of Israel, there is a promise of mercy for the Lord's people. These He would lead, or their return to their own country, "in paths that they have not known"; and He would make darkness light before them. In the final judgment the saints of God will have nothing to fear, for divine mercy will cover them, and will give shelter from the wrath of an angry God. For them, there will be no judgment for sin (Rom. 8:1). Note the necessity for accepting such mercy in this, the Lord's accepted time (2 Cor. 6:1).

**The shame of the idolators (vs. 17-25)**—Judgment has been pronounced against the heathen idolators, but remembrance is indicated in this section of the idolators in Israel. Shame would come to those who trusted in molten images; for such inanimate objects could not help their devotees. Baal's prophets found to their loss that their god could not hear them, neither could he answer their prayer (2 Kings 18-26); and all idolators find this out in the crucial moments of life. Persons who trust in other gods are blind and deaf. They observe not the work of God, and they hear not His voice. Intimation is given of the punishment meted out to Israel for her departure from God. The nation had suffered prior to this on several occasions because of idolatry, but foolishly had failed to learn the lesson therefrom, until removed into an alien land. Men in the present day in general act in a similar way, individually and nationally. Sin brings its own consequences, and God again and again has manifested His wrath against it; yet men continue to act contrary to the divine will. Individuals and empires have disappeared as a consequence of their sin, and the same fate will befall those who act similarly; therefore wisdom emphasizes repentance and obedience.