

# 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

WHY DO CERTAIN MINISTERS APOLOGIZE FOR THE APOSTATE  
CHURCH OF ROME?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, June 14th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.

"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

"Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

"Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

"Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all."

—Jeremiah 23:28-32.

We live in a day when many people seem to have become so religiously colour-blind, as to be unable to distinguish between white and black. This is a latitudinarian age, when it is popular to preach a theoretical tolerance of everything, although one rarely observes anyone who is tolerant of anything which injuriously affects his own interests. The man who professes belief in the inspiration and divine authority of the Bible is, by many, voted an "unlearned and ignorant" man. If he is convinced of its truth, and proclaims with all earnestness the principles and precepts of the gospel, he is reckoned to be very narrow and bigoted. If he distinguishes between things that differ, and insists that unrighteousness is not righteousness, that untruth is not truth, that darkness is not light, he is said to be unreasonably dogmatic. According to the modern view, what one believes, or what he preaches, is of little moment. It is popular to assume we are all heavenward bound, and it is a matter of little importance which road one takes.

Of course, if there be no divine standard, if there be no religious norm, if there be no balances of the sanctuary, if there be no revelation from God, no ultimate and supremely authoritative—because absolutely infallible—disclosure of the divine will, if there be no extra-mun-

dane authority, no revelation from beyond the realm in which we live; if we are left to our own devices to discover what truth we may, and if the best guide we can find upon earth is the guide of human opinion—well, there may be something to be said for that generous tolerance which assumes that one man's opinion is just as good as any other man's opinion, on matters of religion.

But in this place we believe nothing of the kind. We believe that He Who fixed the magnetic pole to which the compass answers, and Who gave us the North Star by which the mariner without compass may steer his bark across the trackless deep; that He Who considered it of some importance that men should know how to make their way from one part of this earth to another; that He Who implanted within the animal creation certain instincts which infallibly direct them, so that the swallow and the crane know the time of their coming—if all this be true, and if this ordered universe did not happen, but if its marvellous design indicates a Designer, and if the perfection of its natural law implies the existence of a Law-giver—if, indeed, the universe itself argues the existence of a Creator, then surely it is inconceivable that He would have endowed man with intelligence and conscience, and yet left him with no Voice from another

world, and no sure guide by which to make his passage from this life to the world beyond.

In this place we have stood many years simply for the authority of God's Holy Book. We believe it, and men may cast what aspersions they like upon our natural intelligence, or upon our scholarship: we are quite unmoved by the scorn and mockery of a sin-darkened world. We believe the Bible to be the word of God.

My text is taken from Jeremiah's prophecy. Jeremiah is very frequently spoken of as though he were a man of melancholy disposition, a misanthrope, a man whose only delight consisted in making other people miserable. Such estimates grow out of a misunderstanding of the prophecy which bears his name, and of the Lamentations of Jeremiah. The assumption has given us a proverbial substantive applied to rather gloomy predictions. Men speak of such a prediction as being worthy of the gloomy prophet, the prophet of tears, and call it a "Jeremiah". But nothing could be farther from the facts. Jeremiah had no delight in uttering hard words. I think he was a man of unusual fortitude, and certainly a man of exemplary courage, a man who was commissioned to tell people what would come to pass, to preach to kings and rulers, to prophets and people, and to warn them against the danger of setting themselves against God.

His word came to pass; his prophecies were fulfilled. What God said through the lips of Jeremiah should actually take place, has very largely now become a matter of history. There may be an outreaching of his prophecy to the last days, but very much of it has been vindicated by the unfolding of history. What the prophet said should be, did actually come to pass.

We hear people everywhere mourning the present situation: the decaying of business ethics, the lowering of moral standards, the decline of temperance, the rapid increase of drunkenness and debauchery. Particular stress is laid upon the glaring contrasts of our social order: on the one hand, men are possessed of multiplied millions, and, on the other, there are little children who scarcely have bread enough to eat. But some of us have dared to be Jeremiahs, and have had to take the consequences. It is almost as much as one's reputation for sanity—certainly for moderation—is worth to confess that he habitually attends this conventicle—"You go to Jarvis Street!"

But long ago some of us said these conditions must inevitably come to pass. When men deny the truth of God's Word, and substitute therefor the issues of their own vain imaginations, and when thus they destroy the fear of God from before men's eyes, so that the very consciousness of God and of human responsibility to Him are taken away, what else can you expect but moral chaos, an ever-increasing disposition to lawlessness, growing at last to universality?

Perhaps I may offend the susceptibilities of some people this evening. I have no pleasure in doing so, and yet it is necessary that we should raise our voices against false prophets, and false prophecies everywhere. This whole chapter, a word written by a prophet, is devoted to an exposure of his fellow-prophets. The chapter begins with the words, "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture; saith the Lord." The inspired history of the Bible, and profane history as well so far as it is accurate, shows that religious declension and general departure from the truth, and from the standards set up in His Holy Word, have almost invari-

ably begun, not with the people, but with the prophet and priest.

Many are fond of denouncing Communists and Communism. I do not believe political and economic cults are half as responsible for the present chaotic condition of society as the men who have been called the prophets of Jehovah, of all names: Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist, United Church men. I do not believe these politico-economic theories are as responsible for the present chaos as the men in the pulpit who have repudiated the authority of the Bible. Our theological, denominational colleges have been hotbeds of sedition, heresies, and religious charlatanry. They are responsible. The world's trouble has come largely from the false prophets, from the ministers who have substituted their dreams for the word of God; who have substituted for the salt of supernaturalism, a savourless naturalism, devoid of restraining and preserving qualities. They have fed men upon chaff instead of upon wheat.

I suppose the annual gatherings of great religious bodies may be taken to reflect with reasonable accuracy the prevailing teaching and attitude, not only of the religious denomination as a whole, but of the local units called churches of which they are composed. When the representatives of a great religious body come together and express themselves, one may not be charged with uncharity if he assumes that the deliverances of such bodies are fairly typical of the general teaching of their ministers.

I read a report last night, presented by a certain professor to the Toronto Conference of the United Church, a report on evangelism and social service. Some may read it and say, "Is there really a return to the old landmarks?" If it is carefully analyzed, it will be seen that it indicates no such return. The report says that what the church needs is a new "urgency", the urgency of the old evangelism. In other words, what the church needs is the dynamic of the gospel—but, of course, without the gospel! They want the "urgency" of it, the driving power of it, that brought things to pass; but they do not want it. They do not want the gospel. What do they mean by repentance—repentance for what? For sins. It is all very well so far as it goes, personal sins, and social sins, sins against society—and there are many of them. I do not say that these things should not be dealt with. But if you examine that report, there is no suggestion that there is any recognition of sin. Not sins, but sin, lies at the root of all our ills, sin that brought hell into existence, sin that necessitated the death of Incarnate Deity at the place called Calvary, in order that men might be redeemed. We must confess, say they, our sins, and repent of our sins.

I repeat, true enough so far as it goes, but sins against whom? Against "the kingdom of God," whatever that may be in modern thought. It is *their* terminology. But that is not what the Bible means by sin. David committed a sin against society, a sin against individuals that composed society. But when God had dealt with him, he cried out brokenheartedly, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." The fear of God was in him, and his sin against his neighbour became, in God's light, a sin against God, for which he was accountable to God.

This report recognizes the necessity of judgment, but they mean by that some form of temporal judgment. There is no perspective, no outlook upon another world. "Time has forgotten eternity" in most of these annual

reports, which seem to be chiefly concerned with economic questions.

I grant you that the church ought to bear faithful witness against evil everywhere. We should never be tolerant of evil. These trapdoors to hell, the beer-parlors, for which the Hon. Mitchell F. Hepburn is chiefly responsible, the Separate School question, and every other evil thing, ought to be condemned by churches which stand for righteousness. And when it transpires that a company of men invested five hundred thousand dollars and multiplied it fifty times in thirty years, deriving therefrom twenty-five millions of dollars—that ought to be condemned. Perhaps someone will object, "That is capitalism." That is not capitalism: that is extortion, sheer robbery, and every man guilty of perpetrating such public injustices ought somehow to be sent to the penitentiary. Why should such iniquity be tolerated?

But how are we to deal with such things? One might suppose from reading the church reports that the chief business of the church is to labour for the meat that perisheth, and not for that which endureth unto everlasting life. It is a reversal of the order of the divine programme. It is an emphasis which completely inverts the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." In these reports there is nothing about heaven; nothing about hell—except an implied contempt for both; there is nothing about a future life. The emphasis is upon this life; thus the evangelism of the New Testament is displaced by what is called "social service".

I think it was in London, Ontario, the proposal was made at a Presbyterian meeting that they should present a resolution in opposition to the Separate School iniquity, and one preacher argued that the Church could not wisely interfere with such matters, for he said they were politicians first and Christians afterward. One might suppose the church to be justified in letting the devil have his way, while comfortable saints sing, "Blest be the tie that binds."

In the General Assembly one brave spirit alleged that there is a considerable defection from Rome in the Province of Quebec, that the Roman Church had lost, over a certain period, about one hundred thousand adherents. The report said the commissioners were amazed that anyone should thus reflect upon the Church of Rome. One minister said he was an embodiment of the church union principle in that he was converted in a Baptist Church, attended a Presbyterian college, and derived much profit from the Methodists. Let me read you what he said:

"Amid the present state of the world, facing religious indifference and hostility in Canada, this is no time to emphasize our differences. Wherever Christ is enthroned, as our Catholic brethren certainly enthrone Him, there do we find our allies and our fellow believers. It will need both the Catholic and the Protestant forces together to hold our citadel in these critical times."

Surely that is an amazing statement from a so-called Protestant minister. There is no "hostility" to the gospel in Canada or anywhere else to surpass the hostility of Rome. For a Presbyterian to describe "our Catholic brethren" as "our allies and fellow-believers" must surely be something new. Whoever attempts an alliance be-

tween Protestantism and Romanism may be sure that God will not be in it.

What utter nonsense, to tell us at this late day, in effect, that the Reformation was entirely unnecessary, that Roman Catholicism "enthrones Jesus Christ"! Has the man read history? Does he know what present-day Romanism is? So far from enthroning Jesus Christ, it virtually subordinates Him, not only to the Virgin, but to the Pope, and even the priest. Romanism is a blasphemous system, I repeat, from top to bottom; it is pagan, not Christian; it is the opposite of everything revealed in the Bible. Whither is so-called Protestantism drifting when prominent ministers of various churches seriously deliver themselves of such drivelling nonsense?

#### I.

THE PROPHET MUST LEARN CLEARLY TO DISTINGUISH AND DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF A HUMAN DREAM, AND THE AUTHORITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION. "The prophet that has a dream, let him tell his dream"—and let it rest there. You have heard the song, "The Holy City"? It is very beautiful, the music of it, and much of its content; and yet in one verse utterly unscriptural. But it is said to be a dream. "Let him tell his dream." The economic Utopias preached by the economic experts called D.D.'s, and who in many instances know nothing about the science of economics, and apparently still less about the science of theology, are nothing but dreams, whether it be the dream of Social Credit or any of the other vagaries of socialism or of semi-socialism. There is no scriptural foundation for these theories—each is but the baseless fabric of a vision which has never been reduced to practice, and never will be. We may not reasonably object to a man's telling his dreams if he can find people simple enough to listen to him, but let him not invoke the authority of Jesus Christ for his dream.

But that is what these religious charlatans generally do. They tell us that their socialistic dream is implied in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the general ethical teachings of Jesus. I heard a man discuss some socialistic Utopia in Hyde Park, London, a few years ago. A good crowd had gathered around him, and he denounced everything that was denounceable. We were all a bad lot, the king and all his counsellors, and the people as well. There were a few policemen standing around to see that order was observed, they paid no attention to his dissertation. He had at least one very careful listener, however, and when he paused, she said, "Will the gentleman permit me to say a word?" "Certainly," he politely replied, "take my place." He stepped down and she mounted the rostrum. It is not often I enjoy a woman preacher—I do not think it is her calling—but I confess I enjoyed that woman's speech. The people were attentive as she said, "I have followed with the deepest interest what the speaker has said. I agree with him, that these things which he has denounced as evils are evils indeed. I am quite at one with him that they ought to be removed, so far as it may be possible to remove them." She was an effective debater. I think she must have been married, and had learned. She agreed with him so far as she possibly could, and, having reached a certain point in her argument, with emphasis she said, "But"—and when a woman says, "But", prepare yourself for the weighty part of her speech—"but I am bound to disagree with the speaker's further remarks, for he has sketched an ideal city in which there shall be no poverty,

no sickness, no sorrow, no tears, a beautiful place to live in; a city of which I think we should all like to be inhabitants. But the gentleman's whole argument was to the effect that such a city will come up, and that mere men can build it. I have read of such a city, and I believe there will be such a city; but the city of which I read 'came down from God out of heaven.' You will never get the ideal social order created by sinful men. When it comes, it will have to come down from God out of heaven." And she was right!

There are some people who dream religiously. We are urged to be tolerant toward all religions. I have never heard a bank inspector recommend tolerance to the manager of a bank he was inspecting. I have seen young fellows working over their books at one or two o'clock in the morning, and have been told by bank clerks that sometimes they spend half the night looking for one cent! But I have never heard of a bank inspector's saying, "You need not be so particular. One cent one way or another does not make much difference." When you deal with numbers you must be exact, and intolerant of errors. Did you ever operate an adding-machine? There is no flexibility there. Two and two make four, never more, never less. But in the moral and religious realms, we must be tolerant! No matter what men say, we must assume they are right; or, at all events, we must avoid "controversy". What utter nonsense that is!

Of course, if the prophet has a dream, let him tell his dream—but let him tell it as a dream. That is what most ministers are doing. We see extraordinary things in dreams. I do, when I have them, marvellous issues of the human mind. I do not know how they get there: I did not put them in. But they tumbled in together, they all got mixed up; hence there is no telling what will come out of the mind when the body is asleep. Perhaps we ought to make allowance for these preachers as for men who are talking in their sleep! If they have dreams, let them tell their dreams; for in dreams men may have the heads of monkeys or donkeys, and hobgoblins may marry angels. In a dream the Pope might even pronounce a blessing on a Protestant denomination, or on an Orange Lodge! He might do anything in a dream, but not actually.

I wonder sometimes if some of our modern ministers think at all? Talk about brains! About the *intelligentsia!* I wonder whether some of them have minds to think at all. When I read what they have to say I am reminded of a little girl in a home where I boarded before I had a home of my own. Her name was Nellie. One day she said, "O mamma, I have an awful pain in my brains." "That is too bad", said the mother, "where are your brains, Nellie?" Pointing to her stomach she said, "Just here." I have wondered if some of the modern prophets have their brains in their stomachs! All they talk about is the "bread that perisheth". It is useless, I know, to preach to a hungry man. Feed him if he comes to your door. I admit all that; but what nonsense is preached in the Lord's name in so-called Protestant pulpits! Not all the superstitions belong to Rome. Many non-Catholic religious bodies are full of it. For instance: Here is a man who never preaches a supernatural gospel. If he touches upon the supernatural at all, it is to deny it. His whole ministry is purely on a rationalistic basis. So far as it has any value, it is merely the elaboration of an ethical system divorced from any dynamic to make it effective. He is not a supernaturalist. But along comes the Oxford Group, which substitutes psychology

for spirituality, the mind of man for the Spirit of God, which proposes, not regeneration, but, in a subtle fashion, re-formation. As though an expert should go to some man who wants his house cleaned and made over again. He surveys the contents of each room and says, "You will not need to spend any money. Everything you require is here: it is only out of order. I will come and put it in order." The Oxford Group comes to put "the old curiosity shop" of the human soul in order—and makes confusion more confounded before it is finished. But the man who is an antisupernaturalist can accept the "quiet hour" and what God allegedly says to him then, although he does not believe that God could speak to a prophet, and inspire him to write infallibly. He can believe that God will speak infallibly to some novice who perhaps was drunk last week, but who has reformed, and that in the quiet hour he may receive direct "guidance" from God apart from Scripture. Why? Because unbelief and superstition are twins, whether inside the Roman Catholic Church or outside. When spiritual darkness possesses them, men will hold mutually antagonistic and mutually exclusive views and conceptions of spiritual things while utterly unaware of their illogic. I mean such conceptions that if one be true the other cannot possibly be true; yet they will hold both to be true. There is a logic of the spirit which the carnal mind wots not of.

Oh that we could have sound religious thinking! If we had, the prophets' dreams would be consigned to where they belong. They have not the merit of Aesop's fables—for they at least had a moral lesson. But to propose affiliation with the Church of Rome, and to speak of the disciples of Rome who substitute the sacramentarianism of the Church for Christ, and pervert the simple ordinances of the church for gain—and call it Christian is absurd. I doubt not there is in the Roman Church "a remnant according to the election of grace", men who somehow get past all its superstitions to Christ. But they are Christians in spite of Roman Catholicism, not because of it. Tell me we need the aid of the Pope? I do not: you may have him.

## II.

"He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." What! How can we speak God's word? What can we do with the Word of God *in respect to these economic injustices?* Preach the Word of God, the principles of it, to the hearts and consciences of men, and see what will happen. Let any preacher preach God's word faithfully, so as to make the business men in his congregation go back to their offices to-morrow with a consciousness that Jesus Christ is there, and that he must deal honestly with his employees, and the people with whom he does business—and men of all classes and occupations—there would be an industrial and commercial revolution in Canada.

I will go farther. If preachers would remember that if a minister has God with him, he can, if he must, part company with all the millionaires on earth, and still carry on his work. I have tried it, and I know that what I say is true. If one of those men who converted a hundred thousand dollars into five million were in my church, I would say to him, "You sinner, repent and confess." And if he would not he would soon find his way out. This church will not identify itself with such iniquity as that. Yet we hear men prating about economic theories while the church offers asylum to many of the worst offenders.

The only thing a faithful prophet needs to be sure of is that he has God's word. When he has that, let him preach it faithfully. God will not forsake him. The existence of this church, and the fact that it is known in all the world at this hour, is proof of that. Let me magnify my office a little, to the praise of our covenant-keeping God. There is not a church in Canada of any denomination that is so widely known as this church, nor any church that touches, through the printed page, and by other means, such a multitude of people as this church. Some of the saintliest men I have ever known have been rich men. It is not a sin to be rich. I believe a man may become rich honestly and for the glory of God. All I insist upon is that the preacher who will preach God's word faithfully can be independent of men because God will be with him.

We do not need communism or socialism, even when it masquerades under a Christian name: we need a generation of faithful preachers of the gospel, who will preach the gospel of individual salvation. You cannot build a Christian society of non-Christian material. It is sheer nonsense to attempt it. Talk about making bricks without straw! Some of these theorists want to build houses without bricks—all of straw. The world's great need is the faithful preaching of the Word.

Faithfulness to God's word will determine our attitude toward the evils of the day. No man can abide by the teaching of the book, and tolerate Romanism. No man can believe profoundly that the Bible is true, without, at the same time, becoming antagonistic toward the iniquitous system of Romanism. I love Roman Catholics as individuals, and would preach the gospel to them with all my might, and seek to lead every one of them from the priest to the Great High Priest, to the one and only Mediator, there to find cleansing through the precious blood of Christ. But never would I favour an alliance with that system of lawlessness which is anti-Christian to the very core. Away with that idea! Let us keep ourselves free from it.

"What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." Then the figure is changed: "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" "Like as a fire"? Oh yes, the Word of God is like a fire. I have seen it do its work. I have seen it burn up the prejudices with which a man had surrounded himself. I have seen the Word of God find lodgement in a man's life like a spark, until it consumed him. That is all the Word of God asks at any time, an entrance. It is "like as a fire."

There is nothing as terrifying as fire. Did you ever hear that cry in the night? We get used to it in a large city like Toronto. When we hear the siren we turn over and go to sleep, after perhaps breathing a prayer for the safety of the men, and of thanksgiving that it is not our house. But with our fire-fighting equipment, we are not alarmed by the reels on the street. But have you ever been in a little town where there was a fire, and nothing with which to put it out but buckets of water? I was once in a place like that when a fire started in the centre of the village. Men ran up and down the street at one or two o'clock in the morning, shouting "Fire—fire—fire". Every man in the place, and nearly all the women, got up and ran to the scene of the fire to help. They did not know how far it would spread, or whether it would consume the whole village.

I have seen men terrified by the Word of God: I have known men to come here, fold their arms, and sit cynically, as though they would say, "We challenge you to disturb our peace." They mocked at the gospel. But I have known them to go home terrified at the thought of meeting God, unable to sleep for days, until they came back in penitence saying, "What must I do to be saved?"

Let the Word of God be preached, and it will burn up the wood, hay, and stubble, of modern church effort. Only the Word of God can awaken the conscience. What a purifying agent it is! That is why Sodom and Gomorrah were burned. They were plague spots. You who have been to London have seen the Monument erected to the memory of those who died in the plague. You have read the story of the ravages of the black plague in London, when the death-carts rattled along the cobblestone streets while the drivers cried, "Bring out your dead; bring out your dead." Coffinless they took their loved ones out and the plague victims were buried by the hundred and the thousand. Medical science could not stop its ravages, nor prevent its spread, and it looked as though the whole city might be destroyed. Then the great London fire took place. It was terribly destructive. But it burned out that plague-infested spot. When the fire died down, the plague was ended.

Oh that preachers would release the fire of God's Word. It would purify our political and economic life. The Word of God, running as a fire, cleanses every sphere of life. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." God's Word is a fire. What figures the mind can conjure up, that being true! The fire would consume every polluting element in the life of the individual, and of society—"The word of God that liveth and abideth for ever."

I say this and close: "And like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." The Word of God is called "the sword of the Spirit". Not only in this respect, that He made it, but in the further particular, that it is He Who useth it. "Is not my word like . . . a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" It is a hammer in the hand of Almightyness. I have seen it break the rock. We read about the "impregnable" line of defense which France has erected between herself and Germany. I hope it is impregnable—but nobody knows until it is tried. These rocky defenses seem to be impregnable. So do men establish themselves in rocky fortresses—gigantic evils like the liquor traffic, or the papacy, wall themselves around. And men say, What is the use? What power can dislodge them? Then a little Professor Somebody—M.A., Ph.D., LL.D., D.D., D.C.L., and I know not what other degrees, buys a hammer from some academic Woolworths and says, "I will smash them." But his toy hammer frightens nobody. He makes no more impression upon these evils, than a British Columbia woodpecker on a giant Douglas fir tree!

What can any man do against these evils? Though we bend all our power to the securing of a protest from the people, an imitation Mussolini passes a measure that is retroactive that makes the plebiscite useless. What shall we do? "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" If the preachers of this country, without any plebiscite at all, would so preach the Word that every member of his congregation would become conscious of a personal God, and recognize their responsibility to Him, we could blot the Hepburn Government out of existence.

Such an aggregation of evils could not exist if the conscience of Ontario were aroused. There is no instrument can effect such an awakening but the word of God which is as "a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces".

I once saw a man lie on his back and allow a heavy curb stone to be put on his chest—a stone about two feet long and fourteen inches wide. A crowd gathered around and as the man on his back inflated his chest, another man took a sledge-hammer and broke the stone. But there is something harder than curb stones. There are hearts that are flintlike. The Bible says men have hearts of stone. No argument can reach them: only the Word of God in the hand of the Almighty Spirit can break their hearts, and open a way for the Saviour to come in.

That is ever our message; back to the Bible, back to the gospel, for the Lord says, "I am against them that prophesy false dreams, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness." I should like to have every one of you for my friend. I have never had pleasure in making enemies. But I have survived, and expect to survive, with a few people against me. But there is one Person I dare not have against me: were the Lord to say, "I am against you", my time would be up, my day done; for who can fight against God?

If there is an unconverted person here this evening, I bring you this message: We have no confidence in the saving efficacy of any ordinance, whether of baptism or the Lord's Supper. We have no confidence in the value of the very best works of righteousness that you can do, however excellent they may be. The revelation of God is that no one shall stand in His presence short of the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the beginning He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." He has never lowered the standard. He sent One Who was His image, the Lord Jesus Christ; and He said in effect, "See that Man? You must be as perfect as He before you can come where I am." But you will say, "Then none of us can ever stand before Him." True! We can never stand before Him in our own righteousness. But He will give us His perfection. Hence His righteousness—all the perfections of His nature—become ours when we trust in Him. He is the Head of the body; His church, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all". We shall be able to sing,

"I stand upon His merit,  
I know no other stand,  
Not e'en where glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land."

Yonder it will still be Jesus, Jesus only. Salvation is in Him—all that God has ever spoken is gathered up in the Word that "was made flesh and dwelt among us".

Do you trust Him? Is He your Saviour? Do you know from a personal experience what it is to have heart and conscience made clean by the blood of Christ, so that you can bow heart and knee, and with confidence look up and say, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thou hast come to me in grace and saved me from all my sin. I have received Thee, and know that to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." When Christ becomes our Saviour, His Father is our Father, and we are His children, and "if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ". May He save us with His great salvation!

## A RECORD OF POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS

Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
Thursday Evening, April 30th, 1936.

*Ninth 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)

Lesson Text: I. Kings, chapter 16.

Our study brings us to the sixteenth chapter of the First Book of Kings. As being incidental to the main subject with which this chapter deals, it is worth while noting a principle applying to the whole book. It is said, "The word of the Lord came" to a certain person. The Bible was written by men who were "moved by the Holy Ghost". It is a record of things that are spoken, or things that are done; and the record itself is true. But in the record there is an account of the doings of sinful men, the sayings of men who were themselves untrue. There are, for instance, some sayings attributed to the devil himself, who is described as having been "a liar from the beginning".

We must distinguish between revelation and inspiration. Revelation has to do with that which God is pleased to communicate to His servants, disclosing to them that which they could not discover of themselves—revealing, in short, the truth. Inspiration is that divine control of the writers of Scripture which moved them to write what God communicated to them, or to record accurately what He had communicated to others.

Revelation, of course, has truth for its substance. God reveals nothing but that which is true. Inspiration insures the accuracy of a record that may contain things that are not true. You say, "Does the Bible contain things that are not true?" Listen very carefully. The Bible, as a record, is the record of fact. If the facts are white, they are so recorded. If the facts are black, they are so recorded. The pen of inspiration writes down the virtues of God's people, and, if they have any, their vices as well. You will find, therefore, that in the biographies of Scripture, being absolutely true to fact, the Spirit of God records some things that are not very creditable. A human biographer, using his own judgment, would be inclined to write the good things, and to pass over the things that were evil. But the Spirit of God moves the writers of Scripture to write that which is true, whether it be good or bad.

"The word of the Lord came." That is revelation. The record of the fact that the Word of the Lord came is inspiration.

"The word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani." Whether Jehu ever wrote down what the Lord told him, we do not know. But if he did not write it, someone else did; and the writing was just as true as the spoken word. It is a true, accurate, record that faces us again and again in the Bible. At your leisure, glance casually at the book of Exodus. Turn the pages until you come to the appearance on the scene of Moses. Turn page after page, and see how often it is said, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying." Either the Lord did speak to Moses, or He did not. If He did speak to Moses, we have here the record of what God spoke. If you read the Bible with an unbiased mind, you will see that every page of it claims to be a record

of the Word of God: it is what God has said, or what God has done.

There is another man in Scripture called Jehu, but he was the man of whom it was said, "He driveth furiously"—that was, before the days of motor-cars. He drove furiously. He was the son of Nimshi: this Jehu was the son of Hanani. Do not confuse them. One was a prophet: the other a great military leader. We have to do in our lesson tonight with the sayings of Jehu the prophet: "The word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha."

Let us refresh our minds, so that we may know who Baasha is. First, the Word of the Lord came to Jehu "against" a certain man. If we, in our daily lives, take courses which are directly opposed to the will of God, we may be sure that we shall find the Word of God "against" us. Whenever you turn to the Word of God, and find it "against" you, you had better listen to it. Pay careful heed to what it says. The Word of the Lord is never against us unless there be something in our lives that is against God. If there be anything against God, against His revealed will, we had better make haste to remove it; for we may be sure that God's attitude toward that thing will not change.

People do not like to hear a word that is against them, and yet very probably that is the very word we most of us need to hear. If we would be wiser tomorrow than we are to-day, we need correction to-day that we may be wiser. If we would be better men and women tomorrow than we are to-day, we must hear the Word that will make us better, and show us wherein we fall short to-day. He is not a wise man who refuses to receive instruction. There are people whom you cannot teach anything. You cannot teach anybody who knows everything to begin with. In some respects we are all like that. Many of us have departments of our nature closed by prejudices. We think that in respect to some little segment of truth, we know it, and, knowing it, we want nobody's instruction. We have made real progress when we have learned to divest our minds of prejudice in respect to anything alleged to be true, or to any aspect of such alleged truth; and then, with courage, fearlessly to address ourselves to an understanding of the truth. If we are right, we shall find abundant confirmation of it. If we are wrong, it is better that we should know it. If you should go down to the Union Station and get on a train that is going to Montréal when you want to go to Winnipeg, the best time to discover your mistake is before the train moves out, and not when you find yourself in a place in the opposite direction from that which you wanted to go. Let us listen to our critics, and receive instruction. Thus we shall prove ourselves to be wise.

Baasha was a man of the tribe of Issachar. He was not of royal blood, even as Jeroboam was not of royal blood; but he rebelled against Jeroboam, and personally slew the first of Israel's kings.

That leads us to the consideration of another matter that runs all through this chapter. This chapter is an inspired record of a series of post-mortem examinations. It is a record of successive judgments that had fallen upon evil men, and the Holy Ghost, by inspiration, moves certain men to write down an account of the tragedies; and to show why, and of what, they died.

We are living today in a very perplexing age. I remember when I was a boy how news of a sudden death, or of any kind of catastrophe, moved me; and how I,

as a child, used to enquire in my own mind why this had come, and what God had to do with it. In my early ministry, when a sudden death occurred, and the funeral service was held, it seemed as though the whole countryside was solemnized by the event. People gave up their work, and came to the funeral by the hundred. I always felt it provided an occasion in which to warn people to be ready for God's hour, and to be prepared to meet Him when summoned into His presence.

We do not feel that so much to-day, because the teaching of our pulpits and of our schools has had a tendency to becloud the conception of a personal, present, transcendent, God, sovereignly superintending the details of human life. We have been taught that God is far away, remote from the affairs of daily life; that our little lives do not concern Him. A minister preached last Sunday morning on the Moose River disaster. Of course, he spoke of the scientific attitude of mind, and explained that if tunnels were not properly protected, if the timbers were decayed they would fall in—all these things would come to pass, and if and when they did, it was of no use to pray about them. The only thing to do was to prop up the tunnel, and see that the thing did not occur again. It was a purely naturalistic view of life—and that is the view that generally obtains. It was wise to emphasize the necessity for propping the tunnel. But when we have done our best and in spite of our utmost care, life is full of unprotected tunnels. When they fall in, and entrap us, is it then useless to pray that God may mercifully deliver us? If not, life must be tragic indeed. If a little boy is run down by a motor-car, or one sustains some other kind of injury, it may easily be explained on natural grounds. The child ran out without giving the motorist any warning, or the motorist's brakes were defective. The shortening of a human life was the result. That is one way to look at it. But if the Bible be true, notwithstanding our modern inventions, and the mechanization of human life, it remains true that not a sparrow shall fall to the ground without our Father's knowledge, that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered"; it still remains true that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose".

Think a moment or two of that verse, and it will bring comfort. "All things." That is a large order—the things of your infancy, and of your mature manhood. It means things related to you that may take place in the other hemisphere, or take place here. It means things that, in human estimation, are very important, and also things that, according to our standards, may seem so insignificant as not to be worthy of mention. But life is made up, for the most part, of very little things; and in such a case as I have referred to—an accident—a fraction of a second may make all the difference between life and death. A car is passing down the street, and you are there at the time. Why are you there at that time? Or why were you not there? We have all had experiences when we could scarcely understand how we escaped catastrophe. Why did we? The Bible says that "all things"—not some, but all of them, "work together for good". It must be "all", or none. If one thing were excepted, we should not be safe. If we are preserved eleven times, and the twelfth are pulled off the sidewalk in front of a car, what then? "All things work together for good to them that love God."

"All things" cannot work together unless there be Someone to Whom "all things" are subject. In other words, if we lose our view of the absolute sovereignty of God, and of the fact that He is personally present in the life of every believer, we can know no good; and we can know no true peace. I believe these historical records are left us to show us how God does—I had almost said, wrap Himself about with human events—how He lives in the affairs of men, and of nations; and that even the most commonplace events that seem, from the natural point of view, to be natural—and wholly natural—are yet by this Book of inspiration directly related to the sovereign will and purpose of God.

When I read the newspaper to-day, I am like the rest of you, and like the statesmen of the world, too. Sometimes I think some of them are no wiser than we, and sometimes wonder if some of them are as wise. I know a few of them I would like to correct, if I had my way. But we read the record of the doings of the world for a day, and we say to ourselves, What next? How are we ever going to get out of this? Who will lead us out of this tangle? I do not know how you feel about it, but I have a calm confidence. Black as the day may be, complicated as national and international events may seem, the Bible remains true; and if that be so, God is not surprised; and in all the events of life—your life as an individual, our lives nationally, collectively in Canada, or as part of the Empire, part of the whole world, for there is a kind of racial solidarity—God is working out His plan.

"Our lives through various scenes are drawn,  
And vexed with trifling cares;  
While His eternal thought moves on  
His undisturbed affairs."

In the days before the Great War I had been somewhere in the western part of the Province, speaking. I changed at a station in the early morning, and I bought a London paper in which was an account of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and the Duchess Sophie, of Hohenberg, at Sarajevo. I was in Canada: that happened in Europe. It was only a pistol shot that terminated the lives of two people who did not mean much to me. But I said to myself, I wonder to what that will lead? I did not know—nobody knew—that it would mean the lives of sixteen millions of men. But it did. So intimately is human life related that we cannot be indifferent to any occurrence anywhere. It may take place in Siberia, in Japan, in Russia; and yet have a very direct bearing upon us.

What is the use of being born, or of living at all, if we cannot believe there is Someone in the heavens looking after us? But there is! And this is the record of it.

Here are two principles that are sometimes very difficult to relate. Jeroboam had sinned, and his career, in the providence of God, was ended. An executioner was required, and Baasha arose—and he killed Jeroboam. When the time of judgment comes, God is never at a loss to find someone to execute His will. And yet Baasha himself was an evil man, and only perpetuated and enlarged the sins of which Jeroboam was guilty; and in due time Baasha suffers at the hands of another as Jeroboam had suffered at his hand.

All through biblical history, right down to the time of Christ Himself—and ever since—this principle obtains: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"—there you have the sovereign

purpose of God—"ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"—there is human responsibility. "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" In our day we observe the rise and fall of kingdoms, of empires, or, in smaller spheres, of governments and parties, of men in business, of companies, and corporations. Governments are busy appointing commissions to enquire into this and that, to find out the reason for all the difficulties that obtain. The Lord always knows, and here He draws aside the veil and shows us why.

Baasha was exalted from among the people, and although he was sent as a judgment on Jeroboam, yet he fell into the same sins, and suffered the same judgment. Yet there was nothing in the event itself to show that God's hand was in it. There was nothing supernatural about the death of Jeroboam. He fell in battle. There was nothing supernatural about the death of Baasha. It was a natural event; an enemy destroyed him, as Jeroboam had been destroyed. But the Book reveals that God works supernaturally often in a very natural way, and by the employment of natural instruments. Men are not always judged by a stroke of lightning, or, as the legal phrase is, "by an act of God". The truth is, however, that events which seem to be attributable to natural causes, are really acts of God.

Look at your insurance policy, and you will find you are insured, or your property, against this, that, and the other thing; but it is not (or you are not) insured against certain possible disasters among which are some classified as "acts of God". That is to say, something that takes place that is entirely beyond human action or control, that is apparently without the employment of human instrumentality. But there are many more things that work in human life than are so described in your insurance policy. Nobody would ever have said Baasha's death was due to an act of God—but the Bible says it was. Certain very ordinary occurrences may come to you or me, but if we are instructed Christians, and live in the light of the open Bible, we shall diligently enquire what the divine purpose in those events is. It may be brought home to our consciences that this or that occurred to us because we were not in right relation to God.

God is doing things in your life and mine every day, whether we see it or not. We are never separated from Him, and nothing "happens" to a child of God. Things occur by God's permission—and sometimes by His direct act—although they may seem to be natural.

Baasha is destroyed, and his family is blotted out. That is a terrible thing! That is quite out of keeping with modern thought. Suppose a physician were to diagnose a malady someone here has, as cancer, an external cancer of some sort. Suppose it were discovered in its incipient stage, and the surgeon were to say, "We must operate", how much would he take away? Would you say, "Doctor, do not take it all away"? What would he do? He would get down to the last rootlet of the tiniest fibre. The only value of such an operation would be in its being thorough, complete, that everything malignant should be extracted, nothing left. Baasha was a social cancer, a deadly plague; therefore he was completely removed.

The same fate had come upon Jeroboam's house, for he too was a plague. He "made Israel to sin", and the divine Surgeon said, "I will cut that out, and will blot out the last remnant of the house of Jeroboam." He

took Abijah home. "because in him there (was) found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." But as for the rest of Jeroboam, he was blotted out.

There are some people who need to be blotted out, for the good of society. It is possible for a human being so to sell himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord as to become a cancer to society, not fit to live, beyond redemption. So the house of Jeroboam was blotted out. The divine Surgeon, looking upon Baasha, said, "You are as bad as he. I will blot you out too." Remember that principle when you meet the higher critics, who say, "Your Bible tells us about the extermination of the Canaanites. I will not believe the Bible." It tells of more than that. Did you ever hear of a surgeon burning out a disease? That is the philosophy of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was a judgment that was indispensable to moral sanitation, an operation performed in the interests of the world's moral health. The Lord said, "I will burn it up."

Let me tell you of another surgical operation. The Lord said, "The end of all flesh is come before me", and he sent the Deluge that blotted out the human race except those who were alive in the ark. Why? As a judgment, a punishment? Yes, upon the wicked; but as an act of grace toward those who lived. Why must there be a hell? To make heaven possible. There could not be a heaven without a hell. There cannot be love with hatred. The very love that loves, must of necessity hate everything that would injure the object of that love. Hence, these records of judgments are the accounts of post-mortem examinations after the judgment has fallen. When a man is hanged, an inquest is held on the body, and the jury finds that the man came to his death by the execution of the sentence of the Court in due process of law. How did he die? Under the curse of the law. Always an inquest is held on a murderer. Here is an account of the inquest. After Jeroboam is slain, and Baasha is slain, the Lord moved someone to write it down: "Tell why they died, so that generations following may know."

So it goes on throughout the chapter. I need not go into the particulars of it, except to show you that which took place as between Jeroboam and Baasha, took place again between Elah, and Zimri, and Omri who was the father of Ahab. The evil which was initiated by Jeroboam, with every succeeding king, waxed worse and worse until at last the whole nation was destroyed.

One or two things only. "Omri went up from Gilead, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died." He committed suicide. He saw there was no way of fighting it out, so he set the palace on fire and perished in the conflagration. He perished by his own hand—but why, "For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin." Even suicide was not exempt. God permitted a man to destroy himself by his own hand—for his own sin.

That is true of individuals, and it is true of nations. I have repeatedly said that I believe Germany will destroy herself. I believe Russia will destroy herself, and Italy. It has been true of all forms of dictatorships,

all forms of absolutism, that it commits suicide. God says, "Write it down. It was for his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam."

Our next study will lead us to an acquaintance with Elijah—with the best of all prophets, and the worst of all kings, Ahab and Elijah in contrast. But we shall postpone that until next Fall. Study this chapter in detail: I have merely suggested to you the principles of the divine government of which it is a conspicuous illustration.

### A FRANK CONFESSION

In *The Globe*, of Toronto, June 16th, there appeared an account of a discussion of last year's Social Service report dealing with the "Brotherhood of man—a classless society". One minister, Rev. R. J. Irwin, Pastor of Donlands United Church, was quoted as having made rather a frank confession. *The Globe* quotes Mr. Irwin thus:

"Are we really committed to Jesus when we're off duty? Frankly, I must admit I'm not prepared to be loyal to God if it means my job. I feel my first duty in this world of competition is the preservation of my wife and family."

The saying reminds one of the prediction of a prophecy respecting the house of Eli: "It shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." Over against that, we may set a passage from Luke: "And there went great multitudes with him; and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

For the honour of the ministers of all denominations, we may earnestly hope that Mr. Irwin's attitude so frankly confessed is unique among ministers. While we say this, however, we greatly fear there are many who put their job first, and everything else afterward. But the remark here reported, goes to show that the subject of Sunday evening's sermon, printed in this issue, was not untimely.

### SEMINARY NOTES

Mr. H. MacBain has, since the close of School, been working with Pastor J. Watt. Mr. Watt is pastor of the Court-right and Wilkesport Baptist Churches. He has lately supplied the Brigdon Baptist Church on one or two occasions. Recently prayer meetings have been held in homes almost every night in various villages and towns around this neighbourhood. Then the brethren have been canvassing for the new work they are starting in Sarnia. The plan was to rent a disused Roman Catholic Church, do the necessary repairs and begin work in that building; but at the last minute the priest said his committee did not want such an arrangement, and reverted to his original plan of selling the place. Brethren Watt and MacBain thought this unwise at present, and so they have rented the auditorium in the Sarnia City Hall, which contains five hundred chairs. The usual price for religious services is \$10.00 per night. The workers appealed for a reduction, especially since they would lease the place for four months. This letter was published in the paper—there is a good deal of interest in this new venture, you see—and the rent was reduced to \$7.00 a week. Let us ask God that through this effort a real revival of saving grace may come to this city, and indeed to the whole countryside.

As we look ahead to another School term, we recall what

a boon the dinners, served to the students each year at a substantial loss, have been to our men. But loss or no loss, the dinners must continue for the health and efficiency of the students! A few weeks back Mr. W. S. Whitcombe printed in these pages another appeal for "Seminary gardens". We here repeat a former request for preserves. The cook told us recently of a good woman who asked her if she could use jars in the Seminary kitchen. The cook "hummed and hawed" a bit, and finally mustered courage to say, "Yes, if they are full." The lady had misunderstood, and surmised that we needed empty sealers. We have plenty of them; we want them filled! Any sort of preserves are welcome—vegetables, pickles, fruit—and any quantity, little matter how large, can be used in this that really is the Lord's service. And so, ladies, when you are preserving, do a few extra of each variety for the Seminary, and then see that we get them when School reopens. (We shall be glad to return sealers sent us, or, indeed, can supply them.)

—W. G. B.

## NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

### Orangeville

The Orangeville Baptist Church has commenced a new sort of a Missionary meeting. It is for the whole family. They meet at 7.30 p.m., once a month, in the church. For half an hour a prayer meeting is held, then the practical work begins. The ladies sew and make bandages, under the direction of Mrs. Searle. The young women have various tasks, including the superintending of the work of the juniors. Meanwhile, the men are busy in the beautifying of the church and the church grounds. At the last meeting, the ground was prepared and shrubs set out. This sounds like an ideal arrangement, and might well be tried by other of the churches.

### Stanley Avenue, Hamilton

The Stanley Avenue Baptist Church celebrated its twenty-first anniversary on Sunday, June 14th, having postponed the services from the Sunday previous, when special remembrance services were held in memory of Mrs. Rowland Frid.

The church was beautifully decorated with flowers from the various organizations of the church, also baskets from individuals, including one from the Garwin Mission on the Indian Reserve.

The Pastor, Rev. C. J. Loney, preached in the morning on "The March of the Conquerors", and in the evening, "The Kind of Man God Wants". The Deacons' Board assisted in the services, and letters of appreciation of the Pastor and his services were read from the various organizations. There were splendid congregations, and special music for the day.

At the conclusion of the evening gospel service, one hour of sacred music was given by Dr. Robert Harkness and his wife, at the close of which two professed faith in Christ as Saviour. The outlook for the work at Stanley Avenue was never brighter, and the work at the Mountain Mission and Governor's Road Mission is also very encouraging.

### Ordination of Pastor Brackstone

The Cannington Baptist Church has invited a Council of Regular Baptist Churches to meet on Wednesday, June 24th, in the Cannington Baptist Church, to consider the advisability of ordaining Pastor Robt. E. J. Brackstone to the gospel ministry. The afternoon session will begin at 3 p.m., E.S.T. Supper will be served by the ladies of the Church before the evening session. All are cordially invited to attend.

### LIBERIA

#### Still Another New Missionary!

On Monday, June 15th, there was born to Rev. and Mrs. H. L. Davey, in Ottawa, Ontario, a baby daughter, Helen Patricia. Mrs. Davey and Helen are both doing nicely, and we wish to extend our sincere congratulations to the happy parents, who are especially happy that their two boys now have a sister. Remember the whole family in your prayers. We are thankful that Mr. Davey is improving steadily, and we trust will soon be enjoying his usual health.

### African Jewels

This is the story of two Bassa people, Gemo and his wife, who have confessed Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and de-

sire to be baptised according to His command. They were recently examined by our Missionaries, who, although they question them regarding their faith and life, seek to lay the responsibility chiefly with the native members, the Bassa Christians, as they know the lives of their people far better than the missionaries. Gemo was at one time a so-called "country preacher" of the native church, although he cannot read or write or speak any English. He became disgusted with his associates because when he told them he knew very little about the Word of God and wanted to be taught more, they replied, "That does not matter; just go and preach anyway". Then when his preacher's or exhorter's license expired, they demanded that he pay fifty cents for a new license, and if he preached without the license they would put him in jail. As a consequence, this man and his wife have come to the Geah-bar Zondo Mission station, and have signified their desire to unite with the church there. After hearing their clear testimony for Christ, and after a thorough examination, they were both heartily accepted for baptism and membership. Pray for them, because they live in a town which is four hours' walk each way, from the Mission, so that during the rainy season, which is just now commencing, they will not be able to come to church every Sunday. How many Christians in Canada would walk four hours every Sunday to come and hear the Word of God, and then another four hours home? These Christians have been doing it regularly for some time. So far as we know they are the only Christians in their town, so may their testimony be very clear.

### Miss Lane Describes the Mission Services, Sunday, May 1, 1936

To-day is the first Sunday in May and already the people in the towns are worrying because rainy season has begun and there's no sun in the sky, and that means that farms cannot be burnt ready for planting rice. If they cannot plant rice there will be no food.

I have told you it was Sunday, so let me tell you what happened to-day. First of all, the people had been given a special invitation to church to hear what God's Word says about rain, etc., and how God answers prayer. We had a very large attendance and several Christians took part in prayer, asking God to keep off the rain long enough to get their farms burnt. After church we had another special feature of the day, for we all lined up and went down to the river to see two more of God's children confess Christ in baptism. It was a beautiful sight. Can you see us all? One long continuous line, single file, going to the river, about five minutes' walk. At the river the school boys and girls made two lines along the water's edge, and then the men and women stood all around as closely as they could. First we sang in English, and then in Bassa. Then God's Word was read and explained. After this the two candidates (a husband and wife) testified to the people and told why they were being baptised. Then Mr. Mellish led them through baptism as we were singing in Bassa, "Where He leads me, I will follow".

Then God gave us other special blessings to-day, too. Would you like to hear about them? Well, last night my little Pearl came to me and said, "Missis, if I get up and tell the people I am a Christian, could I be baptised?" Then she added, "If I'm too small I can wait". I questioned her and found her so clear that I took her over to Mr. and Mrs. Mellish and told her to ask them the same question. I did this because a little while ago the opportunity was given for anyone to confess Christ, and she had come away feeling quite sad because she had let her chance to testify slip by, and I knew how she felt. Mr. and Mrs. Mellish found her answers quite clear, and so said they would give her another chance to tell the church people. To-day, when the invitation was given for those who wanted to follow Jesus, one boy raised his hand. Then the opportunity was given for those who wanted to be baptised. Pearl looked at me and then stood up and told the people that she was a Christian and wanted to be baptised. Then Daisy stood up, and also another girlie, Mary Zondo, each one telling us in her own words that she would like to follow Jesus.

Now, dear reader, these three school girlies are already on the Christian pathway. None of them has Christian parents, yet all love Jesus and want to follow Him, and others are coming too. What about you? Are you a Christian?

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WM. J. JONES, EDITOR

Vol. 11 Second Quarter Lesson 26 June 28, 1936

### A CALL TO THE THIRSTY

Lesson Text: Isaiah, Chapters 54 and 55.

**Golden Text:** "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price."—Isaiah 55:1.

**Bible School Reading:** Isaiah 55.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS:** Monday—Gal. 4:21-31; Tuesday—Ps. 103:1-14; Wednesday—Jn. 4:1-10; Thursday—Jn. 4:11-26; Friday—Jn. 7:37-44; Saturday—Ps. 96.

The blessings consequent to the redemption set forth in Chapter 53, are found in their subjective form in the chapters we study to-day. The finished work of the Servant issues in the acceptance of that work by His servants (55:17). The rest of the prophecy is devoted to the servants (the name appears 11 times, whereas the Servant, though appearing, does so without His name) and their place in the scheme of redemption.

#### CHAPTER 54

One of the inimitable songs of Isaiah opens the chapter, and another closes it.

Vs. 1-3—This section opens with the command to sing and "enlarge the place of thy tent". We are forbidden any interpretation other than that which ties up the command to the Church. The Apostle Paul, in an allegorical illustration of the old and new covenants, calls upon v. 1 for illumination, in Gal. 4:21-31. The whole argument is that Sarah typifies the Church; Hagar Israel. The Prophet has in his mind Is. 51:2 as he thinks of the blessed fruitfulness of the Church as the completed fulfillment of this promise to Israel. The extension of Israel (cf. note 49:20) is really a type of the extension of the Church in its ministry to Gentiles, "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem" (Gen. 9:27). The conquest of Israel by the Gentiles meant the blessings of the one true religion to the Gentiles. Indeed this extension (3) we have already seen (49:12 note), but must now note, as an extension promised to Abraham (Gen. 28:14; cf. Gal. 3:8) in which promise and blessing Gentiles now share. Such enlarging is wide in extent (cf. 49:23), and enlivening to the "desolate cities" (cf. 49:19).

Vs. 4-8—Jehovah promises in mercy certain blessings. What these promises are we now see. Israel had been forsaken, as it were, of Jehovah her Maker (cf. 49:14 and 50:1) in the Babylonish Captivity, and typically now. But her forsaking was only temporary; her greater glory is to be realized in the Church to whom Christ is a Husband. The lessons of redemption for believers are found here, as the happy title "Redeemer" indicates (cf. 48:17, and note on 49:7). He who cast off for a moment did so in His sovereign wrath (7). But in His equally sovereign mercy He displays His everlasting "lovingkindness" (R.V. 8). He is now the God of all the earth, but one day shall be "called" that (Phil. 2:11). The glorious promises of grace are herein revealed (62:4), and fully realized in the notable promise of II. Cor. 4:17. The Lord may chasten His people now, but "joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. 30:5). When we were not His own, His grace was manifested to us (Rom. 5:20). Surely, like Israel, we shall be gathered (7; see also 49:18).

Vs. 9, 10—The sureness of the promises are unveiled. As the waters of Noah never returned to the earth, according to the promise of Jehovah; so the punishment of Jehovah, His chastening in exile will not be meted out to Israel. A time is coming when the warfare of Zion will be past. A covenant was made with Noah (Gen. 9:1, ff.) which has not been abrogated. Just so a covenant of peace, a covenant of the Messiah assures the blessings of the promises of vs. 4-8 (55:3; 59:21; 61:8; II. Sam. 23:5; Ps. 89:34). It is an everlasting covenant best pictured as immutable and immovable as the mountains and hills (10; see note on 51:6).

Vs. 11-17—The varied blessings of the promises are now pictured. The heavenly Jerusalem is in the Prophet's furthest vision (11, 12), she who like Israel is afflicted,

and not comforted (cf. note 51:18). All of her children shall be taught of the Lord immediately (13). Here we need the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit. Then we shall see "face to face" and know without mediation of that sort. The Saviour applied this verse in Jn. 6:45 to believers who are drawn to Him only through the sovereign work of God. They are, thus, drawn, said the Lord Jesus, through the instrumentality of knowledge concerning the Father. Small wonder that such knowledge gives us peace, that the knowledge of sins forgiven reconciles (Rom. 5:1).

But v. 14 directs our attention to the Messianic Kingdom, both now and in its future culmination. It is to be a kingdom of righteousness (Rom. 14:17). And although enemies shall beset it, they will themselves fall captive (15; cf. 49:25). For is not Jehovah sovereign? Does His control not extend even to the forger of arms, and to the wielder of battle sword? No weapon against us shall prosper (17:12) and every tongue against us shall be silenced in His time.

#### CHAPTER 55

Vs. 1-5—The Call to salvation. The wide sweep of the call is emphasized (II. Cor. 5:17). It follows as a natural result of the great redemption wrought by the Servant (ch. 53). The intensity and the imperativeness of salvation are set forth in the figure of thirst. Than thirst there is no more primal and urgent human instinct or desire. Everywhere Scripture employs physical thirst as a picture of spiritual thirst (Ps. 42:1; 63:1; 143:6; Jn. 4:14; 7:37; Rev. 21:17). What more vivid promises are to be found than those? The promises of salvation in this chapter are almost without qualification for us. Israel has receded; the world is in the foreground. We who by nature are morally and spiritually bankrupt; who are in rags and tatters; who are without strength (Rom. 5:6) are invited to the feast of strength-giving wine and milk. "Without money and without price", simply because the price was paid (53:6; I. Pet. 1:19). Men in the day of Isaiah squandered their earthly means, as they are now doing. When bread is most wanting, luxurious spending is least curbed. Governments as well as individuals can reap whirlwinds (Hos. 8:7). A most passionate plea drops from the lips of Jehovah, "Hearken". If heeded, good food (62:8; 9), and rich food in Christ (25:6—a prophecy of the Messiah) will follow. To the one hearing the blessed invitation of the Saviour for redemption (3), there is life. Christ alone can give that life (Rom. 10:5) which the law gave as a reward for perfect living. And such salvation is eternal, as everlasting as the covenant of God with the Messiah (cf. 54:10 note; 61:8; Jer. 32:40). He is the antitype of David; greater David's greater Son whose "sure mercies" are here promised. They are "sure" because the Saviour is risen, now no more to die (Acts 13:34). Messianic also are the promises which follow: Christ is to be the "witness" (Jer. 30:9) and "leader" (Ezek. 37:24; Mic. 5:2) of the "peoples" (R.V.), that is, of the Church in which are Gentiles. Jehovah speaking to the Messiah (5) reminds Him of the call to the Gentiles (cf. 45:14; and 49:6 note) who are considered as a "nation" (R.V.).

Vs. 6-13—The Steps in the Plan of Salvation. No more complete single description can be found in the Bible. "Seek" (cf. note 49:8; Ps. 32:6) begins a progressive parallelism (6) which simply teaches that Jehovah is approachable, because He has been propitiated. We may call upon Him for salvation (65:24; Rom. 10:13) because He is "near" (cf. Ps. 145:18, but esp. Eph. 2:13 and Is. 57:19). Boldness ought to characterize our presentation of such a Saviour, and our own approach to Him (Heb. 4:16).

The unsaved are lost in thought, in mind first (Prov. 23:7; Matt. 15:19; II. Cor. 4:4), then in acts or deeds. Thinking in itself is not wrong (II. Cor. 10:5), but evil thinking which is the lot of every unregenerate person constantly (Gen. 8:21; Is. 59:7).

Conversion, "forsake" precedes repentance, as regeneration precedes conversion or the "return" to Jehovah (Jer. 31:19). The mercy of God (cf. 54:8, 10) is extended to such an one, simply because the Servant of Jehovah has already made full provision for salvation (cf. note on 53:4-6). Once satisfaction has been made abundant "pardon" is possible (1:18). But more than pardon—for believers although still blameworthy and culpable are not guilty. A prisoner may be pardoned for a crime, but he is still unjustified, still guilty. We are declared righteous for His dear sake, blessed be the Lord who bought us!

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WM. J. JONES, EDITOR

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### THE BLESSING OF THE SANCTIFIED

Lesson Text: Isaiah, Chapters 56 and 57.

Golden Text: "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed."—Isaiah 56:1.

Bible School Reading: Isaiah 56.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Hos. 4:1-10; Tuesday—Hos. 4:11-19; Wednesday—Hos. 5:1-7; Thursday—Eph. 5:1-14; Friday—Job 18:5-21; Saturday—Isaiah 1:1-17.

Righteousness and good works are ever a part of true religion. Following hard on the lesson of Chapter 55, this lesson plunges into the function and place of works. They are the fruit, not the root of salvation. In a day when insinuations are cast upon the moral law both by "modernists" and certain "fundamentalists", and governments disregard the ordinary virtues of honesty and integrity and righteousness; when juveniles are packing metropolitan areas in such numbers that corrupted manners prevail, we ought to pay earnest heed to the rightful place of the law of God in our lives and those of our country.

Vs. 1-5—The times of Isaiah were times of moral decadence (see Ch. 57). The opening appeal is appropriate. But our righteousness is based on that of God (51:5). Our works (Rom. 13:8-10; Tit. 3:8; Jas. 2:20) must adorn the doctrine, especially in view of the fact that our "salvation is near to come". As the redemption of Israel from captivity was nigh, even so is the coming of our Saviour nigh. Virtuous living must precede His second advent (Tit. 2:12; Rom. 13: 11, 12) even as it preceded His first advent (Luke 3:8, 14). Never let it be lost to view that His coming is in judgment, as well as in blessing (II. Thess. 1:7).

The humble man who delights in such righteousness is blessed (Ps. 112:1; 119:1) because he recognizes the lofty Law of God, represented (2) by the Sabbath. The principle, not the ritual of the Sabbath is here the exemplification of the whole spiritual, moral Law of God. The first Table, the Table of five commandments designating God-ward relations, is epitomized by "sabbath"; the second Table, pointing out man-ward relations, is summarized by "doing any evil". Strangers, or Gentiles who had certain privileges in the Jewish commonwealth (Lev. 17:8, f.) and eunuchs (typifying the spiritually unfit) were debarred from the sanctuary, that is from the congregation of Israel (Deut. 23:1). In the Kingdom of God it is not to be so, for all who have met the demands of the Law in its highest and truest sense (4) will have the privileges of the "house" or Church (5; cf. I. Tim. 3:15). Even the ones (eunuchs) accounted unfit are no longer barred (Eph. 2:14-16). Theirs will be a new name (60:18; Rev. 3:12).

Vs. 6-8—The "strangers" who truly serve Jehovah and love His name, who keep His "covenant" (see above) will be partakers of the blessings of His "holy mountain", that is to say, the heavenly Jerusalem, or the Church (Heb. 12:22). The Gentiles thus typified are "fellow-heirs" of Abrahamic covenant blessings, and as such are entitled to offer up spiritual sacrifices (I. Pet. 2:5-9; Heb. 13:15). Prayer is just such a sacrifice (Ps. 141:2; Rom. 12:1). What a boon to each of us, teacher and taught, learned and unlearned, is prayer! The Kingdom of God is for Gentile as well as Jew, as the Lord indicated in His citation of v. 7 (Mark 11:17). He who will again gather Israel, as He did of old (11:12) will also gather multitudes of Gentiles (cf. note 49:21; 60:3-11; Jn. 10:16).

Vs. 9-12—The Gentile oppressors of Israel then, are called "beasts" (46:11). Their work was done against a nation whose leaders or "watchmen" (Ezek. 3:17) were blind (29: 9-14; Jer. 14:13, 14). What a piling up of images describing the woeful condition of Israel's leaders! The Word of God spares none, even the most exemplar of men in its just denunciations. What appropriate proof of its divine inspiration! Isaiah is here writing of history, and what a philosopher of history he is! His prophecy is never divorced from facts, from history. Prophet and priest alike (24:2;

Hos. 6:8) were guilty of gross sin. They slept away opportunity for guiding the sheep of Israel (Nah. 3:18). They are rightly described by Isaiah as "greedy". His description is amplified and supported by the other prophets (Mic. 3:5, 11; Ezek. 34:8). Their covetousness is exposed by the prophets, too (11; Jer. 22:17; 6:13). How their antitypes ought to take care lest they fall! How believers to-day ought to take extreme care in companying with false prophets, false teachers!

The folly of the leaders in the day of Isaiah is clearly demonstrated by the parable of the Saviour concerning the Rich Fool (Luke 12:19, 20) and by all who are careless about the "morrow" (Prov. 27:1).

### CHAPTER 57

Isaiah continues his comments on contemporaneous life with its terrible injustices. True as his record is and supported as it is by his fellow-prophets (Zech. 13:4; Hos. 4: 1-19), great as were the economic and social ills of their times, it must ever be remembered that the root problem was spiritual. At bottom, the principle involved in moral and ethical defection is the principle that such pollution is only the proximate cause of sociological evils. The basic cause is always spiritual, and such was the case with Israel in those days (Hos. 4:1, 2).

V. 1 introduces the righteous man; v. 20 the wicked man. Both stand in the greatest of contrasts.

Vs. 1-10—Although the righteous man was neglected, although his death was violent, even a death, perhaps, of persecution, but he was not mourned. Their latter end was peaceful, however (2), for they were spared the sight of national, foreign evil (47:11; cf. II. Kings 22:20). However, their escape was from the evil of the future life (1). It is not always true that the righteous are spared from suffering (Ps. 73:5) in this life. We are here moving in the dim light, yet the light, nevertheless, of Old Testament revelation concerning the life to come. V. 2 describes the felicities of the righteous in heaven. There they sleep as in beds (II. Chron. 16:14; Is. 14:18).

But the wicked are not so (v. 21). In their lifetime they made "sport" of the righteous. Although they indulged in sorcery, spiritual adultery in worship of other gods (3) they mocked the godly. A specific delineation of the sins of that generation is found in the verses which follow (5-10).

Impurity of all sorts accompanied heathen rituals—"enflame" (v. 5) implies lustful sin, such sin as is depicted in "Ben Hur" in connection with the related rites of the grove of Daphne. References to the groves of Ashteroth are numerous in prophecy "oaks" (Jer. 2:20; Hos. 4:13; Is. 1:29); "green trees" (II. Kings 16:4; 17:10; Jer. 2:20); Tophet (30:33) where child sacrifice was performed (II. Kings 23:10; Ps. 106:37; Jer. 7:31). The idolatry of such worship is expressed by the description in v. 6 (cf. Jer. 3:9; 7:18). The realistic portrayal of this worship as adulterous, typical of unfaithfulness to Jehovah then follows (8-10). For comment on this section, see note on 50:1; Hos. 2:5. Israel by such worship had set up household gods perhaps, violating Lev. 2:9, 16; had broken the Sinaitic covenant (Ex. 23:32); had made entangling alliances with other countries and other gods in those countries. In this section we have set forth the principle of the sinner's love of sin (8; Jn. 3:19); the lengths to which he will go—"far off"; and the stubbornness of sin, as well as its sudden revival (v. 10).

Vs. 11-13. Although Israel had no cause to fear men, she yet forgot God who was longsuffering (Rom. 2:4). His mercy thwarted, He vows declaration of their Pharisee-like righteousness, and their works (12). Their works were both evil (59:6) and good (1:11; Am. 4:4). But they were condemned on both counts. Let their gods deliver them, if they will! But the gods are like Baal (I. Kings 18:29) whose impotency Elijah so dramatically exposed. "But" the one who trusts Jehovah (Ps. 37: 3, 9) will possess the land (cf. note 49:8).

Vs. 14-21. The Holy God, the lofty One is also the personal, the close God. This is an excellent summary of the teachings of Isaiah. Because He is that, Jehovah regards frail humanity (Ps. 90:11) especially believers (I. Cor. 10:13). The idolatry of covetousness prevalent in Israel brought the punishment of captivity. But Israel's backsliding (Jer. 3:14) will be healed (Hos. 14:4, f.). He will restore (18) and He will bring peace (19; 32:17) to those afar off (Eph. 2:17). The fulfillment of v. 19 in prayer is seen in Heb. 13:15.