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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

HOW LITTLE WILL DO

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, July 26th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

"He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?"

"And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

"And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."—John 9:35-38.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the Ladder set up upon earth whose top reaches to heaven, for the Daysman Who lays His hand upon us both, for the Mediator between God and man, through Whom we have access by one Spirit to the Father: in His name we bow this evening. We acknowledge before Thee our inherent sinfulness: we have all sinned, and come short of Thy glory. We have no right in ourselves to be where Thou art, yet we thank Thee that Thou hast had compassion upon us, that many of us have been made the children of God through faith in Christ. Thou hast brought us into fellowship with Thyself, and given us a place among the children. Thou hast taught us to pray, and to call Thee our Father Who art in heaven.

Thus would we come to Thee this evening. We make mention of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, the atoning sacrifice which He made in our behalf, of the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth us from all sin. In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sin. In this we greatly rejoice, because we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

We are pilgrims, and strangers; we have no continuing city here. This we acknowledge before Thee; but we seek a city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. We have come to this resting-place by the way on the pilgrim road. We desire, O Lord, to meet with Thee, and to refresh our spirits by the wellside. Draw near to us. Thou hast promised that our shoes shall be iron and brass, and that as our days so shall our strength be. For some, the road is very rough, very steep, very wearisome. Some have little strength—who of us is strong apart from Thee? Sometimes we are very tired; sometimes, it may be, some feel they can scarcely go on. Yet Thou hast made us to know that those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. We come to seek that renewal this evening. May Thy gracious Spirit minister the truth of Thy gospel to our hearts. May it be as the heavenly manna to our souls, as the water of life to the soul

that panteth after Thee, as the hart panteth after the water brooks.

Some before Thee are worn by battling with the enemy. They need more than meat and drink; they need the healing of Thy balm. O Comforter of souls, draw near to us. Make us all to know that God has taken knowledge of us; that He loves us; that He has given us a place in His plan; that we are never out of His thought. Sometimes the world seems cold and cruel. Sometimes Thy children feel lonely. The world lieth in the wicked one. We find no love in the world for those who love Thee. Give us a foretaste of heaven. Help us to make full use of the earnest of our inheritance, and to rejoice in our heirship, gladly anticipating the day of the redemption of the purchased possession.

Perhaps there are some here whose eyes have never been opened by Thy Spirit, who have never seen the King in His beauty, nor beheld the land that is very far off. Oh that that vision may dawn upon them! Dawn upon our spirits, chase the shadows from our minds, we pray Thee. Let us not see men as trees walking, but see all men clearly; in Thy light may we see light!

There may be a stranger here whose case is peculiar. Perhaps he feels that no one understands him. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy. But Thou hast the key to all hearts. Thou hast the tongue of the learned, and knowest how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. Lord, come to the man who feels his situation to be singular. Let him be assured that God has not passed him by. Make us all aware that we are in the presence of One Who knows all that ever we did. This can be none other than Christ.

We seek Thine evening benediction as we meditate upon Thy truth. May it come to us as the word of God! Open our minds and enlighten our understandings, we beseech Thee. We commend to Thee all the interests of Thy kingdom: those who minister the gospel on the streets, Salvationists, and all others who in any way seek to make Jesus Christ known. Lord, we desire that men should know Thee; therefore bless every faithful witness. May Thy word thus delivered prove to be the power of God unto salvation!

Look with mercy upon the sick, and those who minister to

them. Draw near to Thy children who are engaged in necessary labour, and deprived of the privilege that is ours; we bring them all to Thee, and pray that Thou will visit those who are unable to come to Thy house. For those who travel by land and sea, for all the rulers of the earth, we pray. Thou great God Who didst so love the world as to give Thine only begotten Son, let Thy blessing rest upon us all, since we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

We are admonished in the Scripture to let our moderation be known unto all men. It is a common human tendency, in all realms of thought and activity, to swing to extremes. That is especially true in matters of religion. There is a disposition in our day to belittle what is called theology. That is a matter, we are told, that should engage the thought of the professor and the profound religious scholar. People generally, it is assumed, are not interested in theology; it is said the only thing that matters is our religious experience.

What is called theology is only an attempt to explain, on the basis of God's Word, the relationship of the soul to God and to man. On the other hand, there are people who are very precise, very dogmatic, very exact and exacting. They would like to run everyone's religious life into the mold of their own religious experience. Unless you have had an experience exactly like theirs, and are able to state it in their language, they have some doubt as to whether you are saved or not.

Many years ago a faithful Sunday School teacher requested me to have a talk with one of her scholars, a little girl of twelve or thirteen years of age. The child professed to be a Christian, and desired to obey the Lord's command to be baptized, and unite with the church. I had a talk with her, and in simple, childlike language she related her experience. She told how she had been made to know she was a sinner. She saw that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of sinners, and had committed herself to Him, and believed that He had forgiven her sins—a child's story of how she had come to feel toward the children's Saviour.

But her mother said to me, "I should like my father to have a talk with her before she is baptized." The grandfather undertook to "have a talk" with the little girl, and later I saw him and asked him what he thought. "I am not satisfied at all", he said. "Why not?" I enquired. He replied: "I asked her many questions for which she had no answer." "Would it be impertinent", I enquired, "to ask you what questions you put to the child?" "I quoted to her, 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life', and asked her whether she had the Son. She replied, 'Grandpa, I don't know.'"

The grandfather was a theologian in the strictest sense, and assumed that everyone's religious experience could be resolved into an exact verbal formula; and unless one actually subscribed to his statement of things, he could not believe such an one was a Christian.

There are people who seem to think that religious experience may be subjected to such a demonstration as is possible in a chemical laboratory. You put certain ingredients together, follow certain processes, and secure a certain result. There is a subtle moral chemistry about it, but it is not the chemistry of the laboratory: it is the chemistry of the dew, and the rain, and the sunshine. When God kisses the flowers into beauty, and makes the air sweet with their fragrance, and fills the trees with the music of the birds—His work is not only beyond some understandings, but beyond their appreciation, too. They would like to put every bird in a cage, and every plant

in a pot—and wrap every Christian in their logical formula.

I would not underestimate the importance of our concerning ourselves with facts. By all means, let us have the experience. But surely there can be no objection to our seeking a rational scriptural explanation of fact. You may be sure of a fact without being able to formulate any satisfactory theory of it. But if you know the philosophy of the thing, the reason for the fact, you will enjoy it not less but more. A man may enjoy driving a car without having any exact knowledge of its mechanism. But he will drive better and more comfortably if he knows what is taking place within the car's mechanism as he operates it.

I ask you therefore to study this story which I have read to you this evening, to see how the Divine Expert deals with a needy soul. He does not deal with him as you would. There are people who seem to think that salvation lies at the end of a syllogism. They would argue everybody into an acceptance of Christ. They are full of contention. You must not pick the fruit before it is ripe. You must not be impatient with a rosebud because it responds only slowly to the sunbeam. It will be a better rose if you let the sun unfold it than if you try to force it open with your clumsy hands.

A Christian is a new creation; the issue of a supernatural power. A Christian is the product of the creative Spirit of God. It is marvellously interesting to stand by and see God do things. Let us look at this Divine Workman. How entrancing the story!

There is the fact, a blind man. "What is the reason for it", asked the disciples. In the exact words of Scripture, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Our Lord answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him—that I might have an opportunity to manifest the power of God. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." "When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent): He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

The blind man's eyes having been opened, all the neighbours were interested, and began to discuss this tremendous fact. The neighbours, the Pharisees, the Jews, the parents, joined in debating this man's experience. They almost got into a quarrel over it. Let us see how the thing was done.

I.

First, THE MAN WAS THE SUBJECT OF—I had almost said, AN ANONYMOUS MINISTRY. A strange Prophet of Whom he knew nothing came into his life and opened his eyes, ministered to him on the plane of the physical—said nothing about his sin, nor how it might be forgiven. All He did was to open the man's eyes.

This man had been born blind. From his birth he had lacked the ministry of one of his senses. Going along the street last night I saw a man looking up toward the sky, and as I passed I said to him, "Have you found it?" He spoke with a foreign accent, and pointing to a certain spot said, "Is that the comet?" But this man had never seen a comet—he had never seen a star, nor a flower. He had never seen his mother's face! He had been excluded from the world of beauty, of colour and of form; and by so much he was an underprivileged man. They

had no braille system in those days. He had, in all probability, never read. He had lived a very circumscribed life, and did not know very much, for his life had been spent in darkness. He did not know why he was blind. The disciples asked that question, "What is the origin of this man's affliction? Explain it to us." But the Lord did not explain it. The man did not know why he was blind—but he knew the fact. Whatever theory he may have entertained of it, he did not really know why. But he had no doubt about the sad and solemn fact that he had never seen the light of day.

There was something this man did not know about himself. It is well to know one's self. It is well to be thoroughly informed of the constitution of our own nature. By all means let us have the fullest instruction about ourselves from the Word of God. But here was one who had not had that privilege. Nor did he know much about the One Who opened his eyes. He knew that He was a Man called Jesus, but knew nothing of His origin. Whence He came, or whither He was going, he did not know. All he knew was that He had made clay, and opened his eyes.

I do not suppose when the blind man went to the pool of Siloam he expected very much. There is nothing to indicate that this man was a man of mighty faith, that he believed in any profound way in Jesus Christ. He knew enough only to do as he was told, to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. What he expected to result from it, we do not know. I doubt whether he expected very much. He had probably been prescribed for hundreds of times before—but he had remained blind. I fancy he went to the pool thinking that at least the experiment would not hurt him; for I am inclined to believe, so far as he himself was concerned, it was an experiment.

How little or much faith must a man have to be saved? How great must his faith be? How large the fund of his knowledge? The only thing this man knew was that he was blind, that some Man had anointed his eyes, and told him to wash—without even a promise that he should see. But somehow he knew enough to do as he was told.

I have known people to say, "I wish I had more faith." They wanted to analyze their faith, their emotions, their feelings. They wondered whether they had repented enough, whether they had been sufficiently sorry for their blindness. People turn their thoughts upon themselves, and subject themselves to analysis; and often their last state is worse than their first.

How simple this man was in his faith! What faith he had issued in obedience: he did as he was told—with the result that he received physical blessing, his eyes were opened. "Who is the prophet?" "I know only that He is called Jesus." "Where did He come from?" "I do not know." "How does it come to pass that your eyes are open?" "I can only tell you what happened. I only know the fact: I have no explanation of it. One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. That is my experience."

Does the Lord come to us on the physical plane still? Does He begin with people in our day on that low plane? Does He ever touch people physically?

I have known people to begin to pray when they were sick. They had no special religious interest, but they knew they were ill, and hoped there was somebody, somewhere, who could help them—and they prayed. One of our members told me last evening of a nurse of her acquaintance who was attending a patient who was dying.

The man was afraid, and asked the nurse to pray for him. She was not a Christian, and knew nothing about prayer. But here was a dying man asking his nurse to pray for him. There was nothing else for her to do, so she closed her eyes and as best she could began to pray, feeling out after God "if haply she might find him", in behalf of a dying man. She prayed on, and at last she concluded her prayer, opened her eyes—to discover that her patient was dead. But she was alive. In the very act of praying for someone else, in calling upon the name of the Lord, the promise had been fulfilled in her own experience, "Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." She did not know why or how, but she had a definite realization that God had heard her, communication had been established with the Skies.

A man came into one of our prayer meetings in the parlour of a Saturday evening some years ago, a business man. He said to me afterward, "I had to come. I had a special blessing to-day. I am a business man, and when I opened my mail this morning I had on my desk orders for ten thousand dollars' worth of goods. I had not asked for such a blessing, did not feel I deserved it, and I had to come and give thanks for 'every good and perfect gift'."

I have known God to enter the family when a little child came into the home. At other times in the presence of physical death, or when threatened by physical disability of some sort, men pray. This man did not ask to be saved—did not seek salvation deliberately and consciously—but he prayed; and God answered him. Very often this great God of ours condescends to begin with us on the lowest plane.

"He washed, and came seeing." The man did not know very much then: he only knew that something had touched him that had made him other than he was. The blinds had been thrown up, and he had looked out through the windows upon a new world that he had not known existed. You must not bring your catechism and expect him to be able to answer your questions in every particular. But he knew one thing profoundly: "Whereas I was blind, now I see."

The miracle, I say, was apparently in the realm of the physical, though it was more than that: "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." There is a wondrous unity in these natures of ours, and when God touches the body, He touches something else. This man's *heart and mind were already engaged*. He was not a particularly religious man; he had received no religious instruction; he was not prepared to debate with the Pharisees and doctors of the law—although he gave them rather a hard time before they had finished with him. But he had received a blessing, and his heart responded. There was gratitude there. His emotions were awakened so that he could say, "Thank you",—albeit he did not as yet know to Whom he was indebted for the blessing he had experienced.

I have seen some men who had habits that were far from Christian, habits of speech, and almost in the same breath with which they offended one's religious sensibilities, they talked about the goodness of God. Their hearts were somehow touched by something God had done for them, while as yet they do not actually know Him. This man, although he did not know who Jesus was, had had kindled in his heart an affection for the One Who had helped him.

Do not neglect the psychology of faith: "It is with the

heart man believeth unto righteousness." When God comes into a man's life and awakens an affection for Himself, observe that man and see how faith grows, until at last the full light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shines into his heart.

This man's mind was exercised as well as his heart. His reason and intellect were engaged, for he began to enquire into the reason for what had happened to him. You may make light of theories if you will, and mock at the philosophy of things; but you cannot experience a beneficial fact as did this man, without beginning to ask, "Why did it come to pass?"

You women are supposed to be a little more curious than the other side of the house—I do not know whether you are or not. But you get a package from someone, and instantly you are interested. It is a gift from a friend—and you lay it on the table and go about your work! Ah no; you must know immediately what is in it. You break it open, and see what it is: "Is it not lovely? I must see who it is from." "That can make little difference?" "I must see if there is a card in the wrappings; I want to know who sent it." That is natural. When God stoops down and leaves a present on your doorstep, He forces you to enquire, Who sent it?

That is why men have always sought, not only a knowledge of the fact, but the philosophy of it, some explanation of it. Why and how did this marvellous work of healing come to pass? The neighbours said, "How did it happen?" The Pharisees enquired, "What did he do to thee? How opened he thine eyes? What sort of man was he? Where did he come from? Where did he get the necessary power?" They were greatly concerned over the simple fact that, whereas he was blind, now he could see.

The man began to reason with himself about it. He was a bit reticent at first. He heard the discussion among the neighbours and Pharisees, and all he could say was, "Here I am. Once I was blind, but now I see."

They then said, "There must be a mistake somewhere. We do not believe you ever were blind." They called the man's parents: "The Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself."

They sent for the man again and said, "We have solved the problem. Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." They argued with him, asking him again and again who his benefactor was. At last he said, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?" "Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them—mark this, will you?—"Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." This man who had been born blind, when his body was touched, his heart was engaged, and his mind enlightened—and he knew more

than the doctors of the law. He said, "I match your negative with my positive statement. You do not know anything about Him? I do! I know that He opened mine eyes. You say He is a sinner? I do not believe it. I do not know who He is, but somehow He must be related to God. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. This Man, whoever He is, has effected the impossible in my experience, and I am going to find an explanation of it somehow." He seemed to say, "At the present, I do not argue for Him except to say that I know what he has done for me; and I challenge you to explain it." They answered him, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us. And they cast him out."

That is what you will always meet when you argue with people who do not want to be convinced. "Convince a man against his will, he's of the same opinion still." They argued to establish the unworthiness of the man called Jesus, and this man with the opened eyes stood in their way and said, "Explain to me if you can the miracle. Here I am. A miracle has been effected in me that was never effected by any means before. I was born blind, now I see. I cannot resist the conclusion that the man who touched me was of God. I am uninstructed, but that is my theory." His heart was engaged, and his mind began to exercise itself respecting the reason for the miracle.

The Lord Jesus always lays hold of the whole man ultimately. "I pray God", said the apostle, "your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless (entire) unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Sometimes God comes in through the skylight, into our spiritual nature; sometimes He comes in on the level of the mind; by appealing to our reason; and sometimes, if I may so say, He comes in by the basement door, by touching our physical natures. It makes little difference how He comes in, so long as He enters. The fact is, He had entered into this man's life. The man did not know it. He knew something had happened, but he could not tell by Whom, or why, nor could the religionists who criticized—but "they cast him out".

He was thrust out from the presence of the doctors of the law, but *he still had his sight!* I think he said, "I would rather be outside the pale, with open eyes, than be within your circle and still be blind—and 'they cast him out'."

II.

Let us take another step. Jesus Christ had not lost track of this man. He knew all about him: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "I do not know. I have never seen Him. Where can I find Him? Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." "Thou! Thou are the Son of God? The One that opened mine eyes is the Son of God! Lord, I believe"—"And he worshipped him." Instantly he was at the Master's feet.

Observe the psychology of this experience. There are two kinds of agnosticism. Agnosticism means no-nothingism. The agnostic says, "I do not know." These men were agnostic in respect to Jesus. They said, "We know not from whence he is." Yet, mixed with their agnosticism, there was a positive prejudice against the Subject of their enquiry; they did not want to know whence He was. They were inhospitable to any argument in His

favour. When this man said, "Look at me. See my opened eyes. Observe the miracle. Be persuaded of the reality of it, and answer me—who is He Who did it", they said in effect, "We do not know, nor do we desire to know. We know this man is a sinner. We have made up our minds about him. Give God the praise." Theirs was a deliberate, wilful, agnosticism: "This they willingly are ignorant of." And again: "They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved."

There was, however, a sense in which the man himself was agnostic in respect to the person of Jesus. He was not agnostic in respect to his own experience: he knew that his eyes had been opened. Nor was he agnostic in respect to the identity of the Person Who had done it: he knew his eyes had been opened by Jesus of Nazareth. But he did not know who Jesus of Nazareth was. This Jesus had come to him, intruded upon his darkness, opened his eyes: that was all he knew. But instead of being antagonistic toward Christ—note the difference—he was affectionately disposed toward Him. He must have said in his heart, "Whoever He may be, I love Him. I will not let anyone speak against Him. He opened mine eyes, and I am going to stand at His side. He is my Friend." While he knew but little, his mind was open and eager to welcome any word in favour of Jesus. Hence the philosophy of it is in this scripture: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

Once again Jesus came to him, He "found him," and asked him this great question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" I think his reply may be interpreted in this way: "I would believe anything that Thou wouldest tell me. Who is He? Tell me where I can find Him. Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on Him? I want to believe on Him. I am not unwilling, nor even reluctant to believe, but on the contrary I eagerly welcome any word of Thine. My opened eyes are proof of the benignant purpose wrapped up in Thine every word. Point out the Son of God to me, and I will believe on Him." Jesus said unto him; "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee."

Then he had another touch from God. He received another kind of sight. He said, "Thou art the Son of God, my Benefactor, the One with Whom I have fallen in love? Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

There are some here this evening who do not see very clearly, yet your very presence indicates that you are not without interest in the things of God. He has done much for us. We sang about it this evening,—

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

"Unnumbered comforts on my soul
Thy tender care bestowed,
Before my infant heart conceived
From whom those comforts flowed."

Perhaps you have not put your feelings into words; but to yourself you have said, "Somebody has been good to me. Somebody has helped me. I wish I knew who God is! I should like to believe on Him." When a man's heart is thus ajar, when thus he is made hospitable toward the truth, it is not difficult to persuade him who Jesus Christ is. Very often have I spoken to people about Christ, and have found the door locked and barred. I have knocked, but there was no answer; there was nobody at home; there was no response. I have spoken to others; as many of you Christian workers have with the

opposite result. The moment you have spoken the door has been thrown wide, and you have said, "I am in step with the Spirit of God to-day. He has been here before me." You found the man's eyes had been at least partially opened. He was not an utter stranger to grace and to God; he had been touched.

Thus Jesus Christ comes to you to-night. Do you believe on the Son of God? Do you? I ask that question, Do you believe on the Son of God? "What do you mean, *by the Son of God?*" I mean just that, the Son of God, the One Who reveals God, the heavenly Visitor. Perhaps you will answer, "I do not know." Have you anything in your mind against Him? "No; I have nothing against Him." Is your heart warmed toward Him? "Yes; I think I can say it is. When I hear His name my heart is stirred. It pains me when I hear anyone speak against Him." Are you a Christian? "Oh no, sir; I dare not say I am a Christian." But what is your attitude toward the One called Jesus? "Well, there is music in His name to me, but I cannot explain it." What if one should tell you that this Jesus is none other than the Son of God, and the only God that any of us can know? Perhaps one will reply, "I thought of God as being beyond the stars, as having made this world, and all things in it, an infinite Spirit altogether beyond my reach. I have not been able to visualize Him, to form any concrete idea of what God is like."

Would you like to know that God is like Jesus Christ? Would you like to know the creative Spirit that is behind the stars, Who made all things by His almighty fiat, and Who is Himself seated upon a throne governing this universe—would you like to know Him? His name is called "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The prince of Peace". Would you be happy if you could identify Jesus Christ with God? There are wonderful stories in the Gospels about Jesus Christ; the one I have told you to-night about His opening the man's eyes; and did He not multiply five loaves of bread and feed the multitudes, and say to the leper, "I will; be thou clean"? Did He not raise Lazarus from the dead? Did He not lovingly take the children in His arms; put His hands on them; and bless them, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Thus did Jesus. Did He not spend His life going about helping people? Yes; He never did anything else. He went about doing good. That is Jesus. Would you like to know that Jesus is God? Are you minded to say, "I never thought of God as being like that? I was afraid of Him; I was disposed to run away from Him. And do you mean to tell me that God is like Jesus? Even sinful men came to Him. The woman who was a sinner bathed His feet, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Jesus is like the infinite God?" Yes: Jesus is exactly like Him.

"He that hath seen me", saith He, "hath seen the Father." Jesus Christ is "the express image" of the Father's person. Dare anybody here say, "I am glad to know that, sir." Then I will tell you something else about Jesus. Did He not go to the cross? And in the last hour did He not say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"? Did He not die? And did He not rise again from the dead? Does someone say, "Do you mean to tell me, sir, that God is like that?" Yes: He is God! *He is God!* God, because He loved us, took all our sins upon Himself, and suffered the "just for the unjust that he might bring us to God".

Is there anyone here who will say, "If that is what

God is like, if Jesus Christ is God, then I believe. I will worship Him. I will seek no further. I believe?"

Though this man knew little in the beginning, when the Lord laid His hand upon him, he was led into the full light of the gospel. The story does not tell us of any subsequent meeting with the Pharisees. I dare say he met them, for many things might have been written that were not. I can imagine what he would have said had they then said to him, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." He would have said, "I do give God the praise—for I have found that Jesus is God. I have met Him. I know Him. I worship Him as God." He was theologically sound at the end, although he did not know much in the beginning.

When Jesus Christ establishes contact with us, and grace makes a beginning in our hearts, it shines "more and more unto the perfect day". The Lord never leaves us until we "see all men clearly". Do not be above learning the alphabet, religiously. Then you will learn words of one syllable, and the more difficult lessons by and by, until at last you will look into the face of the Word made flesh, and in Him you will find are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; and all that a gracious God has to say to sinful men.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that Thou art such a patient Teacher. We thank Thee that Thou dost begin with us where we are able to begin with Thee; that, having begun a good work in any one of us, Thou wilt certainly perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Help us to learn how little will do to begin with, and how much we shall have by and by. Bless our meditation this evening. Use it to clear away some difficulties in the way of those who do but simply believe. Hear us for Thy name's sake, Amen.

A TEN-YEAR-OLD EDITORIAL

Turning to some of the old Gospel Witnesses, we came upon the following editorial dated July 8th, 1926. It tells of a period of blessing, and we reprint it to remind our members of what God has done, and, at the same time, to bid all remember that He is the same God to-day. Let us pray for a repetition of the blessing.

THE SOUND OF A GOING

From THE GOSPEL WITNESS of July 8th, 1926

For some time THE GOSPEL WITNESS has said little or nothing about the work in Jarvis Street. We have endeavoured to keep our comments on our own work, for some time, within a very small compass. But we have been surprised—and we may frankly confess, delighted—to discover in our journeyings over the Continent that a great many of our readers read the Jarvis Street Church news first of all. God, in His great mercy, has raised up for us a great band of intercessors who naturally look from week to week to see how their prayers are being answered.

The Pastor confesses that he has felt a little concern for his own work for some time, because his duties have taken him so much and so far away from home. But blessing has continued in his absence. Naturally, some departments of the work are bound to suffer through the Pastor's absence. During the last church year the additions to our membership were only three hundred and eighty as against four hundred and seventy-five of the year before. This may partly be accounted for by the frequent absences of the Pastor, because, while people are converted, it is to be expected that more people will come into the fellowship of the church while the Pastor is at home than when a stranger occupies the pulpit, but we rejoice in the measure of blessing we have received.

In four years we have had a net increase of 1,168, the present membership being 2,060. The total additions to the membership during the four years 1922-26 have been 1,463, of which number 989 have been added by baptism.

The last few weeks have marked a great desire, which has been manifest in our prayer meetings, for a great revival. For more than five and a half years our three weekly prayer meetings have continued with unabated interest and power.

Recently, however, prayer for revival has seemed to become with some almost a passion, and we believe the ear of faith can detect the sound of a going over against the mulberry trees.

A genuine revival is invariably marked by manifest instances of the direct operation of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of the people. A very genuine work of grace may be accomplished when it is possible to trace such conversions as take place through certain human instrumentalities; but when the Spirit of the Lord really goes forth in revival power, invariably there are instances of people being converted when alone and under the direct operation of the Spirit of God upon the heart and conscience. Some such instances of that sort we have recently observed. We note two cases, both of them husbands. The first is that of a man whose duty takes him much away from home. His wife had prayed for his conversion long and earnestly, and at last her faith was rewarded when on returning from one of his journeys her husband informed her that he had been converted. A second occurred the last Sunday in June. A young wife had been converted some time before, and on that evening was buried with Christ by baptism. Her husband witnessed her act of obedience; and was there and then so deeply convicted of sin that he could not stay in the service and immediately left. Somewhere, after he had left the building, he passed a motor-car in which there were two little children. The windows were down, and the children were looking out of the windows and singing, "Come believing." The testimony of their childish voices proved another of the King's arrows which are ever sharp in the hearts of His enemies. The sense of conviction deepened, and on the Monday, by the power of the Spirit, this young husband was brought to his knees and kept upon his knees in agony before God for four hours, whereupon he surrendered to Christ, and through a friend sent a message to the Pastor saying he desired to come to see him. He came on Monday evening with a glowing testimony, and last Sunday these two husbands, with others, were baptized.

Sunday evening, July 4th, the Monthly Communion and Reception Service was held at the close of the evening service. A visitor estimated the number of Communicants at one thousand. There were not so many as that, but it was a great gathering, especially for a July Sunday evening. Twenty-one new members were received.

We shall appreciate the continued prayers of WITNESS readers for the work in Jarvis Street.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

We regret that owing to a delay in the mail, the copy for next Sunday's lesson did not reach us in time for publication last week. We are publishing two lessons this week, and shall publish two again next week, and perhaps the week following, in order to get some weeks ahead. Will all who are especially interested in this part of THE WITNESS be careful to preserve these issues so they may have the lessons at hand.

REVIVAL CAMPAIGN IN CALVIN BAPTIST CHURCH, TORONTO

A month's Revival Campaign was opened in Calvin Baptist Church (Highfield Road, just south of Gerrard St. E.) Rev. Frank Roblin, Pastor, on Sunday, July 26th. This Revival marks the completion of a new and permanent place of worship, with a seating capacity of some four hundred people. Evangelist Rolfe Barnard of Texas is conducting the Campaign. Good crowds were present on Sunday and three were saved Sunday night. At this writing, the prospects for a great revival are very encouraging.

The Pastor, Rev. Frank Roblin, invites you to hear this Southern Evangelist who will speak each night, save Monday night, for one month. Delegations from churches of the Union within reach of Toronto will be especially welcome.

"OTHER LITTLE SHIPS"

This week THE GOSPEL WITNESS office received from a lady in Quebec Province the fifth order for four copies of "Other Little Ships", thus for the fifth time taking advantage of the offer of four copies for five dollars. But this friend seems to believe it is a missionary work and distributes the messages contained in the book. Hence, presumably, she makes presents of them to her friends. We publish this note as a suggestion to others.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WM. J. JONES, EDITOR

Vol. 11 Third Quarter Lesson 31 August 2nd, 1936

THE CALL OF JEREMIAH

Lesson Text: Jeremiah, Chapter 1.

Golden Text: "And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."—Jeremiah 1:19.

Bible School Reading: Jeremiah 1.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Ex. 3:1-12; Tuesday—Ex. 3:13-22; Wednesday—Ex. 4:1-9; Thursday—Ex. 4:10-17; Friday—Is. 6:1-13; Saturday—Gal. 1:1-17.

INTRODUCTORY

Of the importance of the prophet we are about to study, there can be no question, for the estimate of New Testaments is mute evidence, yet eloquent (Matt. 16:14; Jn. 1:21). Of his place as a recipient of important divine revelation there ought to be no doubt, for he was the first to have recourse to prayer habitually; to catch up the truth of the personal presence of God with the believer; and to emphasize fully personal holiness, and individual responsibility to God.

But the message of the man cannot be severed from what the prophet was, for his character reflects his message. His was a transparent character. The prophecy reveals him as few Scriptures reveal their writers. An introspective soul, and for that reason a great individualizer; a timorous, tender youth (1:6), filled with misgivings, possibly fear (1:8); a man of tremendous poetical power and strength, one whose sensitive nature was little adapted of itself to the work of a prophet in his day; a gentle, yet firm, a kind yet obdurate, man of God—such was Jeremiah. He was a youth without the pleasures of youth (15:17); a man without the blessings of men in home-life (16:2). More than any other prophet, perhaps, did he suffer for his unswerving fidelity to the truth of God.

CHAPTER I.

Vs. 1-3 is a section in which the date of the call of Jeremiah is given. Jeremiah ("Jehovah founds" or "establishes") was the son of a priest whose training of the young man was devout and strict. Background and home life count tremendously in Christian character and life. In the despised Anathoth (I. Kings 2:26) priestly city (Josh. 21:18) two and one-half miles north-east of Jerusalem, in Benjamin, Jeremiah trained for his task, burrowing deep in the Books of the Law. From the landscape of his home, many figures of the Book are drawn (the hills—4:15; 31:6, 15-20); (the Jordan—12:5; 49:19); (the deep ravines—3:2, 21; 4:11; 7:29). Forty years at least did he prophesy, beginning with the thirteenth year (627 B.C.) of King Josiah, continuing until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. This limit applies to Chapter 1-39, and not to the later prophecies which have a heading of their own (52:12, 27). Jeremiah prophesied in Egypt (53-54).

It is significant that the prophet began his ministry just before the time of the Scythian invasions (c. 625 B.C.), the very year in which Nabopolassar the Assyrian revolted and secured Babylonian independence. At that time the King of Judah, Josiah was a young man. His reign began in 639 (II. Kings 22:1; II. Chron. 34:1) when he was but eight years of age. In 632 "while he was yet young" (II. Chron. 34:3) he sought Jehovah; in 638 he purged Jerusalem of idolatry. The following year Jeremiah began his ministry. How significant that both king and prophet were young! Under the prophet's instruction, religious interest increased, so that the Book of the Law was received with favour in 621 (II. Kings 22:3; 23:2).

Vs. 4-19 is the portion of the chapter dealing with the call of Jeremiah. The nature of that call (4-10) is worthy of note. Jehovah speaks directly with His servant (4), telling him that He had chosen him for particular service before he was born. God "knew" him with a knowledge always present in divine choice. Such election is ever intelligent, rational, as well as purposive. Even as he was called apart from any merit unto the prophetic office, so we are "called to be saints" (Rom. 1:6) from eternity (I. Tim. 1:9). Just so was the prophetic and apostolic call of Paul sovereign and eternal (Gal. 1:15). That every believer has a definite

plan from God is clear from this passage. What a tremendous dynamic to know, assuredly know, that He alone saves, He calls, He keeps, calling in every walk of life (I. Cor. 7:20). But the prophet was commissioned not to Judah only but to the nations (5) who share in the promise to Abraham (12:14-16; 16:19-21; cf. note Is. 49:12; 54:1). But the prophet is moved to cry "Alas", implying not rebellion against the call, but a cry of alarm, pain at the immensity of it and the task implied in it. Comparison of the call of Moses is instructive, for he remonstrated at length with God, rebelling utterly and ultimately being rejected as spokesman for God (Ex. 4:14). The sole reason for Jeremiah's reaction was his inability to speak, to be eloquent, perhaps. One word from the Lord and that objection is silenced in words which form His commission whose terms were implicit faith and obedience (7). The reticence of youth (for the prophet was but a youth [the Hebrew word means that]) was commendable in one set aside for prophecy, but He who gave the mandate to speak, gave also the empowering (8; cf. vs. 19) as He did to Joshua (Josh. 1:5). The Saviour uttered a most blessed "I am with you" whose terms apply to us to-day (Matt. 28:20).

The prophet is not left without a message, however, one whose divine character is impressed upon him by an action similar to that employed with Isaiah (6:7). Jehovah causes His hand to touch the mouth of Jeremiah, thus symbolizing the divine absoluteness of the message of the prophet. The root idea in prophetic revelation is shown in the word "mouth" (cf. note on Is. 58:1). It is the words of God directly, authoritatively given which comprise the deliverances of the prophet Jeremiah. A comparison with the certainty and authority of the gospel revealed to the Apostle Paul, is fruitful (Gal. 1:12). The conception of authority is further conveyed by the employment of a phrase "set thee" which implies the notion of a governor or officer (same word used in 40:7; Gen. 39:4, 5). Armed with such a vice-regency, Jeremiah is sent with an universal message. But his work, like that of any true minister or teacher of the gospel must first be negative, destructive. False notions or views of salvation prevailed then as now. Rubbish and debris must be removed, ere the work of a master builder, of "building up" can be concluded (I. Cor. 3:10; II. Cor. 13:10). The clearing away process is sometimes as difficult, as arduous, as delicate, as demanding, as the building up process. Weeds are effectually destroyed by pulling up—and so sin, for the modern substitutes for weed destruction affect the crops, the true seed. "To build, and to plant" is a favourite figure with Jeremiah (24:6; 31:28, 40). In vs. 10 we see prophecy and fulfillment regarded as one, as if the prophet effected what only God really does (15:1; Ezek. 43:3; Is. 6:10).

The first of two tests for qualification as a prophet is found in vs. 11, 12. Jeremiah sees (probably in a vision) the ordinary sight of an almond tree whose leaves are the first to herald and augur spring. Awakening hope in the national life of Israel is typified, but also sudden punishment. Jehovah is wakeful ("almond tree" and "hasten" are similar Hebrew words) to give sure fulfillment to His Word. The message the prophet discerns, therefore he is a "seer" (I. Sam. 9:9).

How modern prophets need correct visions! A second vision is given, however (13-16) to Jeremiah. He sees a caudron bubbling over—an ordinary enough sight. The large pot (II. Kings 4:38) of metal (Ezek. 24:11) heated from the North but facing South empties its boiling contents Judah-ward. Perhaps a word of caution or warning is typified, Jehovah thus showing His long-suffering. But the prophet announces that not from Egypt in the South, but Babylon in the North is attack coming. It will come from an unexpected quarter—and so with sin. Perhaps there is an allusion to the Scythian attacks and incursions (cf. *Int.*) which served to warn Josiah of the dire necessity of reformation in Judah. But the Babylonians are meant chiefly (4:6; 6:1, 22; 10:22) for they had to enter Palestine from the North at the caravan route at Dan (4:15; 8:16) and thus probably through to Riblah (39:5; 52:9). "The" evil foretold by other prophets will come—such is the burden of this specific declaration of Jeremiah. All the Northern kingdoms will send representatives to Jerusalem where they will sit at the gates (Oriental seats of judgment [Gen. 23:10; Ruth 4:1; Job 29:7] and so palace [22:2; Ps. 9:4]). Jeremiah makes a swift change of figure from judgment to siege. Three reasons are given for this judgment upon Israel: for-

saking God; false sacrifice ("burnt incense" also means "burnt sacrifice"); and worshipping of images.

Vs. 17-19 comprise encouragement on the basis of what precedes—"therefore". Spiritual work such as, Jeremiah's requiring "girding" for walking (Ex. 12:11; II. Kings 4:29), running (I. Kings 18:46), and fighting (Job 12:21; 38:3)—cf. Is. 40:31. The temptation to dismay and discouragement came (15:10; 20:7), but it was not permanent else God's warning of discomfiture would have been fulfilled. Jehovah gave strength for the task for (18) He gave quivering, sensitive Jeremiah a fortified spirit, a will of iron, courage of brass. He was warned of opponents (18), but ultimately he would triumph (19).

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

REV. WM. JONES, EDITOR

Vol. 11 Third Quarter Lesson 32 August 9th, 1936

BROKEN CISTERNS

Lesson Text: Jeremiah, Chapter 2.

Golden Text: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jeremiah 2:13.

Bible School Reading: Jeremiah 2.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Ps. 106:1-12; Tuesday—Ps. 106:13-20; Wednesday—Ps. 106:21-31; Thursday—Ps. 106:32-46; Friday—Ps. 36; Saturday—Is. 59:1-15.

THE EXPOSITION

Vs. 1-13 is the opening section of the chapter dealing with the ingratitude of Israel the whole nation for the past (2) and present (7) love and mercy of God. Jeremiah spoke his prophecy in Jerusalem the capital city, reminding the nation of the love of Jehovah in the wilderness when even then Israel was unfaithful (Ezek. 20:16). Her Saviour could not forget His love for His young bride or the happy days of the past when she followed Him (Deut. 8:2). She was dedicated to Him as the first-fruits (Lev. 23:10-14), and now whoever touches her will be punished (3). God was not unfaithful, there was no iniquity in Him, for He had not broken the covenant. Israel followed after gods which were vanity, wind, and in turn they had become like the gods (Rom. 1:21; Ps. 95:8)—vain. In spite of His care of old, His leading to Canaan, they defiled the land with idolatry (Ps. 106:36f.) and became corrupt particularly in their leadership (8). Jeremiah, though a prophet and a priest did not hesitate to expose their sins. So did Isaiah condemn (28:7) and Hosea and Micah before him.

One look about them will reveal to Israel that from West to East heathen nations with fanatical fidelity clung to their idols which are no gods, but Israel had forsaken her glory (cf. Is. 60:1-3 note). Such contemptuous action was shocking, appalling (12), for it amounted to outright desertion of Him who is the fountain of life (17:13; Ps. 36:9) for the broken cisterns of false religions whose waters, like those of the actual cisterns of Palestine, were foul, murky, and limited in supply.

Vs. 14-30 as a section shows the stubbornness of Israel, even under punishment. Will Israel, born a son, be permanently enslaved by Assyria (lions-Nah. 2:12; Is. 5:29) and Egypt (Memphis, capital of Lower Egypt)? Compared to a woman whose head is shorn, to her shame, Israel is to be punished for her *lasons*, as the defeat of Josiah at Megiddo clearly showed. Her's was the fault, her punishment was of her own doing (17) for forsaking Jehovah and forming entangling alliances with Assyria (Is. 8:11) and Egypt (Is. 8:1-7; Hos. 7:11) against which the prophets had warned (18). Her wickednesses brought with them their own reward, all that Israel might "know" the grievousness of her sin and backsliding (apostasy).

Very old was her sin, her breaking of the yoke, and very heinous too, the character of that sin, (cf. note Is. 57:5) of idolatry. So deep, so ingrained was sin that neither mineral nor vegetable cleansing agents could wipe away the stain (22). She whose planting was from good seed, (21) multiplies her sin by pleading innocence (23). But well does

Jehovah know that she coquetted, that she went after lovers with the unbridled license of the wild ass, with the restlessness of a bewildered young camel. Her stubbornness and ultimate despair which comes from such a sin as hers are depicted in a remarkably fine figure (25). But she will be discovered in her sin, much to her chagrin, and all her leaders with her who believe in the fatherhood of gods (26, 27). And though they turn to God, as sinners do in our time, in the time of trouble, God will refer them to their gods many, lords many. The superficial character of the reforms of Hezekiah is seen here and in 7:9—idolatry still persisted in the time of Josiah. So much so that in the time of Manasseh innocent blood of prophets and the poor (31) was shed (II. Kings 21:16; II. Chron. 24:21).

Vs. 31-37 concludes the chapter with a description of the intensity of the ingratitude of Israel for the favours of God. Israel had broken loose from God (A. V. "we are lords") with a lordly defiance. Utterly unlike a bride she had forgotten her Lord repeatedly—"days without number"—what a poignant figure! So conniving was she in her sinful ways, in her idolatrous adultery that she could teach even wicked women (33). The historic culmination of her sin was not the stealing of the poor, which could have punished (Ex. 22:2), but "these"—the sins of her apostate self (34). Yet in the face of such an accusation, Israel protested innocence, a crime worse than her apostasy, if possible! She reasoned that she was being favoured during the reign of Josiah, for no foreign invasions or incursions disturbed her then. Surely God was in such prosperity! (35). But she little recked with God whose judgment awaited her. Oscillating between one alliance and another with Assyria or Egypt, Israel was sure to bring shame upon herself, akin to that which seized poor Tamar of old (II. Sam. 13:19).

THE APPLICATION

The sure penalty for sinning believers, for backsliders is the paramount lesson running throughout this chapter. Those who have forsaken their first love, the fountain of life, will find only broken cisterns to solace their deep, their long-spiritual thirst.

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

There is an unfailing principle applicable to the Church in its widespread apostasy to-day, found in the backsliding of Israel. Like the leaders of the nation then (8) those in authority, whether self-styled or not, in many formerly evangelical communions are leading hosts who are blinded to their utter repudiation of the gospel. False preachers, like false prophets then, use traditional phrases and terms in the name of religion. Even Bible School teachers can fall unwittingly into the errors of false teaching by using unsound texts and helps. In the present-day falling away there is a tenacity to unbelief which is akin to that of the idolatrous nations (11). How often the faithfulness of men, the loyalty of men to ungodly or even non-religious institutions such as the state or society shames the professing Church!

Another unmistakable teaching of this chapter is the folly of worldliness, and of worldly affiliations. The happy past of a church or a believer is soon eclipsed by the unhappy endeavours to consult with Egypt or Assyria. Israel had sought waters within her own feeble self, and had failed. She sought them without and had also failed (18).

In times of appalling unbelief, the Church is more than ever subject to surprise attacks from the enemy. Unbelief brings in its wake, a host of ethical evils, such as temporizing, compromising, scheming, opportunism. Methods which even the world would frown upon, schemes which respectable men of the world would eschew are often practised by leaders in a vain effort to recover prestige and success in the professing church. Shameful actions whose nefarious character could well show the world wickedness are but the result of religious hypocrisy and apostasy. It was so with Israel (33). And it is so to-day with the individual as well as with a church or denomination.

There is no need for a vacillation on the part of the Church to-day; no need for a changed gospel, or a changed emphasis. The restive character of sin and unbelief is shown in the action of Israel "gadding". How men to-day frantically search for some modern substitutes for the Faith! Their efforts will fail, fruitless. Their end will be shame and confusion of a most pitiable and unenviable sort. (37).