

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"LET GOD ARISE"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 17th, 1937

(Stenographically Reported)

"Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered."—Psalm 68:1.

To remark on the unusual conditions of life to-day has become about as commonplace as to remark about the weather. Those who have had any extended experience of life, and who are able to draw upon their own memory for purposes of comparison, must be constantly impressed with the extraordinary conditions which obtain in every sphere of life to-day; and those who, in addition to that, are conversant somewhat with the records of the past, therefore know something of how men and nations have lived in centuries past, must be impressed with the uniqueness of present-day conditions. Never within our memory, and possibly not in the records of history, was there a time when the sea of life was so turbulent, and when such universal unrest obtained, as in our own day.

It is particularly evident when one looks out upon the life of nations, and upon the international aspect of things. Every nation is either secretly warring, or with great zeal is preparing itself for war. The same condition obtains in other realms of life; industrially, commercially—everywhere—there seems to be a spirit—I had almost said of war—of mutual antagonism, and certainly of great confusion of thought.

Nor are conditions any happier in the world of religion. I suppose none of us can remember when there was such deep-seated and openly-expressed antagonism, not only toward the church and those who constitute it, not only toward the institutions of religion, nor yet only toward the Bible—antagonism in these directions is manifest enough—but antagonism toward God Himself, and particularly toward God as He is revealed in Christ.

One of our visitors told me that when calling at a home last week, not very far from here, a man said, in response to an invitation to this place, "I would not even cross the threshold of this house to meet Jesus Christ." And when warned that he might have to do so, he said that he would rather go to hell than to go to heaven if Jesus Christ were to be there. I am not surprised that the statement

should fill you with horror. I say, there never was a time when organized religion was held in greater contempt than it is to-day; and, it seems to me—of course deploring the attitude, and therefore making the remark without irreverence, that even God Himself is at a discount in His world.

What can be done? What ought to be done? I see no value in religious conferences, in the pooling of human wisdom, or the effecting of any improved—or apparently improved religious organization. It seems to me that we have to look into the past, and to find in the record of the outgoings of divine power some comfort and inspiration for the dark day in which we live. I have selected this text because I believe it furnishes us with such ground for hope and expectation. It is akin to many other texts, but this I think may serve our purpose for this evening, as a prayer appropriate to a dark day.

I am well aware that it is possible for us to make a show of success. It is possible for people to "heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears". It is possible to convert the church into a house of entertainment, and the pulpit into a sphere of interesting and yet perhaps profitless speculation, and so assemble people apparently under the egis of some religious movement, and hold a big meeting, for instance as in Maple Leaf Gardens, and call it "a service of witness"—while leaving the heart of the matter untouched. Such efforts evade the real problem. I know of no other way than this, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him."

I.

Look with me, first of all at THE PURPORT OF THE PETITION HERE RECORDED. What does it mean thus to pray? It recognizes the existence and prevalence of great evil, *that even a holy God has His enemies*. The whole tale of human history establishes that fact from

the beginning: Scarcely were the words of triumph uttered, scarcely had the divine Workman expressed His satisfaction with His handiwork, saying, "It is very good", than there appeared one to mar His masterpiece—and sin entered into the world, and "death by sin". And behind that human transgression we now know, inspiring it, planning the ruin of the one made in the divine image, were principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. God's word for it, there are evil intelligences of superhuman power that altogether outmatch earth's mightiest. They have set the battle in array against God and His holiness.

And those principalities and powers have ever had a way of expressing their purposes through human persons and personalities from Cain until now—in Cain, and soon after in his numerous progeny. Thus evil has become incorporated, incarnated, in human life; and thereafter and thereby principles of evil have been set in operation which have developed ultimately a world system that is itself antagonistic to God, to His rule, and to His word. Thus the beauty and order and all the music of the garden have been destroyed, and the scene of it has become a veritable battleground where men have first quarrelled with God, and then quarrelled with each other. Babel and Babylon have persisted until now.

That is not a pessimistic purview. Surely it is self-evident that all that is in the world, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life", the whole world-system, and all belonging to it, are the enemies of God.

What is the meaning of our text, of this petition? *It is a recognition of human impotence in the face of such opposition.* How the devils must laugh at some religious conferences! It makes one think of ants of a single anthill holding a convention, planning how to do battle with eagles. "The strong man armed keepeth his place, and his goods are in peace." Our chemists, physicists of every order, have sought out many inventions by which to destroy fortresses created by human ingenuity, but they have never invented any kind of T.N.T. that could blow the devil out of his stronghold. Our only hope, as I said to you a few Sunday mornings ago, is in "the stronger than the strong man armed." Hence, "let God arise".

But again I ask, What is the full purport of this petition? I think *it is not primarily a request that God should accentuate and accelerate the ordinary processes of righteousness: it is a prayer for some extraordinary manifestation of divine power, a prayer for the direct personal appearance and intervention of God Himself;* as though the Psalmist said, "We have been utterly beaten. Now let God arise, let his enemies be scattered." That is the meaning of our text.

And that, my friends, *is diametrically opposed to the teaching of the modern church,* for men now for a generation have been persistently and consistently taught that God never does arise, that He never did arise. The mockers are many who say, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." It is a popular theory, that since this cosmic machine was completed and launched into space, as a marvellous piece of mechanism having powers within itself adequate to the fulfilment of its every function, God has withdrawn from the scene and has become little more

than an idle Spectator, watching the work of His hands, and He is regarded as One Who does not—Who perhaps cannot—intervene.

But *this is a prayer for God to do what men say He cannot do.* This is a prayer for God to arise and plead His own cause, to interpose, to intervene, exerting His sovereign personal power in such a way that His enemies will be scattered, and men shall be compelled to recognize that God is God.

II.

Let me ask you to follow me, particularly those of you who know something of the content of the Book, for a few minutes, as we search the records to see if we can find ANY PRECEDENT FOR SUCH INTERVENTION AS IS HERE SOLICITED: Did God ever intervene? Did He ever arise? Can such an expectation reasonably be grounded upon any single historical precedent? There are many! The Book is full of them. That is why the Bible was written, to tell us that God can arise—that He did arise—that He will continue to arise; and that His enemies will be scattered.

When sin entered, it was not permitted to do its work without divine protest; for, immediately, the sinner heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and challenging him saying, "Where art thou?" God did then interpose. Read the context, and you will find that what is asked here is that God would combine judgment with grace, and in the midst of wrath, remember mercy; that He would go forth to judge the wicked, but that He would make the righteous to rejoice before God. The Bible, I say, abounds with incidents which tell us that God delights to do that very thing. He came into the garden, observed man's guilt, pronounced sentence, even a curse upon the man and his inheritance so that the very nature of the earth was changed; but in the midst of it, He gave promise of the coming Seed Who would some day arise and do battle with this serpent, or what it represented, and should ultimately bruise its head and triumph over it.

Then came the flaming sword of the cherubim at the garden gate; and God proclaimed Himself thus early in human history to be a God of war, Who would in His own way and time arise and unsheath His sword against all iniquity.

You remember how our Lord coupled Sodom with the final judgment, and indicated that when the books shall be opened at last, and men shall be judged, even Sodom will be called as a witness in that "great and terrible day of the Lord". What does the story indicate? Merely that God does break in upon the common order of things. I dare say an ingenious critic will tell us that there was an oil deposit, and a stroke of lightning—and that was how Sodom was destroyed! Oh no! It occurred exactly as the Bible said it did: God arose and came down. He visited Abraham, and actually went into Sodom, the second Person of the glorious Trinity, an Old Testament representation of Jehovah, to "see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me." And awful, overwhelming, indescribably terrible evidence was supplied to God Himself, and there came later—I believe what the Bible says—fire with brimstone from heaven, upon the enemies of God. "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and

behold, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace"—for God had arisen—"and it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt."

Then glance a moment at the record of Israel's deliverance. It is to that specifically this psalm refers. I said just now that this petition asked God to do what man had said He does not and cannot do, that God would interpose in Israel's life, and show His mighty power. We read that through those days of wonder-working in Egypt "the magicians did so with their enchantments". They initiated the miracles, but God continued His wonders until the magicians stood back and said, "This is the finger of God." Israel stood at the sea which parted for their entry and they went through the valley of the waters dry-shod. God arose and miraculously destroyed His enemies while delivering His people. Of that the Psalmist here speaks: "O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness: the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel."

Through all the wilderness journey God interposed again and again, doing the impossible, so that Israel's whole record was one of miracle, even to the Jordan, and through it into Canaan. What says the record? "Kings of armies did flee apace . . . when the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon." The haters of the Lord fled before Him because God had arisen.

I give you two other instances only. Look at Elijah on Carmel. He prayed that God would arise—in effect the same prayer—and plead His own cause. He said in effect, "O Lord, it is beyond me. Let it be known that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word." And he dared to say, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." He said, "I gave my case into God's hand, He will arise: I stake my all upon the confidence that He will do so." And when He had made an end of praying, "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God." Not by Elijah's preaching, faithful as he was, but by the direct interposition of God Himself were the Baal-worshippers convinced, and the victory achieved.

You remember, too, the good king Hezekiah, and how he spread before the Lord the letter he had received from the enemies of God, when the great king, the king of Assyria recounted all his victories, saying, "Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children, of Eden which were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Aephad and the king of the city of Sepharbaim, Hena, and Ireh?" And Hezekiah admitted it all. "And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only." And what followed? It is very wonderful that the Lord of hosts did not dispatch an army. He summoned but one of His angels and commissioned him to answer Hezekiah's prayer.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green
That host with their banners at sunset were seen.
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strewn.
For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!
And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.
And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances uplifted, the trumpet unblown.
And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

And in the morning the vast host of the king of Assyria lay dead; and when he himself went into the house of his god, he was slain in the very act of worship. God said, "I will show you whether I am equal to the king of Assyria, and to all the gods of the nations. I will arise, and my enemies shall be scattered"—and they were.

What about the New Testament? The record of the Incarnation is the record of the greatest of all miracles. Who was Jesus Christ? He was God. Why was He there? Because God had arisen. He wrapped His Deity in human flesh and came down. I will not speak of the "doctrine" of the virgin birth of Christ: I rather say, the indisputable fact of it, absolutely annihilates the evolutionary theory held by a large part of the intelligentsia of our day. Why? God arose and came down. He walked this earth, this supernatural Man, exercising supernatural power, dying a supernatural death, being buried and rising again, and ascending into heaven, thus closing the record of the days of His flesh, there to continue His ministry; thereafter, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost", said Peter, "he hath shed forth this"—on Pentecost there was a divine interposition. God, by the Holy Ghost, came down, breaking the hearts of men, and sweeping them by the thousand into the kingdom of God.

All through New Testament history you have the same thing. Luke tells us in his opening passage of The Acts of the Apostles that his former treatise, his Gospel, was a record "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up", thus implying that his second treatise would be a record of all that He

will continue to do and teach as He interposes in the lives of men until the end of this Christian dispensation.

What, further, is the testimony of all subsequent Christian history? It is a record of the frequent arising of the great God, of frequent divine interpositions in human affairs. You will think of comparatively modern days, as when God arose in the great Reformation, and His enemies were scattered. He broke the yoke of Rome that had fastened itself upon many of the nations of the world, and liberated them.

So might we follow the evangelical movements among the Puritans, and thereafter the various revivals, from Wesley's day down. It is evermore a record of God's periodically doing the unusual, arising, that His enemies might be scattered. I say, such a petition as this is well grounded in historical precedent. God has arisen again and again.

III.

I remind you therefore that there is implied in it A DIVINE PROMISE relating it to all the other promises. That is exactly what God promises to do in our day. You will remember that the Lord Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father." That promise "began" to be fulfilled in the lives of the apostles, and it has been fulfilled in the experience, in the labours, of many of God's people, and of the church generally in many generations. There have been individual men who reached far more people than the Lord Jesus reached in the days of His flesh; I mean, as the Son of man. Really greater works have been done in His name.

Let me ask you to reflect upon this, that *until the consummation of this age, we have His definite promise that He will be with us—"all the days."* The first sermon of mine that was ever printed was preached from that text, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. *Go ye therefore.*" That is the way to read that text, not, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." First of all we are to remember that sovereign pronouncement that there is no limit to His power "in heaven and in earth". "Go ye", and say it with all possible emphasis; surveying the scope—no, there is no scope, the infinite measure of the exercise of his sovereign will, in heaven and in earth—"go ye THEREFORE". Go ye only in dependence upon the promise of His accompanying presence and power.

How long? "I am with you *all the days.*" Until the Great War? Until its aftermath? No! No! Until the consummation of the age, the Spirit of God will be with us. Therefore there is the strongest reason why we should plead this promise for God to arise.

There have been great revivals, sweeping thousands into the kingdom; but there has never been a world-revival. A man spoke in the city some time ago, and someone afterward complimented him, and said, "Our preacher never preaches like that." And the minister replied, "And do you know why he does not?" "No; why?" "Because he is a postmillennialist." I turned to that brother and said, "You are like a host of others of your school. I fear you do not know what postmillennialism is. You identify it with evolutionism. I am not a postmillennialist, I see no hope of anything that can be described as a reign of righteousness this side of the coming of the Lord Jesus; but when people say you cannot have the kingdom without the King, and you must have the personal presence of the Lord Jesus be-

fore certain things can be accomplished, I answer, 'The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one; and you never honour the Son when you belittle the Holy Ghost. It was the Spirit of God who "brooded upon the face of the water", and when God said, "Let there be light", there was light. The power of the Spirit of God was exercised in the first creation. And in the second creation, and if God wills it, it can be no derogation of His honour if even before Jesus Christ should come, the Spirit of God should once again sweep as a flaming fire over the world, bringing millions to His feet.

I believe He will. I do not believe that Jesus Christ will come at a time when there are few witnesses on earth. When He comes there will be bitter opposition to Him, I know, and even to the time of His coming. But I believe the Old Testament, insofar as its prophecies are unfulfilled, is replete with promises to the church of Christ, that she shall arise and put on her beautiful garments. This psalm is a prophetic word that looks down to the last syllable of recorded time. There is no reason in Scripture, why we should not in our day see the greatest spiritual awakening the world has ever known, with millions of people turning to God. We have the same gospel. We have the same redemption to proclaim. We have the same power of the Holy Ghost with us.

But if not before—I believe before, myself—but if not before, then at last the promise of this text will be fulfilled *when He Who once put aside His royal robes to appear in the form of a servant, shall arise again and take to Himself His great power and reign*, when He Himself shall come in flaming fire, "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ"; "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," our God will again arise, and His enemies will be scattered. What a glorious day that will be!

To me, the Bible is one and indivisible, the Old and New Testaments are bound together by the promise of the cleansing blood, by the promise of the ultimate universal conquest and eternal triumph of the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Book is still our hope. Its promises still hold.

IV.

So then I lead you in but a sentence or two to this: that that which is established by precedent, and guaranteed to us by promise, **MAY WELL BE USED BY US AS OUR DAILY PRAYER**, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered."

When you take up your paper to-morrow and read of some new manifestation of the spirit of evil, some new disturbance on the world's surface, or some present disturbance still further accentuated and magnified, when tempted almost in despair to say, What next?—let me suggest to you: we may well, as believers, lift our hearts to God and say, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him."

Let us frankly acknowledge our impotence. I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say that the effort now required to assemble two hundred people for the hearing of God's Word, twenty-five or thirty years ago would easily have assembled thousands. It is my constant prayer—I will take you into my confidence—it is my constant prayer that God will give me grace, if necessary, to bear my testimony in His name even to one person, rather than to depart from the gospel. I will not lower the standard. The preaching of this Word would empty any church were it not for the convicting power of the Spirit

of God. There is nothing in it to attract the carnal nature. There is nothing so repugnant to human nature as the gospel if unaccompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost. The preacher may preach with all his might, and all his ingenuity, and study to make the gospel attractive; he may wrap it up in an attractive package—but as soon as the package is broken, as soon as the sword is unsheathed, men will say, "I want no more of that." Only when God the Holy Ghost arises and smites the conscience, and breaks the heart, can the gospel find entrance.

I say to you Jarvis Street people that it is not enough that you visit. It is not enough that you testify. God has blessed us in this place. He has enabled us from this house of prayer to reach the ends of the earth. And I hope to see in this place a still greater fire kindled that will shine around the world. It can be so, but only in one way. When we as God's people remember that above, and beyond, and underneath, and permeating every effort and witness, there must be the power that comes in response to the cry which rises from hearts despairing of other help or helper, "Let God arise." We are helpless unless and until He does. We face principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world. There is nothing in the universe the devil hates like the doctrine of the blood. There is nothing against which he marshals his forces like the blood. That is why we are being perpetually harassed by people who do not like the gospel. Our only hope is on our knees. I long and hope to see the day when we shall have but little time for preaching, when the people of God will throng this place and say, "Pastor, let us talk with God. Let us call on Him to arise." And when He arises people will be saved. We cannot save them. We are helpless. I do not believe I ever thought I could do anything without God, but I have had experience enough as a minister to know that there is no human power that can waken the consciences, and break the hearts of men; no power that can dispossess the strong man armed, save when God Himself, Who is stronger than he, shall arise.

The text is a confession of impotence—let us confess it. Let us come to God with hands down. Let us acknowledge we are at the end of ourselves. There is no substitute, no possibility of our inventing a substitute. We must come to Him, saying, "O Lord, unless Thou shalt come Thyself, unless Thou shalt exercise Thy personal sovereign power, we are helpless." Unless God Himself intervenes, men will never turn to Him.

When we have thus confessed our impotence, *let us also confess our faith.* What a triumphant story this is! "Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee. Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war. Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Sing unto God; ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; to him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God."

Sometimes when I read the stories of the Japanese

raids upon poor China, and the murderous disguised assaults of Italy in Spain, I turn to these passages for my own comfort. Listen to it again, "O sing praises unto the Lord; to him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he hath sent out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds"—His enemies cannot get above Him! "O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God."

My brethren, do you believe in God? Do you believe power and blessing and complete victory may be had for the asking? Do you believe God will arise if you ask Him to do so? Shall we rest in idleness, or shall we heed the admonition, as His remembrancers, to "give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

If there be a vanquished soul here this evening, who has sought to do battle with the enemy, and has been sorely wounded, let me commend to you the petition of my text. Let your heart cry out, "O God, arise, and let Thine enemies in my heart, and in my life, be scattered; and claim this life of mine as a trophy of Thine infinite grace; come and take possession of me. Let my heart and life be a theatre for the operation of the Holy Ghost. Make me a wonder unto many because I shall live a life that is instinct with the divine presence and power." Then indeed we shall have the victory. "Thanks be unto God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray:

O Lord, even in this place we have witnessed the goings forth of Thy power. We have seen multitudes in the valley of decision. We have heard many enquiring their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward. Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee? Wilt Thou not visit this vine, the vine of Thine own planting? Let us see the power of God. O Lord, we would believe this night to see the goodness of God in the land of the living.

We thank Thee for all that is in prospect; for the assurance of everlasting felicity awaiting us in the realms beyond. But we would account the longsuffering of God to be salvation, and believe that Thou dost yet tarry that still others may hear the Word and believe. Oh, do Thou visit us! Take from us, we pray Thee, as Thou shalt reveal it to us, all that would impair our usefulness, and make us other than channels of Thy power. O Thou almighty Saviour, we in this place have stood for Thy Word; we have confessed before the world that we believe in Thee, and in the power of Thy gospel. Wilt Thou not come to us in extraordinary power? Send us one of Heaven's visitations. Kindle a fire that shall spread through all the land, and to lands beyond. Let it be known, O God, that Thou art God, and we are Thy servants, and that we have done all these things according to Thy Word.

Bless us now; forgive all our sins; keep our eyes uplifted to the Lord Who made heaven and earth, from Whom cometh our help. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

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THE STORY OF THE PLOT THAT FAILED

The History of a Church's Struggle to Maintain an Evangelical Ministry in a Free Pulpit

By T. T. SHIELDS

CHAPTER XXVIII.

In due course, the scrutineers returned, and, for a report of their finding, I return to the minutes of the church:

"Before reading the report of the scrutineers, brought in by Deacon Hyde, the Chairman appealed to all present to be ready to accept the report whatever it should be, and to make the best of it. Six hundred and sixty-six ballots had been cast. Of these, five were spoiled (one of them intentionally), and one 'No' vote had been rejected, leaving six hundred and sixty-one votes properly cast. The 'No' vote numbered three hundred and fifty-one, and the 'Yes' vote, three hundred and ten. The majority against the motion was therefore forty-one in a vote of six hundred and sixty-one. On hearing the report, the Pastor's supporters rose and sang, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'

"Dr. C. J. Holman then read the following resolution moved by himself, and seconded by Mr. R. S. Hudson: 'That Jarvis Street Church at this meeting of the 21st of September desires to affirm the resolution passed on the 29th day of April, 1921, viz.:

"That the members of Jarvis St. Baptist Church desires to voice their love and attachment for their Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields, and their gratitude for the ministry of one who speaks not merely in the words of man's wisdom, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, and would take this opportunity of expressing their high appreciation of his remarkably strong power as a preacher, and their admiration of his fearless exposition of the great Christian verities with his unflinching faith in the Bible, in its inspiration, its integrity, and its divine authority, and the church rejoices in the outstanding position on biblical questions which Dr. Shields occupies in the denomination upon this continent, and this church hopes that it may long have the privilege of his faithful ministry and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec may long reap the benefit of his leadership.'

"And further that this church declares:

"1. That it stands for the inspiration, integrity and divine authority of the Bible:

"2. That it stands for a pure and separated church life.

"3. That it stands for an active continuing evangelism, and specially rejoices in the high tide of spirituality that has characterized the prayer meetings the past three months, and in the number of remarkable conversions and valued additions to the church during that time, and would embrace this opportunity to give the most cordial welcome to all to whom the Pastor has extended the right hand of fellowship.

"4. That it stands for the time-honoured scriptural principles, held by the Baptist body of our Convention, and embodied in the Trust Deed of this church, and desires that this church should be preserved in its purity and effectiveness as a New Testament church, and that its officers and deacons should take office on the understanding that they are the servants, not the masters of the church.

"5. That this church desires to see in the department of music a spiritual choir, spiritually conducted.

"The resolution was passed in a standing vote:

"The following resolution was read by Deacon Greenway, moved by him, and seconded by Mr. George Gilmour: 'That inasmuch as it is necessary in the interests of the work of this church that those holding office should be in entire sympathy with the Pastor, giving him their loyal support, it is resolved that the offices of those Deacons, Deaconesses, and officers of the church and

auxiliary societies and committees who signed the statement dated June 23rd, 1921, opposing the continuance of Dr. Shields as Pastor be hereby declared vacant.'

"The Chairman read the motion. The Pastor referred to the special meeting of the church on May 5th, 1920, when he had been supported by a standing vote in the issue on the question of music. He said he had been supported by the vote of the church, but had been left with Deacons who were opposed to him. If he was to carry on, it would be necessary for him to have Deacons in sympathy with him. He supposed those Deacons who had signed the statement of June 23rd would vacate office anyway, but to avoid further delay this motion was presented, and he would regret very much any manifestation of an unkindly spirit.

"The Chairman, speaking *ex cathedra*, asked whether it were likely that this meeting so evenly divided as it was, could elect new Deacons by two-thirds' vote, supposing the Deacons concerned in this resolution were ejected. The Pastor replied that if this resolution should be passed, another one would be presented to cover that difficulty.

"It was agreed to decide the question by standing vote, and the Chairman appointed the same ten scrutineers. Two hundred and ninety votes supported the motion, and the Chairman declared it carried.

By the passage of this resolution the positions of forty-one persons were declared vacant. For the full list the reader is referred to the issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS of September 16th. The first column on page 8. It included ten Deacons, eight Deaconesses, five members of the Finance Committee, the remainder being from the Sunday School and various Committees.

It will be observed that there was a drop of sixty-one votes from the vote on the main motion, and that no opposition vote is recorded. This is accounted for by the large number of departures following the main vote. Far more than sixty-one of the opposition had left. Notwithstanding, it was exceedingly dangerous for our supporters to leave until the meeting adjourned. Had not at least an equal number of the opposition left, the ultimate consequences might have been disastrous. I am calling attention to this because this story is written for the advantage of others who may have similar battles to fight. The moral is: See it through to the end.

The exodus, of course, is very simply explained. The hour was late, and many parents and others who had long distances to go by car and 'bus, were anxious to get home, and thought they were free to go as the main issue was decided.

The change in the attitude of some, and of the general atmosphere of the meeting, may be judged by the fact that the sweeping resolution which I moved next, was seconded by Mr. L. H. Whittemore, one of my most vociferous opponents!

I resume the quotation from the Church minutes:

"The following motion, moved by the Pastor and seconded by Mr. L. H. Whittemore, was carried in a standing vote: 'That in view of the present situation, a special Committee, to be known as the Prudential and Finance Committee be appointed to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the church; that the said Committee

shall exercise all the functions of the Deacons' Board and Finance Committee, and shall administer such other affairs of the church as shall be referred to it by this meeting and from time to time. And that the members of the said Committee shall be: Deacons George Greenway, A. W. Record, J. G. Hyde, S. T. Hall, E. A. Brownlee; and Deaconesses Mrs. C. J. Holman, Mrs. John Lillie; and Trustees Dr. C. J. Holman and R. S. Hudson; and Mr. W. Blackaller; with the Pastor as Chairman of the Committee.'

"This motion was also declared by the Chairman to be carried.

"Finally, a motion was proposed by the Pastor, seconded by Mr. E. C. Green, and carried, in the following terms:

"That the members who have hitherto opposed the ministry of the Pastor of this church, in view of the church's decision recorded at this meeting, be requested to accept the church's decision, and cease from further opposition, that an end may be put to contention in the church."

I must now tell something of the spirit of the meeting. While bitter animosity was manifested in some quarters, it was evident to many of us that the Lord was present in mighty power. I have said that the opposition all gathered on one side of the church. As soon as the report of the scrutineers was read, the company seemed stunned, and the opposition crumbled. It was not unlike an ordinary election night on a small scale. As soon as the result of the polls is announced, or their information is sufficiently complete, that a certain party is elected and the other defeated, the adherents of the defeated party seldom stay to enjoy, or even to hear, the last of the returns: they usually go home. So was it on this occasion. Many of the opposition, seeing they had lost, immediately left. It reminded one of the story of the Egyptians struggling with the waters when the Lord looked upon them, and took off their chariot wheels. The arm of the Lord was made bare. He had heard the cry of His people, and His right arm had gotten Him the victory.

Somewhere between twelve and one o'clock, my wife, Mr. Fraser, and I, drove home. I left the church as Chairman of a loyal committee clothed with plenary powers, and thus with a victory potentially complete.

As I had entered the church that evening, a modest little woman who had often been at our prayer-meetings, handed me rather a plump envelope. Later, when I looked into the parlour I observed it was this same little woman who had assumed the leadership of those who were at prayer; probably the suggestion that they should so employ their time came from her. After I had reached my home I felt this letter in my pocket, and opened it. It was a letter full of thanksgiving to God, telling me that this dear woman had been praying without ceasing for months, that God would vindicate His truth; and she said that while at prayer she believed she had been given the assurance by the Spirit of God that prayer was heard, and that victory would be achieved. She concluded the letter with words to this effect: I enclose a small offering of \$5.00 which is a thank-offering to God for the victory which I am sure He will give us to-night.

Thus the last desperate effort of the enemy had failed. We had been caused to triumph in Christ Jesus, and in the name of the Lord we set up our banners.

(Continued next week)

REUNION, REJOICING, RENEWAL

On Monday evening, October 18th, the annual pre-convention reunion of Faculty, Trustees, Students and Alumni convened in the historic B. D. Thomas Hall.

After the customary good dinner, during which a year's anecdotes and news flowed freely, we settled down to a varied programme under the genial chairmanship of Pastor John R. Armstrong, "32", retiring president of the Alumni. One happy remark of the chairman was when he spoke of the Seminary's growing family—one glance around the hall made one recall the words "... they shall come from the east and from the west..." and we would add, "and from the north and from the south." Representations from Ontario, north and south; Quebec, and as far west as British Columbia were gathered in Seminary fellowship, and we thought of those in the more distant parts still one in heart with us, but sundered by land and ocean.

Vocal numbers by the Misses Twiss and melody from the abiding bow of Miss Mary Jeffery, accompanied by Miss Marion Melrose, A.T.C.M., were much appreciated.

Student-president Russell Slade, "39", representing the men students, led off with a message in which he contrasted the present prevailing unscriptural teaching and preaching with the balanced course of a New Testament Seminary.

Rev. Harold Slade, "30", the "Bishop of the North" spoke pithily of the benefits of a sound ministry, and of the need met by the Seminary in sending forth men who would be unequivocally Baptist, which, as he avowed, is synonymous with New Testament requisites.

Seminary-president Dr. T. T. Shields, after a hearty "How do you do," appealed for the students to be men—men of conviction, men of loyalty—but above all, Men! To make the gathering more homelike we resolved ourselves into a Pastoral Theology class in which, with all his old time readiness of wit and wisdom, "the Doctor" transformed questions into answers.

After Pastor Grahame M. Reeve, "37", of Tottenham, had spoken for the recent graduates, Rev. W. Lempriere, "31", of Cannington, spoke for the seasoned veterans whose school days were veiled in the mist of years!

Miss Rheta Rodgers, "38", the Head-girl, represented the lady students in well-chosen words centered on Philippians 4:6, 7. Student Arthur MacAsh, "39", the editor of the bigger, better and cheaper *Seminarian*, introduced his literary colleagues and gave cogent reasons why the school paper should be a welcome visitor in every Seminary home.

Rev. W. Gordon Brown, in a concise speech, as the Faculty representative, took as his key-thought, the words *Zikron olam*, "an everlasting memorial", which he had seen written on a Jewish tombstone. He likened Seminary recruits to blocks of usable and durable granite which would lend themselves to the preparation they needed before being subjected to the weathering processes of a pastorate. The prepared men were to work for the Lord so as to leave to His glory a memory of good work well done.

The election of new officers for the Alumni, 1937-1938, resulted as follows: Rev. Gordon W. Searle, Class of "31", Orangeville, president; Pastor Grahame M. Reeve, "37", Tottenham, secretary.

The strains of "Blest be the tie that binds..." and the closing benediction by Mr. Searle, concluded a reunion of rejoicing, and expressions of a renewal of loyalty, love and gratitude to our *Alma Mater* and of thanksgiving to God for all His mercies.

GRAHAME M. REEVE, Alumni Secretary.

Bible School Lesson Outline

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

Vol. 1 4th Quarter Lesson 44 October 31st, 1937

QUALIFICATION FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Lesson Text: Luke 18.

Golden Text: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."—Luke 18:16.

I. PERSEVERING PRAYER—verses 1-8.

Our Lord applied the parable of the unrighteous judge in a particular manner to the last days when faith would be scarce, and when His people would be hindered by their adversaries from gaining their just inheritance, and would cry to Him (Compare Rev. 6:10). That the parable had also a general application, however, is evident, from verse 1. Christ tells us that the purpose of the parable was to encourage men to continue earnestly in prayer always, and not to grow weary; they were never to cease their vigilance.

The judge, though an unrighteous man, avenged the widow, because of her importunity (Compare 11:8). His motive was not altogether praiseworthy, but if a selfish, unsympathetic judge, indifferent to the claims of God and man, answered the widow's continued cry, how much more will our loving heavenly Father hear the prayer of His children who will not be denied (Jas. 5:16)! The widow refused to give up her claim. So should we continue to look to God in faith when we know His will. He keeps us waiting sometimes, to test our sincerity, to develop our faith and to prepare our hearts to receive the blessing. Let us persevere till His time come.

II. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM—verses 9-43.

1. Humility—verses 9-14.

The self-righteous man may not enter into the kingdom of God. Such as trust in their own righteousness (2 Cor. 1:9; Rom. 10:3), and set all others at naught, have no place in the kingdom. One cannot share in the marriage feast without being clothed with the robe which the King has provided (Matt. 22:12).

Someone has said that if the Pharisee and the publican went to the temple at the same time, they did not go on the same side of the street; "the one did not dare, the other did not deign". The Pharisee took his stand in a prominent place in the temple and prayed, but only to himself, congratulating himself before God that he was a righteous man. His thanksgiving was not accompanied by humiliation.

The publican, deeply conscious of his sin; prayed a brief prayer from his heart, a cry for mercy which has been echoed by many thousands since that time: "God be merciful to me, the sinner". The Greek word here translated "be merciful" is used in reference to the mercy-seat. The publican trusted not in himself, but in the blood, as the ground of his approach (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). Humbling himself before God, he was exalted, pardoned and justified (Rom. 3:24). Bid unsaved scholars pray this prayer. So must every one who would enter the kingdom come humbly, trusting in the shed blood of Christ.

2. Childlikeness—verses 15-17.

Compare Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16.

Teachers of younger scholars will have a splendid opportunity in this lesson to show the little ones that the Saviour loves them, and though they have not the privilege of going to Him in the flesh, as did the children of that day, they may come to Him in a very real way. He desires to bless and to save them. Children have a part in the kingdom; let us not hinder or discourage them, but let us bring them to the Lord.

All who will not receive the kingdom as a little child shall not find entrance therein. How do the little children receive a message from one they love? As a rule, they receive it with confidence, trusting absolutely, with no question or reservation. A child is humble (9:46-48; Matt. 18:4),

and teachable (1 Pet. 2:2). Such an attitude of trustful obedience is necessary, if one would be saved.

3. Self-renunciation—verses 18-30.

Compare Matt. 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31.

They who trust in riches may not enter into the kingdom. The story of the rich young ruler is a sad one, illustrating the career of many a promising young man. The famous painting depicting this incident is entitled "The Great Refusal".

The ruler possessed many commendable qualities; we admire his enthusiasm as he came running to Christ, his reverence as he knelt before Him, his outwardly blameless life, his sincerity, his sorrow at departing. We read that "Jesus, beholding him, loved him" (Mark 10:21).

He addressed Christ as "Good Master", and before answering his question, the Lord probed to see if he also believed that He was God. Christ met him on his own ground. He had asked the way of life, supposing he might secure eternal life by his own good works. The Saviour gave a summary of the commandments as a test of the young man's relationship to God, saying, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17; Lev. 18:5). His self-confidence was rebuked when Christ intimated that, far from being perfect, the one thing he lacked utterly disqualified him from receiving eternal life (Jas. 2:10). Even the first commandment had not been obeyed; namely, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". He had another god; something else held the supreme place in his thoughts and affections—his wealth. He clung to his treasures, unable to give them up for the sake of heavenly and eternal gain. He would not pay the price of following Christ (Luke 9:23, 62; 14:26, 27). So, though sorrowful, he departed.

It is difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom because of the tendency to trust in his riches to win him favour with God (Mark 10:24). The difficulty is illustrated by the Oriental picture of a heavily-laden camel arriving at a narrow city gate intended only for foot-passengers. Then the gate is conceived as being transformed into the eye of a needle. If privileged persons enter the kingdom with difficulty, how about ordinary men and women? Entering the kingdom is a spiritual experience, beyond the realm of human attainment, possible only by the operation of the power of God (Rom. 8:3, 4).

The disciple who renounced earthly comforts, possessions and relationships for the Lord's sake would receive abundant reward, both here and hereafter.

4. Faith—verses 31-43. Compare Matt. 20:17-34; Mark 10:32-52.

For the third time (See 9:22, 44, 45) our Saviour sought to enlighten the disciples concerning His coming rejection, suffering, death and resurrection, but their wills and hearts were opposed to the truth, and their minds refused to comprehend the force of His announcement. They failed to take Him at His word in simple faith.

The blind man at Jericho refused to be discouraged from lifting his voice to Christ in prayer for mercy. Matthew mentions two blind men, but Mark and Luke speak of one, Bartimaeus, probably the more conspicuous of the two. As to the place where the miracle took place, it has been suggested that Christ healed them as He left the old Jericho and as he approached the new Jericho some distance away, built by Herod the Great.

By sovereign power Christ gave sight to the blind eyes. The gift of physical sight was but typical of the spiritual vision which came because of the faith exercised (Acts 16:30, 31). The first one whom Bartimaeus saw was his Saviour, and he immediately followed Him. No wonder the people joined in songs of praise to God!

BOOK REVIEW

Women of the New Testament, by Abraham Kuyper, published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 95 pages, cloth \$1.00, paper 65c.

Here thirty brief character studies, not only set forth the women of the New Testament, but also show their spiritual heirs in the life of to-day. Dr. Kuyper is known as a leader in the affairs of the kingdom of Holland as well as in the Kingdom of God. We recommend these studies—they are even supplied with questions for discussion—especially to ladies' study groups. In them particularly the book will fill a real need!—W. G. B.