

# The Gospel Witness

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

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## WESLEY'S GOD AND OURS

For the past month or so religious papers generally have had much to say about the two hundredth anniversary of the conversion—or reconsecration, which ever it was—of John Wesley, in a place in Aldersgate Street, May 24th, 1738. Nowhere have we seen a word which would indicate that there is any disposition to discount the value, to England and the world, of the religious revival in which the Wesleys and George Whitfield were the most conspicuous figures.

Comparisons are instituted between the condition of England and of Europe generally at that time and now; and, in the main, some resemblance is recognized. Further, there is quite general acknowledgment in such papers that the world to-day needs nothing so much as just such a religious revival. But there are few who propose an analysis of present-day theology, to discover wherein it differs from Wesley's position, with a view to getting back where he stood. Apparently Wesley's revival is desired, but not on the terms with which the Wesleys and Whitfield complied. In some quarters Wesley's theology seems to be regarded with a thinly-veiled contempt. Wesley's attitude toward the Bible and its general teaching in respect to sin and salvation is spoken of as something that is for ever past, and which no reasonable man could be expected to believe to-day.

But is it not absurd to expect such a spiritual movement as later took the name of Methodism, with Wesley's God, and Wesley's Bible, and Wesley's gospel, left out? Is it possible tacitly to justify, or at least to explain, every form of human vice as the inevitable outcropping of the "vestigial remains" of a brute ancestry, and reap from such teaching any degree of human saintliness? Is it possible to sow denial of the virgin birth of Christ and of His essential Deity, of His expiatory death and real resurrection, and the supernaturalism of His whole person and work, and reap therefrom such a self-denying, self-sacrificing service toward God and man as characterized the early Methodists? Can any reasonable man expect to sow distrust of, and disrespect for, the Bible as the word of God, by denying the historicity of its records, the morality of many of its standards, and the truthfulness of much that it says in respect to natural phenomena, and from such sowing to reap obedience to its high moral precepts and principles, and a social and national righteousness which will exalt a nation?

Yet these impossible fruits in some quarters are suggested as a possible harvest from the long and liberal sowing of the seeds of Modernism. When Joseph's brethren came down into Egypt he said to them, "Yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest." That word "earring" does not describe, as is commonly supposed, wheat coming out into the ear. It is a Saxon word which means plowing. The situation had become so hopeless that there was not only no harvest, but there was no plowing, and no seed to sow, even though the fields had been plowed. No wonder the seven years of drought began to come. So it is in the religious world to-day. If there be no harvest of souls, it is because there has been no earing, no plowing, no preaching of repentance such as Wesley and Whitfield preached; no warning to flee from the "wrath to come"; no teaching respecting the efficacy of the precious blood.

Nowadays the evangelist cannot do as Moody and his successors for some years did, sharpen their sickles on the assumption that the fields had been cultivated, and that the grain was ready for reaping. We need to go back to Wesley's method; to the method they must have employed when the seven years of dearth were ended, and break up the ground that must have become almost as hard as stone. We must plow deeply, and lay again the sure foundation for faith by emphasis upon the basic principles and doctrines of the Word of God.

We believe, not only that a revival is possible, but probable. But we do not believe it will be brought about on the one hand by a laudation of the fruits of such movements as that of the Wesleys, coupled with the complete rejection of the roots from which those fruits were grown; nor, on the other hand, do we believe it will be brought about by wild and baseless speculations as to the time of the Second Advent and the details of a millennial programme. The present need, as it seems to us, is that preachers who believe the gospel should systematically indoctrinate their people in the great verities of the Christian faith. Though the word, "theology", seems to be at a discount in some quarters, the fact remains that there never has been a great religious revival, producing enduring fruits of righteousness that did not carry with it a revival of theology, though it may not have been called by that name. What we mean is a revival

of interest in, and subjection to, what the Bible teaches about God.

It must surely be admitted, in the light of present world conditions, that human nature has not greatly improved since the days of Wesley. History records nothing worse than Japan's wanton attack upon China, nor than their atrocious methods of attack; nor anything more fiendish than Italy's rape of Ethiopia, nor than the fiendishness of the delight of Mussolini's son as an aviator participating in that wholesale murder, the "fun" of dropping bombs upon unarmed and noncombatant Ethiopians; is not surpassed by any record of cruelty extant. The conduct of the war in Spain, Hitler's campaigns of robbery and murder, and Stalin's method of "liquidating" his opponents, prove conclusively that human nature has lost none of its capacity for entertaining the devil.

But the things we have mentioned are only the extreme symptoms of the malady of sin which affects human nature in Canada, the United States, Britain, and everywhere else, just as it does in the places we have named. Hence, we conclude, human nature needs the same radical change to-day that it did when John Wesley preached the gospel of repentance and regeneration.

God has not changed since Wesley's day. Nor has His word in any respect been amended. And only if and when preachers believe and preach the Bible as Wesley did, and themselves submit to its precepts and principles, may we expect to see such fruits as characterized the ministry of John Wesley and his associates.

## A GREAT CHAPTER FROM THE WORD OF GOD

The foregoing article was partly suggested by the reading of the thirtieth chapter of Isaiah. It is a long chapter, and we should like to urge our readers to a careful perusal of it. Were we to do so, many of them would resolve so to do—and then perhaps forget to carry out their resolution. We therefore adopt the unusual course of printing out the whole chapter:

### THE THIRTIETH CHAPTER OF ISAIAH

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes. They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor, be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach. The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them. For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, their strength is to sit still.

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy

not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall; swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit. For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, we will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: we will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: and his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord; to the mighty One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lightning down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of

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# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"NOW WE SEE THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY"

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, May 29th, 1938

(Stenographically reported)

"And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me."—Genesis 42:36.

I ask you this evening to give your thought for a little while to the study of a problem which is as old as human history, the problem of the tangled skein, of the broken pillar, of all the contrarities of life, the problem of life's apparently inverted order. The story of any godly life, could it be accurately told, would serve us as a basis for our study. The special advantage of such a narrative as we have before us this evening is that we know it to be true. It is the story of a life written from the divine standpoint, where things are represented as they really appeared to God.

The story of Jacob is a very strange one. If we could take the fabric of a godly life in its completeness, we should probably—indeed certainly—discover woven into the perfected pattern the name of the divine Weaver; but while the threads of life are still in the loom, because our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and we cannot see the end of things—nor always see things relatively—it sometimes seems as though life were without a pattern. We could borrow the language of Jacob quite sincerely, and supplying different names, perhaps somewhat different experiences, in the main this would serve to tell our story: "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me."

I want you to view this bit of Jacob's experience this evening and think with me as we analyze it together, to see what we may learn for our own spiritual profit.

## I.

I begin with this observation that IN THE WAY OF LIFE'S PILGRIMAGE WE FREQUENTLY MEET WITH ADVERSITIES IN MIDDLE AND LATER LIFE WHICH SERVE ONLY TO ACCENTUATE OUR EARLY GRIEFS. Jacob had had by no means an easy life. His own disposition made it exceedingly difficult for him to live comfortably, and I rather suspect that that is where our chief difficulty lies: there is so much in ourselves that is contrary to truth and righteousness and to the moral constitution of things, that makes it appear as though circumstances and the fates were against us.

Jacob had difficulty at home to begin with. Though he had a godly father, he had a brother who had no sympathy whatever with his religious aspirations. Though Esau, from one viewpoint, was rather a pleasant man, yet the fact that he was "profane" in the sense that he had no religious outlook, made these brothers, though living together in the same home, to be quite separate and distinct from each other. I know that we sing about "Home, sweet home", but I doubt not there are some here this evening who can trace their earliest difficulties to the domestic sphere, although there too they found their greatest joy.

Neither Jacob nor Esau was an easy man to live with.

It became necessary for Jacob to leave home. Some of you remember when circumstances forced you to set your feet in an independent path. Then yonder with Laban, Jacob prospered materially only to discover that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." He had his difficulties with Laban, and after some years he started home again rich in silver and gold, sheep and cattle; and with his children.

Then the greatest of all sorrows came to him: Rachel died, and he had to bury her somewhere at the roadside, "in the way of Ephrath, which is in Bethlehem." He survived all these troubles, however, and kindly time seemed to heal the wounds they had made. But when the pain of his sorrow over Rachel's death had been somewhat eased by the passage of time, Joseph disappeared; and still later famine came; and seeking to relieve that situation, he lost Simeon as well. And now that their stores were nearly exhausted, he discovers that the price he must pay for their replenishment is the surrender of his last great treasure, Benjamin. All of life seemed to him, in the eveningtime, when he was least able to bear it, to have gone awry; and as he reviewed the record of the past, in anguish he exclaimed, "I have been an unfortunate man. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me."

Probably there are people here this evening who have had to say something like that. The problem of the book of Job is the problem of every human life. The solution is beyond human wisdom. There is a solution, however, to these difficulties; there is a way out of the maze; there is a light in which these things may be read and understood; and I would fain bring you to that light if possible this evening.

*There is no period of life which we may count upon as being entirely free from disappointment.* Jacob had had his earlier troubles. Some of them he had outgrown—as we have outgrown ours. Sometimes we smile to ourselves as we remember how we allowed some minor disaster to disturb us. We have grown up since then, and have left these childish ailments like the childish maladies to which we were subject, behind us.

The mess of pottage presents no temptation to the man of maturer years. But experience enlarges our capacity for sorrow as well as for joy. We outgrow some of our temptations, and sometimes we flatter ourselves that we have ascended the hill, and have reached a position of security and of comparative comfort—when behold the famine comes, and we are plunged into new perplexities. But a few years ago—and a very few years ago—there were men in Toronto who were ready to say they had succeeded. The world was beneath their feet. They had "arrived"—until the famine came. What we speak of as the "depression" suddenly dropped down upon

us, and in many cases everything was swept away as by a cyclone. Men were left stripped and bare. They said, "I did not expect this. I thought I had left all trouble behind me, but here it is again."

There is no period of life in which we may assure ourselves that all our perplexities are behind us. There is a pestilence that "walketh in darkness", but there is also a "destruction that wasteth at noonday". There are troubles of the morning, and the sunny afternoon may be marked by fatal visitations; and as for the eveningtime, we cannot be sure that the sun will set before some great storm has burst upon us. Many a man have I known in my experience as a pastor, who has seemed to live a singularly sheltered life up to a certain point; then disaster has overtaken him, and he has been overwhelmed with trouble. He has said to me, "Pastor, I did not expect this. I thought this was reserved for younger men. I had looked forward to its being light at eventime, but I cannot see any light. It seems to be darkening to the midnight hour. Joseph is not—this were bad enough; and Simeon is not—that is an accumulation of sorrow; and ye will take Benjamin away—now there is a still greater trouble in prospect. Where shall I look? All these things are against me."

There may come a time in one's life when it appears as though there were a *strange articulation of these troubles*, a concatenation of events which make it appear as though they were all pieced together, as though there were someone who had evil designs toward us, who from the beginning, had been planning things against us. A poor soul came to me a few weeks ago with a letter, saying, "It is too long for you to read now, but will you do me a favour? Promise me to read the first seven pages at least." I do not know how many pages there were, I should say about seventy, a long letter very finely written. Do not smile. It was a sad story, I had not read half a dozen sentences before I understood perfectly. It was from a dear soul whose mind had slipped, and who imagined that someone was persecuting her at every corner—the postman, her husband, everybody was against her.

I understood. I have met many like that, and I sympathize with them. I could take pages out of my own life-story, and could quite easily persuade myself that someone was persecuting me, pursuing me. Nothing is easier than to imagine that, when life is viewed from some points of view, if—and I anticipate my later remarks in saying it—if we lose sight of Christ and His sovereignty over all. I do not wonder that lives are being wrecked, that suicides are multiplied. We need the stabilizing, controlling power of faith in an ever-gracious God to save us from pessimism and cynicism. Such an attitude of mind may often be justified by events. It is easy to look back over the years and say, "I can see it now. I can understand now why Joseph was taken, and Benjamin; an enemy hath done this." Nothing of the kind! Circumstances may have suggested that: but your life has not been moulded by an enemy. It was not true of Jacob, although it seemed as though all these troubles had been related one to the other by a malignant purpose.

Let me pause a moment to give you time to think. Did you ever have an experience, when you said, "Who did that? Who is responsible for that? Whom shall I blame for that?" I have had it. I could quite easily blame someone. Of course, there is one who does not like any of us. So far as he has power, he troubles all the saints.

He is "the accuser of the brethren", our adversary the devil. We can account for some things on that ground, but we cannot account for "these things" on that ground. You cannot account for the disappearance of Joseph and Simeon, and the departure of Benjamin, on that ground.

It is a very dangerous thing when any of us get to the place where we pity ourselves: it is dangerous to one's peace of mind, it is dangerous all the way through. Whenever one allows himself to suppose that someone has been ordering things for his disadvantage, working things against him, he puts himself in a perilous position. I have often told a story of an experience which did me good when I was a little boy. My father was a minister, and he used to send me on errands, sometimes to carry a letter to someone who had to have it at once. He called me once and said, "I want you to take this letter to Mr. So-and-So. Run away as quickly as you can." I used to be particular in those days! So I said, "I shall have to have a little time. I am not ready for the street. I shall have to"—he looked over his glasses; I can see him now: "You want a little time? What for?" "To put on some other clothes. I must make myself presentable." He replied, "Run along, my boy. Do you suppose people have nothing to do but look at you?"

Often I have found comfort in that reflection, that I can go many places without being seen at all. It is a pity that we should trouble to think that everyone is against us. Why should they be? We are not important enough for that—neither you nor I. Why should an army of people be mobilized against you, or against me?

These things came to Jacob at a time when he was least able to bear them. It was getting toward evening-time with him. Some of us absolutely refuse to admit that we are anything but just a little older than we used to be. We shall have to admit that, I suppose. Notwithstanding we have had to say, "I thought I had had my share of the uphill road. I thought I had had my full measure of conflict and difficulty"—I thought I had as a minister. Any man who stands for the Book in these days will have his difficulties. I thought I had had mine.

I remember years ago building a church. I thought it was a great job. I enjoyed it, but it had its difficulties. When we opened it after the task was completed, I said to myself, "Once in a lifetime is enough of that." I had not been there long until some church actually sent me a call. They sent a great committee to see me, and I said, "What do you want me for?" "We want you to come to us and build us a church. We are going to build a new church, and we think you can lead us in it." I said, "Thank you, gentlemen; I have just built one, and that is enough." Then another church came and said, "We have plenty of money, we will give you *carte blanche* if you will come and build us a church. We will wait a year for you." But I said, "No thank you. I enjoyed building one—but one in a lifetime is enough." But now I have another such job on my hands again. Such is life. When we think our tasks are behind us, and our difficulties over, some new trouble emerges, and we are ready to say, "All these things are against us."

Jacob reached a stage when *each of his troubles seemed to accentuate all that had gone before*. There had been Rachel's death: he had been brokenhearted. She had left him two sons. Benjamin had cost Rachel her life. But time was a great healer, and little by little that sorrow receded into the distance. Jacob survived. Then one day they came to him with a coat dipped in blood,

and his sons said, "This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." Jacob examined it and said, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Joseph, Rachel's son, was gone; and as Joseph went out of his life the old wound was torn open again, and began to bleed as though inflicted but yesterday. So our troubles have a way of relating themselves to things that are past, and bring them back to us so that we cannot get rid of our sorrow.

Later Simeon left his father, and now Benjamin must go; and each succeeding trouble seemed to make the smart of all that had gone before, the keener, until at last Jacob felt that all the elements of life were conspiring to undo him. This city is full of people who feel like that, hundreds of them, thousands of them, heavy-hearted, broken-spirited people, people for whom the last star has gone out of their sky. They are not in church: they see no good in going. The friends they once had, have left them; and they are full of heaviness. There is at least one scripture to which even they could subscribe—"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." And Jacob, a great man, who had amassed a large fortune, who said, with some satisfaction in the midst of a great fear, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands"—silver and gold, wealth almost inestimable—has lost it all, famine prevails, there is no help anywhere. Two of his sons have been taken from him, and a third is about to leave. Hence he exclaims, "I may as well give up—all these things are against me."

How little do we understand of the problems of life! How utterly unfit we are to form opinions about even a single day's experiences! If you forget God, if you exclude Him from your thought, if you refuse to believe that in the heavens yonder there is a throne, and upon it One Who, being God, bears our likeness and understands us—if you forget, or have never known, that the sceptre of the universe is in the wounded Hand of Calvary, this must be a dark world. I do not wonder that people committed suicide in Austria. I do not wonder that men's hearts should be filled with fear for looking at the things that are coming upon the earth. You may think you can find a solution to the problem—I can find none. I can find no light in modern religion, with the sovereign Saviour excluded. I cannot find it anywhere among the nations. Do not say that all the trouble is in Europe: we have quite enough of it here, there is quite enough to baffle us in Canada.

## II.

But we must take ANOTHER VIEW OF THINGS. If I were to send you away with that picture, it were better that you had not come. You could say, "What was the use of that preacher's reminding me of my troubles? I know them. It is all true. I have said that all these things are against me; but if you have no solution of the problem, why name it? Why not ignore it?"

I remember years ago when I went to London, Ontario, to live, I could not get a house, and my wife and I became "paying guests"—not boarders, we were named by that euphemism of reduced respectability that calls common boarders, "paying guests." We were "paying guests" in a certain house the people of which were full of resentment against their circumstances, against the conditions of life that forced them to do what they were

doing. It was not the most comfortable place to stay. One Sunday at luncheon I asked the daughter of the house how she had got on at church that morning, to which she replied, "Not well at all." "What was wrong?" I enquired. "The minister had nothing to talk about but debt, debt, debt. The church was in debt, everybody was in debt. I felt like leaving the service before it was over, for I know enough about debt without going to church to hear about it."

Why do you not say, Amen? If I were to leave you at that point, you would have a right to say, "I know enough about trouble without going to church to hear about it. I face it all the time." It is because I know you have experienced it that I have brought this to you, to explain that there is Someone else Who knows all about it too—who knows far more than you do. Poor Jacob—"All these things are against me." Were they? Were they? We must read his story backwards now because we know the sequel.

"What about Benjamin, Jacob? Are you sorry that that strange governor said, 'Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you'?" "Oh no", saith Jacob, "I should never have known who the governor was if he had not insisted on Benjamin's going. The day could never have come when I could say, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."

It is true that the later troubles of life, my dear friends, are related to all the earlier ones. They are all part of life's long discipline. We shall see in a moment that we are held and moulded by a Hand that is infinitely kind. It is forever true that—

"There's a widensss in God's mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in His justice  
That is more than liberty.

"For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man's mind,  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind."

"What about Benjamin, Jacob? Are you sorry now, Jacob?" "Oh no. I can understand why he had to leave me now." "And Simeon, do you understand that?" "Yes; if the governor had not kept Simeon, I should never have been willing to let Benjamin go. That had a place in the divine chain of events." Life is one; after all; there is a strange unity in life's plan:

"The threads our hands in blindness spin  
No self-determined plan weaves in;  
The shuttle of the unseen powers,  
Works out a pattern not as ours."

There is a pattern in your life; there is a scheme of things; there is a design; and to-day is related to your yesterdays. You cannot get away from your yesterdays. Blessed be God, by His Sovereign grace—and because of His sovereign grace—it is true that we cannot get away from Him Who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever". Hence the threatened departure of Benjamin is related to Simeon.

"And what about Joseph, Jacob?" "Oh, Joseph was my well-beloved. I loved him more than all my sons. I gave him a coat of many colours. His loss was the greatest blow that ever came upon me." "Would you say it now, Jacob?" "No. I should say now that it was the greatest blessing that ever befell me."

I read to you about Joseph to-night, and you heard him say, "God did send me before you to preserve life." All those troublous times of earlier years have had

relation to the present time, and even the iniquity of his children against Joseph, worked out for good.

It is a sad thing, when brothers disagree, when there is family trouble. "You do not mean to say that family trouble can be made to work out for good?" someone says. It would not if we had not a sovereign God, but God can make it do so.

At last Joseph said, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither. I will forgive you: try to forgive yourselves." In the end "all these things", instead of working against Jacob, were seen to have been "working together for good". There was Someone over all Who was not disturbed by Jacob's intermediate complaining. You know what I mean? What a lot of grumbling you have done to God! How many complaints you have poured out before Him! How often have we told Him that we could not endure it longer! What a blessing He was not turned aside from His purpose by our complaints! What a blessing that He carried out His purpose in spite of our rebellion! If we had had our way, we should have spoiled the whole plan. Joseph would never have gone down into Egypt; Simeon would never have followed him; Benjamin would never have been required to take the journey; the family would have been stripped bare. Then indeed, "all these things" would have been against Jacob.

But "all these things" that seemed to be contrary, really worked together for good. I love to see the old man in the eventide. Do you know the book of Genesis? Some people criticize it. I am sorry for them! Verily, it is the book of beginnings. Everything is contained in the book of Genesis. Look at Jacob at last, when the story has been fully told, and he has been brought down into Egypt, and the good of all the land of Egypt is his, and he has seen the glory of the son whose departure he had mourned—what a day that was!

Then at last Joseph brought his sons to his father, and Jacob said, "I had not thought to see thy face. and lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed, And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Have you not made a mistake, Jacob? Have you been redeemed, preserved from all evil? Did you not say, "All these things are against me"? "Yes, I said it. But I knew not what I said. The opposite was true. The Angel did redeem me from all evil."

It was well in the end of the day. You know how the watchmen used to go about the city crying, "Twelve o'clock, and all's well"? The later hours were called—and "all's well." Is it nearly twelve o'clock with you? Is it nearing the end of the day for anyone here? Can you say that all is well? There is only one way of saying it. There is only one way of being sure that all is well. As I read that chapter this evening, did you see the gospel in it? It is the gospel of the resurrection

in the Old Testament. "Joseph is yet alive." It is because Jesus Christ is "yet alive", and because the Man Who died at the place called Calvary is now enthroned in glory, there to intercede at God's right hand, our great High Priest, that all is well.

Have you received Him as your Saviour? Do you know that Jesus Christ lives? Can you read your newspaper to-morrow morning and say, "It makes little difference, after all, what happens. We shall not be here long, and all will be well yonder." One of the London newspapers had a big headline recently, "No bad news to-day." I am not at all interested in many of the sporting events of the day; the only good purpose they serve me is to show that there is no extraordinarily bad news to print or the sports would not have the headlines. When I look at the paper I say, The news can be no worse to-day or we should be told.

But that is a negative gospel. Can you say, Good news to-day? It was good news when Jacob knew that Joseph was alive. I recommend you to an acceptance of the old truth that Jesus Christ lives. Read the Book. The critics have had their day, and will soon cease to be. The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the inspired, infallible, and supremely authoritative word of God. It contains the gospel of salvation for every one of us, the story of One Who was crucified, but of One Who is coming again, to take to Himself His great power and reign. And I, at least, am happy in the prospect of the morrow because He is a Friend of mine.

Will you trust Him? Commit your life to Him. Trust His blood for the cleansing of your sin; His sovereign power for the ordering of your life; His unailing promises for your security, for salvation here and hereafter. May we all trust Him, that so all things may "work together for good".

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, O Lord, that amidst all the uncertainties of life, faith brings us to a position where everything else is secure. Thy throne is established in the heavens, and Thy kingdom ruleth over all. Help us that we may bring all our troubles to Thee, that we may cast all our care upon Him Who careth for us.

It may be there is some father here who is troubled about his children as Jacob was troubled about his children. Lord, comfort him to-night. His sons may have caused him much trouble, but in the end of the day may they bring him much joy. Some mother here has been troubled as she reviewed the past. Give her comfort in knowing that Jesus Christ lives, and that therefore all is well. Some man or woman here this evening is almost in despair, at the end of everything, because everything seems to be against him or her. Make such an one to know that God is not against them; and if God be for us, who can be against us? Give us thus the comfort, the joy, that belongs to those who are really trusting Thee. For Thy name's sake, we pray, Amen.

## A GREAT CHAPTER FROM THE WORD OF GOD

(Continued from page 2)

a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest; and hailstones. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

## Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol 2 Second Quarter Lesson 24 June 12th, 1938

### THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Lesson Text: Acts 2.

**Golden Text:** "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."—Acts 2:33.

#### I. The Manifestation of the Holy Spirit from God—verses 1-13.

Our sovereign Lord, in controlling the events of the universe and in ordering the steps of each individual life, chooses His own time for action. Unlike men, He is never impatient, or indifferent (2 Pet. 3:18, 9); He never manifests Himself too early or too late, but exactly on time. The Day of Pentecost was full come (Gal. 4:4).

The word "Pentecost" is derived from the Greek word meaning "fifty". Fifty days after the Feast of the First-fruits, characterized by the offering of a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest (Lev. 23:9-14), the Jews celebrated the Feast of Pentecost, when the priest waved before the Lord loaves of bread baked in the oven (Lev. 23:15-22). Fifty days after the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:23), the Holy Spirit descended from heaven, forming the individual Christians into one body, even as the particles of wheat had been combined into a loaf.

Unity of place and purpose in prayer (Acts 1:14), will always bring blessing to God's people.

The sounds and sights which accompanied the descent of the Holy Spirit are symbolic of great truths. The "sound from heaven of a rushing mighty wind" suggests the mystery (John 3:8), the heavenly origin (John 14:26), and the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Kings 19:11). The Greek word meaning "wind" means also "spirit".

"All powerful as the wind He came,  
As viewless too."

Fire, in Scripture, denotes Deity (Exod. 3:2), purity (Isa. 6:6, 7), and judgment (Heb. 12:29). The tongues as of fire, parting and sitting upon each of them, speaks of utterance, and of unity, yet diversity (1 Cor. 12: 4-6).

The Holy Spirit was now not merely upon the Christians and with them, but He was also within them as Christ had promised (John 14:17). The power of the Holy Spirit was supernaturally demonstrated to all in the gift of speaking in other tongues bestowed upon the disciples. It was the will of God that the message of salvation might be given quickly as possible to as many people as possible. The believers were then the only instruments of the Gospel, for the New Testament had not yet been written.

The gift of tongues was evidently a temporary gift: it is mentioned among the gifts in 1 Cor. 12:8-10 but not in the later list in Eph. 4:11. It was not regarded as the highest gift (1 Cor. 14:4, 12), and was not to be exercised in public without the gift of interpretation (1 Cor. 14:5, 28). Notice, too, that the disciples exalted the Lord, not themselves (John 16:13, 14), and the praise of the wonderful works of God is far different from the unintelligible mutterings of some who claim to be speaking in tongues to-day. The one filled with the Spirit will talk of Christ, not of any ecstatic emotional experience.

The exuberant joy of these disciples, the fact that they were controlled by a power outside themselves, and their gift of utterance were misinterpreted by the spectators who thought these were the signs of drunkenness.

#### II. The Message Concerning the Holy Spirit and Christ—verses 14-36.

Peter acted as spokesman for the apostles, clearly stating the explanation of the marvellous manifestation from God. The sermon has two main divisions:

1. The Holy Spirit was sent according to the Word of God—verses 14-21. God had promised an outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon His people Israel in the last days, according to the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. The coming of the

Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a partial fulfilment of that prophecy, but not a complete fulfilment since all the details do not harmonize. Portents in the heavens in the last days are mentioned in Matt. 24:29.

2. The Holy Spirit was sent because Christ is the Lord—verses 22-36. The theme of this section is stated in verse 36.

The works of Christ upon earth, His miracles and His teachings were all signs that He was the Son of God, the Messiah (John 20:30, 31). They had rejected His claims and crucified Him. Yet the sovereign will of God was being carried out in the death of His Son. Christ had been fore-ordained to die from before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:20).

The Word of God expressly declares that Christ was the Messiah. The Jews revered the name of their great King David, and Peter explained that the statement given in Psa. 16:8-11, could not possibly refer to David himself, since he had died. Therefore David had been speaking as a prophet and his words had referred to Christ.

The resurrection proved that Christ was the Messiah. (Rom. 1:4). The resurrection of Christ, His exaltation (Psa. 110:1; Phil. 2:9), and the gift of the Holy Spirit are tokens that God had accepted the redemptive work of Christ. The Saviour was thus justified in the Spirit (1 Tim. 3:16), and as soon as He was glorified, God sent the Holy Spirit (John 7:39). Christ was perfected as the High Priest to be our Representative with God (Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25), and the Holy Spirit became God's Representative with us (Rom. 8:26, 27).

#### III. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit to Men—verses 37-47.

When the Holy Spirit comes upon the believer. He performs through him His mission in convicting the unsaved (John 16:8-11). That day about three thousand people were convicted of sin, brought to repentance, received the Word, received the Holy Spirit, were baptized and were added to the Church because they had been added unto the Lord.

At Pentecost the Spirit came not only to each individual believer present but He also baptized them into one body, forming a new corporate Church (1 Cor. 12:13).

Every New Testament Church should aim to exhibit the characteristics of this early church. It was a church with regenerate membership, an instructed church, an obedient, prayerful, powerful, unselfish, worshipful, joyful church, a church with a good testimony, and a growing church.

## NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

### ASSOCIATION TO MEET AT LINDSAY INSTEAD OF BOBCAYGEON

We are informed that the associational meetings to be held Wednesday, June 8th, will be held in the Lindsay Regular Baptist Church instead of the Bobcaygeon Baptist Church as previously announced.

**WESTERN BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE GRADUATION EXERCISES.** The Western Baptist Bible College in Calgary, Alberta, which is carried on by Rev. Morley R. Hall, graduated nine young people on April 29th, in the Westbourne Baptist Church. The valedictory addresses were given by Miss Ruth Stauffer and Mr. George Bennett. Rev. Geo. R. Dawe, Principal of the Bible College, assisted by Miss J. Ewing, English Teacher, presented the diplomas, and Rev. Andrew Grieve of Vancouver gave an address filled with most fitting exhortations for the occasion. Mr. Grieve, writing in the B.C. Baptist Bulletin for this occasion, says: "This was without a doubt a week of blessing in many ways, no more to the students and others who attended the Conference meetings than to the guest speaker. One realizes the importance of the contribution to the Regular Baptist work in Alberta through the Bible College. Rev. Morley Hall, the honored and worthy president of the college, and his consecrated staff, have labored sacrificially and scripturally for God's glory in preparing young men and women for Christian service. One grand result is that, scattered throughout the province are young men indoctrinated with real New Testament faith and principles, being used of God in the conversion of souls. They deserve and demand a place in our prayers for continued spiritual success."

**OTTERVILLE—Rev. L. Roblin.** The Otterville Baptist Church has just experienced a time of refreshing from the Lord during its anniversary, and following special services. On Anniversary Sunday the Central Baptist Church Octette of London assisted. Mr. W. Green spoke in the morning and the Octette sang several numbers. Instrumental selections

were given at both services. In the evening the Pastor preached on, "Shall we know each other in heaven", and two souls professed salvation. A new record was reached in the Bible School and large congregations attended. The next four days were ones of real revival when Rev. Jas. McGinlay, the evangelistic pastor of Central Baptist Church, preached each night. The messages were given with great power and the crowds grew from 80 the first night to a packed church on Thursday. Best of all, souls were saved every night but one, and on the last night, six came to Christ. The church has been marvellously blessed and is encouraged to go on.

**A LETTER FROM SCOTLAND**

13 Inverary Terrace,  
Dundee, Scotland.  
April 20, 1938.

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"We are deeply grieved to hear that your beautiful church has been destroyed. May God sustain you and your people in this fiery trial of your faith. I am glad there is clear evidence in THE GOSPEL WITNESS you so kindly sent me, that the sore experience is indeed among the "all things" that "are yours" and that it is already being "found unto praise and honour and glory."

"As to the progress of Modernism on this side; few voices are raised in protest, for the man who speaks out is at once

"sent to Coventry" and must plough a very lonely furrow. A subtle effort is being made to graft the new teaching on to the sturdy stock of the true Evangel, for it is now painfully evident that Modernism itself is a dry tree, utterly devoid of spiritual sap. This spurious evangelism deceives many, for the new generation is profoundly ignorant of the Bible. For the same reason the "Isms" are having a great vogue amongst us. We are overrun with Foursquarism, British-Israelism, Buchmanism and Spiritualism.

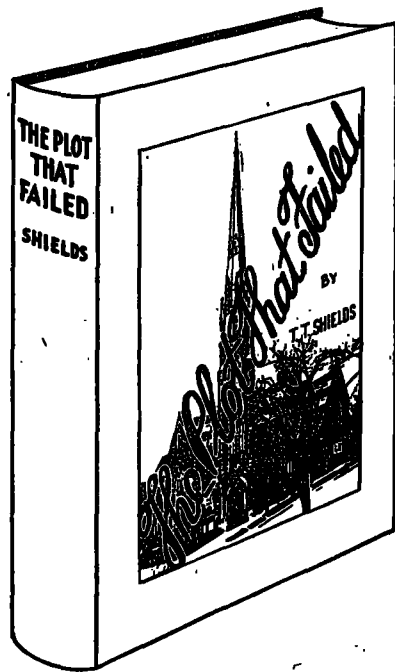
"In the Church of Scotland, however, there is a stirring of a better life. The day of Wellhausen and Driver is definitely past. They will soon be in the "Penny Box" of our booksellers, if not already there. The revival of Calvinism on the Continent is now beginning to affect us for the highest good. It has startled the Modernist to find that the old Puritans whom he long ago buried in the Penny Box are now being bought eagerly by Continental students at high prices. They have had a glorious resurrection! The fact is that a good many of our young ministers now see that the infidel Higher Criticism of Germany had led them into a Sahara and they are struggling to get out of it.

"Thank God, though the enemy has come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord has lifted up a standard against him.

"In sincere sympathy and with kindest regards,

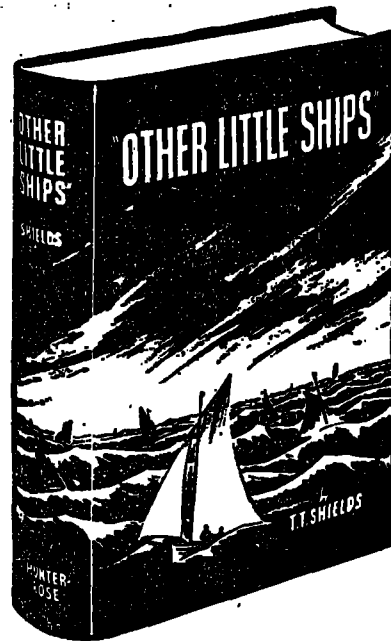
"Yours cordially,

"JOHN SHEARER."



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