

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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TOLERANCE

Words may be used as a frank expression of the mind, as vehicles for the conveyance of truth; or they may be used as a veil with which to conceal the truth, and sometimes as a mask by which to represent the opposite of the truth. There are vagrant words which are seldom permanently domiciled. They drift about like tramps from one company to another. They acquire different accents as they consort with a variety of dialects. Such words need to be questioned, examined as to their origin and most recent associations, and for the purpose to which they are directed.

Words lose or change their meaning, as a rich man may lose his fortune. They change their employment, as a man once a mighty merchant-prince may fall to the level of selling popcorn or peanuts. Words change the levels of their habitation, and the scope of their vision, as some feathered creatures of the high mountains, and the still loftier altitudes, clipped of their wings, may learn to keep company with barnyard fowls. Words too may lose their noble bearing, and the dignity of their original vocation; as when Samson, by association with Delilah, lost his raven locks, the strength of his mighty sinews, and the far sight of his flashing eyes, to become a blind Philistian slave grinding at the mill.

TOLERANCE comes to us as a verbal aristocrat of noble lineage and pleasant address, and suave and gentle speech, as though he were anointed "to preach the gospel to the poor; to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." He is instant in season and out of season in preaching toleration. We must be tolerant of everything and toward everybody. Not infrequently he dons a clerical gown and enters the pulpit. He frequently enters an editorial sanctum, to suggest what should be written. But he is never happier or more at home than when speaking from a political platform, or proposing political measures.

But who is this exquisite BEAU BRUMMELL, this modern ADONIS before whom we are constantly being admonished to bow down? The tone and accent of TOLERANCE need to be studied, and especially ought we to observe his eloquent silences, as well as his plausible speech. If he be carefully observed and examined in this

way, it will be seen that he pleads for tolerance of evil rather than for good. He begs us to tolerate the fire, not the firemen; the poison, not its antidote; the bandit, not the police; the war-monger, not the legitimate defender of his country; the time-serving politician, not the far-seeing statesman.

The term *tolerance* has a medical use, denoting a body's degree of physical immunity to an excess of poison. The modern preachments of tolerance seem to assume that humanity, considered as an individual, a religious or political community, a state or an international sphere of human interest—that in all these relationships, humanity is endowed with such immeasurable degrees of tolerance that it can absorb any and every kind of poison, religious, educational, political, racial, without injury to itself.

It may be profitable to view a few of the spheres of human interest within which this modern doctrine of universal tolerance is so loudly proclaimed.

In the realm of religion in general, the doctrine of tolerance amounts almost to a new religion. Let it be said, however, parenthetically, that we believe in tolerance to the utmost degree religiously, if and when tolerance means the absence of force, or compulsion, or restraint of any kind, in respect to religious belief and practice, save only where such belief and practice infringes upon the liberty of others. We do not believe in tolerance when it means that we must refrain from teaching what we profoundly believe lest it should be offensive to others—we believe the opposite—nor that we should refrain from defending our religious convictions against those who would rob us of liberty to entertain them.

But we are told we should be so tolerant as not speak a word against those who would reduce the Bible to a book of fables, rob it of its authority, and give it the value only of a pile of rags or of old iron which may be made over into something new. We are urged indeed to be tolerant toward those who, in the name of scientific, historical, or ethical, knowledge, would rob us of even the essentials of the Christian faith.

We are asked also to be tolerant toward many anti-Christian religious systems. We are called intolerant if we expose the fallaciousness of the absurd phi-

losophy known as Christian Science; and if we point out the dangers which inhere in Roman Catholic domination, though our fears may be corroborated by the entire history of that church. If we point out that its principles are not alone anti-Christian but tend to the blinding and enslavement of the individual, and the steady deterioration and ultimate decay of the nation in which it gains the ascendancy, we are called bigoted, narrow, intolerant.

So also in the political realm. We believe in civil liberty. We believe that every man should be free to advocate any sort of governmental reform, but, we are told, because of this, Communism, Fascism, Nazi-ism, and we know not how many other political isms, should be allowed to spread and multiply without let or hindrance. We agree that in this realm also there should be no application of force or compulsion unless and until the propagation of these isms should go to the extent of advocating violence. But we ought not to be tolerant of them; we ought, by every legitimate method of moral suasion, to combat these errors.

But tolerance is a very comforting and comfortable word. It is a fitting disguise for a time-serving politician whose foresight is limited to the next election, or at the most to the bounds of his own political career. Tolerance is easy to those who have no convictions of truth. It is an alias for indifferentism. Tolerance is a cloak for the man who, having convictions, fears to jeopardize some temporary prize by their expression. In such case, tolerance is a gaudy uniform in which to dress up a craven coward as a hero.

Tolerance is a mask for the time-serving politician. He would postpone all religious and political crises until he has had time to feather his own nest; and if after him the deluge, he cares nothing, being indifferent to the wellbeing of future generations, and of the future of the state which he professes to serve. He would sacrifice the ultimate welfare of a nation to his own temporal advantage—and all in the name of tolerance.

Tolerance may be worn as a religious and scholastic gown to accentuate the religious profession of one who is devoid of any conviction of revealed biblical truth. One whose religious profession gives him a position with its emoluments, a living, a career, but whose religion is so shortsighted as never to have seen the King in His beauty, or to have beheld the land "that is very far off", may well include tolerance as an article of his creed.

But in all these instances, tolerance is a one-sided and superficial virtue. Thus do men preach tolerance when what they really mean is, Let us alone: we do not wish to be disturbed; for good or ill, we would have our own way, and we resent and resist all persons or principles that would intrude upon our smug complacency, and upon our determination to do as we like.

THE CRAZE FOR "UNION"

It is perhaps not peculiarly characteristic of the time, but rather symptomatic of a common trend in human affairs, that churches should hope and endeavour to retrieve their failing fortunes by some form of "union".

There have been unions of different branches of the Presbyterian Church, unions of various bodies of Methodists, unions of various conventions of Baptists—and seldom, if ever, has such a union really strengthened or

enlarged the work. There has seldom been talk of uniting two healthy, vigorous bodies. Union is generally proposed for the purpose of effecting economy, or to save something out of the declining bodies. There may be cases where success has attended such a venture, but we know of none. In the summertime, in a city like ours, many summertime unions are effected; that is, two or more churches unite for service. And everybody knows it is a union of congregations which diminish for the summer.

Now we read of some-sort of Baptist union in Western Canada, a union including several Conventions; and it is proposed to attempt a union of all the Baptists of Canada in one organization. The only people who profit from such unions are the denominational secretaries who, at other people's expense, are able to travel from one end of the Continent to the other. In a sparsely settled area of such tremendous proportions as the Dominion of Canada, such a union would destroy the last semblance of democratic control that may remain. So we argued at Ottawa more than twenty years ago. Nor will such an argument lose its cogency until the population of Canada has been increased several hundred per cent.

The only people who would attend the general Convention, outside of the paid secretaries, would be the people living in the immediate locality of the Convention's meeting-place. Thus it would throw the control of all Baptist affairs into the hands of a paid secretariat, who instead of being servants of the Denomination, would, in a very short time, become its master, just as has happened in the United States.

The real reason for this demand for union is the general declension of the churches and Sunday Schools and their work. It is not much wonder that it should be so in Canada, because in the Maritimes, in Ontario and Quebec, in Western Canada, and in British Columbia, the "Old" Conventions have passed resolutions which virtually amounted to the request of the Gadarenes when they besought the Lord Jesus to depart out of their coast. They have requested the withdrawal of the Lord and His Word, and the denunciation and persecution of everyone who stood uncompromisingly for either.

But of what value would such a union be? If a man should endeavour, chemically, to produce synthetic wheat or oats or corn, and sow down a hundred acres with his product, and when rain and dew and sun had done their work, he should find only barren land, would it help him to effect "union" between himself and a farmer-neighbour, and sow another hundred acres with the same stuff? IF an already crowded cemetery were enlarged by the addition of another large tract of land, there might be a real "union", but it would only enlarge the place's capacity for more burials.

Why will not churches learn the truth of that which is written, "Not by might, nor by power"—by an army, that is, by organization, or enlarged united human effort—but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts"? The seed is the Word; and if the Word is not sown, there cannot be a harvest. No "union" in the world will bring prosperity to churches or denominations from which the Word of God has been excluded, or wherein it is so vitalized by scholastic winnowing as to make growth impossible. Life always organizes itself, and if individual Christians and churches will heed the scriptural admonition: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season", in due season they will reap "if they faint not".

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE RAINBOW IN THE CLOUD, AND ROUNDABOUT THE THRONE

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, July 10th, 1938

(Stenographically Reported)

"And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,
"And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;
"And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

"And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

"And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

"And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

"And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

"And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."—Genesis 9:8-17.

"As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness roundabout. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake."—Ezekiel 2:28.

"And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

"And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow roundabout the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."—Revelation 5:2, 3.

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

"And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.

"And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices."—Revelation 10:1-3.

What a marvellous book the Bible is! How blind, how spiritually blind, must they be who see not in it the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever.

A great judgment has swept over the earth, and all flesh save those who were with Noah in the ark has been destroyed. Noah is sent forth into a depopulated earth, commissioned to replenish it; and at the very beginning God establishes His covenant with him—I read it to you—by the terms of which He pledges Himself never again to destroy all flesh with a flood. As a token and sign of the covenant, God saith, "I do set my bow in the cloud", and promises that when He brings a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and that He Himself will look upon it, and remember His covenant.

In Ezekiel's prophecy we have the story of another cloudy and dark day. The people of God have been carried away to the land of Babylon, and Ezekiel is with them. While he is among the captives by the river of Chebar, the heavens are opened, and he sees visions of God. He sees a whirlwind coming out of the north, and a great cloud, and a fire unfolding itself and a brightness out of the mist of the colour of amber. He sees the wheels whose rings are so high they are dreadful. He sees certain fourfaced living creatures, and they are with the wheels, and "the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels". They were pneumatic

wheels; they were alive. "And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them." Ezekiel saw them going every one straight forward, and they turned not as they went. He saw their shining track, and above the firmament that was over the heads of the living creatures he discerned a throne, and on the throne there was the appearance of a man above upon it. The man presented a strange spectacle. His colour was as amber, like as a fire: "From the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness roundabout. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness roundabout. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord."

In the last book of the Bible we have an epitomized prophetic history, and an historical prophecy—the whole course of human events from the establishment of the Christian church to the final judgment and the time of the restitution of all things. In the fourth chapter, John, like Ezekiel, saw the heavens open. He was in the spirit, and he too saw a throne set in heaven, and a rainbow roundabout the throne. Then in the tenth chapter he sees a mighty Angel coming down from heaven. There can be no doubt as to His identity: "His face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." He put His

right foot on the sea, and His left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, and when He cried, "seven thunders uttered their voices." John says of that mighty One that He "came down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon His head."

I might nurse that figure if that were within the scope of my purpose this evening, and show you something of the marvellous unity of Holy Writ. Like the wheels that turned not when they went, God's sovereign purpose runs through all the Book. There is a rainbow in Genesis; there is a rainbow in the heart of the prophetic scriptures; and there is a rainbow on the head of Him Who brings all things to a glorious consummation.

I think we need this view of the Word that comes from God in these dark days, in order that we may have a correct view of the world and world-events. We need, as Christians, to learn to sing,

"With mercy and with judgment
My web of time is wove;
And aye the dews of sorrow
Are lustered with His love.
And e'en earth's murkiest storm-cloud
Is by a rainbow spann'd,
Caught from the glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land."

It is a warm night. Did you ever hear the story of the genesis of Dr. Chalmers' great sermon on the expulsive power of a new affection? It was something like this, as I recall: He was driving along a country road in Scotland in an old country trap, a two-wheeled concern. The driver was an expert horseman, and the horse a high-spirited animal. As they trotted along, a piece of newspaper or something of the sort fluttered in the hedgerow, and the horse became a little skittish, and shied away from it. The horseman gave it a sharp cut with the whip, saying, "I will give you something else to think about." That suggested that great sermon. I cannot preach a great sermon—never did, I could not if I tried—but I do want to give you "something else to think about", other than the temperature in this great hall, so think with me.

I.

These scriptures suggest that God,—the God of the Bible, Who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—that GOD IS A GOD OF JUDGMENT.

He so revealed Himself to men in the Deluge when He declared, "The end of all flesh is come before me." But Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord when He visited with judgment the wicked earth where "every imagination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually." I shall not argue the historicity of the Deluge, but rather assume the historical accuracy of the record. I should like to argue it: that would be interesting. It would take me on a detour, however. Let it be enough to say that I believe in the literal historical accuracy of the story of the Deluge, that it was as universal as human habitation of this earth, however widespread that was—at least that.

Evidence abounds that such a Deluge took place over the whole Northern Hemisphere, including North America and Europe. I have not time to summarize the evidence: that would be another subject. I assume it to be a fact. And it was a time of judgment when the severity of God was revealed on a world-wide scale. God went forth to prove His right to rule, and to call His human creatures to account.

The Bible plainly teaches us that *the Deluge was typical and prophetic of a still more extensive judgment*

yet to come. Our Lord Jesus speaks of His coming again, and He says that "as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be". The earth will not be greatly different in its moral quality when Jesus Christ shall come again from what it was when overwhelming judgment was visited upon it long ago. We read this evening how the inspired apostle, dealing with these dreadful realities of human life—sin at its acme, sin at its peak, sin "when it is finished," horrible to contemplate—said that God saved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, while bringing the flood upon the ungodly.

Peter names first the angels that sinned, saying, "God spared not the angels that sinned"; then he comes from heaven to earth and refers to the Deluge as an historical reality, declaring, that God "spared not the old world" but saved Noah's house; he refers to Sodom and Gomorrah, and the judgment that overtook them; and he says these things are "an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly"; he declares that the God Who both saved and judged, Who manifested both His justice and His mercy, will do so again: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." The indisputable historical fact of judgment is a prophecy of a judgment to come.

I said just now that the truth of the Deluge might be demonstrated. I will not labour that, but on second thought it occurs to me that it may be necessary to my argument to say this. Scientists have found, for example, roundabout Gibraltar, in the rubble drift of the English Channel, around the Jersey Islands, things that give abundant evidence of assemblies of the animal creation, having been driven together by some great terror. A thousand feet above sea level, in Central France they found an accumulation of bones, hippopotami, and all kinds of animals, wolves, beasts of prey—not one of them gnawed as though the result of the preying upon one another of carnivora, but bones of creatures that do not naturally consort with each other, that are natural enemies, driven together in vast numbers, and their bones, hundreds of tons of them, mute witness to the truth that the Deluge was a fact.

I have a conviction that there is no contradiction whatever between the testimony of God in nature and the testimony of God in the written Word; and that when the great judgment day shall come, and God shall judge the world by Jesus Christ "according to my gospel", as Paul says, the very earth, the whole created order, will be found a witness against man's sin, and against his unbelief, that "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God". History and prophecy, an historical judgment and a judgment to come, are all written into the story of the Deluge.

II.

But GOD COVENANTED TO DELAY HIS FINAL JUDGMENT. The great Judge grants a sinful earth a long reprieve. He says He will not again destroy all flesh with a flood. Hear me. Again and again emphasis is laid upon the flood, as a flood of water. The same apostle whose epistle I read to you speaks of the heaven and earth being "reserved unto fire", at the judgment of the great day. God has made a covenant, not only with men, but with all living creatures, with the very earth upon which we tread, saying: "I will not again curse the earth for man's sake."

Is it true? Oh yes. The earth has continued; one

generation has passed away, and another generation has come. It is true of the human creation: it is true also of the animal order. "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." We have witnessed some apparent aberrations of nature when it seemed as though the heavens were opened. Have you ever stood on the seashore and observed the tide rolling in and breaking on the shore, then receding only to roll in a little farther, and a little farther, and a little farther? You have said, "What if it were to continue to come farther?" Why does it not? God has so decreed: "Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth"; "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." At last it breaks in impotence upon the shore, and recedes. Twice a day it comes and goes; comes and goes. Oh that man could hear God's testimony to us. How easy it would be for God to overwhelm us! Sometimes we read of great devastating floods as when the Mississippi overflows its banks, and whole cities are inundated.

I have a friend in Kentucky who wrote me at the time of the floods down there. I have been a guest in the parsonage next to the church. He said, "We were taken out of our house through the second-storey window." I met some people afterward and said, "How did it come so quickly that you could not get away? Did you not know the waters were rising?" They said, "It came just like a flood. There was no time for anything. We could only flee upstairs and wait." But that was only local. We read of "China's sorrow". I wonder if there is not a providential purpose in it, when Japan with all her mechanized forces has turned ruthlessly upon a nation that asks nothing but to be allowed to live its life in peace—and suddenly the great river overflows, and man's mighty engines of war are stopped, temporarily at least. I wonder if the great God of nature is not saying to us, if only we had ears to hear, "Be careful! Be careful! Be careful! Remember what power resides in my arm. Think of what I am capable of doing!" But when we read of these things we can always rest in this assurance that God has made a covenant with the earth. There may be earnest of judgment, overflowing rivers, unusual tides, some subterranean disturbance at sea, that sends a tidal wave in upon Miami—but these disasters are all the result of natural, though unusual phenomena.

There is nothing supernatural about such events. I wish we could know that the God we worship is the God of nature. He does not need to go out of His way to bring judgment upon His creatures. Said Deborah, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." They needed not to go out of their "courses" to fight against Sisera: they never do. Properly understood, all nature and every law of God fight against the man who fights against God. God has made a covenant with the earth, and successive generations have peopled it. "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side." The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord, as well as full of the evidence of His power. The earth is preaching to all of us: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." The very testimony of nature will leave every man without excuse at the

judgment-bar of the God Who is in covenant with His earth.

That is not because men are any better than they used to be. It was after the flood as well as before, that God said, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." God says we are all a bad lot. In the sight of His law the earth is populated with creatures every one of whom has lifted his hand against God. Yet He says, "I will not destroy you; I will give you a long reprieve."

III.

Let us look for a minute at THE COVENANT SIGN: "I do set my bow in the cloud." There was nothing supernatural about that. I believe in the supernaturalism of the Bible; I believe in the supernaturalism of Christianity from beginning to end. But God is the God of nature, and He works by natural as well as by supernatural means. I have no doubt the bow was in the cloud when God said this. It was the order of nature that it should be.

You know what a rainbow is, the sun's rays shining through the drops of water that compose the clouds, and so refracted that all the elements of the spectrum which are blended together to make that one white light, are analyzed and spread out for our admiration—just as when a sunbeam shines into a glass prism. It is broken up into its constituent elements. The cloud is here, and as the sun shines, He sets His bow in the cloud.

There is a lesson here. God has no need to do a special thing, He need not be especially just, or deliberately true. He has no need to resolve, "I will love"; God is love. The sun has only to shine, and the rainbow must appear upon the cloud because a sunbeam is what it is. But it was selected as the sign of the covenant. I do not know but it might accurately be said that it was a sign of the inexorability of nature's order.

I read a recent discussion in the correspondence column of an English paper about hell. Some man says, "I do not believe in hell. I do not think it is consistent with the conception of a God of love." The hell of science, my dear friends, is just as terrible as the hell of theology. It is wrought into the very nature and constitution of the universe, and of everything in the universe: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." No special legislation is needed for that. If our eyes were open, we should see men kindling the fires of hell every day. Walk up Jarvis Street and see the beer-parlours that are trapdoors to the pit. You see men staggering along, young girls and young boys. Go into the hospitals and insane asylums of this and other lands. Go where you will, and you will see the principle of the bow in the clouds, that which is natural and inevitable, and can never be changed because God cannot be changed. Then some little theologian, some little preacher, who is a Doctor of Divinity, and Doctor of Philosophy, and I know not what else, says, like Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth postulates a biological miracle that is inconceivable to the modern mind. There are many things that are "inconceivable" to men in insane asylums—and people without God are mentally unbalanced, whether it be a Fosdick or someone else.

"I do set my bow in the cloud." Though you burn your Bible, you cannot erase what is written in the cloud. There it is, a sign of judgment—and of mercy too. It appears in the very nature of things, a covenant of God Who is the great Law-Giver.

Love is as natural to God as the rainbow to the sun.

God cannot help loving. But there could be no rainbow without the rain. The cloud is as necessary to the rainbow as the sunbeam. The rainbow breaks it up, and says the sunbeam is yellow, and violet, and red, and crimson—I know not how many colours, each with its various shades. The scientist tells us it is all determined by the wave-length. That is too much for me, but there it is. The man says, "God is love." Yes, He is; and God is just. "God is merciful." So He is, and God is righteous. "God is longsuffering and patient." So He is, but God is true and faithful. You cannot have a sunbeam without all the colours of the rainbow. You cannot have a part of God: you must have all there is of Him. You must take His justice as well as His mercy; His judgment as well as His grace.

This covenant was divinely instituted. Noah did not ask for it. Noah would never have thought of it, would never have presumed to require it. But what does the text say? "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you." As though He would say, "I do not ask your permission; I do not ask your co-operation. As the Creator and Preserver and Ruler of all, as God beside Whom there is none else, behold, I establish my covenant. I make you a promise, and I will keep it." According to some, Christianity is to give place to Humanism. A religion without a God. It has done so in the thought of a great many.

I received a compliment once—I do not receive many. One Sunday evening some years ago I was coming along past Allan Gardens to the evening service, and saw in front of me Professor Keirstead, one of the most scholarly and godly men I ever knew. As I came abreast of him I said, "Good evening, Professor; I am glad we are to have you with us this evening." "Oh, hello, Shields," he said, "I thought I would come down and hear a little about the divine side of things. A lot of these men talk about men—men—men; and this poor man gets tired of it. I like to hear a bit about God, and I came down here to hear something of the divine side."

There is no other side! God said, "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you. Come into agreement with me. There is the rule. I ask neither angels nor men: I have established my covenant. If thou hast any doubt about it, behold, I do set my bow in the cloud. As the Author of things as they are, I make my covenant; and every time thou lookest on that bow, remember that it speaks for God."

Sometimes we get tired of things as they are. I find the newspapers in our day do not minister to my peace of mind. Some alderman in this city said something about Hitler, and the German Consul asked him to apologize! Many citizens said he ought to apologize. I did not know there were so many out-patients of the asylum! German bombers are busy sinking British ships. Hitler has lied in such a way that would almost bring a blush to the cheeks of Beelzebub. I would never apologize to Hitler, even if asked to do so by the British Government. I believe he is one of the chief instruments of the devil, and is not fit for human society, or for any government to have anything to do with but to blow him off the face of the earth. And Mussolini is no better. I do not like to read the papers these days. Sometimes Canadian news disturbs me—but more of that Thursday evening.

We see, do we not, iniquity at the flood everywhere. Is that an exaggeration? We cry out, "How long, O Lord, how long?" I frankly say when I hear the thunder, I have often dreamed of how easily God could make an end of sin. Then I remember, "Behold, I do set my bow in the cloud." He seems to say, "My day is coming; I can wait; I can wait."

"Thou, the patient Heaven upbraiding,
Speaks a solemn Voice within;
'Weary of our Lord's forbearance,
Art thou free from sin?"

"Fearless brow to Him uplifting,
Canst thou for His thunders call,
Knowing that to guilt's attraction
Evermore they fall?"

"Know'st thou not all germs of evil
In thy heart await their time?
Not thyself, but God's restraining,
Stays their growth of crime."

"Couldst thou boast, O Child of weakness!
O'er the sons of wrong and strife,
Were their strong temptations planted
In thy path of life?"

Let us be patient. He has set His bow in the cloud, and by so doing He has told us He has appointed a time: therefore His time of judgment and of universal accounting will yet come.

When did He say that? Noah had brought of all the clean beasts, and had offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, a typical sacrifice, and the record says, "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Calvary has laid the basis for the salvation of every man who will ever be saved, but Calvary has also effected the earth's reprieve. I believe there is not a man on earth who does not receive an indirect benefit of the cross of Christ. If Jesus Christ had not come, judgment must have fallen. But the Lord "smelled a sweet savour". The Apostle Paul said, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ." He waits to be gracious.

Peter said a strong thing—have you observed it? "I do not believe in the second coming of Christ", says a man who has lived perhaps forty years, and cannot conceive of the Infinite, cannot understand the Infinite Who works in the amplitude of eternity. Peter says, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, 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. . . . But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"—why does He wait—"the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

In the same chapter he says we are to "account the longsuffering of God salvation." Why the longsuffering of God? Because of the reprieve that God gave a sin-cursed earth when He said, "I, behold, I establish my covenant with you." The day of judgment is appointed,

and when it may strike God only knows. Meanwhile there is the rainbow in the cloud.

Ezekiel sees another picture, of a Man on a throne, the great wheels going straight forward, all things working together for good to those that love God, and the spirit of the living creatures in the wheels, everything moving forward toward a throne. Shading his eyes, he sees upon the likeness of the throne, the likeness of a man, and he says, "I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about." Fire, not gold; and yet it was like a rainbow; and he continued, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord."

Take a long leap to the book of Revelation. There John sees a throne, and a rainbow roundabout the throne—still the throne of judgment and of mercy; still God remembers His covenant. He is the covenant-keeping God. The rainbow roundabout the throne, the evidence unfolding until by and by John sees this Mighty Angel come forth to judgment. When He speaks it is like the roar of a lion. He sets His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot upon the earth; and when He speaks seven thunders utter their voice. Who is He? John says, "I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." Not merely about the throne was the rainbow, but upon His head, Himself the personification—how shall I put it—of the philosophy of the scheme of divine judgment from beginning to end, combining mercy with judgment, in wrath remembering mercy. When He spoke the seven thunders uttered their voice. Not now a crown of thorns, but a rainbow roundabout the throne. In Him, the righteousness of God, His truth, His justice, His mercy, His faithfulness, His patience, His love, His power—and the one big word, as I often tell you, grace, finds its supreme exemplification. There are no contrarities in the Godhead. There is no conflict in the Godhead. God is at peace with Himself. All moral qualities harmonize in Him: There is a rainbow upon His head.

When He comes, He will come "to be admired in all them that believe." What a great day it will be when Jesus Christ comes! I hope we can say sincerely that we are impatient for His coming. I hope we can all say that we are numbered among those who "love his appearing", and entertain the promise of it as the "blessed hope". How we shall admire Him! You think you love Jesus Christ now, but you do not love Him anything like you will love Him when you see Him face to face.

"In mansions of glory and endless delight
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow,
"If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now!"

What a glorious day it will be when Jesus Christ comes down the skies to take unto Himself His own, to be admired in all them that believe!

But not only so. *When He comes, the day of grace will be ended.* I repeat what I said last Sunday. I believe the teaching of Scripture is very clear on this, that when Jesus Christ shall come again the day of grace will be over, the dispensation of grace will be ended. But today people are being told that millions of people will be converted after the coming of Christ. I do not believe

that after the church has gone, and the Spirit of God has terminated His ministry, that then the greatest revival that has ever taken place will take place. Peter would not have said we are to "account that the longsuffering of our God is salvation", if the coming of Christ were to usher in the greatest revival the world has ever known. God waits—why? Because this covenant established with the earth will be outdated when He shall come. Not with flood, but with fire will He come. "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The justice of God and the ultimate judgment of sin are as indispensable to the love of God as the salvation of the sinner. When I read of the iniquity of the earth abroad in Germany, and Italy, and Spain, and Russia, and China, and elsewhere, which is altogether beyond human power to check or to punish, I say to myself, If God loves us, if He really is a God of love, He must judge this iniquity; He must punish it. Ultimate, overwhelming, complete, final, judgment upon sin is as indispensable to the nature of God as grace toward the penitent. There is a rainbow roundabout the throne, and upon the head of Him Who is to come.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee for the rainbow in the cloud, and round about the throne, and upon the head of Him Who is at once our Saviour and our Judge. If there be one man or woman here to-night who has not received the Lord Jesus, O Spirit of God, leave him not, forbid that anyone in this assembly this evening should dare to close his or her eyes until such an one knows beyond all possibility of doubt that He is saved with an everlasting salvation. Make this a night of salvation; make this a night of grace, for Thy glory's sake, Amen.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

BELLEVILLE—*Pastor Alex. Wyse.* About thirty-five from the Trenton Church motored to Belleville for Sunday evening service on June 26th. The church was well-filled. Pastor Wm. Hall of Trenton conducted a baptismal service and baptized ten from Trenton. Pastor Wyse of Belleville then preached a very forceful sermon from the text, "Now is the judgment of this world." It was indeed a time of blessing for both churches as we lifted our hearts in song, adoration and praise to our God for His manifold blessings showered upon us. Surely, "the fellowship of kindred minds 'is like to that above'".

The following Sunday at our regular communion service we had the pleasure of receiving into our membership a family well known in our Union who served faithfully in Jarvis Street and other churches.

On Friday, July 8th, after our usual prayer meeting, we held an informal reception for our new pastor, Mr. Alex. Wyse, and family. Mr. C. E. Beattie welcomed them in the name of the church, and Mr. Wyse made a very fitting reply.

STOUFFVILLE. Five young people who have recently professed faith in Christ were baptized by Pastor D. Macgregor. Three of these were from Stouffville and two from the First Markham Church.

A HOME MISSIONARY VISITOR. A special pleasure was given to us this week to greet in Toronto the most distant of all our Home Missionary pastors, Mr. Geo. Hicks of Geraldton, and to hear first hand something of the difficulties as well as of the joy of this pioneer work in a new mining town.

PASTOR T. CARSON of Verdun writes: "We enjoyed very much Mr. Dubarry's final visit. We had our first open air meeting last Sunday. A good number were out and I had the privilege of speaking in French.

REV. E. V. APPS ORDAINED. The following account taken from the B.C. Baptist Bulletin will be of special interest to his many friends in the East who remember Mr. App's as a student at the Toronto Baptist Seminary. We are also happy to note that Mr. App's is a member of the Executive Council of the British Columbia Baptists.

"At the call of the Marpole Regular Baptist Church, representatives of the churches of the B.C. Convention met at Marpole for the purpose of publicly and officially recognizing, after examination, the Divine call of Pastor Edward V. Apps to the Christian ministry.

"The statements of the candidate, relative to his conversion, his call to the ministry and his doctrinal beliefs, were accepted by the council, which unhesitatingly voted to fellowship him in all three.

"Rev. Lorimer G. Baker preached the ordination sermon. His text was in the book of Haggai, from which he emphasized the things that we have in the great plan of God. The message made a very deep impression upon many. Rev. W. J. Thomson offered the ordination prayer and, in behalf of the Convention churches, gave the hand of fellowship to Brother Apps, who closed the meeting with the benediction. We are happy to record that the Marpole Church, under the ministry of Brother Apps, is enjoying tokens of Divine blessing from week to week."

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 2 Third Quarter Lesson 30 July 24th, 1938

The Ministry of Philip

Lesson Text: Acts 8.

Golden Text: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."—Acts 8:35.

I. Saul Persecuting the Church—verses 1-4.

The pilgrim's path is beset by many obstacles. It is ever true that they who will live godly in Christ Jesus suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 5:11; Phil. 1:29). Christians of the early church were opposed by the Roman authorities, who thought they were setting up a rival kingdom, and by the orthodox Jews, who considered the Lord Jesus an impostor. Let us not complain or pity ourselves when we are called upon to suffer inconvenience for the name of Christ.

The leader in the attempt to exterminate the Christians was Saul, who later became the great apostle Paul. Earnest, zealous and conscientious, he thought he did God service (John 16:2; Acts 22:3-5; 26:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:9; 1 Tim. 1:13). The Greek word translated "consenting" in verse one denotes not merely passive, non-resistance, but active, purposeful co-operation. As a member of the Sanhedrin Saul gave his vote against the Christians (Acts 26:10).

God had not forgotten His own. He was directing their lives, and He used the untoward circumstances with which they had to contend as a means for performing His own will that the Christians should preach the Gospel in the more distant parts.

II. The Apostles Rebuking Simon—verses 5-25.

Philip was one of the deacons who exercised a strong ministry for the Lord (Acts 6:5; 21:8). Samaria, the scene of his labours at this time, received his testimony and many believed on the Lord (John 4:39). There was great joy in the city (verse 39). The Christian is the only one who can truly rejoice; he alone knows the joy of sins forgiven, the peace of reconciliation with God, the confidence of protection, and the hope of future blessedness.

Simon the sorcerer had deceived the people by his seemingly miraculous powers. Many are ready to judge as Divine any action or movement which is accompanied by a manifestation of the supernatural. Satan also has the power of performing miracles (2 Thess. 2:9, 10), and we must try the spirits (1 John 4:1).

Simon professed faith in Christ, and was baptized. Only God can search the heart and judge whether a man who claims to have believed on Him has really been born again (1 Sam. 16:7; Prov. 17:3; John 2: 23-25). We may deceive others, or we may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive God (Gal. 6:7).

The purpose of Simon's profession was soon revealed. He made a show of religion for the sake of material advantage, thinking that godliness would be a means of gain (1 Tim.

6:5). He was still a sorcerer, and he coveted the power which the apostles possessed. Simon is not the first, nor is he the last, to think that spiritual favor or power can be purchased. There are those who give money to churches or charitable institutions to salve their consciences, thinking to merit salvation or spiritual grace thereby.

Simon could not bestow blessing upon others, nor receive it for himself, since his heart was not right before God (Matt. 15:8). In spite of his profession he merited the rebuke of Peter. He had need of repentance. Let us hope that his desire for an interest in the prayers of the apostles was genuine, and that he turned to the Lord.

III. Philip Instructing the Ethiopian—verses 26-40.

The familiar incident of the conversion of the Ethiopian official will afford illustrations of the principles of Christian service.

The Lord is sovereign in His choice of the place where His servants should labour (verses 26, 39, 40). Philip had been preaching to multitudes in Samaria. Humanly speaking, he was leaving a field of great opportunity when he departed south toward Gaza, a district which was uninhabited. The Greek word translated "desert" in verse 26 denotes any uninhabited place rather than "desert" in our sense of the term. The place of God's appointment is the place of our greatest usefulness, whether that place be large or small (John 10:4). Concentrated effort bestowed upon one individual may be as important as bearing witness to large numbers (John 4:4, 7).

God provides the power for our service. We may learn from this chapter that the Holy Spirit prepares the messenger, leads him (Gen. 24: 27, 40), brings about opportunities, and makes the witness effective by convicting the unbeliever (John 16:8-11).

The Lord has His own plans. When He would bring blessing to a nation or community, He frequently chooses an individual as His channel. The Ethiopian treasurer, a man of authority, would doubtless be the means of wide blessing in his native land. The Wesleys, Spurgeon and others were chosen to bring revival in England, and John Knox in Scotland.

We would be spared much wasted and fruitless effort if we were content to wait for God to work: His time and His way are always best. Let us not run before Him. When, as in this case, He places one hand, as it were, on the messenger, the other upon the needy soul, and brings the two persons together, something is bound to happen.

God has ordained that His word should be the instrument of salvation (1 Pet. 1:23). They are wise who use this appropriate and effective weapon in the heavenly warfare. Christ is the theme of the whole book (verse 35; Luke 24, 27). Isaiah, chapter 53, was the very passage needed to show the way of saving grace to the enquirer.

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