

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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TWO PERTINENT ARTICLES

Elsewhere in this issue we print two editorial articles from *The Watchman Examiner*, of New York, of which Curtis Lee Laws, LL.D. and John W. Bradbury, D.D., are the Editors. The first article is entitled, "The Trend in Religious Liberalism", and the second, "The Propaganda of Prejudice". We print both these articles with whole-hearted approval.

We have for some years observed the trend in religious liberalism: There are forms of religion, as there are kinds of clothing and habits of life, which are acceptable only in particular seasons and special circumstances. We have known people who, in exuberant health, held tenaciously to a theory of divine healing which was to the effect that it was the privilege of every Christian to have a thoroughly sound and healthy body; but when later overtaken by illness or accident, they demonstrated that their much-vaunted faith was nothing more than a mental theory—and they were quite willing to go to hospital, and to receive the ministry of doctors and nurses.

Religious liberalism is suited to good times and prosperous conditions. Let us state a hypothetical case. Here is a man who, when the fig tree blossoms and there is abundant fruit in the vines, when there is no failure of the labour of the olive, and the fields yield their meat, and the flock is in the fold, and the herd in the stalls, congratulates himself on his prosperous condition. His wealth is rapidly increasing, and in a material sense, all is well with him. As he closes his office at the end of the week, he turns homeward with a feeling of elation. He attributes his prosperity in no small measure to his own industry and business acumen. He has no thought of the possibility of there coming to him at any time a cloudy and dark day. "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names."

When Sunday comes, with his wife beside him, and perhaps his children with him too, he proudly drives to church. He is only one of many similarly prosperous people. The preacher shares the atmosphere which their presence creates. It is a fine summer day for all of them—and so, metaphorically, they all go sailing together, and, as the fresh breezes fill their sails, they glide merrily on.

The preacher tells his hearers what a beautiful world this is; how the individual, and society, and nations, are all part of the evolutionary process which ensures con-

tinual improvement and ultimate perfection in a developing age. He has a word of contempt—or perhaps in some cases rather of pity—for those who still speak of sin, and preach the necessity for salvation. The Cross, the resurrection, Pentecost, the new birth, are all reduced to a naturalistic plane; and the service ultimately closes with a note of mutual felicitation, involving the suggestion that God is rather to be complimented on having such a healthy and prosperous family.

This is repeated from week to week, and month to month, and perhaps from year to year—the prosperous man becomes more prosperous, the proud man becomes prouder still. Each week he gets a little nearer to the summit of the hill of success, and each Sunday the preacher encourages him in his vanity.

Then something happened. The market crashed. Many great financial houses went down with it. This man went down too, but not in quite as complete a collapse as some others. He had to reef some of his sails; the winds and the waves were threatening. At the end of the week he returned home, a more sober, sadder, but wiser man. He was rather thankful that he had managed to keep his office open, when so many had closed.

On Sunday he went to church. When the service was over, he had a feeling that the minister had not even read the newspapers. He was living in another world. He was still telling the people that all was well. The sermon evoked no response in this man's breast. Another week passed, and still another. At last he returns to his home, wondering what next week will bring. He has spent the whole week like a drowning man, grasping at every little straw to keep himself afloat, and wondering how soon the end will come.

When Sunday comes, he tells his wife he thinks he will not go to church, that he has no heart for it. She gently suggests that perhaps he needs such help as the service would bring, but he replies, "It brings no help. The minister has no word of comfort or of cheer for shipwrecked people. I have thought much about it, and as I recall, it is not he who has changed, but I. While I prospered, his messages were very palatable, but they rather trouble me now; and certainly afford me no help." The modernistic preacher wonders that the places of the prosperous men and women who used to smile their approval from their pews, are now empty.

The crash of the market now threatens the world, and even nations seem to be tottering to their fall. No

wonder religious liberalism is becoming increasingly unpopular. For once we agree with Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, because we agree with the Word, when he says:

"The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock"—how much we need that!"

But let us quote the other part of it, which Dr. Fosdick did not quote: "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

The second article from *The Watchman-Examiner* entitled, "The Propaganda of Prejudice", is equally suggestive.

Errorists always substitute prejudice for principle in their propaganda. That is the chief weapon of Romanism. It lays hold of the children in infancy, and trains them in prejudice. It endeavours to bolt every door and shutter every window by prejudicing the mind against all non-Romanists.

Prejudice has been the chief instrument in the propagation of Modernism. Evangelical Christianity was held up to contempt. Young men in theological colleges, were not instructed, but rather prejudiced against all evangelical influences. Modernists did not attempt to defend their position: they were rather content to call evangelicals names. It was so in our own controversy with Modernism in Ontario and Quebec. Everyone who questioned the infallibility of the Fosdicks and Marshalls and Matthews' and Glovers, was dismissed as a "liar"; every paper that exposed the fallacies of Modernism was called a "lying sheet". Every man who dared to stand out against these philosophies of the pit was personally attacked, his veracity impugned, his intelligence questioned, and often his character assailed. However, we have this comfort, the "propaganda of prejudice" may erect a cross, but it cannot seal the graves of its victims. "Truth crushed to earth will rise again."

It seems to us that, notwithstanding the darkness, wherever there are mulberry trees, "a sound of a going" may be heard thereabout.

The Trend of Religious Liberalism

From *The Watchman-Examiner*

Twenty years ago no one would have thought of questioning the future of religious liberalism. All the anchors of the old faith had been cut off and the general drift was toward wide-open speculation. None seemed to know just where the currents would direct the drift, but it was a popular assurance that there would be no turning back. Major denominations, with but few exceptions, recognized the trend. Their officials were compelled to herald the new day.

It is revealing to read the addresses at annual assemblies in those days. Evolution was an assured conclusion. Supernaturalism in Christianity was pitilessly attacked. Those holding the principle of hermeneutics that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and is a consistent revelation of the mind and will of God were excoriated as chauvinists and medievalists. Whoever held to the deity of our Lord, his virgin birth, his miracles, his atoning sacrifice for sin, his bodily resurrection and his eternal glory was treated as an insipid nonentity.

Pulpit utterances sounded like senatorial campaign talk. The Monday morning newspapers tittered over every fresh denial of the ancient faith and the new prophets seemed to be encouraged.

A vast change has taken place since then. The drift we have mentioned struck a storm. It has been one of the most devastating the human race has had to weather. We should thank God for it and take courage. When England was threatened by the Spanish Armada the winds of God drove the proud galleons of Spain on to the Scottish rocks. Admiral Drake was more assisted by the ways of Providence than by his sea-faring genius. So in the debacle of this decade, the faith once for all delivered to the saints has been immeasurably supported by the course of events.

The drifting ships of adventurous liberalism are inevitably seeking safe anchorage. Those who once made a mockery of the realism of prayer are now calling for an effective prayer life. Others who slighted the atonement are now crying out against the devastations of sin. Some who in vigor tackled the making of a new world with a disparagement of heaven, are now gazing with misty eyes to beyond the hills of time. And there are some who sought to rescue Jesus from the peril of being worshipped who have found themselves at his feet, humbly acclaiming him Lord and God.

Liberalism is definitely drifting back to an age-long course. The crisis of our terror-stricken modern world is leading to a more solid exploration. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Yes, deep needs lead to deep devotions. It is a pity that human nature is so stubborn and often so stupid in its vanity that it deliberately heads into storm areas.

As religious liberalism therefore faces the future it must inevitably forsake its empty negations and return to the assured positives of the ordained Christian faith. Out of the mouth of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, the most outstanding protagonist of so-called modernism, came this almost prophetic statement:

You see, we modernists have often gotten at our faith by a negative process. We do not believe this. We do not believe that. We have given up this incredible idea or that obsolete doctrine. So we pare down and dim out our faith by negative abstractions until we have left only the ghostly remainder of what was once a great religion. Then seeing how few our positive convictions are and how little they matter, we grow easy-going about everybody else's convictions, and end in a mush of general concession. Then a crisis falls upon the individual soul, upon the family, upon the world at large, where a religion that is going to amount to anything must have deep conviction in it. "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock"—how much we need that!

The Propaganda of Prejudice

From *The Watchman-Examiner*

This is the disease infecting nearly all the world. Aryans are being whipped into frenzy against the Semites in Europe and their victims are being driven

(Continued on page 7)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"THE KING OF LOVE MY SHEPHERD IS!"

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, August 28th, 1938

(Stenographically reported)

"And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."
—II. Samuel 3:39.

Many of the Messianic Psalms, prophetic alike of the sufferings and exaltation of the Lord Jesus, had their historical basis in the life and experience of David, the son of Jesse. Some of them were measurably true of him historically, but truer in their larger prophetic significance of "great David's greater Son".

I think, indeed, it would not be too much to say that David was one of the most eminent of the Old Testament types of Christ. "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he," our Lord enquired. They said, "The son of David." Then said He, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" The truth is, He was both. Therefore the history of David is replete with illustrations of gospel truth.

The chapter from which my text is taken belongs to David's earlier years. He reigned seven and a half years in Hebron over Judah, and then thirty-three years over both Judah and Israel, reigning in all, a little over forty years; and he was thirty years old when he began to reign. While David was in Hebron, fierce war raged between the house of Saul and the house of David, and indeed long after the seven and a half years had passed. Among the people of Israel there were divided loyalties. Some were for Saul, and some were for David; and "Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul". He was commander-in-chief of the armies of king Saul.

In many respects, Abner was a very worthy man, and a most admirable character; but he had espoused the wrong cause. He was a loyal-hearted man who was reluctant to transfer his allegiance. He stood by Saul when Saul no longer deserved that anyone should stand by him; and even after Saul was dead, his loyalty to his master was carried forward in a loyalty to his still unworthier sons, until, when he was falsely accused, by Ishbosheth, as Joseph had been, and his patience reached an end, Abner sent messengers to David saying, "Whose is the land? saying also, Make Thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee."

He also "had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you: now then do it: for the Lord hath spoken of David saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hands of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies." Abner went to see David, and David received him kindly, and made a great feast for him; he did not reprove him for his mistaken enthusiasm for a wrong cause; whereupon Abner announced his intention to go now to all the tribes of Israel

and win them to David's banner. He then left the king's presence to execute his purpose.

After Abner had left, Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruah, returned from pursuing a troop. Joab, the man of blood and iron, was told that Abner the son of Ner, his bitterest foe, the captain of Saul's army, had come to see David, and that David had received him kindly, and had sent him away in peace. Joab was angry, and sent a messenger after Abner, in the king's name, doubtless—though "David knew it not", bidding him return. Supposing he had been commanded by his new master, Abner returned, before his work was done, to Hebron, and "Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died;" thus he dyed his hands with his blood, and "shed the blood of war in peace," as David later said, "and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet."

When David heard of Abner's murder, he wept, saying, "Died Abner as a fool dieth?—Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou." And "all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner." He had willingly forgiven him, and made him his friend; but an enemy intervened. Then David cried, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak (tender), though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."

Herein is a striking illustration of the whole gospel story. Before I left my home this evening I heard a Salvation Army band playing,

"Tell me the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love."

I have heard it before hundreds of times, but my heart thrilled again to the music of it. I said to myself, There is nothing like it—and I shall try to tell it again this evening.

I.

First, I want to speak to you of THE TENDERNESS AND LONG PATIENCE OF THE GRACE OF GOD as illustrated in this incident of David's life.

David was king. He had been anointed king. He exercised a real and royal authority. Multitudes in Israel bowed the knee to him, yielding obedience to his sceptre, recognizing in him their rightful lord. He was a real king, as is our Lord Jesus at this hour. Do not suppose that Jesus Christ must wait to come into His kingdom. There are some people who seem to imagine that Jesus Christ is a King without a kingdom. That is not true. He is a reigning Sovereign. He Himself said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He

is anointed King. "Where is he", enquired the wise men from the east, "that is born King of the Jews?" He is not only King of the Jews: He is everyone's King—and He was born to be so. He is the King by divine right, by the eternal purpose of God. We worship a Saviour Who is a Prophet, a Priest, and even at this present time, a King.

David was a king against whom long war was waged. Not everyone recognized him as a king: "There was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." There are many cynics to-day who blame the church because the gospel of Christ is not universally accepted. They tell us that if it were wisely preached, if indeed we were true to our commission, the whole world would be lying at the feet of Christ.

Such is not the teaching of Scripture. Our Lord was crucified because He said He was a King. Men rejected His claims to kingship, and countless millions have rejected His claims from then until now. Still He is "despised and rejected of men". Notwithstanding, He is King. There is nothing so unpalatable to the natural man as the gospel of the Son of God. There are no norms so irksome, so objectionable to natural men, as the precepts and principles of the gospel. Nobody loves them naturally. There is not one of us here who learned, by any natural process, to fall in love with this King, or with the laws of His kingdom. To the natural man He "hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." That is still true.

There are some people who mock at "Toronto the good". If Toronto professes to be "Toronto the good", it deserves all the scorn that can be heaped upon it. Its goodness must have been as a morning cloud and the early dew, which vanished away long ago. Men sneer at our "blue laws". It is intolerable to the disciples of "tolerance" that there should be any laws designed for the preservation of a day of rest! This present-day spirit is only symptomatic of the general attitude of the carnal mind toward the reign of the Lord Jesus.

Nor will the natural man tolerate the person of Christ. Prophetically it is written: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." "We will not have this man to reign over us." In apostolic days the apostles recognized the fulfilment of the second Psalm, saying, "Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

And men are still doing it. There is still war against this glorious King of Whom I speak. You may observe it everywhere, in every sphere of human life—a determined, persistent, rebellion against the spiritual rule of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notwithstanding, *David was very patient with his enemies always, even from the beginning.* When Saul was delivered into his hands, he refused to kill him. He cut off the skirt of his garment on one occasion, and having removed himself a little distance from him, held it aloft to prove to the jealous, vindictive Saul that his life had been in David's hand, but that he had spared him. And

now that Abner, who had led the forces of Saul against David on many a bloody field, Abner who had done everything in his power to break the rule of David, and to conserve the kingdom for the house of Saul—now that Abner comes to him, there is no vengeance in the king's heart. He is kind and tender to him, ready to receive him; makes him a feast; treats him as a royal guest—without a word of rebuke for all his rebellion.

So does our Lord receive sinful men. There are people who, if you offend them once, never make an end of it. Placate them today, but their bitterness returns to-morrow; shake hands with them to-day, but the old enmity appears to-morrow. There is no end of it, no possibility of establishing friendship with them. Not so with the Lord Jesus.

I wonder is there a man here this evening who has long been an enemy of Christ, who has resisted all His claims? You have taken His name in vain a thousand times; you have mocked at those who professed to follow Him; you have spent your whole life in bitter and open hostility to the King of kings. There has not been a single day in which some act of rebellion could not be recorded against you. And you say this evening, "But why should I come to Him? How dare I come, who have rebelled against Him so long and so often?" Let me assure you that the love of the King I represent is "not easily provoked".

Any one of us may come to Him, as Abner did to David, and tell the whole story of his rebellion, confess his folly and his sin—and He will receive him as though he had never been other than His friend, as though he had spent his life in His service. All the record of the past He will immediately blot out. Oh that men could know how ready our gracious God is to forgive!

"Great God of wonders all Thy ways
Are matchless, godlike and divine;
But the fair glories of Thy grace
More godlike and unrivalled shine;
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who hath grace so rich and free,

"Such dire offences to forgive,
Such guilty daring worms to spare;
This is Thy grand prerogative,
And in this honour none shall share;
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who hath grace so rich and free?"

But this man was one of the chief of sinners in respect to David and his rule, for he had been commander-in-chief of the armies of the enemy. No one had made himself so strong for the house of Saul as had Abner the son of Ner. Now, before all Israel, and before the king, he says, "I have been wrong; I desire to change my allegiance, to serve under another flag, to receive orders from another master." He brought his sword and laid it down at the feet of David, saying, "Command me; I am at Thy service." And David received him, notwithstanding his erstwhile prominence in the armies of the enemy.

How true that is of the gospel! It always seems to me that there is a striking parallel between this story and the story of another who was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord", who had stood by and held the clothes of the persecutors who hurled their stones at Stephen, the first of all the martyrs, who said, even as he died, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The young man Saul was there! He heard it all, with unbreaking heart apparently. Still he

went on like a beast of prey thirsting for blood, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter"—until great David's greater Son arrested him and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" I do not think He said it harshly. I think there was a note of tenderness and of infinite compassion in that Voice that Saul heard from heaven. He answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" I am confident he did not expect the answer he received. He heard the King say, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest"—and like Abner, he laid down his sword, and thereafter "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

Relating his experience afterward Paul said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem—I was against him." But later he said, when they would have turned him aside from going to Jerusalem, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus," and though he was freely forgiven of the Lord, he never forgave himself. He never forgot his opposition. He said in effect, "I have tried to make up for it. I have tried to bring as many as I could to His feet, for last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God—I was a captain in the armies of the enemy. I did what I could to destroy His kingdom." Ah yes, but how he later loved Him! Hear him say: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Hallelujah, what a King! By His blood our sins are washed away. It is the glory of divine grace to make the greatest saints of the greatest sinners:

"Ah Grace, into unlikeliest hearts,
It is Thy boast to come,
Thy glory of Thy light to find
In darkest spots a home."

He chooses Abner; He chooses Saul; forgives the greatest sinners; promotes them to honour in the army of the living God.

How David wept when Abner, whom he would have saved, died "as a man falleth before wicked men." He said before the people, "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner. I did not do it; I am free of his blood; I forgave him; I was willing to receive him." And he followed the bier. The people were pleased with that exhibition of grace, "as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people"; and they knew that day when they laid Abner away, and covered that murdered body, that the king did not do it, that another hand had laid him there.

It is tragically true that, notwithstanding the grace of God, some people will go to the precipice; it is sadly true that men throw their lives away, and notwithstanding the cross go straight to perdition, but at last all the universe shall know that it was not of this King that they died: "He willeth not the death of the sinner." How gracious was David! He wept over Abner, as, when they brought him news of the death of Saul, thinking it would be good tidings to him, he said, "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the un-

circumcised triumph." Later, when others slew a son of Saul, Ishbosheth; they cut off his head and brought the head of his enemy to David, thinking to please him: but he said, "As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings: how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand?"—"I am this day tender." It is as though he said, "This with me is a dispensation of grace; I shall not go forth to judgment. That day will come by and by." How wondrously patient also is the Lord Jesus!

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

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

II.

Let us look for a few minutes at THE TEMPORARY TRIUMPH OF EVIL, the temporary power of evil. He said, "These men—these men, the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me. They are fighting me all the time, seeking to defeat my purposes of grace. They are too hard for me."

Observe, will you, that the men to whom he referred *often appeared to be fighting on his side*. For long years Joab appeared to be on the side of David. It was Joab who went out against Absalom; it was Joab who fought David's battles on many a field of blood. It was Joab who had taken the field against Abner and all the hosts of Saul, and Abishai with him. But David knew what they were. He was never deceived.

There was a sense in which David, as a man, was afraid of Joab. Joab was a man of blood who unscrupulously, pitilessly, fought; he was a real soldier, a mighty man of valour, in the truest sense a "strong man armed". He often seemed to be on David's side, but underneath he was always awaiting his time to betray him.

And there is a malignant intelligence, a malevolent personality, who is leader in the opposition to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. He is never so dangerous as when he professes to be fighting the battles of King Jesus. Who can explain the corruption of what is called Christendom, the decadence, the degeneracy, of nearly all branches of the so-called Christian church, apart from the assumption that there is a spiritual Joab who, while using the very banner of the King, is really fighting against Him?

No one can say that the Roman Catholic Church promotes the interests of the kingdom of God, nor that the Greek Catholic Church is on the side of Jesus Christ. Oh the pity of it, that thousands of pulpits throughout Christendom will this very day take the glory of Deity from the brow of the Lord Jesus, and deny his very claims to Kingship—like Fosdick, reducing Him to the level of other reformers and religious leaders; and all in the name of Christianity. There is a real Joab abroad, greatly to be feared; and he has

many lieutenants, many helpers throughout the world. Religion has been from time immemorial the greatest and most effective opponent of Christianity. I mean by that, that in the realm of religion the devil has always done his deadliest work, and never has he been busier than he is in our day.

Joab was especially moved by jealousy and envy of anyone who threatened his pre-eminence. Abner was a prince of a man, as David testified, "a prince and a great man," equal in soldierly qualities with Joab himself. Joab knew what a general he was, and he hated him as he hated few other men. There was another man toward whom David was favourably disposed, Amasa, another great soldier—and Joab hated him, also. Jealousy is as cruel as the grave. When people become jealous, individuals or nations, there is nothing they will not do to accomplish their purpose.

The Jews had a legend that it was when Lucifer, the son of the morning, the prince of all the angels, learned that God had planned to make a man in His own image, and put him on the throne with Him, when he learned that in the creation God was making a spouse for the King of glory, this angel, moved with jealousy, resolved to disfigure and destroy the beauty of the one upon whom the Prince had set His heart's love; and that that was the reason for the fall of Lucifer; and, subsequently, for man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into the world and all our woe.

Of this I am certain, the devil is jealous of those who are in the favour of God. Jealous of Abner always, he became the object of his special enmity the moment he knew he was reconciled to the king. I say to you young converts: you wonder sometimes that when you were careless and indifferent, and made no effort to serve the Lord, the devil seemed to let you pretty much alone; but the moment you were brought to repentance, and you turned with full purpose of heart toward Christ, it seemed as though all hell were let loose upon you. It is always so, as soon as the soul can sing,

"My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child;
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And 'Father, Abba Father!' cry,"—

As soon as the devil knows this, he will be on your track. If you repent and believe in the Lord Jesus to-night, you will have a hard time to-morrow. The devil will not let you alone.

As soon as Joab heard that Abner had come to the king, and that the king had made a feast for him and let him go again in peace, he sent a false note to Abner, signed doubtless in the name of the King, to return. The devil is the greatest forger that ever lived. He is always forging the name of God, always outlining courses for men in the name of religion, that are directly contrary to everything the Bible teaches. You had better "try the spirits whether they are of God", for many false prophets are gone out into the world: If a messenger overtakes you on the road, and bids you return to Hebron, you had better examine his credentials to see whether it is really from the King.

Abner accepted it, in good faith, and even as he returned—but let me read you the story: "And when

Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died." Joab said in effect, "Abner, you have seen the folly of your course; I am glad to welcome you. We shall be comrades-in-arms now. I have coveted your great ability for the service of David." He took Abner aside "quietly", and even as he talked, he whipped a dagger from his belt and drove it into the side of Abner, under the fifth rib. Notwithstanding the king's clemency, notwithstanding the king's yearning over Abner, because he was ignorant of Joab's devices and had not learned the subtlety of a jealous foe, he fell into his hands, and died "as a man falleth before wicked men." Even "while he was yet a coming", like the story in the New Testament, this devil threw him down and tare him. Abner died.

The cross is a reality. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus makes salvation possible to us, and yet there is a malevolent spirit that will step between us and the forgiveness of the King, and even in the very city of the King, and almost in His presence, will shed our blood. It is the only explanation I can offer for some of the things we see to-day. We see iniquity abounding on every hand. I am not a pessimist, but surely those of us who have known our own Province, know very well that there never has been a time within the last fifty or seventy-five years—perhaps for a longer period—when individual life, social life, public life, political life, was so corrupt and so polluted as it is to-day. The Government of this Province—I have said it again and again—promotes the interests of the underworld, of the basest elements of society; men who care nothing for the souls or bodies of men, who are the agents of hell, are the special favourites of Premier Hepburn and his colleagues. Tell him that with my compliments. There is no explanation for it apart from this: "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience", not only in this country, but in the country to the south of us. And if you make a survey of the whole world, you will find the same condition—as though the devil had been loosed for a little season to deceive the nations. We are living in a mad world. Notwithstanding, the gospel is true; Jesus Christ is King. But He is tender, and in this present day "these men, the sons of Zeruah, are too hard for (Him)."

I do not mean that David could not soon have settled the matter. This is he who went forth against Goliath when he was but a youth, ruddy and of a fair countenance. He said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." And the giant licked the dust. The lad, in the name of the Lord, put his conquering heel on his insolent neck, and severed his head from his body. He could similarly have dealt with Joab. "The strong man armed keepeth his palace" a long time, "but when a stronger than he shall come upon him"—do not forget that! Do not forget that some day "a Stronger than he shall come upon him." Meanwhile, there is one who is called "the god of this world". "The whole earth

lieth in the wicked one", as truly as Samson lay in the lap of Delilah. Joab and Abishai had their way for a long time.

III.

It may be that evil will still be in the ascendancy for a while. I do not know how long "the strong man armed" will keep his palace; But A DAY OF JUDGMENT MUST COME. David said, "I am this day tender, though anointed king." Then he added, "The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." "Joab", said he, "you will not escape in the end of the day. There is a day of reckoning coming, when the books will be balanced." "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished"; "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I wonder is there an unconverted man here this evening who is inclined rather to question that doctrine? He says, "I have heard that before, but I am not in the least disturbed by it." In my experience as a minister, I have had to do with some—how shall I describe them?—perfect liars, men who know how to tell a lie, and stick to it. Almost invariably the bigger the liar, the readier the man is to call God to witness that he is telling the truth. Says the man, "If I were to drop dead this minute, sir, what I have told you is the absolute truth." Why did he say that? Because he did not believe in God, God was, not a reality to him; but he thought he was to me. He invoked the name of God to credential his lie.

What if the day of judgment is long in coming? "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." The man says, "I got away with it"; "I did it, and got away with it." How far did you get away? How far? Not so far that a righteous God cannot overtake you, my friend. Joab committed all these crimes and "got away with it" right up to the end of David's life. For forty years Joab maintained his position; and when David was old, Joab put a puppet named Adonijah up for king, and "Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom". Doubtless he thought if the weakling Adonijah were king, he could have his own way. For all those years Joab maintained his position in Israel; then in the eveningtime the Nemesis fell. Another king arose to execute judgment, and one after another of those who had rebelled against David fell.

When tidings of these things came to Joab, he fled "unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold of the horns of the altar", saying, "I am safe here—as safe as in church." He laid hold of the instruments of religion and said, "They dare not touch me here." But Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoida, saying, "Go, fall upon him", and even as he held on to the horns of the altar, the sword of justice in the hand of Benaiah, was sheathed in his heart, and the rebel and traitor died at last as he had deserved to die these forty years—and the floor of the temple was stained with his blood.

There are people who seem to think they can sin against God, and get into the church, and lay hold of the horns of religion; but if they have never repented and turned to God, the church can not save them. The "horns of the altar" will not save any one of us when God goes forth to judgment. I read it to you to-night. This old earth has lasted a long time, and

the mockers say it will last a great deal longer—perhaps it will. But we read that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day", that God is waiting, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He is "yet tender, though anointed king"; but hear me: "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel", and He has not only appointed a day of judgment, but He has appointed a Man, and by that Man whom He has ordained, none other than the King Who now is tender, will He "bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

There is only one hope for any of us, and that is to have that matter settled now. There is a way of settling this matter out of court. The controversy between your soul and God may be settled with the great Advocate Himself, the Lord Jesus. You say, "I cannot pay my fine"—He will not ask you to: He will pay it for you; but He will insist that you plead guilty. You say, "I am going to court." That will be very unwise. You had better settle it out of court. If you do, He will pay your debt; He will set you free, and you may look forward to the day of judgment unafraid, without any "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation". But I warn you,

"There is a line by us unseen
That crosses every path
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

"To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth;
It does not quench the beaming eye
Nor pale the glow of health.

"How long may we go on to sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and where
Begin the confines of despair?

"An answer from the skies is sent,
Ye that from God depart
While it is called, To-day, repent,
And harden not your heart."

THE PROPAGANDA OF PREJUDICE

(Continued from page 2)

into exile. Waves of rioting sweep over Burma between Buddhists and Moslems with hundreds killed and wounded because of a book interpreted by Buddhists as, offensive to their faith. Russia and Japan teeter on the edge of war because their national ideologies lead their peoples to excited distrust of each other. Even in our own land vast numbers are torn apart into opposing camps due to propaganda of bitterness and the excitements of fear and malice.

Mass hysteria is mankind's most easy tool for hatred. It is not material whether propagandists are sincere or insincere. Those who affect the thinking of millions by radio or print bear a great responsibility. The tensions which propagandists of prejudice may create have in them nightmares of possibility. The contagion spreads. Humanity too easily responds to the savage mentality. So common is this that there is nothing that confirms the doctrine of total depravity more completely than this. With all the world's boasted culture in 1914 millions of men rushed in mad slaughter upon one another. The world has not yet recovered from that feast of hate. It threatens to repeat that bath of blood.

The Christian must preserve his soul from the evil

passion of prejudice. He must guard against being smirched by the foul flood of propaganda which is surging over the world against various races and groups of human beings. "If it be possible, as far as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." We can never forget the blind folly of the evil-impassioned throngs which cried for the blood of the Son of God—"Crucify him! Crucify him!" There the propaganda of prejudice did its worst. We cannot have part with such evil spirits. Our Lord met mankind's prejudice with the grace of sweet reasonableness. By this he won the devotion of love and banished the passion of hate from many human hearts; so may we.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

Lesson Text: Acts 15.

Golden Text: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."—Acts 15:18.

I. The Crisis in the Church at Antioch—verses 1-6.

The peace in the Church at Antioch was being disturbed by false brethren from Judaea who were troubling the souls of the Christians by teaching that salvation could not be obtained apart from the Mosaic law, and therefore the Gentile converts must first become circumcised Jews. Believing Pharisees took the same stand.

Anxiety and perplexity prevailed among both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews looked with suspicion upon the new converts from heathenism with their laxity in regard to ceremonial observances that were so characteristic of Judaism. On the other hand, the Gentiles considered the burden of the law unbearable. One may compare the problem in the Church to that which modern missionaries in India face with reference to the caste system.

The legalistic teachers were departing from the purity of the Gospel in maintaining that salvation was to be obtained by works, rather than by faith (Rom. 4:5).

As these men purporting to be officially representing the church at Jerusalem had come to spy out the liberty of the Christians, the Apostle Paul's whole procedure in receiving the Gentiles was under criticism. Moreover, the entire future missionary policy of the Church was involved.

The passage in Galatians 2:1-10 seems to refer to this crisis and council meeting. If so, Titus was one of the "certain other of them" accompanying Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem.

II. The Consideration by the Church in Jerusalem—verses 7-29.

After the preliminary discussions, Peter gave an address in which he proclaimed his conviction that the commission which he had received to give the Gospel to the Gentiles was from God (Acts 10:9-16). The Holy Spirit had given them the witness in their hearts that they were the children of God (Rom. 8:16). They, too, had been cleansed from sin (1 Pet. 1:22). God is no respecter of persons and all who are saved have been saved by grace (Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 5:15).

To demand that the Gentiles keep the law was to put God to the test instead of taking Him at His word (Acts 11:17). The law could not save, for men could not keep it in its entirety (Rom. 8:3; James 2:10); it merely convicted them of sin, causing them to realize their need of Divine grace (Rom. 7:12, 13; Gal. 3:24). Justification is by faith, not by works of the law (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16).

Barnabas and Paul then related their experiences among the Gentiles when God had attested their ministry by miracles and signs.

James the Just, brother of our Lord, the leader in the Church of Jerusalem, gave the final judgment (Acts 12:17). He referred to Simon Peter's account of his experiences in

the house of Cornelius, the first Gentile to be received into the Church (Simeon is but another form of the name Simon). With this agreed the words of the prophets who foretold that the Gentiles were to be included in God's program for the blessing of His people (Amos 9:11, 12). God was but carrying out His own predetermined purposes (Eph. 1:10; 3:9, 10; Col. 1:26). He knows the end from the beginning.

The Gentiles were not to be burdened with the yoke of bondage to the law of Moses, but were to remember the law of love, and refrain from practices which would cause offence to godly Jews (Gal. 5:13-15). This was necessary (verse 28), not for salvation, but for peace and understanding between the two groups. They should abstain from pollution arising from partaking of the flesh of heathen sacrifices (Exod. 34:15), or the flesh of beasts killed by strangling and from which the blood had not been drained (Lev. 17:13, 14), or blood in any form (Lev. 17:10, 11; 19:26). These restrictions would also be merciful provisions for the Gentiles themselves, assisting them to free themselves from all former associations with heathen religion and its impurities. Teachers should emphasize and illustrate the principle of voluntary limitation of liberty for the sake of the weaker brother (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8).

The unanimous (verse 25) decision of the elders and apostles was carried into effect. Barsabas and Silas (also known as Silvanus, Acts 17:4; 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Pet. 5:12) accompanied Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch to give any necessary oral explanations. The letter embodying the instructions of the Council is interesting as being the first document of the acts of the early Church which has been preserved for us.

III. The Consequences to the Church at Large—verses 30-41.

The results of the Conference were far-reaching. The decree brought joy and comfort to the perplexed Christians at Antioch, and in other places. The truth of the Gospel in its purity had been clearly enunciated. Some of the provisions of the decree were meant to be temporary, but the principles are eternal.

The Apostle Paul's mission to the Gentiles had been endorsed, and the right hand of fellowship was given him by the pillars of the Church, Peter, James and John (Gal. 2:9). Very shortly he set out on a second missionary journey.

It would seem that Paul's stern rebuke of Peter occurred during the sojourn in Antioch after the meeting of the Council (verse 35; Ga. 2:11-16). Peter did not err from the *doctrines* of the Gospel, being in entire agreement with Paul in that matter, but he "*walked not uprightly* according to the truth of the Gospel". Though associating freely with the Gentiles in Antioch at first, he later withdrew from social intercourse with them in weak compliance with the prejudices of Hebrews from Jerusalem. His inconsistency might have had disastrous results in destroying the recently secured unity in the Church. The encounter between the two stalwarts was probably sharp, but there is no reason to suppose that either one cherished any ill-feeling toward the other. Peter probably realized his mistake, and repented (2 Pet. 3:15, 16).

The dissension between Paul and his companion Barnabas illustrates the truth that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels", and that these chosen servants of God were men "of like passions" as ourselves (Acts 14:15; 2 Cor. 4:7). Paul was of the opinion that John Mark, who had once turned back (Acts 13:13), did not possess the qualities of steadfastness necessary for missionary endeavour (Pro. 25:19; Luke 9:62). Barnabas thought his young relative had learned his lesson, and would henceforth prove faithful.

The two missionaries came to an amicable agreement, Barnabas choosing his own sphere of labour (1 Cor. 9:6). God overruled the seeming disaster of their separation in multiplying the streams of Christian influence (Acts 8:4). Also, Mark evidently profited both by the sternness of Paul and by the kindness of Barnabas (1 Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11).

REV. ROY HISEY

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