

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

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

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Vol. 17, No. 38

TORONTO, JANUARY 26, 1939

Whole Number 871

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

We have recently read an interesting address by a very well-known American preacher which, in the paper in which it appeared, is entitled, "The Jews Fulfilling Prophecy". The author of this sermon is free of many of the extravagances which nowadays are put forth in the name of evangelical orthodoxy. He is a minister for whom we have the greatest respect and admiration; but when he deals with the subject of the Jews he uses at least one of the shibboleths of orthodox premillennialism.

The text of the sermon was Isaiah, chapter forty-three, verses nine and ten. For the purpose we have before us the following paragraphs from the sermon will be sufficient:

When Jesus and His disciples were walking round the temple not long before His crucifixion, and He told them there would not be one stone left upon another one day, they asked Him: "Master, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" or, rather, "of the end of the age?"

The Lord Jesus answered both questions. He predicted the destruction of the temple, which came about forty years later, then, leaping over the years to the present generation, He carried His disciples' minds to the end of the dispensation; and the sign He gave them was the fig tree. "When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves", He said, "ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24: 32, 33). Or, as Mark's gospel puts it: "that he is near, even at the doors."

We are living in the days of the budding of the fig tree, for that is the recognized symbol of the covenant people of God, of Israel. So the Lord was really telling His disciples: "When you see them again acting as a people in the world, then you may know that the coming of the Lord is close at hand."

Near the close of the World War I was giving some lectures in San Francisco through the autumn and winter at the Y.M.C.A. There were some members of that Association who wanted to learn about the Second Advent. We studied the prophecy of Isaiah, and I tried to point out that there was coming a day when the people of Israel would go back to their own land; but, of course, I had to tell of the judgments that would follow. When I started to return home, just as I was walking along the street, a lusty-voiced individual came tearing out of the *Frisco Examiner* office, shouting: "Extra! Extra! Allenby has taken Jerusalem."

I said, "Here, lad, give me one! I've waited thirty years for such news!" I'll never forget the thrill that came to my heart as I got on to the ferry-boat and settled down to read that stirring account of Allenby's entering that city of Jerusalem; and as I read it I recognized that we had moved into the final epoch of the "times of the Gentiles".

It will be observed that our preacher refers to the parable of the fig tree, and then says:

We are living in the days of the budding of the fig tree, for that is the recognized symbol of the covenant people of God, of Israel. So the Lord was really telling His disciples: "When you see them again acting as a people in the world, then you may know that the coming of the Lord is close at hand."

Here it is said that the fig tree "is the recognized symbol of the covenant people of God, of Israel." We should like to enquire who recognized the fig tree as the symbol of Israel? And where, in the whole Scripture, is there anything to indicate that our Lord's use of the fig tree was designed as an illustration of Israel?

Luke, in his version of the parable, says, "And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

It will be observed that the fig tree is classed with "all the trees," and the Lord said that when we see the trees budding—not only the fig tree, but the shrubs in our gardens, or any other trees—we may of ourselves know that summer is now nigh at hand. But what is the budding of the fig tree, and of all the trees? In each of the Synoptic Gospels, it is "these things". Now what are "these things" that are to come to pass? One will read the twenty-fourth of Matthew, the thirteenth of Mark, and the twenty-first of Luke, in vain to find even the remotest suggestion that the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, or to the Holy Land, is included in "these things".

Among the things predicted in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew are the coming of false Christs; wars and rumours of wars; famines, pestilences, and earthquakes; persecution of the saints; false prophets arising; iniquity abounding; the gospel being preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, standing in the holy place; incomparable tribulation; a further prediction of false Christs and false prophets, showing great signs and wonders; an admonition to refuse belief in any secret coming of Christ, on the ground that His coming will be as visible as the lightning; after the tribulation, a darkening of the sun and of the moon; stars falling from heaven; then the sign

of the Son of man in heaven; then the sending forth of His angels, to gather His elect from the four winds.

This is a list of the "things" referred to in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew; and immediately there follows, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree." But what is there in the chapter to suggest that the budding fig-tree represents the return of the Jews to Palestine? But we are told that the budding fig tree "is the recognized symbol of the covenant people of God." We have asked scores of people the authority for such a recognition: we have never been able to find anyone to answer us. This surely is not exegesis: it is reading into the Scripture that which is not there. As a matter of fact, there seems now to be some doubt about the immediate provision in Palestine of a national home for the Jews. The sons of Ishmael are in the majority there, and seem indisposed to yield their position. On the other hand, the Jews are being driven out of most of the countries of Europe, and the nations are at their wit's end to find asylum for them.

Why do we call attention to this matter? Because we are jealous for the authority of the inspired Word of God; and we are persuaded that nothing can do more to shake people's confidence in the reliability of the Scriptures than the interpretations that virtually read into the Scriptures predictions which are not there.

We recently read Principal Fairbairn on "Prophecy". The work was published in eighteen hundred and sixty-six, and the preface to the Edinburgh edition is dated, "Glasgow, October, eighteen hundred and sixty-four". We quote from the preface as follows:

Mr. Frere, who has more perhaps than any other acted as the leader in this mistaken and perilous line of things, has lived to see his most confidently-announced prognostications of great events thrice over palpably falsified. Even since the first edition of this volume was published, a whole series of announcements from the sure word of prophecy, issued, not by one merely, but by a number of disciples of the same school, have shared a like fate. Holding, as they do in common, and without any valid ground in Scripture, that the present Louis Napoleon is the last, the culminating embodiment of the antichrist—holding it, indeed, so firmly that it has ceased to be with them a matter of doubt, "having been demonstrated with mathematical certainty"—there *should* have been formed a seven-years' compact between the emperor and the Jews at the latest in 1861, (the period of the Second Advent being assigned to between 1866 and 1868.) the Jews *should* have been already back to Palestine, and their new temple in progress, since this was to be completed in 1865; Popery as a system *should* have been destroyed in this current year of 1864, or, as it is otherwise and more particularly expressed, "the mystery of iniquity should now have been finishing in bloodshed so great, that the apostle uses a hyperbole to describe it, *reaching unto the horses' bridles.*" All these, and other things of a like nature, were a few years ago confidently predicted, while not one of them has had even the shadow of a fulfilment; and in so far as such interpreters of prophecy could do it, the cause of Bible truth has been delivered up into the enemies' hands. Nor is it the least melancholy part of the matter, that they appear to be themselves no way daunted by the results; and, as if the ground still remained firm beneath their feet, the same things are reasserted with unabated confidence, only, by a fresh manipulation of figures and symbols, the period is postponed some eight or ten years later: the consummation now is to be, not in 1866-8, but 1871-2. (See, for example, Baxter's "Louis Napoleon", ed. 1863.)

From the foregoing it will be seen that practically the same things were being said seventy-four years ago. The Jews were to be back in Palestine, and the temple complete, by eighteen hundred and sixty-five. What Dr. Fairbairn said seventy-four years ago could be said over again to-day:

Nor is it the least melancholy part of the matter, that they appear to be themselves no way daunted by the results; and, as if the ground still remained firm beneath their feet, the same things are reasserted with unabated confidence.

It seems to us a thousand pities that men so thoroughly sound in their evangelical testimony, who so clearly set forth the way of life through faith in Christ, should bring to their interpretation of eschatological matters, certain assumptions which have been handed down through two or three generations of premillenarians without re-examination, and which are absolutely devoid of scriptural foundation; and that, by so doing, they should surround the precious truth of the "blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ", with so many predictions which repeatedly have been palpably falsified by the mere passage of time.

"QUEBEC PRIEST BOLTS CHURCH, TAKING FLOCK"

Under the above caption, *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto morning newspaper, printed a Canadian Press dispatch from Dalhousie, N.B., which we give, in part, as follows:

Dalhousie, N.B., Jan. 19.

Rev. Real D'Anjou and eighty parishioners have broken away from the Roman Catholic Church at Fontenelle, on the Gaspé coast in Quebec Province, and have been admitted to the Miramichi Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

(A spokesman in the Roman Catholic bishop's palace at Gaspé and the former parish priest at Fontenelle to-day confirmed that he and eighty members of his congregation had severed their connection with the Catholic Church. Neither the spokesman nor Mr. D'Anjou gave the reasons for the break.)

Bishop's Policies Blamed

Unrest caused by disagreement with policies of Bishop F. X. Ross of Gaspé, had been felt in the Fontenelle parish for some time, Mr. Hayward stated to-night. A strained situation occurred in October, 1936, when another priest came to replace Abbe D'Anjou.

"The parishioners were highly indignant," said Mr. Hayward. One man tried to prevent the new priest from saying Mass, and the offender was sentenced to five months in jail.

The method of distributing relief moneys from the Quebec Government also was said to be a cause of disagreement between the bishop and abbe.

A further dispatch from Montreal, appearing in the same paper, added that in this little village of about one hundred and twenty-five families, the Curé D'Anjou had been ejected from his own church because he had refused to collect a tax on the ground that the people, of whom he said seventy-five per cent. were unemployed, were unable to bear any further taxation. It was said that he had declined to charge for weddings and baptismal services, as the people, while not starving, were in dire need. It was further said that Mr. D'Anjou had been rebuked for accepting a lot of vegetables for his parishioners because they had been donated by a Protestant!

A more detailed account of the same story recently appeared in a Protestant French-Canadian paper, *L'Aurore*, of Montreal. The article, from which we translate the following, is in the form of an open letter to a Roman priest in Switzerland:

"Here are the facts. They are well known here.

"I have already spoken of the depression which has made itself felt even in Canada. In the parish of Fontenelle many families were on direct relief. It appears that the one at Fontenelle who was charged with the distribution of this relief did not fulfil his task with perfect honesty. He had, however, the signal advantage of being a friend of the Bishop. The Curé D'Anjou dared, according to the newspapers and the personal reports that I have received, to attack this important personage and to bring this friend of the Bishop before

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 22nd, 1939

(Stenographically Reported)

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."—Colossians 1:18.

History abounds with the names of men who have challenged and secured the attention of their fellows, and by words and deeds of varying qualities, have secured for themselves a place of recognition among the great men of the world. But even the greatest of them have enjoyed but a meteoric attention; they have flashed like meteors across the sky, and have died out into the darkness, leaving behind them at best but a vague memory of their splendour.

But the Star of Bethlehem has never grown dim. The brightness of the halo of the Manger has increased until it has burned with the glory of seven suns; and there has been given to the Child of the manger a name "that is above every name." Often I feel the strongest desire to speak of His glory, but where shall we find language to express, or a mind to conceive of His greatness? And yet I would assay the task, trusting to the presence and power of that Spirit of truth Whose special function it is to glorify Him.

I would fain speak of the transcendent glory of His name, of the inherently preeminent worthiness of His character, that we may see how fitting it is that He should forever outshine the glory of all others.

I.

Where shall we begin a study of the character of Jesus Christ? We must, of course, think somewhat of HIS PREINCARNATE GLORY. If we restrict our contemplation to that miraculous parenthesis in His being described in the Word as "the days of his flesh", we shall not wholly understand Him. The story of His earthly life is unique, altogether matchless in its quality. The Gospels, each of itself, and together, is and are inherently immortal because they enshrine the image of Him Who only hath immortality. The benevolence of His deeds, the incomparable wisdom of His words, the supernal quality manifested in every aspect of His character, give to Him a place entirely apart, and accord Him the preeminence among the sons of men.

But while we must look through the Gospels, if we would understand Him, we must think of the glory that was His from all eternity: before the wise men saw the star in the east; before Daniel spoke of Messiah's being cut off, and of His later supremacy and glory; before Ezekiel saw above the firmament that was over the head of the cherubim the appearance of a throne and the appearance of a man above upon it; before Jeremiah spoke of His everlasting love; before Isaiah testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; before David sang his psalms, or called Messiah his Son, and his Lord; before Balaam uttered his reluctant prophecy of the Star and the Sceptre arising out of Jacob; before Moses, the greatest of all the prophets, spoke of the Prophet like unto Himself, Whom God should send; before Joseph wore his golden chain, or Jacob saw

the ladder resplendent with the glory of ascending and descending angels; before Isaac met his bride at evening-time; before Abraham rejoiced to see His day, and, seeing it, was glad; before Noah, in prophetic type, prepared the ark and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith; before Enoch walked with God, or spoke of the Lord's coming with ten thousands of His saints; before Eve, in joyous expectation, declared, "I have gotten a man from the Lord"; before Adam walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day; before there was given to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; before the mountains were brought forth—before He appointed the foundations of the earth—in splendid isolation, in solitary grandeur, He lived in and shared the glory which He had with His Father, before the world was. From everlasting to everlasting, O Christ Thou art God!

We cannot understand Him—nor can we properly praise Him—unless we conceive of Him as coming out of the unknown, one with the Father, and the Holy Ghost; a heavenly Visitor coming to earth, to bring to this stricken planet "good tidings of great joy".

II.

THE INCARNATION OF THE ETERNAL SON WAS AT BEST A PERIOD OF SUFFERING, AND YET EVEN THERE HE ENJOYED AN UNRIVALLED PREEMINENCE. There is no record—there could be no record—of a *condescension comparable to His*. The former King Edward the Eighth as Prince of Wales was known as the King's messenger, his son, to the utmost limits of this almost boundless Empire; and his present Majesty is no stranger to the outposts of Empire. They have travelled far. But not they, nor any others, can compare with that act of our Lord's by which He stooped to wrap Himself with our nature as with swaddling bands, and condescended to tabernacle His infinite Spirit in a human frame.

There is nothing anywhere to compare with the miracle of the Incarnation. The story itself bears the imprint of divinity; for none but the mind of God could ever conceive of such condescension as that. The compassion He showed in the days of His flesh, in all His words and deeds, separated Him from all others who lived before, or who have, on the earth since lived. There has never been another to spend an entire life in doing nothing but good: "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

How preeminent His character when viewed in respect to His earthly existence, to His manifestation of Deity in the flesh. You remember how the spouse in the Song of Songs which is Solomon's, described the glory of her beloved as being "the chiefest among ten thousand". She speaks of him as being "altogether lovely". So splendidly symmetrical, so perfectly balanced, so harmoniously related, were all the elements of His character, that He

presented to the world a perfect image of God; "The image", as we read in the context, "of the invisible God". Preeminent therefore among all human characters He appeared in the days of His flesh, for the qualities which he exhibited.

Preeminent too in the scope of His revelations. God had communicated His thoughts through men from the beginning. "At sundry times and in divers manners" he has spoken "in time past unto the fathers by the prophets", but in these last days He has spoken unto us "by his Son". No other prophet was ever able to speak from personal knowledge of all the mysteries that lie beyond the veil. Others were able to speak only such limited revelations as were communicated to them for some special purpose; but when Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be", this supreme, preeminent, Authority replied, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." In his proper Person He monopolized the truth of realms beyond, and even asserted that He was the incarnation of the sum of it, saying not only, "I tell you the truth", but, "I am the truth." "Last of all, he sent unto them his son", and in the person of Jesus Christ we have the supreme, the ultimate revelation of God to man. He is the divine Ultimatum, God's last word to the world. Nor will He ever speak another word which is not already involved in that revelation of Himself through Him who was "the Word made flesh, and (who) dwelt among us." Said John through his disciples, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" There is not another. There can never be another. "He is God, and there is none else."

So we may say that He was *preeminent in His suffering*. No one did ever suffer as did the Lord Jesus. No one was capable of suffering as He did. No other ever had the capacity for suffering that He had. Perfect man, He was also God; and His perfect and sinless humanity was augmented in all its capacities by union with Deity, for he was "God manifest in the flesh". Thus considered, His whole earthly life—not Calvary alone—was one of suffering. By His very incarnation He suffered—by His humiliation, by His subjection to finite limitations, by the—shall I say, His voluntary restrictions of His divine powers, by the conditions with which He surrounded Himself, "That He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God"—in all these respects He suffered, even as He suffered from all eternity in anticipation of His performance of the promise of redemption, for He saw it from the beginning. The brief hours of His physical agony at the place called Calvary were but the culmination of millennia of suffering. He was the suffering God; and when at last He cried, "It is finished", He proclaimed the culmination of a divine enterprise, the supreme achievement of Deity.

It is no wonder that the heavens put on mourning, and the constellations formed in funeral procession, that the sun exchanged at noon his wonted bridal vestments for the mourning robes of night, that the very earth quaked, yea, shuddered in sympathy with its Maker's travail. It is no wonder that the centurion and those that stood with him, witnessing these things, exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God." The death of Jesus marked the utmost

stoop of Deity that He might "taste death for every man".

But specifically *He was preeminent in the atonement which His blood effected*. How men have tried to pay the price of their own and others' transgressions! How nations have endeavoured to expiate their own and their rulers' guilt! But it has all been partial, always something left unfinished, part of the debt left unpaid. Human blood has accomplished much; human blood has purchased for us many privileges, privileges which we enjoy even now. It is not true to say that nothing has ever been accomplished by war. In the providence of God partial judgments have fallen, and the crimes of nations and of individuals have been partially expiated, but never fully paid. Hence war succeeds upon war; and this sinful old world has tried to pay its debts on an instalment plan. But this Man was different. What value was in His blood! What efficacy there was in that cleansing tide! How blessedly true that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." There is nothing left to pay when the debt has been paid by the blood of Christ. "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

III.

But very particularly THE TEXT WHICH I HAVE READ TO YOU DESIGNATES THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AS THE CULMINATION OF THAT PROCESS BY WHICH HIS PRE-EMINENCE WAS TO BE PERPETUATED: He became the first-born from the dead "that in all things he might have the preeminence."

His resurrection was the climax of the payment of the *price of redemption of an alienated world*. We know little of the boundaries of the divine empire—or has it boundaries? We know that principalities and powers in the heavenly places are informed by the church through its ministry, by what God has done through His redeemed people, of "the manifold wisdom of God". I think we shall very probably find, when the full tale is told and the veil is altogether lifted, that the dominion of our glorious King is so wide as to make this planet upon which we live appear to be but a minute province of that vast domain. The only part of His empire which dared to dispute His supremacy, and to challenge His preeminence, was that moral realm to which this world stands related, in which the sin of men is augmented by "principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world".

But our Lord Jesus came to subjugate this rebellious planet—not to perpetuate its alienation, but to cleanse it from its defilement, and fit it to become once again an integral part of His holy empire. So did He come to redeem this earth. Redemption is a far bigger thing than the redemption of the individual sinner, important as this is; for we are told the whole creation is to be delivered "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

To me, it is a comforting and inspiring reflection that our glorious Lord, by His incarnation, took unto Himself a part of this material realm, and preserving it from all contamination, keeping it holy like unto Himself, He at last carried a bit of this material world into the immediate presence of a holy God. The pledge of the resurrection of believers? Yes. The pledge of their being

ultimately clothed with bodies fashioned like unto the body of His glory? Yes. But more than that. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." He Who became the Firstborn from the dead leads the way for that glorious procession which shall be followed by a regenerated earth—a new earth and a new heavens wherein righteousness shall dwell.

Oh the infinite scope of the redemptive ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ! He became the Firstborn from the dead, that He might not be baffled, that He might not be defeated in this rebellious province of His domain. Hear me. If Jesus Christ could be defeated, if the sovereign will of the Infinite God could ultimately be frustrated; then in the nature of the case God would cease to be God. He must be all and in all—and He is! And Jesus Christ came not alone that sinners should be forgiven—that is the primary thing—but that the house in which they dwell, the earth upon which they walk, should be purified from all iniquity, and bound with chains of everlasting fealty to His eternal throne.

His resurrection marked—how shall I put it to make it simple—the *Waterloo of all those principalities and powers which were confederate against Him*. Mr. Brown read to you this evening that at the Cross He blotted out "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Ordinarily, I fear, we have little conception of the magnitude of that accomplishment achieved at the place called Calvary. Too often we think of it as the payment of the debt for our sin only. We see a Man upon the cross, a malefactor on either side, His enemies surrounding, mocking, and spitting upon Him, while His weak, timorous disciples stand afar off. We think of the resurrection scene as we follow the women to the sepulchre, sharing their anxiety as they say, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the sepulchre?" But after all, these visible things were but typical and representative of that Spiritual conflict which lay behind it. When Jesus Christ went into the wilderness He was tempted of the devil, but He never yielded. As He approached that final hour at the striking of the clock of destiny foreordained from all eternity, when He should achieve a victory over all His foes, we have scriptural warrant for believing that all the hosts of hell gathered about the cross. Later, not alone the Roman soldiers, but the storm troops of hell itself, kept guard at the sepulchre. Yet this mighty Conqueror, taking to Himself His great power, bruised the serpent's head, and achieved the noblest victory of all the ages, treading principalities and powers beneath His feet; in due time returning a Conqueror, having overcome, to sit down with His Father in His throne. He was the Firstborn from the dead "that in all things he might have the preeminence".

Oh for an imagination sanctified, made holy, and equal to the sublime exercise, that we might spread our wings, and fly, in an attempt to picture that supreme achievement of Deity!—

"God, in the person of His Son,
Hath all His mightiest works outdone."

What is He to you, my dear friends? I wish that we could see Him as He is. Do you tell me that faith falters? Do you tell me that you have some question as to whether He can forgive sin? That the Son of man still has power on earth to forgive sin? Nay, rather, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Surely such an one as Jesus Christ, preeminent in authority, having been given "authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him", having all authority in heaven and on earth—surely if He say to thee, "Thy sins which are many are all forgiven", there can be no voice in all the universe to dispute the conclusiveness, the finality of His decree!

Do you not see that one of the implications of this great truth of the everlasting preeminence of Jesus Christ is that *He is worthy to be trusted?* You can safely commit your soul's interest, and your body's interests, the interests of time and the things of eternity, to His supremely authoritative and mighty hand. If He forgives thee, friend, who shall condemn thee? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather"—here is the emphasis—"YEA RATHER, that is risen again." It is in the resurrection and ascension and enthronement and everlasting preeminence of Jesus Christ our hope of salvation lies. Can you not trust Him?

Having trusted Him as Saviour, how cheerfully, how gladly, how gratefully, how worshipfully, ought we to bow before Him as our Lord! He is the only One in Whom you may always find satisfaction. He is the only One Who will never disappoint you, Who is incapable of failure in any degree. He is the only One worthy of our worship, our adoration, our love. Do you love Him? Do you really love Him?

I wonder is there someone here who says, "I am not a professing Christian, sir. I do pray. I confess that whenever I hear the Lord Jesus magnified, whenever I hear His name exalted, I am conscious of a feeling of warmth in my heart. And sometimes—although I have given such poor evidence of it—sometimes I dare to believe that I love Him." Listen: "Whosoever loveth is born of God." If a man's heart should go out toward Jesus Christ, if one should say with heart and intellect, "I do accord Him the first place. I am glad that He is the Lord. As well as I know how, I love Him. I do not know very much, but I love Him", such an one is not far from the kingdom.

I recall an authentic story of a poor woman who came to church and said to the minister, "Sir, I should like to join the church." He made an appointment for her, and she came to meet the minister and deacons. They asked her many questions. She was very shy, very timid, and was unable to answer. She stammeringly attempted to reply, but could not. At last, as they looked at each other, the minister interpreted their decision and said, "Now, Mrs. So-and-So, we have no doubt about your sincerity, but we think perhaps you had better wait a little while until you understand things a little better." "Thank you, sir", she said; and as she rose to go there were tears in her eyes, but she forced herself to say, "I am sorry I can not speak for Him. I fear I do not know very much. But I know this"—then almost fiercely she said it—"I know I could die for Him!" They exchanged glances

again, and the minister said, "Sit down. You have given us the supreme proof of conversion, that you love the Lord. We now believe you are born of God."

Oh that we might love Him, and give Him the first place, and ever fix our eyes upon things in the heavens. Then when all the things of time are ended, when He shall have come with all His holy angels with Him, when at last the redeemed family, a multitude that no man can number, shall be gathered before the throne, when there shall have come for ever an end to death and suffering, and tears, and every kind of sorrow; in that supernal, salubrious, eternal city where the streets are of gold, and the walls are of jasper, and the gates of pearl; where there is no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it; when the sun shall have burned himself out, and the stars have ceased to shine and the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, even there it will inspire our rejoicing and our worship and adoring praise, that He Who died on the cross, Who was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, and with the Father and the Holy Ghost, He the infinitely glorious One—in all things, and for ever, He, HE shall have the preeminence.

Let us pray:

How shall we worship Thee, Thou holy One? We have read of the heavenly creatures appearing before Thy throne, each of them having six wings; with twain they covered their faces, with twain they covered their feet, and with twain they did fly, joyfully proclaiming the whole earth to be full of Thy glory. We have no wings save the wings of the cherubim that overshadow the mercy seat. There where the blood is sprinkled we bow in reverent adoration.

We cannot understand. We have no minds to measure, no language to express the greatness of the vision which, of Thy grace, Thou hast given to us in our hearts. O Lord, we worship Thee! We pray for every man and woman here. Is there anyone who has never seen Jesus Christ? Is there anyone who does not know that He is God? Is there anyone who has never yet prayed, God be merciful to me, a sinner? Even as we are bowed before Thee, help such an one so to pray. Yea, Lord, we would fain all offer that prayer again. Save us. Wash us in the blood. And by Thy grace at last make us all meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; for Thy name's sake, Amen.

"QUEBEC PRIEST BOLTS CHURCH, TAKING FLOCK"

(Continued from page 2)

the courts. The Bishop naturally wished to stop the trial. Mr. D'Anjou persisted, and the influential merchant was found guilty. That, according to the newspapers and witnesses, was the cause of the disgrace of Mr. D'Anjou. The Bishop suspended the curé, and immediately appointed another one.

"It seems, however, that matters did not go smoothly for the new priest. The door of the church was closed in his face, and he was refused the key. Canon law, it seems, was forgotten. A church warden (*marquiller*) undertook the defense of Mr. D'Anjou, but new Roman troops were sent to the spot. These soon won over the Mayor, and this civil officer threatened the church warden with ecclesiastical thunder (!) The fight still continues, and the influential group of Mr. D'Anjou is under constant attack by the forces of Rome. Several priests have been permanently installed in Fontenelle; mission after mission has been preached, and still the new Protestants have for the most part held firm. Some English Canadians from Montreal, invited to undertake the expenses of a presbytery, visited the locality. They are practical people, and did not wish to risk erecting a building to no purpose. In order to be assured that they were investing their money in a substantial work, they made a census of the Protestants. They found, and this quite recently, sixty families who had remained faithful, and they were convinced that it was worth the trouble of erecting a building that would serve as combined

presbytery and chapel until the completion of the church that they plan to construct."

All this is an old story. The secession of this priest and his followers in the little village of Gaspé is one more example of how history is repeating itself in the Province of Quebec, that stronghold of Rome.

In the past, the most powerful forces that have opposed the Roman Catholic Church have come from within the system itself. The great Protestants of all ages have been Roman Catholics who were driven by their consciences to protest against the vices of their own church. Such were Wycliff the Englishman, Huss the Czech, Luther the German, Calvin the Frenchman, and a host of others. Rome is ever its own worst enemy.

In the Province of Quebec it seems to be intent on going its own way to commit moral suicide, and by its corruption and greed, to shock its own people into open revolt against it.

The church appears in some dim unconscious way to recognize the workings of this principle, for the Roman Catholic government of our sister-province some two years ago passed its infamous "Padlock Law, a statute which is as subversive of the spirit of liberty as anything that has emanated from Hitler. By supporting such a law, the hierarchy in Quebec confesses its fear and its feebleness in the face of a growing opposition within the ranks of the hitherto loyal French-Canadian habitants. The Church thus admits that it cannot trust its own unaided arm for protection against its enemies, and has called in the civil powers to strengthen its ecclesiastical authority. The "Padlock Law" is reputedly aimed at Communists, but it nowhere defines Communism!

In the same column of the paper that carried the dispatches referred to above, there appeared another account of how Quebec police, without making any charge, or without any process of law, threatened to place a padlock on the door of an apartment if a certain occupant did not move out within four days. This incident did not take place in Russia, or in Germany, or in Italy, but in the largest city of Canada! The Roman Church does not love Protestants any more than it loves Communists, and if this procedure is allowed to pass without a strong protest now, there is every reason to believe that it will soon be used against Protestants.

That great English statesman, Edmund Burke, warned his contemporaries that, "It is by lying dormant a long time, or being at first very rarely exercised, that arbitrary power steals upon a people." No word of warning could be more appropriate to Canadians of to-day. The Federal Government, nominally Liberal, weakly stands by while every principle of liberty is being trampled under foot in Quebec. It has refused to disallow this iniquitous piece of provincial legislation. The reason for this cowardly inaction is not far to seek: the votes of Roman Catholic Quebec, cast into the balance, has turned defeat into victory, or victory into defeat, for every Canadian political party since Confederation. In order to purchase favour with the Roman hierarchy, there are Canadian politicians who sell their principles, and wink at the suppression of traditional British rights and liberties.

Up to the present time the French Revolution has not seriously affected French Canada. Twenty years and more before the mother-country passed through the throes of that agony, New France had fallen into the hands of the English. Protestant and foreigners though they were, the English proved to be a bulwark that protected the church of Rome in Canada against the assaults of that potent enemy that proved almost fatal to Catholicism in France. Though an absolute king, allied to an almost omnipotent church, had all but exterminated Protestants in France by fire and sword, by St. Bartholomew's Day, and the dragonades, nothing could prevent the fatal Revolution. The Church itself produced the Revolution by its own corruption and blindness.

There will be a French revolution in Canada. It is already on its way—and Padlock Laws and the like cannot prevent it. For the sake of Canadians, of both French and English origin, whether Protestant or Catholic, we pray that when this new French Revolution comes, it may be a Protestant Revolution—not bloody, but as deep and profound as the work of the Spirit of God when He touches the hearts of men, and turns them from darkness to light, from serving idols to serve the living and true God. Of this great movement for whose coming we pray, it is our earnest hope that the episode at Fontenelle is but the harbinger.—W.S.W.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 3 First Quarter Lesson 6 February 5th, 1939

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Lesson Text: Genesis 15.

Golden Text: "He believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."—Genesis 15:6.

For Reading: Genesis 16, 17.

I. Abraham's Inheritance—verses 1-7.

The opening phrase of the chapter, "after these things", indicates that there is a definite connection between Abram's conduct after the battle with the kings, and the vision of the Lord which was given to him. Abram refused to make profit for himself as a result of the service he had rendered, lest he should put himself under obligation to the heathen King of Sodom. Abram was not dazzled, as was Lot, by the glare and gold of Sodom. The servant of the Lord should be free from compromising alliances with the ungodly.

God promised that He Himself would be a shield to protect Abram, so that he need not depend upon the patronage of the King of Sodom (Psa. 3:3; 18:2; 119:114). No real harm can come to the child of God who seeks shelter in the presence of his all-powerful Protector (Psa. 84:11; Rom. 8:31).

Abram's rejection of the reward offered by the King of Sodom opened the way for him to accept the reward offered by Jehovah. God will Himself be "the exceeding great reward" of those who seek only His glory. God will not be debtor to any man and the one who makes the interests of the Lord his main concern will find his reward, either here or hereafter. This principle may be illustrated by reference to Daniel in the den of lions, or the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace.

Abram knew that he was to have seed as numberless as the particles of dust upon the earth (Gen. 13:16), but, as he had no son, it looked as though he must adopt his beloved and trusted servant Eliezer of Damascus, and make him his legal heir. But God willed otherwise, and promised to give him a son as heir. This He did, not merely for Abram's sake (1 Cor. 10:11), but also that He might teach us all the lesson that, in the spiritual realm, sonship must precede heirship (Rom. 8:16, 17; Gal. 3:26-29). Some desire the blessings of Christianity, without acknowledging Christ. We have been born again unto a living hope, that we might obtain an eternal inheritance. Our claim to that inheritance is the strongest possible, the claim of birth relationship (1 Pet. 1:3, 4).

God renewed His promise to Abram of an innumerable seed, and, despite all appearances to the contrary, Abram believed the word of God that he should have a son, and through his son, great posterity. Natural issue was most unlikely, considering the age of Sarah and Abram, but Abram believed in a God of resurrection power (Rom. 4:13-25). He refused to look at the incredibilities, the seeming impossibilities and the obstacles, but trusted that God would keep His promise (Heb. 11:11, 12). Abram thus became the first of that long line of men and women of every age, race and clime who would believe the word of God, and be justified by faith. Works would not avail; Abram was helpless unless God should intervene. We cannot save ourselves. God alone must work, and bring life from the dead. Righteousness is imputed to those who believe upon God, Who justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5; Gal. 3:6-11).

The God Who had called Abram, had also brought him out of Ur, for the very purpose of giving him an inheritance (Rom. 8:30; 2 Cor. 6:17, 18). What He had promised, He was well able to perform.

II. God's Covenant—verses 8-21.

Abram's faith, though strong, was not perfect, for he asked God for a sign (Judges 6:17; 2 Kings 20:8; Matt. 12:39; Luke 1:18-21). The mere word of God should be sufficient. God in His mercy may give signs to assist faith, but not to satisfy idle curiosity (Mark 2:10; Luke 23:8, 9). God answered Abram's request, and demonstrated the fact that the promises

given to him were in reality provisions of a solemn covenant (Gen. 12:1-4; 13:14-17; 17:1-8).

The Hebrew word translated "covenant" most probably comes from a root word meaning "cut through", and the Hebrew expression for "making a covenant" is "cutting a covenant". The idea is connected with the custom of dividing each of the animals into two parts, and placing the parts in two parallel rows as described in this chapter. Each row represented one of the two persons between whom the covenant was to be made. The two persons then passed down between the rows. The blood shed when the animals were divided was a token of Christ to be shed when God and Christ made an Everlasting Covenant (Heb. 9:15, 22; 12:24; 13:20). Christ is the Mediator of that New Covenant. His death made it possible for God to justify those who believed in Him (Gal. 3:19; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 3:26).

The fowls of the air probably symbolized the opposition of Satan (Mark 4:4, 15). The child of God will experience much difficulty before coming into the full realization and possession of the blessings of the covenant made for his benefit.

Abram had seemingly been watching and waiting patiently (Heb. 2:3; Acts 1:4) since the vision commenced the previous evening as he stood beneath the starry heavens. At the command of God he had distributed the sacrificial animals. When the sun was about to set, he fell into a deep sleep and a horror, a great darkness, came round about him.

Possibly that fear and amazement were associated with the prophecy of the future bondage of Israel. God foretold that the long period of subjection and oppression would last for 400 years, counting from the time of the birth of Isaac (verse 16; Acts 7:6, 7), and 430 years, counting from the time of the call of Abraham. Exod. 12:40, 41; Gal. 3:17). Each part of the prophecy was fulfilled (Gen. 25:7, 8; Exod. 12:36).

The Amorites were one of the most powerful tribes of Canaan, and here seem to represent the whole people (Gen. 14:7; Josua 24:15). Israel could not inherit the land till God judged the Canaanites who were in possession, and judgment would not descend upon the Amorites or Canaanites, till their measure of iniquity was full (Matt. 23:32; 1 Thes. 2:16).

The Oriental furnaces were really cylindrical fire-pots. Abram saw a torch of fire emerging from the smoking stove. The smoke and the fire were emblems of the presence of the Lord Himself (Exod. 14:19, 20, 24; 19:18), typifying His justice and His mercy, His purifying and His guiding power. It was as though the Lord were passing between the slain animals, ratifying the covenant He had made with Abram.

The furnace and the burning light are also typical of two aspects of the history of Israel. Chosen in the furnace of affliction, suffering, sorrow and subjection (Deut. 4:20; 1 Kings 8:51; Isa. 48:10), they were yet destined to experience the light of the revelation of God, to enjoy the light of deliverance through Moses, the Judges and finally, through Christ (Matt. 4:16), and also to bear the lamp of testimony concerning the Messiah (Deut. 7:7, 8; John 5:35).

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

BRISCOE STREET, LONDON—*Rev. R. D. Guthrie*. "Anniversary services were held in Briscoe Street on Sunday, January 22nd, to celebrate the 6th anniversary of the opening of our church building. Although the worst storm this winter hit Western Ontario on Sunday, we had a great day.

Building Fund offerings were received at all services. The people gave liberally and sacrificially, and the result was that our interest will be brought up to date as of February 1st, and \$350.00 will be paid off the principal. This will reduce our debt to \$1,575.00 as of February 1st.

Dr. J. Frank Norris will visit Briscoe Street Tuesday, February 28th, and a special evangelistic campaign will be held in April with the Scotch Gospel singers in charge of the music and Dr. Harry Hamilton as evangelist.

VAL D'OR—*Rev. W. Wellington*. "Children's week-night lantern lectures have been commenced, and as children are barred from the attendance at movies in Quebec province, the possibility of seeing lantern pictures is considered a treat. Last night at the first meeting fifty-eight attended. God willing, beginning next week, we shall conduct children's

meetings every Wednesday evening in the Protestant school of a growing town some miles distant. Similarly, in Val d'Or there is a new Protestant School opening next week, and we shall be permitted the use of it and given the cooperation of the teachers. Unsaved ones are attending our services, and I believe that some are convicted by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Pray for them."—W.J.W.

ALTON—Rev. John Hunter. The annual business meeting of the Alton Church was held recently and the church reports as follows: "While 1938 was a year of adjustment, we managed, with the generous help given us by the Union, to meet all our obligations. Missionary interest was revived and we were able to help a little in the larger field. We were able to see progress in all our departments. Souls were saved and eleven were baptized. Seven new members were received into the church.

FORT WILLIAM. This church has experienced a time of blessing recently. A number professed faith in Christ during special campaigns under the leadership of the Roblin Brothers. The church is greatly encouraged and looks forward to a greater work in the future.

TOTTENHAM—Pastor G. M. Reeve. Pastor Reeve recently baptized four believers from Tottenham in the Orangeville Church. There has been a marked spiritual growth in the church life, Mr. Reeve reports, adding, "We have about twelve who have begun to lead in prayer of late. I know of no greater thrill than of hearing a beginner's strugglings in prayer."

SHENSTONE MEMORIAL—Rev. A. C. Whitcombe. Mr. McBain gave us an account of the work in Sarnia. The church enjoyed the visit of four young men from the seminary at last week's prayer meeting. Messrs. Cook, Frey and Wilkins took charge of the meeting and sang for us. We were pleased to have the youngest organization of our church present, the Sunbeam Mission Band. This is a group of girls in their early teens who meet once a month for Bible study, prayer, missionary information and practical work.

Temple Baptist Church, Sarnia, is more than a name to us now. And because we know it better we feel that we know all the work of the Union more intimately. It is a remarkable story, one that creates zeal for the Lord's work as well as fresh interest in our missionary enterprises.

The people were pleased to have our Seminary so well

represented, for we know the value of it to our churches. The fellowship did both the church family and the visitors good.—A.C.W.

THE SEMINARIAN

The January issue of The Seminarian, the paper published by the students of Toronto Baptist Seminary, is a party treat. The front page has an interesting sketch of Mr. Paul Rumball who is spending his furlough from Japan in studies with us. Another page carries an article by Mr. Rumball on fashions in Japan, particularly fashions in drinking tea. The editor presents an uplifting New Year's message on "God is the One Working in you". Mr. F. M. Buhler writes from Switzerland the latest news of his work in and around Bienne. And then there is the French column, news of graduates and of students, with plenty of spice to make the whole thing delectable. Send for a copy. The Seminarian is forty cents a year, or ten cents a copy.—W. G. B.

THE OPENING OF THE NEW JARVIS STREET BUILDING

From many quarters we have received enquiries as to the probable date of the opening of our new church building. It will be understood by all who have had experience in such matters that at this time it is safe to name only the approximate date.

All the contracts by their terms are required to be completed not later than March 31st. By "all contracts" we mean the general contract and the mechanical trades, all of which, by the terms of their contracts are penalized by failure to finish by March 31st. But assuming these contracts to be then completed, at least six weeks thereafter will be required to make the building ready for occupation.

We therefore tentatively announce that we hope to open our new building on May 14th. It so happens that May 15th will mark the twenty-ninth anniversary of Dr. Shields' pastorate in Jarvis Street Church; and it is felt that it would be fitting if the observance of the anniversary, and the opening of the new church could take place together.

We shall probably have at least a week of services, so try to plan to be in Toronto May 14th to 22nd for on May 22nd their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth will visit Toronto.

BOOKS BY DR. T. T. SHIELDS

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