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Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

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

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 180 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.
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SHOULD PROTESTANTS PRAY FOR THE NEW POPE?

A Sermon by Rev. W. Gordon Brown, M.A., of Toronto Baptist Seminary

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Evening, March 5th, 1939

"I announce to you great joy," said the violet-robed dean of the Cardinal Deacons last Thursday, in a language long since dead except for the world of scholarship and the Church, "we have a Pope." A vast concourse of people in Rome acclaimed the news. To-day more than three hundred million Roman Catholics around the world unquestionably accept Mgr. Pacelli as the head of their religion, Bishop of Rome, Archbishop of the Church province of Rome, Primate of Italy, Patriarch of the West, *Pontifex Maximus*, "most holy Father" of all "the faithful", Successor of the Apostle Peter, Vicar of Christ and of God, "our Lord God the Pope".

What should be the attitude of Protestants toward this man in particular and the system which he represents? By Protestants I means those who still remember that the churches to which they belong left the Roman fold in protest against its doctrines and practices, for example, the Lutherans and the Presbyterians.

Of course, speaking historically, there are good grounds for holding that Baptists are not Protestants in this sense: we did not come out of the Church of Rome because we were never in. All down through the ages from the time of our Lord, there have been groups of simple, New Testament "saints" and "believers" here and there who have held to the Bible without the accretions of tradition, trusted in Christ without the aid of "sacraments", and banded themselves together in local churches for the worship of God in spirit and truth and the propagation of His gospel to the unconverted.¹ We claim spiritual descent—but by no episcopal, tactual nor baptismal succession—from this "glorious band", this "chosen few". Yet such a claim should make us even more protestors, "Protestants" against Rome.

What attitude, then, should we take toward the new pontiff? Should we put him in our prayers? Hear what the Scriptures say, for they are our only authority. The Apostle Paul writes in I. Timothy 2:1-7:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority: that

we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (reverence). For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have (willeth to have) all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and life not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

I.

We must all acknowledge that THE POPE IS A KING. He is one of the "all men" of our passage, he is one of "all those in authority" or "eminent place", and indeed he is among the "kings" of the earth.

But how is the Pope a king?

He is a king *in the service done him*. Take the list of officials which surround him; and unless you are an expert in such matters, you are quite bewildered. Mark the palace in which he lives and the temple in which he adores and is adored. Consider the pomp which attends his public functions—the colours of the ancient East and splendour of medieval royalty. It is possible that our word "pontiff", which comes from the Latin *pontifex* is derived from the words for "pomp" and "make"; certainly this *summus pontifex* is a "pomp-maker" as I suppose none before him were. In him may be seen

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beautify, all that wealth e'er gave".

His are "the paths of glory" even in the "grave". The Pope cannot say with the Peter whose successor he claims to be, "Silver and gold have I none". His is no fisherman's coat. He receives a triple crown. When Justinian had built that architectural marvel of the Eastern Church, St. Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom, which was estimated in the days before our money was inflated to have cost seventy million dollars, and made it so wonderful that his historian held he had done it by inspiration of God, he said: "O Solomon, I have outdone

¹Compare Matthew 18:17-20.

thee." So has papal splendour long since outdone Solomon, his temple, his palace, and his Hebrew kingdom. The Pope is a king resplendent.

Of course, he is king *in his Church*. Over more than three times "ten thousand times ten thousand", he holds absolute authority as priest, teacher and director. The Roman Church is no democracy, nor episcopacy, it is a monarchy. Since the thirteenth century the Pope has proclaimed himself the vicar of Christ, the universal bishop.

"that is, he has immediate, complete and canonical power over all churches, dioceses, and believers."³

Romanists talk about the reign of the Pope; for that the new one is soon to be crowned.

But the kingship of the Pope extends beyond spiritual matters; he is king *in a state*. Back in the thirteenth century the Pope claimed power not only over all "believers", but over all the world. He held the "two swords"—one temporal and the other spiritual. When Wycliffe raised his voice, a chief reason for his protest was the claim of Rome to dispose English state affairs. For a long time the temporal power of the papacy was great. To-day the papal state is a very small affair, but the claim to obedience is still there. The Pope claims not only to be a king, but a king of kings.

And we are commanded to "offer requests, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings . . . for kings and for all that are in authority". How can Protestants pray for such a king?

The Psalmists could compose hymns and prayers to be sung for the kings of Israel.

"Give the king thy judgments, O God,
And thy righteousness unto the king's son".⁴

But those kings ruled a chosen people.

Yes, but Paul wrote at a time of many kings, most of them under one great king, Caesar Nero. Christian ethics in these matters Peter summed up simply in four points:

"Honour all men.
Love the brotherhood.
Fear God.
Honour the king."⁵

Honour Nero? He lived in unmentionable sins; he murdered his own mother. Pray for him? Paul himself could call him a lion, from whom he was glad for a time to escape, but by whom he would be finally martyred in Rome itself. If Christians could pray for Nero, praying for Mgr. Pacelli is a mild request.

Pray that he may be saved. What a glorious thing it would be if he were really soundly converted! What must he do to be saved? Just what you and I must do, personally trust the Saviour Christ.⁶ Is that possible for a papist? To be sure, Rome has denied salvation by faith alone, and teaches final salvation by faith and works and more works. A hierarchical system it put between the individual soul and its God. But I cannot but think that many in the Church of Rome really pierce beyond the many forms and ceremonies, and trust, not to their penances and masses, but to the Lord Jesus Himself. Faith, personal trust in Jesus Christ is the one means of salvation. Have you found it? Pray that the Pope may.

³Towards the close of the sixth century, Gregory I., in denouncing the claims of the contemporary Byzantine patriarch, went the length of saying that whoever arrogates to himself the title of 'universal priest' is a precursor of Antichrist" (*Epistles xxxiii, lib. vii.*)

⁴Compare Luke 22:38.

⁵Psalm 72:1.

⁶I. Peter 2:17.

⁷Acts 16:31; etc.

But I go further and make bold to say that, since

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

so God both rules and overrules. He can make a man-in such a position as "his Holiness," even though he may not fully realize it, "a servant of the servants of God", as he professes to be. God has not left our world. Some think so, it is so dark. Shall I begin to call the roll of sufferers? Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, China—shall I add Germany, Italy? So cruel are the times, so wicked, that a despairing modern poet said recently:

"Love, the Son of God, is dead;
Pity, son to love, is sped;
Love and Pity, both are dead."

Would God such a man could see a vision like Isaiah's, who saw "the Lord high and lifted up", Sovereign of the universe'; then he would know he is wrong, ten thousand times wrong. I remember how often my father during the War used to quote in his morning prayers at the family altar and ask that God would make the wrath of man to praise him, and restrain the remainder of wrath'. Our God can use Pope Pius XII. to this end. As head of the Roman Church he can speak for a great part of the world's population. He has had wide diplomatic experience, not to mention his linguistic attainments. His first broadcast was a message of peace to the world. In an address last Sunday evening in Old St. Andrew's United Church Dr. J. R. P. Sclater wished that the Protestant Churches might with him speak with one voice against the forces back of Naziism and Facism. He went so far as to say that, perhaps thousands of years from now, we may hope to be one with Rome. As I said in THE GOSPEL WITNESS this last week, we Evangelicals see no possibility of organic union. Nor is it desirable, indeed. But we should *pray that all efforts for peace*, "that we may pass a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence", *may be blessed of the Lord*. Our God is the Saviour of all men, but specially of believers'. May he save us from the frightful ravages of war, and bless even the Pope's efforts to this end.

II.

I rather wish I could leave the matter there, but to do so would be true to neither conscience nor faith. The pope is a king, but THE POPE IS A FALSE KING.

The Bishop of Rome calls himself eternal pastor as the vicar of Peter and so of Christ and of God. He sits, his Church thinks, upon the throne of Peter. But *his claims from Peter are false*.

Says the papist: Did not Jesus say, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church"⁷? Certainly, my Romanist friend, He did. But did that mean that Peter was thereby made the vicar of Christ? Was supreme power then given to Peter? The church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone"⁸. You Roman Catholics depend much upon the Church Fathers. Will you then produce one line from any of the earlier Fathers to show that they thought the promise of Christ to Peter made him anything more than the first among equals as to the apostles? You cannot do it.

⁷Chapter 6:1ff.

⁸Psalm 76:10.

⁹I. Timothy 4:9.

¹⁰Matthew 16:18.

¹¹Ephesians 2:20; compare Revelation 21:14.

The Roman Church says it was founded by Peter and that he spent twenty-five years in Rome. But at the very time he is supposed to be in Rome, the years 41-67 A.D., the book of Acts¹² twice locates him in Jerusalem and the Epistle to the Galatians¹³ probably later in Antioch of Syria. There is no real proof that Peter ever was in Rome. It is not stated in the Bible, and it is not sure outside of the Bible. If it were a matter of the importance which the Roman Church puts upon it now, the Spirit of God would have put it in the Word, I have no doubt; but it is not there.

Peter as the sole foundation of the Gentile church? Have you thought how absurd that is? It is true that through him the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius,¹⁴ but later at the Jerusalem Conference in the year 49 A.D. it was recognized that Peter was specially the apostle of the Jews¹⁵. Read his own letters, and find in the first one that he tells us that he wrote to Christians in Asia Minor, who belonged to the dispersion of Israel¹⁶. The special apostle to the Gentiles was not Peter but Paul, his co-worker, who founded the church in Rome we do not know, but it was Paul who wrote to them. It was Paul who visited them, and that more than once, though in bonds¹⁷. Of course, as Paul told them, justification by faith alone is the same for both Jews and Gentiles¹⁸. The Romish opinion of the place of Peter is without foundation in the Scriptures to which they appeal. But did you get it in the evening lesson? Paul said that this supposed "vicar of Christ", this first "most holy father", this infallible teacher of faith and morals, on one occasion at least was a hypocrite and a leader of hypocrisy¹⁹.

The Pope's claims regarding Peter are wrong, and wrong also are his claims of apostolic succession. Papists not only hold that Christ made Peter His vicar, but that he, having ministered in Rome for a quarter of a century, made his successor after his martyrdom, one Linus, have the same office; and he, his successor after his martyrdom, one Clement, and so on down the line for well on toward three hundred times. That is a tremendous claim.

Of course, the claim itself came about gradually. The early "bishops" of the church in Rome not only did not call themselves *papa* or Pope, but did not act the part. At the time of the great Church Council of Nicæa, when bishops of the churches met to discuss the doctrine of the Person of Christ, Rome held no primacy. That was in the fourth century. Charles the Great²⁰ controlled the Pope. It was not till the thirteenth century that the Pope claimed to be universal bishop and vicar of Christ. The papacy is a gradual growth, which would justify itself by a claim of direct succession from Peter. Sufficient historical documents to establish certainly the line of the bishops of Rome for the earliest times do not exist; and did they exist, what would they prove? If you add up all the spaces between "reigns", when there was no pope, you get many months. At one time there were three popes! But are we to believe that the Spirit of God abides in a material kingdom, though it have spiritual pretensions? The corruption of the papacy in the

Middle Ages is unspeakable. As a decent man to decent men I could not describe it to you if I would. Take Benedict IX.²¹ His name is "disgraced by every conceivable excess". At times in those ages the disposal of the papal office was by influence of immoral women, but this Benedict sold the office for the hand of a woman for whom he had a passion. In vision Ezekiel²² was taken to the old Temple at Jerusalem, and saw the abominations there wrought, and then saw the glory of God depart reluctantly from the shrine. If the glory of God ever rested in earlier ages on the church in Rome, it must have departed in the days when simony and concubinage were common sins of the papacy. Thus the claim to unbroken spiritual succession is as hollow and noisy as a kettle-drum.

The Pope is a false king in his claims regarding Peter and his succession from Peter. *False also is the worship which he accepts.* When the new Pope is elected by the college of Cardinals, they three times give him what is called *adoratio*. They promise obedience, and they adore the pontiff, kissing his slipper. Such groveling! When John in the Revelation was almost overcome with the glory of the visions he saw, he fell down to do homage to the angel who showed him such things; but the angel said, No, "worship God"²³.

But we may go further and repeat that Romanists have accorded to the Pope what the Romans of old did to the then Emperors, the position of "our Lord God". This is no Protestant misinterpretation. It was found, at the time of the Reformation, in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*. No wonder early Protestants said the Pope or the Papacy was the Anti-Christ²⁴. Polycarp, disciple of John, died because he would not say two words, since the first contained the attribute of deity, *Kyrios Caesar*, "Lord Caesar". He said, "Lord Jesus". There is one God, the Father, and one Lord, even Christ Jesus²⁵.

Once more, *the Pope is false in cursing Protestants.* Because so much milk-and-water Protestantism to-day is talking about reunion with Rome, many would-be Protestants are led to imagine that Rome's attitude has changed. But Rome says she does not change. The right of persecution of heretics with physical violence is still the claim of Rome, and it is actually advocated in books by Romanists to-day. If Rome is not persecuting as much as she used to, it is because she lacks the power, not the will.

Rome teaches that outside her fold there is no salvation. She is the one depository of grace. Only through her hierarchy may one come to God savingly. A soul may reach Heaven only by her sacraments. Believing that doctrine, thinking she would thereby keep souls from damnation, I say the Roman Catholic Church was consistent in the Inquisition, of whose horrors you have read a little.²⁶

So the one who claims to be the Eternal Pastor of all believers, execrates millions of those who trust the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation because they do not come to

²¹1083-1045 A.D.

²²Chapters 8-11.

²³Chapter 22:8,9.

²⁴So Luther, Calvin, etc.; compare II. Thessalonians 2:4.

²⁵Ephesians 4:5,6; compare Matthew 23:8-10.

²⁶The European populace entertained itself during the 16th and 17th centuries with public executions and autos-da-fé, the latter being great bonfires in which heretics were roasted en masse. It is estimated that 50,000 people were burned to death in Europe in the 16th century. When the Inquisition was at its height in Spain, men and women were jerked to pieces on the rack, crushed to death by weights, or burned alive for public edification. As the flames consumed their victims, spectators held up children so that they could better enjoy the sight!"

¹²Chapter 12 in the year 44 A.D.; chapter 15 in the year 49 A.D.

¹³2:11ff.

¹⁴Acts 10, 11.

¹⁵Galatians 2:8.

¹⁶1:1.

¹⁷Acts 28; II. Timothy 1:17; 4:16,17.

¹⁸Romans 3:30.

¹⁹Galatians 2:13.

²⁰Eighth century.

God in the way he thinks right. Surely nothing could be more false than this.

The Pope is a king, we must pray for kings; the Pope is a false king, we must pray against him. May I be specific and name some of the things in which our prayers should be to God against the claims and works of Popedom.

We should pray against the restriction of liberty. There is no liberty under Rome. It was Rome that demanded that Galileo recant from the findings of his telescope. The denial of freedom of thought and expression is in Canada to-day.

In 1938, without a dissenting voice, the legislature of our sister province of Quebec passed the Padlock Law against "propagating or tending to propagate communism or bolshevism." (What could be worded more broadly?) Under this law a man's house is no longer his castle. Without warrants, houses are searched, and men detained by the police, with no redress in innocence. Many have suffered from this iniquitous law. It is ridiculous. One man even had his trousers confiscated! (I suppose he took to skirts like the monks in Quebec!) It is unjust. Communism is not defined by the law. It is persecuting. To the Roman Church in Quebec all heretics are communists. We have evidence that the law was fostered by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and is being used against Gospel efforts in Quebec. Pray for these efforts, pray against this law.

Another example of the loss of British liberty reaches Ontario and all Canada. It is found in the rules of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Free discussion is closed off by this board. Could I broadcast such an address as I am now delivering over this "land of the free"? By no means. Why? On that board is a Roman Catholic priest who acts as censor. Pray for the confusion of such papist schemes.

Then *we should pray against the Romanist encroachments on our government as such.* We had an example not long ago in the Ontario Separate School Bill. Men like our pastor raised such an outcry that the legislature repealed the bill. But now there is a new plea being voiced for a greater share of public funds for the schools established to teach the Roman Catholic religion. If they need more funds, let them do what other religious bodies have to do in this country, raise them themselves. Why should they have a right to my taxes and yours? Our common schools are not Protestant schools but public schools. The Separate Schools are a curse to our country. Pray against them.

Further *we ought to pray and work against the present movement in which many are turning Romanist.* That movement has gone ahead rapidly in England. This last week a mission to Protestants was held in a large Roman church in this city by a former Presbyterian minister. If so-called Protestant pulpits do not preach more Gospel, hold better to the authority of the Bible, what can we expect? I once asked a priest of the local church I have just referred to, what was the secret of Roman power to attract people. He said, "Authority." While many to-day are ending every sermon with a question mark, Rome uses an exclamation mark. The way to

¹The present Attorney-General (Mr. Maurice Duplessis, who is also the Premier) . . . has been reported as having said that it was at a meeting, to which he had been invited by Cardinal Villeneuve, that he decided to take the steps to combat 'communism' which are embodied in the Act." (*The Canadian Magazine*, March, 1939).

²Recall the letter from Quebec by Miss Leila M. Boyd recently in THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

have less Roman tradition is to have more Bible doctrine. Pray for it, pray for revival.

Still further, *pray against Rome by praying for the thousands who in various parts of the world are to-day turning from Rome*, that they may be saved from infidelity and brought to the living Saviour. God wills that men should come to acknowledgment of the truth and so be saved. If this is His will, let us pray for its fulfilment. Here is our opportunity in Quebec, in South America and elsewhere. O for another Reformation!

Should Protestants pray for the new Pope? Pray, pray, pray. How shall we pray? There is one God to Whom to pray, and one Mediator through Whom to pray. He is the One by Whom we have the new covenant in His blood, Whose memorial we shall observe in a few minutes. No one comes to God but through Him.

And how through Him? Because "he gave himself a ransom (really, a substitute ransom) for all". There is the heart of the Gospel. That is what the Liberals reject and so lose out to Rome. Some of them say they believe in the atonement in the sense of an expiation, among them Dr. Sclater, to whom I referred, but yet he can say that the hymn

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains",

"sounds crude and material to some ears. There is a physical literalness in it which is not native to many minds."

Then the modern mind is related to the carnal mind which is enmity against God. To Evangelicals the blood has ever been precious.

"Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary,
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for thee!"

It means that Jesus took our place, bore our sins, died our death, and so paid our debt.

Have you trusted Him for yourself? It is not enough to cry against Rome. To belong to the Orange Lodge will not save unless a man be at the same time really a Christian. Salvation is not in an institution—that it is, Rome teaches. Church membership is not enough to rest upon. Your own goodness will not save you. That would be salvation by works—another doctrine of Rome. Salvation is in Christ alone. Accept Him and be saved. Then work for Him to rescue others.

³Modern Fundamentalism, p. 80.

LAST SUNDAY IN MASSEY HALL

We have received splendid reports of all services in Massey Hall last Sunday. The Pastor's Class was taught by Mr. John Coghill, Superintendent of the Adult Department, and we received a letter from one member of the class who said, "I write just to tell you how wonderfully well Brother Coghill did yesterday morning on the lesson."

We also heard from many, enthusiastic expressions of appreciation of the message by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe at the morning service. We endeavoured to induce Mr. Whitcombe to let us publish the sermon, but he said he was busy for the moment translating a sermon by Mr. Dubarry, which he would prefer to have published. Then, at our insistence, Mr. Brown with some reluctance consented to the publication of his address of the evening. We are sure all who read it will recognize its great value. Jarvis Street Church—and the Pastor—are particularly fortunate in having two such splendid aides as Mr. Whitcombe and Mr. Brown.

NO MIRACLE BUT THE TRUTH

By REV. ROBERT DUBARRY

Nîmes, France.

Translated from the French for THE GOSPEL WITNESS by
Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, M.A.

See note at the end of this address.

"And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

"And many believed on him there." (John 10:41, 42.)

An excellent Protestant, when asked about the real belief of the people called Baptists, said: "We worship Jesus Christ, while they worship John the Baptist." Baptists are evidently much misunderstood, and what we have to say on the work of the great forerunner may shed some light on our ministry.

The happy circumstances of this biennial conference which reunites us in this place will give us the opportunity to examine the words of our text under the four following aspects: *Firstly*, a ministry deprived of the extraordinary; *secondly*, a ministry specializing in the proclamation of the truth; *thirdly*, the reason for such a ministry; and *fourthly*, the analogies of that ministry with that of our churches.

I

"John did no miracle."

No miracle, in spite of the blessed signs which had marked the decisive stages of the history of Israel. No miracle in spite of the innate curiosity of the Jews who, as Paul reminds us, require a sign. No miracle in spite of the distresses and the thick shadows of the times. No miracle to confound the blasphemous pride of the Roman usurpers, or the self-sufficiency of an erring priesthood. No miracle to respond to those that the Son of God was openly performing at the same time. No miracle to satisfy the personal necessities of the new prophet: no miracle to provide his food, and spare him the added labour of the difficult search for agile locusts and the care of painfully searching out wild honey in a desert; no miracle to complete his primitive raiment of camel's hair; no miracle to evade the hostility of his enemies; no miracle to make a way of escape from death.

In a time when, to accredit the truth, miracles abounded, on the eve of those which were to accompany and to follow Pentecost, is it not suggestive to observe that the greatest "among them that are born of women" was never called to exercise a power which seemed in those times as normal as it was marvellous.

II

"All things that John spake of this man were true."

This is not the appreciation of incompetents or words of honeyed flattery. It is rather the spontaneous testimony of people whose good faith is revealed in their eagerness to believe on Jesus Christ Himself.

Let us try to discover some of these truths that John spoke "of this Man". It is a remarkable fact that the extreme brevity of the Biblical accounts concerning John the Baptist suffers an exception when his testimonies to the Saviour are recorded. A complete Christology, that is to say, a doctrine of Christ, could be erected on the sayings of this last of the prophets.

John spoke the truth when he taught the *pre-existence* of Christ: "This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me." (John 1:30.)

He spoke the truth concerning His *deity*: "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (John 1:34.)

He spoke the truth concerning His *relation to the Holy Spirit*: "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (John 1:33.)

He spoke the truth concerning His *Kingship*: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ (the Anointed King), but that I am sent before him." (John 3:28.)

He spoke the truth concerning Christ as *Judge*: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable." (Luke 3:17):

He spoke the truth concerning His *power*: "He shall bap-

tize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Luke 3:16).

He spoke the truth concerning His *attractiveness*: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." (John 3:29).

He spoke the truth about His *future*: "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30).

But above all, John the Baptist spoke the truth when he gathered together in that striking image of the *Lamb of God*, all the sublimities, all the humiliations, and all the blessings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. . . . Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:29, 35-36).

All these things that John the Baptist said of his Master were shown to be true during the days of the earthly life of the Son of God. They were confirmed by the appearances of the Risen One and have been fully manifested since by His work in the world. There is no creed or catechism or manual of doctrine which does not find its fundamental articles in the simple announcement of the testimony of John the Baptist, the true theological forerunner of the Apostle Paul. And we venture to add that for any genuine Christian Jesus Christ cannot be anything else than He was to the last and greatest of the prophets: the eternal Son of God, the Giver of the Holy Spirit, the King, the Judge, the Master, the Omnipotent One, the Bridegroom, the Prince of Peace, the perfect expiatory Sacrifice.

III.

The special ministry of John the Baptist manifests itself in the first place by the intrinsic superiority of his testimony: the truth is of more value than miracles.

Miracles are for a certain time and a certain place; the truth is eternal and universal. Miracles speak to man through the senses; the truth touches his will directly: "The truth shall make you free." Miracles are entrusted to the fragile and fallible vessel of memory; the truth takes bodily form in our life.

The *purpose* of John's testimony sheds light on his ministry.

It was essential that attention be called not to the messenger but to the Hero of the message. The proclamation of the truth lends itself infinitely better than signs and wonders to such a purpose.

Finally the *results* of the forerunner's testimony justify his lack of miracles.

Brought into subjection by the irresistible truth to which his message is confined, the crowds responded to the most rigid appeals by a humiliation more striking than history, had ever depicted.

But that is not all. Drawn along by the profound reasons of his teaching, the choicest disciples of John found themselves raised to a higher level on which the true Master could be met and followed. Not being retained by anything extraordinary in the person of their teacher, the disciples could do nothing else than leave him in obedience to his own teaching.

IV.

The entire ministry of Jesus Christ, the whole history of Christianity, and hence all the eternal plans of our God, are thus visibly connected with the intentional absence of miracle, and with the immense rôle of the truth in the ministry of the forerunner.

The striking analogies of our present circumstances with his, make of immediate importance the several considerations which are about to follow concerning true miracles, false miracles, and our rôle as witnesses of the truth.

Being ignorant of the ways of the Lord, the natural man is able to discover in miraculous signs the exception which in confirming the rule will initiate him into divine things, but the Christian can find in every day manifestations of the heavenly power a still greater cause for wonder. The smallest harvest will mean much more to him than a miracle of the multiplication of loaves; a single day of health will reveal to him more of the divine power than a sudden restoration. Miracles, then, ought to appear to the Christian only as a precious complement of truth, as a brief revelation to the infinite wonders of the grace of God yet veiled to his sight.

Miracles in the material realm are surpassed not only by the supernatural incarnation of the Word, but also by the supernatural regeneration of the believer. In the material realm the divine Will intervenes without obstacle, while in the spiritual realm the miracle is performed by the most astonishing of wonders, the victory of grace over the stubborn resistance of rebellious man.

But let us seek now the true part played by miracles in the scriptural revelation. We shall be surprised to observe that apart from certain striking exceptions this rôle is comparatively small. The patriarchs do not seem to have performed any miracles. Moses performed some at the beginning of his ministry, and the principal miracles which followed had as their special object to warn the ten tribes against going after strange gods. And let us note here with the Great Interpreter, that "there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." Our Master Himself does not seem to have performed any miracles before His brief ministry at the close of His life, and it is evident that He did not by any means perform all that He had the power to do. The apostles in general showed signs and wonders only at the threshold of their work, or to accredit themselves in exceptional circumstances. Paul, indeed, emphasises this expressly in speaking of true servants of God: "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"

Miraculous signs always appear in relation to a special necessity of accrediting the divine messages, a necessity which the scripture constantly emphasises. Whenever the conditions of the primitive miracles may be reproduced in our day, may it please the Saviour again to support His truth by supernatural acts. But we must always recognize that by the Word of God, by the voice of history, by the fruits of the Spirit in the lives of Christians, the truth to-day is able to prove itself by means more numerous, more influential, and more efficacious than in the days of John the Baptist when the need of miracles might seem to have been almost indispensable. So, without in any way excluding the present blessed possibility of the miraculous, or even a certain frequency of miracles, our privileged situation reduces the necessity of signs and wonders much more than in Biblical times.

Relative to miraculous blessing, let us emphasize here that we are in a world that is in revolt and under the curse, a world in which the prince of this world has been given the power to oppress men. But our Sovereign God has not given up the right to intervene. It has not seemed good to Him to reveal to us the limits He has fixed or the mysterious way in which He works. We cannot then claim that the gift of miracles must become the prerogative of every Christian who possesses sufficient faith. For if miracles were the necessary fruit of piety, the activity of true believers in each generation would have sufficed to cause the disappearance of all suffering, and, by miracles of judgment, to do away with all injustice.

Though there be special miraculous ministries, we are all called to manifest a permanent supernatural power in reproducing the miracle of Jonah by our testimony as the Lord's redeemed who have passed from death unto life. Let us remind ourselves in this connection that even in the days following Pentecost, it was the daily walk and conversation of the Christians which gave them "favour with all the people". Which in a large measure explains the statement of the same verse, "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved".

We must not neglect to note the strange contrast which is offered to the limited necessity for miracles to-day by the superabounding emphasis on the miraculous. For outside of Spiritualism and Roman Catholicism, both of which are more and more turned towards the marvellous, many seekers are often deceived by the apparent resemblance of satanic miracles to the divine power. But did not the Master expressly foretell the multiplication of lying wonders when He said, "Behold, I have told you before." (Matt. 24:25). Under pain of denying this warning, or of supposing the Adversary either stupid or weak, we must conclude that the manifestations of the extraordinary in our times will have more chances of emanating from the pit than from heaven. And let us remark that it will be Christianity, especially in its highest evangelical expression, that will be naturally the most audacious field of action for the most seducing counterfeits of divine power. History has furnished so many examples

of this that it would be surprising if our age were to be exempt. Let us emphasize in this connection the immense responsibility of the man of God whose lack of vigilance might welcome or recommend such works of the enemy for the sole reason that they come with an appearance of sincerity or with beneficial aspects.

But does not the old serpent accomplish his cleverest devices in subtly introducing the flesh in spheres where the work must be accomplished not by might nor by power but by the Spirit of the Lord. Numbers, money, earthly influence, sometimes even spiritual influence, in a word, *success*, these in the form of the miraculous are the things which Satan uses in incredibly large measure. He has used such means in leading great masses of people, large fortunes, fine personalities, towards paganism, Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, National churches, and to religious frauds and modernism. Could he then have neglected the extraordinary opportunity of surpassing himself by invading the evangelical churches. Alas, he has not forgotten us, and the Adversary has only too often realized his perfidious ends among those who preach the gospel by leading them to give first place to the deceptive wonder of unusual results and the last place to the honest fruit of obscure labour.

The touchstone of every profound work must be the manifestation of the truth in the fruits of the Spirit. But it is the extraordinary which attracts more and more attention at the expense of those genuine spiritual virtues of "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance . . . against which there is no law." Religiously speaking, we live in a romantic age, not to say romanesque, when only the improbable can be believed and only the fabulous is true. Or to put it in other words, under the false pretext of exceptional divine interventions, we are too often slipping towards the most deceptive kind of religious materialism.

Thus in the thinking of the average Christian the scale of values is often reversed. The facile art of provoking a prompt decision is more coveted than the art of caring for the sheep. The place given to statistics of the New Birth leads to the neglect of the statistics of spiritual longevity. More is expected from an evangelistic campaign than from the regular conquest of souls, more from revival than from normal growth. The influence of Conventions takes precedence over that of the local church; the visiting preacher is of more importance than the regular pastor; the appeal of the moment takes the places of the recognized duties of the spiritual family; the chance acquaintance has greater rights than the brother of the church. Doctrinal novelties and specializations take the place of co-ordinated teaching, as the popular virtues take the place of fundamental virtues. Works are put before faith; the word before the thing; the form before the reality. Numbers count more than weight; the brilliant more than the solid; popularity more than worth; results more than the offence of the cross. Thus the exception supplants the rule, and the flesh the spirit. This new order will demand *first* the harvest and will away with the old established principle: "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Or to sum it all up, the sensational reveals itself as a kind of diluted miracle whose noisy attractiveness dethrones the severe demands of the old truths. For the price of the sensational is almost always some indifference or some carnal liberty with regard to the scriptural teaching.

Now in a movement as unpretentious as ours, we know by experience how much hard labour one true conversion demands; what consuming care is required by the formation of the least saint, what salutary lessons are taught by inevitable failures and by unanswered prayers. How many prayers, how many plans, how much sacrifice, are necessary to assure the material support of even a small work! And finally, how difficult it is, if not almost impossible, to attain in our day any degree of popularity by sound spiritual means alone. Yes, indeed, Christian work is a difficult art. And as we see huge successes which, by their large scope, the rapidity of their growth, and by their publicity would be of such a kind as to incite us to discouragement, we may sometimes be tempted to fear that there might be in our cause something decidedly inferior. To such doubts the certitude of our calling and our experience of divine assistance makes us bold to respond in a way completely reassuring.

Our special task must be more and more that of the fore-

runner, to be humble sowers of the truth of the Gospel. On this neglected ground we are unfortunately sure to meet with less competition than in the realm of the marvellous. Ought we not to endeavour to specialize in aiming to have no power but through the truth. "Let us labour to think well," said Pascal, "that is the principle of morality". He might well have added, "and also of Christian work".

The limited scope of our churches providentially dictates their method. We cannot aim beyond our means and undertake a series of great enterprises. But if the laboratory does not have the imposing appearance or the huge production of the factory, it can nevertheless command the same prosperity. If our experiments are made conscientiously and in the spirit of love, they will some day find their application on a larger scale. Thus we ought by the action of the Word of God in the crucible of our local churches to give attention to the patient and careful elaboration of this final product, this priceless standard given for the imitation of sincere saints: "the man of God . . . perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works". And thus by the help of God may this true miracle of miracles become more and more the characteristic of our ministry, our hearty response to the miracle of His love.

NO MIRACLE BUT THE TRUTH

The beloved president of the Evangelical Association of French-speaking Baptist Churches made many friends for that movement during his visit to the United States and Canada last year. So far as we know, however, the exigencies of deputation work allowed him to preach only one full-length sermon while he was on this continent. That was at the convocation of the Toronto Baptist Seminary, and the great address "Thinking Straight", now available in booklet form, was the result. We do not know any more effective means of commending our Foreign Mission work in France than this call to arms from its leader. The address was delivered at the biennial conference of the Association meeting at Court, Switzerland, in September, 1930.

Only one with such a long and rich experience as that of Mr. Dubarry would dare to use the great plainness of speech employed in the following address. For more than forty years he has been pastor of the same church, which he has seen grow from a few members to one of the strongest Protestant works in France; he has long been a trusted leader among French Baptists, having held the office of president for twenty-six consecutive years. We regret that Mr. Dubarry did not have time to make the translation himself, but trust that we have not done too great injustice to his beautiful French.—W.S.W.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 3 First Quarter Lesson 12 March 19th, 1939

JACOB'S VISION AT BETHEL

Lesson Text: Genesis 28.

Gold Text: "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not."—Genesis 28:16.

For Reading: Genesis 29, 31.

I. The Valediction—verses 1-9.

When Isaac spoke these words of farewell to his son it would seem that he was ignorant of the true reason for the departure; Rebekah had represented it as a wise and pleasant undertaking (Compare Gen. 24:1-3), rather than the bitter exile which it really was (Gen. 27:41-46).

The blessing given to Jacob by his father must have been a cherished memory during his years of wandering. The influence of a godly home and godly parents is a priceless heritage. Parents have the great responsibility of leading their children aright in the ways of the Lord (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15).

Isaac reminded his son of God's dealings with Abraham and the covenant concerning personal and national blessing, and temporal and spiritual prosperity (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:5-7; 17:6-8; 22:17, 18). The testimony of God's faithfulness to others is of assistance in strengthening our faith.

Just as before, Esau displayed remorse because of his previous actions when it was too late to turn back (Heb. 12:16,

17). He tried to please his parents by choosing a wife who did not belong to a foreign race. He should have done this at first (Gen. 26:34, 35).

II. The Vision—verses 10-15.

The Lord answered Isaac's prayer for blessing upon his son. He chose the night when Jacob "lighted upon a certain place" to reveal Himself to him. He had been with Jacob all along the way (Gen. 35:3).

Jacob who loved his home found himself a homeless wanderer (Gen. 25:27). Fearful, perplexed, distressed, unprotected and lonely, he called upon the Lord (Gen. 35:3; Psa. 34:6; 77:1). His discomfort and distress increased when night came and he was without shelter. People may be brave about leaving home as long as daylight lasts, but at night, it is a different matter. When all is gay and bright, some people imagine that they can do without God, but in the night of sorrow their hearts are turned toward Him.

In the vision Jacob saw a ladder set up, reaching from earth to heaven, a picture of the blessed connection which has been established between men on earth and God in heaven. The foundation of this union is the atoning work of Christ which was wrought out for us on earth. Christ is the Way to the Father's throne (John 14:6; Heb. 10:19, 20).

The angels of God ascending and descending on the ladder symbolize the communication between earth and heaven, possible because of Christ the Mediator and Intercessor (John 1:51; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1). The angels are represented as those who minister to the heirs of salvation (Psa. 91:11; Luke 15:10; Heb. 1:14).

Above the ladder stood God Himself, the same God Who had blessed Abraham and Isaac. How comforting for Jacob to be reminded of the truth that he was not alone! Though a wayfarer at the time, the land was promised to him and to his seed as a possession.

The promises made to Jacob's grandfather and father were repeated to him personally. It is an unspeakable blessing to have godly parents, but no one can believe in Christ for another. Each must hear and receive the promises of God for himself (Rom. 10:9, 10; 2 Tim. 1:5). God covenanted to remain with Jacob, to keep and to restore him (Exod. 33:14, 15; Psa. 121:5-8; Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5).

III. The Vow—verses 16-22.

When morning came Jacob realized that he had been in the presence of God. He had not expected to find Him (Psa. 139:7-12). It is better for us to be near the Lord and know it not, than to suppose that He is with us when He is not (Luke 2:44, 45; 24:15, 16), but it is best to have Him near, and to be conscious of fellowship with Him (Psa. 91:1).

The city of Luz ("Hazel-tree") became to Jacob Bethel ("The house of God"). Although he had been driven from his father's home, he experienced to some extent the blessedness of the House of God.

Jacob's stone-pillow became a pillar to mark the spot where God had met him (Joshua 4:1-9). That which had been the token of his hard homeless state was to be the memorial of rich blessing. He sanctified it with oil (Lev. 8:10-12), and by that action set it apart as holy and distinct from all other stones. Bethel was thereafter a sacred city, the place of fellowship with God (Gen. 12:8; 13:3; 31:11-13; 35:15). Places, buildings and the very ground, when associated with the memory of dealings with God, seem sacred to us (2 Kings 5:17; Isa. 64:11).

Jacob made a vow to serve God, to perpetuate the memorial at Bethel, and to give the Lord a tenth of all his income. This is not the first mention of the tithe in Scripture, the minimum portion which belonged to the Lord, and which was required of the Israelites under the Law (Gen. 14:20; Lev. 27:30). Over and above this amount they were to present free-will offerings; that is to say, they did not really begin to give till they had given more than the tenth (Mal. 3:8, 10). Under grace we should be more liberal. The principles of Christian giving are found in such New Testament passages as I Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7.

Jacob's heart was not yet perfect before the Lord; not yet was he free from the bargaining disposition of his younger days (Gen. 25:31). He made his vow only on condition that the Lord would vouchsafe to him protection, guidance, food and clothing. God had already promised to be with him, and to bring him back to safety.

THREE WEEKS TO THE YEAR'S END

This has been the most difficult year of Jarvis Street's history financially. On March 4th last our holy and beautiful house was destroyed by fire. Since then we have had to hold Sunday Services in Massey Hall, and week evening services in Cooke's Presbyterian Church. Notwithstanding the generous hospitality of our friends of Cooke's Church, the charge upon our General Fund has enormously increased. In addition to this, our people have strained every nerve to support the Building Fund. Altogether it has been a year of tremendously heavy burdens.

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