

# The Gospel Witness

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### THE WAR AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

(From "Revelations of the War", published in 1915)

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 28th, 1915

"Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."—John 19:11.

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."—Acts 2:23, 24.

During the past six months we have become accustomed to the use of superlatives in descriptions of the war. With respect to the nations involved, the size of the armies engaged, the number and striking power of the ships, the destructiveness of the modern weapons employed on land; the new factors introduced, such as aircraft and submarines; the lawlessness of the foe, and the consequent obviousness of the moral issues involved; in all these respects the war is said to be "unparalleled" and "unprecedented".

But there is a sense in which there can now be no conflict of moral opposites, however extensive the field, however mighty the forces engaged, and however ruthlessly and even lawlessly the war is waged, which is without precedent. Every Naseby, and Trafalgar, and Waterloo, and Gettysburg, was involved in Golgotha. While to the natural view, Calvary seems to be local, and to belong to a fixed point of time, regarded in the light of its spiritual significance, and considering the principalities and powers which wrestled for the mastery at "the place of a skull", that typical death's head germinally involved all the battles of the ages from the dawn of time to the Judgment Day.

There is no interest of human life, no paradox, no problem, no mystery, which is not understandable at the Cross. It is perfectly true that the Cross is the ground of the individual sinner's hope, and the Crucified is the individual believer's Saviour; but the Cross and the Resurrection together, "the Lamb as it has been slain", is the divine answer to universal human need.

The present war, like every other controversy of his-

tory, involves a question of authority. That will bear thinking about; but I believe you will find that the further you press your enquiry, the more clear will it appear that a question of authority will always be found to lie somewhere at the root of all human strife, whether individual or national. The Kaiser believes it is his divine right to exercise authority over men, and to extend that authority over other nations than his own. The German army and navy have been prepared to enforce that authority. Belgium, and France, and Russia, and Serbia, and Great Britain, are at war to resist German authority.

Thoughtful persons will soon discover that the matter of the legitimacy of human authority abounds with difficulty. That is why you must be careful, when you buy a piece of property, to see that there is no flaw in the title. Otherwise you may have no authority over that which you have purchased. The maps of the world are changed as the areas of authority of certain governments are enlarged or reduced. And as you ponder this question you will see that there is no consideration of greater importance than the enquiry, What is the ultimate law? Whose is the supreme will? In whom does the ultimate, absolute, sovereign, authority reside?

Upon the correctness of the answer to that question the soundness of all theology, the true interpretation of all history, and the rational explanation of all human experience, depend. That is why, I may freely confess, I am what is called a Calvinist. For fundamental to that system of theology, and to that philosophy of life, is the doctrine of divine sovereignty, which assumes that God is absolute in all realms.

Whoever understands and accepts that truth will not find his faith shaken by the war. He will not discuss the silly question, Is Christianity a failure? For, to him, Christianity is Christ, and Christ is God, and God never fails. He may not be able to see very far; he may, indeed, experience much darkness, but a sovereign King forbids the harbouring of despair.

Standing before Pilate, Jesus gave no answer to some of his questions; and Pilate marvelled at His silence, and said, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power (or authority) to crucify thee, and have authority to release thee?" And then Jesus went to the heart of this whole matter. He told the governor that all human authority was delegated authority, and that he had no authority but that which was given him from above.

And it is no more difficult to find God in this war than in the tragedy of the Cross. This modern paradox is not greater than that ancient story. You will find in the verses before us a *battle of wills, a conflict of motives, and a difference of achievement*; and in all God is shown to be sovereignly supreme.

### I.

HERE IS A CONFLICT OF AUTHORITIES, or a battle of wills. Authority implies power, legal, moral, or physical, power to enforce its decrees. And Pilate claimed to have such authority over Jesus Christ: that his will would determine whether He should be crucified or released. And Jesus admitted his claim. But he told Pilate something of which he had never dreamed, and which made him only the more uneasy. He said, in effect, that back of the imperial decree which gave him his judicial authority, and back of the Roman state with all that it implied and symbolized, there was a Higher Authority without Whose sanction the highest earthly potentate was powerless.

Moreover, Christ tacitly acknowledges that, subject to divine sanction, the state is clothed with certain authority; and such acknowledgment was in harmony with His explicit teaching, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." Whatever may be said of the personal rights of kings, there is no doubt that the collective human interests represented in the state have a certain divine right of authority over the individual. Jesus Christ did not dispute it.

And I think we may discern in these words a recognition of the authority of the individual will of Pilate. He was not, in relation to the state, a mere automaton. He was permitted certain discretionary powers. Nor was he merely a puppet in relation to the power from above; for in the exercise of his authority Christ recognized that he was morally responsible for his acts: his act was not sinless, though another's was "the greater sin".

Observe, also, *Christ distinguished between the will whose sanction would determine His crucifixion, and the will by which He was "delivered" to be crucified*. In its human instrumentality that will was a composite. There was the collective will of the priestly party, of Caiaphas and Annas, of organized and established religion, of the trained intellectualism of the day. And there was the participation of Judas, by whose treachery Jesus Christ was "delivered" to the chief priests. Of him it is said, "The devil having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him"; and again, an hour or so later, "Satan entered into him."

You have therefore the Satanic will mastering the will

of Judas and expressing itself through Judas. The same malign influence is at work upon the chief priests, and through them working his will upon the multitude, and thus bending the will of Pilate, and through him making use of the authority of the state. Thus you see the will of Satan controlling the will of unregenerate human nature—Judas, the chief priests, the multitude, the false witnesses, and Pilate himself; and so utilizing for his own ends the powers of this world as represented in the authority of Caesar.

On the other hand, you have *the federal Head of a new race*, the second Adam. He is the incarnation of righteousness, and goodness, and truth, and of everything to which Satan and his subjects are opposed. And for the present these powers of evil have authority over righteousness, and goodness, and truth! Much more than "civilization" was at stake: the world's redemption was at stake. And all the powers of the world were united against Christ.

Now *put yourselves in the position of the disciples of Christ*. They have been thrilled by His gracious words; some have had their eyes opened; others who were lame have been made to walk; not a few tongues who speak His praise, until He came to them, were dumb; and some whose flesh is clean as a little child's, were loathsome lepers till He touched them; and some had come back from the grave at His call. When Jesus hung upon the Cross, what view had they of God's government of things? Faith must have staggered, and reason, too, at such a sight. Each must have said, "I cannot understand a God Who allows evil to triumph over Him, and nail Him to a cross!"

Yet Jesus Himself asserted that all these wills, primarily and chiefly that of Satan, and then of Judas, and the priests, and the multitude, and Pilate—having no sympathy with each other, opposed to each other in many respects, and opposed to the divine will in every respect—were yet unconsciously working together in concert in subservience to the one only sovereign Authority from above.

Does that throw any light upon our present perplexity? Hundreds of millions of people at war, expressing their wills more or less effectually through ten different governments representing ten different political systems. It is a frightful spectacle, and in it all, righteousness, and goodness, and truth, appear crucified afresh. But above all the din of battle I can hear a Voice, in answer to the boasts of the mighty, speaking for Belgium, and for the representatives of righteousness, the world over, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

As all these wills in conflict with each other, and each working its own pleasure, were yet divinely and sovereignly compelled to co-operate, and bring to pass God's holy will when Jesus Christ cried, "It is finished", and bowed His head and died; so on the bloody fields of Europe to-day, without violation of the freedom of the human will, or cancellation of responsibility, God is sovereignly subjecting all authority to his own, and working out His own designs.

### II.

But you may see a further paradox here, **CONFLICTING MOTIVES WORKING TOWARD THE SAME END**.

*You have Kaiserism at the Cross*. This Man had been offered all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, if He would acknowledge subjection to Satan, and

fall down and worship him. "World-power" and more was Satan's ambition from the beginning. And because this wondrous Man refused to submit to Satanic authority, He is crucified—as Belgium has been for a similar reason. The spirit of the Kaiser is not a new thing under the sun. Napoleon was similarly possessed. And so was Charlemagne, and the Caesars, and Alexander, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Ahab, and Pharaoh, and Chedorlaomer, and ten thousand others. They came under the spell of that spirit who claims authority over all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. The spirit of modern Germany is a very ancient aspirant to universal dominion. The motive of worldly ambition was a very influential factor in bringing Jesus Christ to the Cross, as it now is, in bringing the nations to fields of blood.

Then, too, there was *the motive of covetousness, greed of gain, an immoral commercialism*. Judas said to the chief priests, "What will ye give me?" We read that, "He was a thief, and kept the bag, and bare what was put therein." And that unworthy, that contemptible motive played an important part in the erection of the Cross. And it has something to do with most crucifixions. Ahab's covetous desire for Naboth's vineyard invariably has had some part in the shedding of blood wherever it has flowed.

Somebody says the war was not due primarily to German ambition for world power, politically and governmentally; but that she wanted room for commercial expansion. She cherished no grudge against Belgium, she merely wanted Antwerp for a sea-port to facilitate her overseas commerce. Let it all be granted, what then? It is only a repetition of history. It is Satan entering into Judas, and bidding him ask, "What will ye give me?" There is no doubt that that motive has reddened the fields of Europe as it reddened the hill of Calvary.

But *what motive do you discern beneath the intellectual and religious "culture" of Pharisaism in particular and of Judaism in general?* You must study your gospels to answer that question. Doubtless there was an element of jealousy engendered by His growing popularity, in which they saw their own influence threatened. But there was something deeper than that. Do you remember how the Scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman who had been taken in adultery. They quoted the Mosaic statute governing such cases, and asked if He also approved of her being stoned. And He replied, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." And that was typical of all His teaching. His sharp arrows pierced their armour of superficial morality. He called them "whited sepulchres" and "serpents," and "vipers"; and their attitude was a revolt against His teachings, and against the life of holiness He lived, and the ministry of tender compassion for the sinful, and weak, and wounded, He exercised. So that you may discern among the motives preparing the way for the Cross, the revolt of the carnal mind against the requirements of the spiritual law.

And a motive closely akin to this may be observed in operation in this war. The boasted German "culture" involves the elimination of the moral elements from human thinking. Though it may sound a little like "I told

you so," I am bound to confess that I have long believed that German critics of the Bible were not intellectually honest, that their antagonism toward the written Word was dictated by motives similar to those which inspired the Pharisees to conspire to crucify the Word Incarnate; they were moved by a moral bias against the principles which Christ exemplified, and which the Bible proclaims. At all events, certain of Germany's intellectual idols have not feared to say that a civilization woven of Christian principles is incompatible with German advancement. Nietzsche's philosophy involved the repudiation of all conventional morality, and the glorification of the carnal mind. He was a voice crying against Christ, and saying, "Let us break His bands asunder, and cast away His cords from us." The famous "scrap of paper" incident was the logical expression of this mental attitude. The motives consisting in a desire to extend Pharisaic culture and German culture are not unrelated to the native antagonism of the carnal mind toward all moral restrictions.

But *what was the motive of the multitude?* What motive actuates seventy millions of Germans in this war? Surely many must be free from motives of ambition, and greed, and opposition to righteousness, such as I have described. In this ancient tragedy the multitudes were ignorant of the issues involved. Their prejudices were played upon, and their passion inflamed by the hypocritical representations of their leaders. And undoubtedly the rage of the German nation is to be similarly accounted for. Their Kaiser has blinded their minds, lest the light of the knowledge of the facts of the case should shine unto them.

And then *there is Pilate, moved by political motives;* he strives to maintain a position of neutrality. He mildly scolds both sides; and while convinced of the iniquity of the proposal to crucify Christ, while knowing that for envy His enemies had delivered Him up, he lacks both the wisdom and the courage to declare himself. Instead, he orders water, and washes his hands in the waters of neutrality, and declares that he is innocent of the blood of this just Person! And righteousness, and goodness, and truth, Incarnate, hangs there upon a cross, bleeding, dying, crowned with thorns! And President Pilate is neutral!

And the motive and spirit represented in Pilate have their counterparts in this war. I cannot understand such neutrality. Where moral issues are concerned no man or nation can be neutral without suffering a deterioration in moral character for which there can be no material compensation. The sacrifice of moral principle to political expediency by the individual or the nation is the first step in the direction of moral bankruptcy.

*How different from all these was the motive of Jesus.* He came to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; and, in the accomplishment of this, to give His life a ransom for many.

And Jesus knew that while the motive of hate moved the wills that delivered Him up; and self-interest forbade the political Pilate to take sides with Him and with righteousness; the higher sovereign Authority was moved by a motive compounded of mercy and truth and righteousness and peace. Thus it was Love not Hate which triumphed at the Cross!

For your comfort, I counsel you in these tragic days

to read your gospels again, and study well the record of the Cross and Passion of our Lord. Observe the silence of all voices which might have told of the virtue which had flowed from Him of the seamless robe. How one-sided was the evidence! Not one voice was heard on His side. How dark was the day when Jesus died! The world never has been wrapped in such darkness from then until now: nor was such darkness known before. And yet though it was too dark for men to see what was being done, it was not too dark for God to work! They parted His garments among them, and for His vesture they cast lots. They gave Him gall for His meat, and in His thirst they gave Him vinegar to drink. They crucified Him between two thieves, and numbered Him with the transgressors. They refrained from breaking His bones; but they drove a spear into His side, and looked on Him Whom they had pierced. His body was surrendered to Joseph; and thus He was with the rich in His death. And all these things were done on the world's darkest day, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled"; and all conflicting motives were, sovereignly over-ruled, and God had His way; for darkness and light are both alike to Him.

And the same mighty forces are at work to-day as then. They are differently clothed, and differently named; but in their essential nature they are the same. Only let us remember that God is not blinded by darkness; He is not daunted by human and Satanic confederacies. And though jealousy is still cruel as the grave, there is a Love which the many waters of all the springs of evil cannot quench.

### III.

And now we may see WHAT A DIFFERENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT is recorded to the credit of these opposing wills and conflicting motives.

On the one side there was a *treasuring up of wrath* against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Not one escaped. Judas went to his own place. The defiant prayer of envy and jealousy, "His blood be on us, and on our children," was terribly answered; and no horror of the present war surpasses the unspeakable sufferings of Jerusalem. Nor did Pilate's neutrality save him for time or for eternity. He did not avoid the danger he feared; but, according to tradition, for other matters was made to answer to his Roman master, and, like Judas, died by his own hand.

And Germany is succeeding only in laying up for herself a store of wrath. The proverb shall be taken up against the Emperor of Germany as against the king of Babylon, "How hath the oppressor ceased! the exactress of gold ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruleth the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from

heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou has said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High! Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, the son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts."

But observe, on the other hand, how the chief Sufferer, by His inestimable sacrifice, *laid up a store of grace for all human kind*. We who have found the Cross the medium of pardon and of peace can understand the paradox, that Jesus was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and yet was "taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain." And we know now, that though righteousness appeared that day to be defeated, with the battle of Golgotha, a new day dawned for the world. And I would remind you, as this great war is reminding us all, that the vicarious principle is wrought into the very nature of things, and is the warp and woof of all human history. And the blood which is being so freely poured out in the cause of righteousness in Europe to-day, while it is being shed "by wicked hands," is, notwithstanding, fulfilling "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." And that insures the most gracious results. We had thought that the blood-price of "civilization" had been fully paid; but we were mistaken. And we shall willingly pay the further price as our hearts are assured that the blood of the righteous is not shed in vain. Then we shall sing:

"Whate'er the loss,  
Whate'er the cross,  
Shall they complain  
Of present pain  
Who trust in God's hereafter?"

"For who that leans on His right arm  
Was ever yet forsaken?  
What righteous cause can suffer harm  
If He its part has taken?  
Though wild and loud,  
And dark the cloud,  
Behind its folds  
His hand upholds  
The calm sky of to-morrow."

- God had His way on Golgotha, as He will have His way on Europe's fields of blood; and now, as in the

ancient time, *He will triumph through the nature of things.* The doctrine, or let me rather say, the fact, of divine sovereignty, is quite consistent with the human consciousness of volition. God is the author of the nature of things, and He never does violence to the nature of things. He deals with men in harmony with their mental and moral constitution: He deals with them as men; and not as machines. But there is a sense in which His sovereignty consists in the nature of things. Evil is inherently mortal. Like water, it is its nature to run down hill. It falls from the loftiest throne by its own aberration. It is destroyed by its own poison. Judas gravitates "to his own place"; "the son of perdition" goes to his cavern at the end of the day; measureless infamy descends to the welter of "the bottomless pit."

But it is of the nature of righteousness to "exalt" whatever it touches. It dwells in the high places; its native air is in the uplands. From the pit into which envy has cast it, it rises, like Joseph, from servitude to sovereignty. When the Man of Nazareth had been crucified and laid in a grave, His enemies conspired to keep Him there; and, sealing the grave, and setting a watch, they "made it as sure as they could." But He rose again from the grave; God having "loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." And of the principles of truth, and justice, and liberty, which were released by His resurrection, it must be said, it is "not possible" for them to be "holden" by any power of earth or hell.

The conclusion of my whole argument this evening is this: that the constitution of the universe and of everything in it, is so framed that its well-being consists in obedience to the sovereign will of God. That is true of every man and woman here, and it is true of the Empire and of all the nations of the earth. God will triumph through the nature of things: and everywhere men will reap what they have sown. Our salvation and our peace consist in surrender to the will of God revealed in the crucified and risen Christ. Germany will go to her own place as Judas did, and all that is best in our civilization will survive the conflict; because it is "not possible" that righteousness should perish. May it be ours to rest in the assurance that,

"Man's weakness, waiting upon God,  
It's end can never miss;  
For men on earth no work can do  
More angellike than this.

"He always wins who sides with God;  
To him no chance is lost;  
God's will is sweetest to him when  
It triumphs at his cost.

"Ill that He blesses is our good,  
And unblest good is ill;  
And all is right that seems most wrong  
If it be His sweet will."

### A WORD ABOUT JARVIS STREET CHURCH

A number of our readers have written in recently enquiring as to how the work in Jarvis Street is progressing. Our readers recognize that we do not say very much about Jarvis St. Church. In our issue of September 21st we published a note of seven lines, in which we said:

"Last Sunday was another good day. The morning congregation was good, and the evening, as is now quite usual, packed to more than capacity."

Following this a friend who has proved the sincerity

and unselfishness of his friendship in a very practical way, remarked that he thought it would be better to avoid such references to congregations. Like ourselves, he has been so disgusted with the boastings of men who multiply tens to hundreds, and hundreds into thousands, and seem to have no regard for truth when reporting numbers, that he was of the opinion that it would be safer to say nothing at all about such matters. We agreed. There was no exaggeration in saying we were crowded out and we refrained from mentioning any number; but after our friend's kindly suggestion, we felt sorry we had even said the church was full to capacity.

Now we have received further word from England as follows:

"You would do well to give some account of this, (Jarvis St. services), I suggest, in the pages of *The Witness* from time to time. I have several times been asked how things were proceeding. I think your English readers would like to know."

In response we shall allow what has already been said about congregations to suffice. It is enough to say it is now evident we did not overestimate our requirements in building.

The prayer-meetings are well sustained in numbers and interest. We still have three a week. We are also thankful to report that we experience much of "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"; and in Jarvis St. we have, to a marvellous degree, been brought into "the unity of the faith." We are constantly praying for a divine visitation in revival power, but we are not without evidences of the Lord's presence in conversions and baptisms.

Our great Sunday School (should we be wrong in the use of an adjective?) goes on about its work. Last Sunday, of a teaching staff of nearly two hundred, only ten teachers were absent, including such as were sick.

The various war services are already claiming our men. The Superintendent of the Young People's department wears the uniform of the Canadian 48th Highlanders. In our Teachers' Conferences we now have army and navy uniforms. Others have joined the air force. There has been no such demand for men as in the last war, and we hope and pray there may not be. But if and when there is, Jarvis St. men will not be found wanting.

Perhaps that is enough. The gospel is still preached, and is still the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

### TO-DAY'S SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

By Sir Charles Marston, F.S.A.

We recognize that we are living in an age when knowledge is increasing very rapidly, but few realize how much more we know about Bible times than we used to do. Half a century or so ago people were criticizing the Bible on the basis of the *then* existing knowledge. They pointed to all sorts of places where they thought the Bible, especially the Old Testament, was wrong; and many learned men believed them. For it was estimated then that all human knowledge was fairly complete, and that little allowance need be made for ignorance.

#### The Great Mistake

The supposition that knowledge was fairly complete sixty years ago amuses us to-day. Those know-alls

were ignorant of radios, of airplanes, of motor cars, and a host of other things too numerous to mention. Science to-day does not venture to emphasize its knowledge, it emphasizes its ignorance. The world, and the world's great enigma—Man—present far more mysterious problems than the learned simpletons of last century imagined. Yet the old-fashioned assumptions of sixty years ago are still mostly taught in our schools and colleges, and conventionally believed in our every-day lives. No wonder civilization is in such a mess! And those who have adopted them in matters of Religion call themselves modernists! A real modernist must surely be a man who takes account of the evidence about the Bible which has been discovered in the last fifteen years; and in this short article it is proposed to give a glimpse of its character and extent.

#### Miracles Happen

Before doing this let us deal with the objection these ancient modernists raise against the whole Bible. The Bible records miracles, and *they* don't believe in miracles. According to the superficial knowledge of sixty years ago, miracles could not happen, the trouble for those who cling to this belief is that they do happen. One leading scientist to-day affirms that even the ordinary events of every-day life partake of the nature of miracles. While those who study the extraordinary events, certify to the reality of miracles. Readers who doubt this assertion should read a book called "Man the Unknown," by Dr. Alexis Carrel of the Rockefeller Institute, New York, (published by Hamish Hamilton). This authority, who is perhaps the greatest medical scientist of the day, says that a negative attitude towards miracles can no longer be sustained. He testifies to the reality of the healing of organic diseases by prayer, including cancer, under strict medical supervision. In view of this evidence for miracles which happen to-day, people can hardly reject the Bible because it records miracles which happened long ago.

#### Dating Evidence

Now as to the nature of the evidence about Bible times which scientists are digging up in Palestine. That land is studded with mounds which mark the sites of cities mentioned in the Old Testament, built by men who lived from three to five thousand years ago. When a perpendicular cross section is cut into one of these mounds, it exposes layer after layer of ruined cities, superimposed one above the other. This is due to the fact that after a city was destroyed, instead of clearing away the ruins, people just levelled their surface, and built again on top of them. Until about fifteen years ago the difficulty of archaeologists was to date the different stratas. But the pottery fragments which permeate each layer have been found to provide dating material. For the shapes, textures, sizes, and ornamentations, of ancient pottery, used to change as time went on; and complete pots found in the tombs linked up with the pieces on the sites. Again a pot could here and there be dated, by the discovery of some datable object lying beside it, such as an Egyptian scarab or seal, with the inscription of some Pharaoh, whose date was known, engraved upon it. So the pots and their pieces were classified and dated, and they in turn have supplied the dates for the various layers of occupation. Archaeologists can now tell what particu-

lar strata of ruins belonged to the time of Abraham, or of Joshua, or of Solomon, or of Jeremiah. And the objects lying among them, which have survived the ravages of time, contribute to tell a story of their particular period.

#### Biblical Jig-saw Puzzles

Now we are all familiar with jig-saw puzzles, and how the various pieces go to make up a complete picture. The articles left behind by men, who lived in Old Testament times are like pieces of jig-saw puzzles—it may be of the time of Abraham, or Joshua, or of Solomon, or of Jeremiah, or of some intermediate period. Supposing someone told us that a jig-saw puzzle would represent a primitive village with huts, and people dressed like savages; and we found the pieces contained parts of a modern town, and people in modern dress? Then we would know that some mistake had been made. The theory of Evolution misled critics of the Bible into the belief that the ancient Israelites were uncivilized and illiterate. Archaeology has proved that Abraham and his descendants lived in a highly civilized community; and that the ancient Israelites, so far from being unable to write when they conquered Canaan, brought an alphabetical script with them, from which, by the way, our own system of writing is descended. And so one might go on; all the archaeological jig-saw puzzles of Old Testament times that have been unearthed and assembled, tend to confirm the particular period of Bible History to which they belong, and to supplement it. When the jig-saw puzzle of Jericho was put together after Professor Garstang had excavated the city that Joshua burnt, it was found to confirm entirely the story of its destruction contained in the Book of Joshua. So the Science of Archaeology is all the while confirming the substantial truth of Old Testament history, just as another modern Science is endorsing the reality of Bible miracles. It is time that these discoveries were generally known, and that people appreciated how present-day Science endorses the Bible, and contradicts those crude materialistic ideas about life which have brought Christian civilization into such peril.

#### VISITATION OF THE UNION CHURCHES

The Board of the Union is most happy to announce another step forward in the work. The Rev. Harold Slade, pastor of Timmins Church and vice-president of the Union, has consented, at the earnest request of the Board, to give a month of his time between now and Christmas to a systematic visitation of the churches. We do not know anyone in the Union better qualified for this difficult task than Brother Slade. His church has loyally and liberally supported our work from the beginning, and he has had a large share in the programme of expansion carried on in new centres in Northern Ontario and Quebec. We are confident that his presence among our churches will be a benediction to them. The Board is most grateful to Brother Slade for his willingness to undertake this work and to his fine church in Timmins for their missionary vision in consenting to surrender their pastor for a time. We trust that they will receive an abundant recompense in sharing the joys and blessings of the care of our Union churches thus assumed by their pastor.

Mr. Slade's itinerary is being arranged by the Union Office and we are now completing plans for engagements beginning November 22. We shall be most happy to hear from churches in the general neighbourhood of the Montreal-Ottawa district which desire a visit from him. Write without delay to the secretary at 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto.



As he goes among the churches, Mr. Slade will be assured that a great number of friends in all the churches will labour together with him in their prayers. As he carries on evangelistic services, or brings a word of cheer and fellowship to those in hard places, let us bear up before the throne of grace both the churches to which he ministers and the church in Timmins.

A few weeks ago, as the office was waiting for word from Mr. Slade and the Timmins church, a good friend of the Union came in one morning and handed the secretary a fistful of bank bills—forty of them, and everyone a "tender". "I was anxious to get this off my mind," he said! The secretary does not know what he said in reply. He noted, however, that half of the gift was for the Union and half for the Seminary. That of the Union was to be applied where it was needed most and we suggested Home Missions. While Mr. Slade's visit to any particular church will not be conditioned upon any financial help, the Board earnestly hopes that every Pastor and church visited will take as liberal collection as possible to help defray travelling expenses, and thus make our funds go as far as possible. Mr. Slade asks no remuneration for his services.—W.S.W.

### ANNUAL REPORTS

A number of requests have come in for copies of the Annual Report recently presented to our Convention. Additional copies are still available and we shall be glad to send them free of charge to those making request. In this report the Board renders an account of its stewardship to the churches and friends which have provided the money for the work of the Union during the past year. Separate sections are devoted to the following activities: Home Missions, French Evangelical Association, Western Canada, Toronto Baptist Seminary, THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and the Financial Report. Nothing is more inspiring than to read of the blessing of the Spirit upon the preaching of the Gospel in these various fields, and the Board is anxious that all the information possible regarding its work be disseminated in all our churches. Write at once to the Union Office, 337 Jarvis Street, if you have not seen this fine report, and send the names and addresses of other friends whom you believe would be interested in this work.

## Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 3 Fourth Quarter Lesson 48 November 26th, 1939

### THE APPOINTMENT OF JOSHUA

Lesson Text: Numbers 27.

Golden Text: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."—Joshua 1:5.

For Reading: Numbers 25, 26, 28, 29.

#### I. A Sure Inheritance—verses 1-11.

Much is said in the Book of Numbers concerning the organization of the nation of Israel. Each tribe had its own leader, place of encampment and order in the line of march, just as each one was to have its own inheritance in the land of Canaan. Holy order in the work of the Lord is commendable, but disorder and confusion tend to weaken the testimony (1 Cor. 14:40; 1 Tim. 3:14, 15).

The right of inheriting the property and possessions of his house was one of the privileges of the head of each of the families, and this right of inheritance was passed from father to son. Zelophehad, the head of the tribe of Manasseh, had died in the wilderness (Num. 14:35; 26:64, 65), leaving no sons, but five daughters (Num. 26:28-33). The daughters made a plea before the assembled leaders and congregation of Israel, asking that they be considered the legal representatives of their house.

Moses had formed the good habit of asking the will of the Lord in all times of perplexity, that he might administer the affairs of Israel with justice (Exod. 18:15, 19; Num. 9:8; 1 Kings 3:7-9). The wisdom of the Lord is available for those who will ask Him in faith (Jas. 1:5).

Each of the tribes, including Manasseh, was to have its own inheritance, and the claim of the daughters of Zelophehad was sustained. They must not, however, marry into another tribe (Num. 36:1-12). The Lord is interested in that which pertains to the welfare of His children; He knows where they dwell (Psa. 139:1-12). The decision of the Lord concerning the rights of inheritance comprised a statute of judgment to be strictly observed (Num. 35:29). So, too, has He made adequate provision that the inheritance of each of His children should be absolutely sure and safe (Rom. 8:16, 17; Eph. 1:11-14, 4:30; Tit. 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:3, 4).

#### II. A Solemn Invitation—verses 12-17.

Moses was aware that he would not be permitted to lead the children of Israel into the Land of Promise. He must die before that time, since he had failed God in the hour when he should have glorified Him before the people (Num. 20:12, 13).

As the people neared Canaan, the Lord comforted His aged servant with the promise that he should have a glimpse of the land before he should be gathered to his fathers. He was asked to climb into the heights of Abarim, a range of mountains on the border of Moab, on the north-east shore of the Salt Sea. Mount Nebo was one of its prominent peaks, and it was there that Moses died (Num. 21:11; 33:44, 47; Deut. 3:27; 32:49-52; 34:1-6). The Lord, for His own purposes, sometimes revealed to His servants the time and manner of their death (Num. 20:23-26; Luke 2:25, 26; 2 Tim. 4:6; 2 Pet. 1:14).

It was natural that Moses, who had led the people for about forty years (Exod. 7:7; Deut. 29:5; 31:2), should be anxious as to the one who should succeed him as undershepherd (1 Sam. 18:13; 2 Sam. 5:2; Psa. 78:70-72; Eccles. 2:18, 19). Without a leader the people would be as sheep without a shepherd—helpless, defenceless and foolish (1 Kings 22:17; Zech. 10:2; Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34).

#### III. A Sacred Investiture—verses 18-23.

God had already chosen Joshua, the son of Nun, to be the next leader of the host of Israel; he was the man of God's appointment, a man called, chosen and faithful (Heb. 5:4). His name was originally Oshea or Hoshea meaning "welfare" (Num. 13:8, 16; Deut. 32:44), but later it was changed to Jehoshua, Jeshua or Joshua meaning "Jehovah saves". This name is the Old Testament equivalent of the name "Jesus" (Matt. 1:21; Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8).

Joshua had the first qualification of a leader; namely, the willingness to obey (Exod. 17:10; Matt. 8:9; Luke 7:8). He who would be a master must first learn to be a minister (Matt. 20:27; 23:11; Mark 10:42-45). Joshua had already made good as a servant of Moses, standing before him when he went up into the mount of God (Exod. 24:13; 32:17; 33:11; Deut. 1:38).

Joshua was a brave soldier. He had been chosen to command the expedition against Amalek, and he had acquitted himself with credit (Exod. 17:8-16).

Joshua was also a man of faith. He represented the tribe of Ephraim when the spies were sent into Canaan (Num. 13:8). He and Caleb stood alone against the multitude, and urged the children of Israel to believe God and to enter at once into the land (Num. 14:6-10, 30, 38). Like Daniel he was convinced that it is better to be alone in obedience to the Lord than to follow the multitude in doing evil (Exod. 23:2; Dan. 1:8; 6:10, 22). Caleb and Joshua wholly followed the Lord and were amply rewarded. They were the only two adults of that generation who were permitted to enter the land (Num. 26:65; 32:11, 12).

The Spirit of the Lord rested upon Joshua, equipping him for the great task that was his (Deut. 34:9; Isa. 11:2; 61:1; Luke 4:18, 19). By this time he had probably overcome the feeling of envy to which he once gave vent (Num. 11:28, 29; Mark 9:38-40).

Moses was directed to lay his hands upon Joshua and separate him unto his holy task (Deut. 34:9; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 1:6). Joshua was given the solemn charge before the priest in the presence of the whole congregation, and the charge was repeated when Moses was about to die (Deut. 31:7, 8, 14, 15, 23). He was to rule the people as directed by the Lord, and he proved faithful to his trust.

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\*NOTE—The titles given in italics are of sermons preached in 1915 and published in a volume entitled "Revelations of the War," and reprinted in successive issues of "The Gospel Witness" as being as applicable to the present war as to the last one. Of the War Sermons therefore Nos. 5, 7, 8, 9 and 11 contain two sermons each, and Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 10 only one. The remaining sermons in "Revelations of the War" will appear successively in "The Gospel Witness."

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