

The Gospel Witness

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

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"Behold, I Make All Things New"

How shall we wish each other a "happy" New Year? Was there ever a time in the world's history when so many people felt in need of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness", as to-day? The calendar tells us that a new year will begin in a few days, but it will dawn upon an old world, with all its sin and shame, its woes and its wars.

A new world, in the sense of new conditions of life, and men and nations of new dispositions, seems like a dream impossible of realization. There is no hope for better things in mere education. For years Germany posed as the most enlightened and thoroughly educated nation in the world. Now she is the world's greatest curse. Nor is there hope in mere religion as such. Russia was a very religious country before the Revolution; and poor Spain had too much religion for her good. And that is true of all lands. Religious people are not always good people.

There is no hope for the world but in God Himself. Nothing less than divine power is required to "make all things new". The world needs new people, people who are actually new creatures in Christ Jesus. The only religion of value is that which has power to make people really new, who will live seven days of the week as new people. Only then can we hope for a new society, a new relationship of individuals and of nations.

As a New Year's message therefore we would exhort our readers to resolve upon a more complete consecration to the Person and work of the only One Who can "make all things new". By prayer and effort and sacrificial giving, let us in the New Year seek more earnestly than ever the proclamation of that gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation". This is the best contribution we can make to a new world; and the best way by which we may be "looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

A VISIT TO QUEBEC

By Rev. H. C. Slade of Timmins

The greatest challenge to Christian missionary work in our day is undoubtedly the province of Quebec. Missionary societies have for too long a period utterly overlooked this province, which, in many respects, forms the very heart of our Dominion. Is it because Christians somehow feel that Roman Catholicism, which dominates the people, has much of Christianity in it? Let it be forever remembered that Rome is one of the fiercest foes Christianity has ever had. History teaches us this truth clearly. Or, is it because such an evangelistic undertaking is looked upon as impossible? It is a mighty task, and only those who are equipped of God with boldness, patience, and perseverance, plus ability for hard work, need ever accept such a charge. But it is not impossible with God.

As a Union we have looked upon this field especially of late. Our Lord has commanded us to lift up our eyes and see it white already unto harvest. When we have so done, the responsibility to evangelize becomes ours. We fear that God may say to many believers in our Dominion, "They have made you keeper of the vineyards, but your own vineyard have you not kept." On our skirts is the blood of this people deluded by a false religion, unless we go to them with the gospel.

On our itinerary of the past month we met many who are stirred in heart over the abominable practices and teachings of Rome. They speak with sadness and sympathy, yet with indignation, of confession to a human priest; of convents where the fair of our land are placed behind high walls and barred doors and windows for the remainder of their natural lives; of purgatory with the power it supplies to cardinal and priest. Some are endeavouring to enlighten the people by preaching the gospel, witnessing from door to door and spreading the Word by tracts.

It was a delight to visit our brethren of the Union in the Ottawa Valley Association. They are labouring valiantly and with singular effectiveness, but all feel that so little is being done. Their present cry is, "What are we among so many hundreds of thousands of people?" At the same time they keep on heralding the glad tidings, believing that the Lord Who multiplied the loaves and fishes will bless their efforts and raise up many men of God to evangelize this great field.

We ought to begin a vigorous programme of evangelism at once. All we have and are, ought to be put into it. The preaching of the gospel will save souls and form churches in Quebec as it did in Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, and Rome, in the days of the early disciples. It is "the power of God unto salvation".

The Roman Catholic programme has never been so fully realized in our country as in this generation. Evidently they have almost complete control of this beautiful province, while making enormous strides in all provinces from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. Sections which were pioneered by Christian Protestants are being bought up by Roman Catholics. Some of these pioneer descendants wish to remain as residents, and do so until it becomes intolerable to live where Roman Catholicism predominates. Churches of various denominations have been so reduced in some places that outside help is required in order to maintain their existence. Others have been closed up entirely. This condition obtains where once those churches flourished in true

worship and testimony. Truly it can be said of Quebec, "The Philistines envied Isaac . . . and stopped wells digged in the days of Abraham his father." If we want the coming generation to live in Canada with freedom of worship and exercise of conscience, something must be done. Quebec is only a beginning in Canada of this pernicious programme. Can we trust God to send us another like Luther, accompanied by a mighty, heaven-sent revival? Our expectation is from Him alone.

As we write, the voice of God is loud upon our soul, "Awake, thou that sleepest." "Let us not sleep as do others." Protestantism is guilty of napping, and "while men slept, the enemy sowed tares" is being rapidly carried out. How long shall we allow this state of affairs to exist while we, as servants of Jesus Christ, do nothing about it? Christian reader, you are a debtor, (Rom. 1:14). First, to God from Whom you received the gospel; secondly, to men for whom you received it. There is but one way to discharge this gospel obligation: it is to take some share in spreading the name of Jesus Christ your Saviour. Your prayers and gifts will go far in assisting us to maintain and expand our great home mission enterprise.

A new mission has lately opened in the Snowden district of Montreal. This is a residential district, rapidly building up and being settled by young married couples. This presents a splendid opportunity for Bible School work as well. A recent evangelistic campaign held in the district gives indication that a work can be done under a God-sent man. We were thrilled to see about forty people wending their way to the mission through a blustering snow storm.

The hearty and warm reception given by all pastors and people of the Ottawa Valley Association when we visited the churches was most gratifying. Thus received, as a representative of our Union, it was expressive of the unity prevailing in the Union's interests and fellowship. Let us seek, by God's help, to make 1940 the most fruitful year of our history. A happy and prosperous New Year to you all.

A VISIT TO THE GOLD COUNTRY

Pastor W. Tompkins of Lachute writes as follows of the Timmins Church when he ministered in the absence of Rev. H. C. Slade while the latter was engaged in visiting some of the Union Churches.

It is not of earthly metals I would write, though shown the inner workings of a gold-mine during a month's visit to the brethren in Christ of the First Baptist Church, Timmins. I speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ and their application in a New Testament Church and individual lives.

I was profoundly impressed during my stay in this northern town, with the evident result of a consistent, unapologetic, aggressive Gospel ministry through the years. It was a great joy to see how grace has much more abounded and revolutionized many lives to the glory of God.

As a believer in Christ my faith was strengthened in the efficacy of the redemptive and transforming power of God unto salvation, and I was much encouraged as a pastor not to be weary in well-doing.

These people have been well inculcated with "Bibline", and believe God's Word in a practical fashion. Hence, I never before saw so many Bibles used during preaching services. This encourages the preacher and warns him to quote the Word correctly.

Prayer-meetings are frequent and inspiring. It gave me a thrill and a deep sense of responsibility to know that before the services in which many unsaved are always present, a band of believers were knocking at Heaven's gate for blessing on God's Word.

(Continued on page 8)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"FOR JONATHAN'S SAKE"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 12th, 1939

(Stenographically Reported)

"And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"—II Samuel 9:1.

I shall assume that David and Jonathan need no introduction to this congregation, but that we meet them this evening as old friends. Like some magnificent, sculptured, column, which has outlived its fellows, and, amid the ruins of some old abbey still retains its ancient splendour, unmoved and unmarred by the touch of time, so amid the wrecks of many friendships, and the ruins of many an unrequited love, the story of the mutual and immortal love of David and Jonathan stands out on the page of history as a golden monument, a perpetual reminder of the abiding and ever faithful friendship of our Creator, God Himself.

Saul was the first of Israel's kings. Jonathan was his son, and heir-apparent to the throne. It would appear that on the first occasion of their meeting David and Jonathan conceived an unusual attachment for each other. It is recorded that each loved the other as his own soul. By some strange spiritual intuition, it was given to Jonathan to discern that the purpose of God in respect to the succession did not lie in the direction of human expectation; and that David and not Jonathan was the divinely appointed successor to Saul in the throne of Israel. In anticipation of the accomplishment of the divine purpose, when David should be exalted to the throne and the kingdom should be established under him, Jonathan proposed that they should make a covenant with each other, by the terms of which David was to guarantee his kindness to Jonathan's house for ever: "Thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever," said Jonathan. To this David assented, and the covenant was made and sealed between them. In due course, when years had passed, Saul and Jonathan fell together on Gilboa's mount. And David, you will remember, lamented over his friend, saying, "Very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." And when other years had passed and David had come to the throne, and God had put the fear of him and the dread of him upon all the nations round about, from that seat of authority and privilege David asked the question of the text. He remembered the promise he had made to his friend; he remembered the promise of the covenant into which they mutually had entered; and he asked, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

It is not of David and Jonathan primarily that I shall speak; for behold, a greater than Jonathan is here. I shall speak to you this evening of a sovereign's love expressed, a wealth of love exhibited, and a wondrous love explained.

I.

I begin, then, with an examination of THIS EXPRESSION OF A SOVEREIGN'S LOVE. "Is there yet any that is

left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness?" David did not ask that his enemies should be brought into his presence that he might be afforded an opportunity to show his displeasure, to exercise his royal authority in anger and in judgment. But, on the contrary, he recognized that he was there as God's representative. It was not his own kindness but "the kindness of God" he was to dispense. This was he who sang: "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." And of the surplus of the lovingkindness, of the love of God, he desired to distribute to those who were in need. And that is my subject this evening: that "the kindness of God" is no fiction but a fact; that it is a truth which you and I need to believe, of which we need to be profoundly convinced. There is such a thing as "the kindness of God." And if men and women here this evening did really believe, there is not one of us who would not find his or her life transformed. For just in the measure in which we believe in the lovingkindness of God, just in the measure in which we learn to rest in His love, shall we grow up into Him in all things.

Now the kindness of God has been expressed in many ways. First of all, it is expressed *in the works of His hand*. For it is written: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Everywhere God has His witnesses which bear testimony to the truth of the kindness of God. This world is full of evidences of the great fact that He Who made it and arranged it for our habitation is the Lover of our souls. The very minerals of the earth, the tin, the lead, the iron, the copper, the silver, and the gold, these are but bells which call us to worship in His temple Who is pleased to inhabit the praises of Israel. A hundred fathoms deep, where the coal is mined to warm the feet of little children, to cook dinner for a million mouths, to provide power to a million hands, to bridge the oceans and span the continents, and make men ten thousand miles apart the neighbours of each other,—in the cellars of this great house we call the world, by the light of a collier's lamp, the enlightened understanding can read the message of the Bible that "God is love". We are just now learning that all the great forces of nature, the lightnings which make a way for the rain, the Niagaras, the air we breathe—that all these great forces are but our Father's horses, which, though running wild in His world, were designed to be harnessed to our purposes, to carry our messages, to drag our carriages, to do for us that which our fathers thought to be impossible. And, if I may paraphrase the Psalmist's saying, if our ears are trained to catch the music of Love's message, you may hear it thundered by the waters as they break upon the bounds which God has set that they turn not

again to cover the earth; it is carolled by the springs of the valley as they run among the hills, and give drink to every beast of the field; you may hear it above you in the trees of God's planting, where the birds make their nests, where they sing among the branches; it is echoed from the high hills where the wild goats find refuge, and from the rocks where the conies dwell; it is borne upon the breeze which plays upon the grass which groweth for the cattle, and upon the herb designed for the service of man; on the great and wide seas where go the ships, where men do business in great waters; on harvest plain, in flowered dale, and on the highest sun-kissed mountain peak, there is left the impress of a loving hand. The lovingkindness of God is everywhere. It sparkles in the dewdrop of the morning; it shines in the shadowless noontide; it is painted on the rainbow on the cloud; and when wrapped with evening shadows you may read it in the crimson of the sunset; while at night "the heavens declare the glory of God," and the stars bear witness to this everlasting truth!—"The kindness of God"! The seasons sing it in their march; the years echo it in their flight; the generations write it as they pass; the centuries engrave it on their monuments to speak when they are gone—everywhere the lovingkindness of God appears, and this earth, once deluged with vengeance, is now flooded with the kindness of God; so as then with wrath so now with mercy, the tops of the highest hills are covered. All nature is lighted by the face of God, all nature is vocal with the message of His love, if but our eyes were opened to see, our ears unstopped to hear.

"For he whose eyes the Lord anoints
His tender love may see,
In radiant hill and woodland dim,
And tinted sunset see;
For not in mockery does He fill
Our earth with light and grace,
He hides no dark and cruel will
Behind His smiling face."

Somebody will say, "Well, sir, I rather like that teaching. I have long believed that there was a testimony in nature, and I myself love to commune with nature." Ah, yes, but strangely enough the testimony of nature is not sufficient. You remember how Byron sang,

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods;
There is a rapture on the lonely shore;
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar,"

but poor Byron never found in the "pathless woods" a path that led to God; nor in the "rapture on the lonely shore" was his soul ever caught up in heavenly communion. We read in the Word of God that "the plain of Jordan was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord . . . But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." O no, men are not changed by environment. This race began its course under the most favourable conditions possible. We began in a garden that was vocal with the praise of God. Yet notwithstanding ten thousand voices proclaimed the love of God, the voice of the tempter was heard above all others, and "sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

And so, my friends, the Lord has given to us not only the testimony of nature, but a *written Word*. I have not

time to quote this evening the many passages in the Word of God which declare the lovingkindness of God. I heard one say once that you could not find the love of God in the Old Testament, that not until you come into the New Testament is that great truth revealed. I wonder what part of the Old Testament he had been reading. It is there written: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Is there not love expressed there? "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." I have not time to quote the passages which speak of the love of God in the Old Testament. I simply want to tell you that the whole Bible is a bound volume of our Father's love-letters. There are hard things in the Scripture, there are stern sayings written in this Book; because there are things in your life and mine that need to be sternly dealt with. But in lovingkindness God has spoken to us, and the whole Book from beginning to end is inspired by a Spirit of everlasting, of unchanging love.

Yet men have not heard the written Word any more than they have listened to the testimony of nature. Therefore *God has given us still clearer evidence of His love for men*. I remember years ago hearing a man read the Bible, when I was a lad in the Old Country. You know there are people who do not read the Bible with their eyes: they read it with their fingers. They cannot read your Bible or mine. They must have one especially prepared, because the sense of sight has failed. They must learn the truth through the sense of touch. And I remember a man who used to sit at a certain place on the old Bristol bridge in England. He sat on a campstool with a large Bible on his knees before him. And the third chapter of John seemed to be his favourite chapter. He had a little cup fastened about his neck, into which the passers-by threw their pennies as he read. And I have heard him reading again and again with his fingers, that great word, that epitomized Bible, that condensation of all that God ever said to men: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You will remember that on the eighth day after His resurrection, when the disciples were gathered behind shut doors for fear of the Jews, Jesus appeared again in the midst of them. And on this occasion one disciple, who had been absent a week earlier, Thomas, called Didymus, was present. And Jesus said to Thomas—if I may again resort to paraphrase: "Thomas, I have been a long time with you, telling you every morning, every noontide, every evening, always the same old story, that God is love. But though I have been a long time with you, yet thou hast not known me, Thomas. And so at last I have brought to you a blind man's Bible. Come near and read it with your fingers! It is written in my hands and feet and side, that God loves the world." And since Jesus died at the place called Calvary, this sinful world has been left without any excuse for unbelief. God hath spoken His last word in the Word Incarnate, and He has proclaimed this everlasting truth that is wrought into the very foundation, into the very constitution of the universe, that is proclaimed by every voice that speaks, by every creature He has made, the everlasting truth that God is love.

II.

And now further, here is A WEALTH OF LOVE EXHIBITED: "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him?" David did not issue a general, and unrestricted invitation, for all and sundry to come and receive the kindness of God at his hand. *The kindness of God was offered to particular persons and only such might receive it from him.* Who were they? They were to be members of the house of Saul. And what was the house of Saul? The name of Saul was representative to David of the bitterest hostility, the most murderous hatred of which he had ever had any experience. Again and again, Saul had prepared a javelin, and he had said, "I will smite David to the wall." In thought and purpose, he had shed the blood of David repeatedly. He hated him, and was, therefore, his murderer. But now David asks that his enemy be brought before him that he might show the kindness of God unto him. How unlike most men! I have read a story somewhere of Sir Henry Parkes, once prominent in the public life of Australia, and Prime Minister of New South Wales. He was one who rose to an exalted position from the humblest station. He began as a very poor boy and worked his way up until he occupied the first position in the land. And one day as he was sitting in his office, in conversation with a friend, a servant brought in a card. Sir Henry looked at the card and turned to the servant and said, "Tell him to wait." Then the conversation between Sir Henry and his companion continued. But in a few minutes his visitor said, "Now, Sir, I know you are busy and others are waiting to see you, I will withdraw." "Oh, no," said he quite leisurely, "sit down. Don't be in a hurry." "But, Sir," said his visitor, "didn't the servant say to you just now that there was some one waiting?" Sir Henry replied, as he picked up the card from his desk. "Oh, yes, I know the gentleman. He is one of the blue-blooded gentlemen with whom I have had association for many years. There was a time when he despised me and all associated with me. He held me in contempt as belonging to a lower order of life. Now," he said, "I am up and he is down. Let him wait." And that was very human. It would have been human for David to have done a thing like that. But, remember, he was a man after God's own heart: and it was because of that he said: "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him?" Did I not read to you that same story in the New Testament? "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The message of the Gospel is for sinners. The promise of grace is for sinners. The promise of the wealth of the Father's house, and all the abundance of the heavenly city, is all reserved and prepared exclusively for sinners. Nobody else has any claim upon it, unless he is prepared to acknowledge his relationship to the house of Saul.

But you know there are some people who do not subscribe to that somewhat ancient doctrine; but who are rather ashamed of their family lineage and they have written another especially for their own satisfaction. I remember some years ago a man who had a great deal of trouble, who seemed to have been chosen in the furnace of affliction, who came to see me to tell me a very wonderful story. He came into the study, and although it was in my own house he seemed fearful lest any one

should overhear this confidential tale he had to tell. He had been in hard circumstances. He had had much sickness. He had been out of employment again and again. He had bravely faced all his reverses, and he had found some comfort in the story he then related to me. He said, "You know, Pastor, I like to think sometimes that if everybody had their due I should not be as I am to-day. For," he said, "while I do not say very much about it, I am related to a certain family." And he gave me the name of an historic family, and he told me in little more than a whisper that away back there across the sea, where his family had its origin, there was a great fortune. How many millions it was, I do not know, but it was yonder in Chancery, and if only he could establish the line of connection and prove what to his own satisfaction, at least, was true, he would immediately come into possession of all this vast wealth which had been left by an earlier representative of the family. The family was a titled family—I am not sure whether he would have been an earl or a duke, or what he would have been, if only he could have come into possession of that to which he believed himself to be entitled. And he told me that story as though no other tale like that had ever been told. He did not know that we all have a family story like that. Haven't you? Oh, I have. We are all blue-blooded folk; we are all related to belted earls, or dukes, or princes, or something of the sort. We love to tell the tale until some young man goes to university and studies biology. Then he discovers he belongs to another kind of family altogether. As for the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, it is not true, it cannot possibly be true. "Well," I say to my evolutionary friends, "if you are proud of your pedigree, you are perfectly welcome to it. I have not very much to boast of; but so far as my family history preserves any account of the past, I am absolutely sure that there were no apes in my family. I have not come of that line." But I have come of a very ancient family, of a very aristocratic family, a family that once had its home amid conditions that were absolutely ideal. I have come of a family that occupied a position of high honour. My great-grandfather, no my great-great-great-grandfather—and back farther still—I do not know how many generations, but I do know that I belong to a "first family" and am descended directly from one whose name stands out in all the history of the human race as one of the most conspicuous figures of antiquity. And his name was Adam. Did you ever hear of him? And the thing for which he was chiefly remarkable was that he was a great sinner! That is all.

"Oh, well," but you say, "I do not subscribe to that." I affirm that from the first word of Genesis to the last word of Revelation there is absolutely nothing but promise of judgment, of wrath—wrath to come—for every man who does not acknowledge his sin, and plead guilty to the fact that he is related to him who brought death into the world and all our woe. No, my friends, I put it that way because I thought I might get some young man who is carried away with that philosophy of fools, with that "damnable heresy", that doctrine that was hatched in the Pit—that men were evolved from some sort of protoplasm that a somebody was evolved from a nobody. There is not a solitary word of true science or religion that can support that perfectly absurd philosophy. Professor Bateson, one of the outstanding scientists of the world, once President of the

British Association for the Advancement of Science, was the guest of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in this city some years ago, and was the chief speaker. And Professor Bateson gave as his judgment, that while he did not accept the Book, and declared he was agnostic respecting the question of human origin—he did not know where man came from or whither he was going—science, he declared, had absolutely failed to produce one single proof in support of the theory that man was evolved from a lower order. Why is it that teachers and professors, in view of the fact that that doctrine is so utterly discredited—why is it that they will poison the minds of young men and women, and teach a doctrine that is contrary to every demonstrated fact of science, and to every word that is written in the Word of God? My friend, if you are going to accept that philosophy, you may as well throw your Bible in the furnace at once. But if you come back to the principle I am discussing, if there is anybody that is left of the house of Saul, though a rebel and an enemy, against God, to him God will shew kindness. If you will come under that classification, and say, "I have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," I want to assure you that all the wealth of the universe is at the command of faith.

There was a time, you remember, when Saul came forth before the people, brought thither by Samuel, who said, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people." And when the people turned to Saul and saw that "he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward," they said, "God save the king." I suppose he was one of the finest specimens of physical manhood to be found in all the world, a man without blemish, a man who the people felt instinctively was born to command. But now the question is asked, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul?"

Should we not expect to find the house of Saul still reigning in power and great glory? But, alas, alas, sin takes the king from the throne and casts him into the pit; it takes the prince and brings him low. And all that was left of the royal house of Saul was a poor man, lame on both feet: "Jonathan hath a son, which is lame on his feet"—poor, broken, crippled mortal, who was a burden to himself and of no use to anybody else. That was all that was left. Thus sin destroys the handiwork of God, thus sin takes the sceptre from the hand of God's king. For you remember that in the beginning God, Who made all things, last of all made man in His own image and likeness, and He said concerning him, "It is very good." To him also He said, "Have dominion." And it is written in the Word: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands." We were made to be kings not captives; we were made to rule; we were made to tread the world under our feet and to reign under God as kings over His creation. And yet, what is left of the once royal and glorious house? There is not a man here who will dare to stand on his feet and say, "I am left. I am a king." You were defeated to-day, my brother. You were defeated yesterday. You tried to have dominion, and you failed. You tried to walk in the way of His commandments, but were unable to do so. You desired to walk in the paths of righteousness, and you did not because you discovered the truth in this old story—you are lame on both feet. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there

is none that doeth good, no not one"—not even that man who thinks he did good down in the City yonder.

"Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul?" Is there anybody here who says, "I am glad you found me, for that is a true description of my state. Here I am, helpless, morally corrupt, undone, lame on both feet; and I never knew there was a message of comfort, a message of joy and inspiration for a poor sinner like me." That is what the gospel is for. God's programme is to make men over again, and to bring men back into fellowship with Himself.

Then Ziba, a servant of the house of Saul, answers David's call, and he goes away down yonder to Lo-debar. And when Ziba comes into the presence of Mephibosheth and tells him that he has a message from the king, and that the king desires to see him, I fancy Mephibosheth was something like Agag: he may have said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." "And did you tell him, Ziba, who I was? Does he know that I have the blood of Saul in my veins?" "Oh, yes, he knows that." And I think Mephibosheth would say, "I have been hiding away from him all these years. I did not want him to know that I was alive, and he has found me at last." And you have been like Mephibosheth. You have thought that your salvation was to be found in putting as great a distance between you and the King as possible; whereas, your salvation is to be found in coming into His presence. "Where art thou?" said a Voice in the garden. What was the answer? "I hid myself." And men have been hiding from God from that day until this, running away from Him and from every representative of the religion of Christ. You, my friend, have imagined that every Ziba who comes from the King to summon you into His presence is a messenger of death, a messenger who comes to rob you of joy and of pleasure. But you are mistaken. I want to play the part of Ziba and find some Mephibosheth to tell him that the King wants to see him, and that he does not need to be afraid to come. There is kindness in the heart of the King for you, and nothing but kindness if you will come at His call. Your sins which are many will all be forgiven. He has promised that "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

But there is another parallel here. Mephibosheth must have said to Ziba, "It is a long way to Jerusalem for a lame man, and I cannot get into the presence of the king." We know it is recorded that Mephibosheth could not go out to meet the king as others. He was lame on both feet; poor, helpless creature. But here is a beautiful word: "Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar."

I was talking to you this morning about Joseph. Somebody said to me afterwards, "Is not that your favourite theme?" I do not know whether it is. I know the Lord Jesus is my favourite theme, and I do not care where I go to find an illustration. But you remember those men of whom I was speaking this morning? Carry that story a little farther. They came back into the presence of the old man with a gospel of resurrection. They said, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." The house rang with the news. "And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." It was too good to be true. I think he said, "It cannot be true. Joseph would not stay yonder in Egypt and send word to

me in this far-distant country and bid me come to him. If it were Joseph who is governor yonder he would know how old I am, how infirm I am, and how impossible it is for me to make the journey." And one of the boys—I do not know whether it was Reuben or Judah, but one of them I fancy—took the father by the hand, and said: "We have told you all the words of Joseph, but that is only half our gospel. Come out and we will show you something." And the old man came out and he looked at the long train of wagons loaded with all the good things of Egypt, and he said, "What is that?" And they said, "The wagons which Joseph has sent to carry you." "And when Jacob saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said, it is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive. It is just like him. He knew what I needed. I will go and see him before I die." And then you see him being tenderly helped at last into one of those wagons surrounded by all the luxuries of Egypt. And Joseph sent and fetched him into his banquetting house.

My message to you, my brother, is that the grace of our Lord Jesus will meet you where you need to be met. Somebody says, "I am glad, sir, I came this evening. I will think that over. There are some things I am going to put right. I am just going to give up this, and I am going to abandon the other thing. And when I have made a little progress, then I think I will go." O no, that is not the gospel. Come just as you are. Jesus will meet you just where you are, in all your weakness, in all your impotence,—but not in Jerusalem. Blessed be His Name! If you and I had to get up to Jerusalem before we could be saved, there would not be much chance for us. But He finds us in Lo-debar, and brings us into His presence. God can save you right where you are this very minute. God, by the power of His regenerating Spirit, can make you a new man and bring you into His own presence.

And then Mephibosheth came, and when he came into the presence of the king, "he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not; for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." And Mephibosheth, overcome, said, "What is thy servant that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" That is the publican's prayer in the Old Testament: "God be merciful to me a sinner." And the king said, "Ah, Mephibosheth, if that is what you are, then there is all the more need of the kindness of God. And you shall have it at my hand and in my house." I wish I had an hour to speak about just that one word. I touch it and leave it for you to think about: "Fear not . . . I will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father—Mephibosheth, you have heard the family history, haven't you?" "Yes, my lord, O King." "And you have heard that Saul forfeited his inheritance by transgression?" "Yes." "Well, fear not: I will restore it all to you, and I will make you just as rich as you would have been if Saul had never sinned." What is the gospel for? I gave you just a suggestion in my lecture last Tuesday evening. The gospel is God's way of restoring our souls. He Who made us can make us over again. He Who made us in His own image and likeness in the beginning is not going to be defeated by the Devil: "The Son of God was manifested, that he

might destroy the works of the devil." And, blessed be His Name, He is going to do it. He is going to cleanse this old world until the whole creation is at last delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

John, on one occasion, saw a great multitude which no man could number. And one of the elders pointing to this great multitude said to him, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" And John said, "I don't know." He threw the question back upon his questioner, and said in effect: "I never saw anybody like that. Why, their garments are not soiled as though they had been on a journey. They are not disfigured as those who had been in battle; nor is there any evidence of weariness as those who had borne heavy burdens. This is something new to me. I never saw anything like it before." And the angel answered: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,"—the last trace of sin. And as John looked about in the land of glory, he could see absolutely no evidence of sin anywhere but in one place: "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne . . . a Lamb as it had been slain." Oh, men and women, the Lord Jesus has so completely taken upon Himself our sin that the only mark of sin in Heaven is upon Him. And the rest are washed and cleansed and glorified. Sin is done away:

"In Him, the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost."

And, my friend, that is possible for you. You can begin life all over again. You may be born again, a new record may be written. You may come at last into the presence of God, by His grace without fault. Don't you think that is a better doctrine than that evolutionary talk? Don't you think that is a real gospel? Is there anybody here who does not need it? Anybody here who has not a black page in the past? Anybody here who does not need the precious blood of Jesus, the righteousness of Jesus, the grace, the recreative power of God? It is available for everybody.

III.

I must not keep you longer than to give you THIS EXPLANATION OF THIS WONDROUS LOVE: "That I may shew him kindness,"—it is the vicarious principle of the gospel—"that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake." Why should Mephibosheth receive it? What had he done? Nothing. But Jonathan had done everything, and for Jonathan's sake he was entitled to all the wealth of the king's house. If he had known it, he might have come long before. He might have occupied a place at the king's table as one of the king's sons. And if the king had said, "What have you done? have you served in the army? have you served in the palace?" he would have said, "No, I am lame on both feet". "What have you done?" "Nothing. I have just been a burden to myself and everybody else." "Well, on what ground do you demand admission to the king's house?" And he could

have said this: "I come to remind my lord, the king, that in the long ago he made a covenant with Jonathan, my father, and he swore with an oath that he would never cut off his kindness from Jonathan's house." And the king might have said, "But you are related to Saul, aren't you?" "Yes, and on that side I deserve nothing but wrath. But I am related to Jonathan, too, and on that side I claim nothing but mercy." Related to the first Adam, hell is our portion; but when we can claim relationship to the second Adam, we can claim mercy. That is the gospel. For Jesus' sake: He died for you, He paid the debt; and for His honour, God will receive any poor sinner who will come.

Oh, to feel in our hearts a desire after Jesus, just to want Him, to desire that Christ should be formed in us the hope of glory! Then "all things are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." And you shall be a millionaire forever. May He make us so for His Name's sake.

Bible School Lesson Outline

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THE CHILDHOOD OF CHRIST

Lesson Text: Matthew 2.

Golden Text: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him"—Matt. 2:2.

For Reading: Matthew 1.

I. The Search of the Magi From the East—verses 1 to 12.

The various personages mentioned in the record of the birth of Christ are representative of the various spheres of life. The magi belonged to the educational world; Herod to the political world; the priests and scribes to the religious world; the shepherds to the industrial world, and the angels to the heavenly realm. Christ is the centre of all, and when He is given His proper place, order and harmony prevail, but when His authority is denied, confusion and discord follow.

God had sovereignly revealed the sacred secret of the coming of the Messiah to the wise men from the East, even although they did not seem to belong to the Jewish race. The Lord has never left Himself without a witness, and there have been godly searchers of the truth in all places and at all times (Acts 14:17). The wise men believed the testimony, and set out on their quest to find the new-born King.

We have no certain knowledge of the names of the wise men, nor of the countries from which they came, nor how many there were. Tradition says that there were three, perhaps because three offerings were presented. We are not told the details of the journey, its time or manner, although the men probably travelled by camel, the usual mode of transportation by land in the East at that time. We presume that Christ was about two years of age when the wise men arrived in Bethlehem (verse 16).

The star which the magi saw is rightly called "his star", the star of the King. The Lord Jesus Christ is the "star out of Jacob" (Num. 24:17), and "the bright and morning star" (Rev. 2:28; 22:16). His first coming heralded the approach of the light of the Gospel upon this dark world (Isa. 9:2, 3; Matt. 4:14-16; Luke 1:78, 79; John 1:9; 9:5). Similarly, His second advent will be the signal of the coming of the full light of righteousness (Mal. 4:2; 2 Pet. 1:19).

Men cannot ignore Christ; they will either be joyful in His presence, as were the wise men, or they will be troubled, as was Herod. Indifference is impossible when He is concerned. (Matt. 12:30; Acts 17:6).

The priests and scribes had knowledge concerning the Messiah, but that knowledge was merely theoretical. Prophecy was being enacted before their eyes, but they knew it not. The birth of Christ was hidden from those who thought them-

selves wise, for God's secrets are disclosed only to those who humbly trust Him (Matt. 11:25).

Herod did not wish the people to hear the report of the wise men that a King had been born. His very fear testifies to his belief in the accuracy of the testimony. It is vain for man to attempt to suppress the truth of God (Matt. 10:26; 2 Cor. 13:8).

The star which the wise men had seen when in their own country again appeared to guide them to the place in Bethlehem where the young child was. The scriptures and the star had both been necessary to guide them to the Christ. We, too, need the holy Word of God and the heavenly Spirit of God to show us the way to the Saviour (John 5:39; 15:26; 16:14).

The wise men rejoiced when they saw the Saviour's star, for they knew that they would soon see Him. Their faith in the Redeemer anticipated their sight (Rom. 8:24; John 5:14, 15). So will all be able to rejoice when they come to Christ (Acts 8:39; 1 Pet. 1:8).

By faith these men recognized the King, even although He was clothed in the garments of humble humanity. They rightly adored Him, and they presented unto Him gold in token of His royalty (Psa. 21:3), frankincense in token of His fragrant life (Psa. 45:8; Song of Sol. 3:6), and myrrh in token of His suffering and death (John 19:39).

II. The Sorrow of the Mothers in Bethlehem—verses 13-18.

The conflict of the ages between good and evil, between God and Satan, was renewed at the time of the birth of Christ. Many a time had satan attempted to corrupt or destroy the Royal Seed in order to frustrate God's designs for his overthrow (Gen. 3:15). But God was watching, and once again was victorious over the Adversary.

Herod's smooth words to the wise men were but the thin coating of the poisonous pill. They constituted a superficial gentility which concealed, for the time, his wicked designs. His real nature was revealed in the madness and cruelty of the ruthless slaughter of the innocent children of Bethlehem.

III. The Subjection of the Master in Nazareth—verses 19-23.

The angel of the Lord directed Joseph when the holy family departed into Egypt, according to the word of the Lord, and also when they returned (Exod. 4:22, 23; Hosea 11:1). Christ lived His whole life upon earth in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Saviour spent His boyhood days in obscurity in the village of Nazareth, subject to Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:51). How great was the condescension of the Lord of glory!

A VISIT TO THE GOLD COUNTRY

(Continued from page 2)

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