

The Gospel Witness

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

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UNDENOMINATIONALISM

Last week we published an article on denominationalism. The opposite of that is of equal interest and importance.

It is probably true that never within the memory of anyone now living have "undenominational" groups, organizations, and institutions, been so numerous as they are to-day. Every unoccupied church building, or any other kind of building suited for the assembly of a hundred people more or less, seems to constitute an invitation to somebody to start a new undenominational religious meeting-place.

But what is actually involved in the term, "undenominational", as applied to such places? They are given many names. They may be called, "Gospel Centre", or, "Evangelistic Centre", or "Gospel Tabernacle". In a number of cities of our acquaintance, there are groups which modestly call themselves, "The People's Church". As a matter of fact, the name of these undenominational centres is legion.

By calling themselves undenominational, they mean that they are subject to no outside authority, that they are a law unto themselves. At that one point they differ in no respect from a Baptist church, which is equally independent, and autonomous. Many of these places have not even a church membership, and the individual, or small group of individuals which constitute the official body, be it "centre", "church", or whatnot, is responsible to no one; not even to the congregation who support the work.

For example, the People's Church in Toronto is, in truth, neither a "church" nor a "people's" body. It is a private corporation, of which the Pastor is President and Manager; and the ownership of the property, and all else connected with it, resides in the incorporated company of perhaps anywhere from five to a dozen people—five, we believe, is the legal minimum. But it is not in any Biblical sense a church, for it has no membership other than those who compose the incorporated company. Nor is it controlled by the "people", either a large or a small company. The people who attend the services, and contribute to the funds, outside of the incorporated group, have absolutely no control over it. It is a private company, bearing a religious name.

There are other bodies which are not incorporated. They probably own no property, but rent a building, and

hold services. But those who direct the services of such an organized group are utterly irresponsible, for there is no body of people to whom they must give an account. As a matter of fact, however, every such group or organization constitutes a denomination in itself. Call it "Gospel Tabernacle", or "Evangelistic Centre", or, "People's Church", or "Gospel Hall", or whatnot—that is the name by which that group is recognized and identified. That is the name by which the group is *denominated*.

Quite frequently such "undenominational" groups profess a great devotion to the Scriptures. In contrast with their prefix, "un"; the denominations are referred to as though they were wholly apostate. Some denominations, doubtless, have virtually repudiated the authority of Scripture, but their apostasy does not consist in the denominational name by which they are known. An individual, or a group, or a church, is not necessarily reprobate from the faith because it or they choose to answer to the name Anglican, Presbyterian, United Church—or in other countries, Methodist, Congregationalist, or Baptist. Such groups, or churches, or associations of churches, as are called denominations, are not rendered guilty of any sort of heresy merely because they use and hold in honour a particular religious or ecclesiastical name.

On the other hand, the groups which boast of their "undenominationalism" give no proof of their subjection to scriptural authority by their proud assumption of the prefix, "un". They may, indeed, be quite as unscriptural, and unbrotherly, and uncharitable, and unreasonable, and unreliable, and irresponsible, as they are undenominational. The truth is, undenominationalism is a misnomer. The man who calls himself an undenominationalist is a denominationalist, just as the man who boasts that he has no creed is, literally, creed-bound; his creed being that he has no creed. The undenominationalist is, in his sphere and in his principles, as truly subject to the delusion that he is a freer man than others, as is the man who calls himself a free-thinker; or the alcoholic who boasts of his "personal liberty." The free-thinker is in bondage to his positive unbelief; and the personal liberty advocate usually is the slave of appetite.

The undenominationalist, in boasting of his freedom from denominationalism, all unwittingly acknowledges

his complete subjection to another *ism* that is as positive in its attitudes as any other *ism*, notwithstanding its negative prefix, "un".

This being so, someone will say, "What objection can there be to undenominationalism, if after all it differs only from denominationalism in the name it assumes?" The objection is that *the "un" principle is parasitical*. It boasts of its possession of the virtues of the denominations and its freedom from the vices of denominationalism; and thus it preys upon all denominations. It is very often a religious sneakthief. It creeps into others' houses, for no other purpose than to steal therefrom. They are like the Midianites, or the Philistines, who made their raids upon Israel's territory about harvest time. They were willing that the Israelites should cut down the trees, and plough, and harrow, and sow the fields—they then made a practice of appearing frequently about harvest time for the reaping.

Gideon was a denominationalist, an Israelite who was not ashamed of the name; and there is a record of his once being engaged in threshing wheat "to hide it from the Midianites". It was on that occasion that the angel of the Lord appeared, calling him "a mighty man of valour", and sending him forth to do battle with the undenominational Midianites, who, in reality, were just as distinct and separate a people as were the Israelites. So is it still. The putting of "un" as a prefix to a name neither destroys nor negatives the *ism*. Brethrenism, and Pentecostalism, and Gospel Centerism, and Tabernaculum, and all the other undenominational nondescripts are Midianites who covet the Israelites' harvest.

Undenominationalism is perhaps especially obnoxious in its institutional manifestations. Undenominational institutions are like innocent merchant ships with camouflaged guns. This is particularly true of so-called educational or training institutes. They prey upon all denominations, and sometimes even exhibit themselves as examples of church unity. But what are the facts? Their representatives seek admission to the pulpits of all denominations. They plead the cause of their institute, and solicit funds for its support, while inviting young people to enroll as students. And when they get there, they effectually undermine and destroy the distinctive denominational principles in which their students have been trained in their respective churches.

We said they were like merchant ships carrying camouflaged guns. True! But guns which are fired with smokeless and silent powder. Professors or teachers must not discuss distinctively denominational tenets, for this is an undenominational institution. By implication, students are taught to believe that the institution has risen above denominationalism. Yet the principles which have been expressed in the life of the various denominations have at least this value and importance, that they have engaged the thought of religious people for centuries, and for some of the principles concerned people have laid down their lives. But now these principles are set aside as though they were of no importance. It is as though a professor of anatomy should say to his students, "We will not bother examining the backbone of the subject. You will be well advised to keep as far away from that as possible, because it is a nerve-centre which gives much trouble!"

How can such institutions teach church history? Adequately to study it inevitably plunges the student into the terrible subject of denominationalism! Perhaps this is one reason why such undenominational institutions

turn out students who, while utterly ignorant of religious history, profess the fullest competence as prophetic interpreters.

A denominational school, whether it be Anglican, United Church, Presbyterian, Baptist, or whatnot, is not ashamed of its name. It teaches with full freedom those things for which the institution stands, and in contrast therewith, it is free to refer to all other denominations with which, on certain principles, it is in disagreement. But there is absolute freedom of discussion—and no offense is given to anyone. *But in the undenominational institutions, professors and students do not so much agree to disagree as they agree to ignore those great principles which have supplied the church—using the term church generically—with backbone through all the centuries.*

The same objection may be registered against many undenominational missionary organizations. It is true that many such organizations assume an attitude of respect and not of contempt toward the denominations from which they derive support, but still the fact is that these undenominational missionary organizations build no churches; they do no home-mission work; they are wholly inactive in respect to the evangelization of their home-land. We mean, they are inactive as organizations. Individuals within the organizations may be members of various churches, and there fulfil the mission of a church member. But the organization, as such, digs no wells; we repeat, builds no churches; evangelizes no home fields; and yet pumps its supplies from denominational churches.

It has always seemed to us that in such methods there was an element of unfairness, bordering, in some instances, not in all, on a kind of religious dishonesty. These undenominational centres are the happy hunting ground of peripatetic "Bible teachers". Such Bible teachers are not all alike. Some of them do find time and opportunity occasionally to preach the gospel of salvation to sinners; but the larger number seem to be intent upon grinding out their repertoire about the Antichrist, and Armageddon, and the connection of Russia and Germany, and the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, the rapture and the tribulation, and all the ingenious features of their manifold dispensations, etc., etc., *ad nauseam*.

We suggest to some of these prophetic experts that when they are discussing "the signs of the times", they give some attention to Matthew twenty-four, twenty-four to twenty-eight:

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

It may be that some of the "signs of the times" may be found in some of the vagarious prophets themselves, that they are themselves representatives of the principle set out by the Apostle Paul, who said: "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."

(Continued on page 6)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE ART OF DOING RIGHT

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, March 31st, 1940

(Stenographically Reported)

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."—I Cor. 10:23.

I shall speak this morning particularly to those of you who profess, and call yourselves Christians, to those who have made profession of faith in Christ, declaring you have been born again, and have become children of God through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

As the children of God, it is at once our privilege, and our duty, to be the best children we can be; not to be content with any second-class, much less third-class rating. In the school of Christ we should seek to excel in knowledge. The great scholar, whose words we read this morning, declared that he counted everything but loss "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus (the) Lord." The knowledge of Christ was, to him, the most excellent of all sciences. And in order to know all that might be known of Christ, he was willing to pay the largest possible price, and to count everything but loss. He tells us also that he counted not himself to have apprehended. His school days were not over. He had not been matriculated from the lower into the higher school, much less did he count himself to be a graduate in the knowledge of Christ; but rather, apparently, revelled in the privilege of being still at school, with the opportunity of endeavouring still to excel. And he tells us that the motive for so desiring was that he might "apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." That is to say, he had a passion for the realization, in his own experience, in his own conduct and character, of the divine purpose in calling him into fellowship with God. I think he meant that he did not want to disappoint his Lord: he wanted to be as good a man as it was possible for a Christian to be. And nothing less should be the high ambition of every believer in Christ. We ought not to be content to be at the end of the procession.

Some years ago I was entertained in a typically Southern home, in the Southern States. They had a negro cook whose name was Mary. Her face was as black as ebony. She had cared for her master for many years after his wife's death. She studied him as a mother studies her child. She loved to "mother" people, and she adopted me. She looked after me as she looked after her master. One day I went out driving with the minister of the church. We arrived home late for luncheon. Luncheon was nearly over. However, I was welcomed to the table, and when Mary came in I said, "I am sorry, Mary, to be late." "Oh, well, it don't matter. Baptis' allus late." There was a merry twinkle in her eye as she looked over at her master, who was a Deacon in a Baptist Church. I said, "Surely, Mary, you don't really mean they are always late?" "Yeh; allus so; an' they's going to be late gettin' into heaben, too." She was a Methodist. I pressed her for an explanation, and she said: "When we get to de pearly gates, the Meph'dis 'll lead de crowd; then'll come de Piscopalians, Presby-

terians, Disciples—" and she called the roll. "Den at de end de Baptis'll come tagging on behind." I said, "Do you really think that, Mary?" "Sure, suh!" she said. "But I don't think they are all quite as bad as that, are they? There are some good Baptists?" "May be"; and she shrugged her shoulders. Then with a world of affection in her eyes, and a merry twinkle, she looked at her master as she said: "I been doin' my best for a long time, but I ain't had no luck."

After all, there was something in what Mary said. There are some Baptists who are quite willing to lag behind. There are Baptists, as there are people of other denominations, who live at a poor dying rate, "fond of these earthly toys", whose souls seem never able to fly nor go "to reach immortal joys."

But what a blessed thing to see people going on with Christ! It is one of the joys of an extended pastorate to see people converted; and to hear them first lisp the Saviour's name, like babes in Christ; then to see them take to the Word and show an appetite for the sincere milk of the Word, and to go on growing up into Christ, until they are able to relish a good meal of the strong meat of the Word.

That ought to be our ambition. But the Christian is beset with difficulties. His perplexities are many. It is not always easy to know exactly what to do in given circumstances. The living of the Christian life is a divine art, much more than a science. It must ever be an expression of that which is resident within the soul, rather than a mere conformity to external regulations—We are not "under the law, but under grace". And it is to that great principle of grace the text I have announced directs us this morning. It would turn us away from the law to grace; from that which is merely external, to that which is within; from that which is the effect of outward compulsion to that which is the fruit of inward impulsion: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not."

Christians need to stop at the crossroads to read the signs. Sometimes, indeed, we may find ourselves in extremely difficult situations, when we feel that we need an extra endowment of divine wisdom to know exactly what we ought to do. It is not always easy to apply the precepts and principles of the gospel to all the exigencies of life.

Let us look therefore for a moment at the words of the text. In logical weight and importance the word "lawful" comes first. It means simply things which are within the law, which are not in themselves wrong. By the term "all things", Paul surely means only all things within given categories. It is not a universal term; he does not mean to say that he may do anything he likes without offence. Not that. The word "expedient" has

the idea of profitableness; that which is wisely advantageous, and advantageously wise. There may, indeed, be in the word itself a certain suggestion of mutuality, a coming together of things which make a given course profitable to more than one.

I.

I begin then, with the remark that **THERE ARE SOME THINGS WHICH ARE ESSENTIALLY UNLAWFUL**. There are things that are in themselves, and apart from all relations, essentially evil. They always and only are wrong. I mean, of course, that whatever is contrary to, out of harmony with the divine law, is in its very nature evil. There are some things, Paul says, that ought not to be so much as mentioned. There are some things so manifestly, conspicuously, evil, that it is never questioned as to whether a Christian ought to have anything to do with them or not. He must not look on them, mention them, or even think of them, at all. They are without the pale. They should be excluded from all Christian consideration: they should be as loathsome to us as leprosy; and, in respect to such matters, it should not require a moment's consideration to determine our attitude toward them. If the thing be essentially—I mean in its very essence—intrinsically wrong, then I do not need to take a fraction of a second to determine what my attitude is to be toward it. It is to be one of antagonism, of utter rejection. The simple choice between things that are essentially evil and things which are essentially good is not difficult.

II.

But **THERE ARE OTHER THINGS THAT ARE, IN THEMSELVES, NOT WRONG**. "All things are lawful for me", said Paul. He meant things that were not morally wrong in themselves. Other things are neither moral nor immoral but unmoral. They have, in themselves, no moral quality whatever.

Had we time, we might think of some of the "things". Meat and drink, for instance. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." Man is neither saved nor lost by eating or drinking, nor by abstaining from either. Salvation is a far deeper thing than merely what we eat or drink. And so of the things we wear. I know that people can bring themselves into bondage to all sorts of externalities, to things that are entirely apart from life. It is not wrong to wear red, or blue, or yellow, or green, or black, or white—anything you like. And you will not sin if you dress in the fashion, in itself considered, any more than if you dress out of the fashion—it will probably cost you a little more if you are out of the fashion! It is a very superficial-view, an immature view of Christian life, which stops to ask about this thing, or that thing. "Is there any harm in it?" You may tell a little child not to touch a hot stove, not to play with matches; but a grown person does not need such admonition.

And so of acts, there are certain things which are not wrong in themselves, things that you and I may do, places to which we may go. We commit no offence by doing these things. In themselves they may be perfectly lawful, and there is no wrong attached to them. Must I even mention it again? I have not mentioned it for a long time. I almost feel like apologising for doing so.

A man said to me once: "My minister has a hobby. It does not matter where he begins, before he gets through

he will be sure to denounce the theatre, dancing, and card-playing. We have heard it so often that we are tired of it." But you don't hear very much of that from me, do you? Denunciation is not teaching. I have never felt that it was wise or necessary to take the ground that these things are necessarily, and invariably, under all circumstances, in themselves essentially, intrinsically, evil. I have said it before, I say it again: I conceive of the possibility, it may not often be so, but it is possible that the theatre, or some theatrical performance may not of itself be bad: it may even be of a neutral order, and I will admit the possibility of its being good. I can conceive of people's engaging in dancing just for the sake of the music of it, without any evil to themselves at all. A man told me once that he played cards with his wife in the evening. He found it a diversion. He was one of the finest men I ever knew, but I do not think he had come to see the higher privilege but I knew him so well that I am sure he was incapable of any dishonourable course.

So, for the sake of argument let us treat these things which are often described as "worldly amusements", and assume that at least sometimes they may be classed with the things which are lawful, and assume that there may be no essential evil in doing them. Someone may say, "I am glad to hear you say that. I shall not have to worry any more about such things." No; not if you live on the kindergarten plane, and are under the law. But will you think with me for a few minutes this morning? What I shall say will be simple, and yet it is profound. It is never difficult to choose between the good and the bad, between that which is obviously right, and that which is manifestly wrong. We can make that choice at once. But often the difficulty lies in a choice between the good and the better. Are you going to be content merely with that which is good, if, in the providence of God, He wills that you should have something better? Are you going, deliberately, to live below your privileges, and travel to heaven third-class, when you might go first-class? It is not always a question of whether this is right, and that is wrong; but as between two things that may in themselves be good, how shall I choose the better and make the best of life, as a Christian? You remember what Jesus said to Mary, when her sister Martha rebuked her, and incidentally, even, rebuked her Lord for having Mary sit at His feet. He said: "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Both women were good, but Mary had chosen the better part of the two.

Thus must we all choose. To-morrow when you go to the office, or the shop, and you children when you go to school, there will be times and places when and where you will have to make your choice as a Christian. You will, of course, do nothing that is definitely wrong. But are you going to say: "That is good enough for me"? Will you not rather stop to ask, "Is there anything I can do that would be better than that?" That should be your choice. A man says: "I may do this; or at the cost of sacrifice, I can take the higher ground, and show what it is to be a Christian. Shall I take it? Shall I do the best thing?" That is what Paul means: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient. I might make many choices without condemnation, but by making a certain choice I can earn the commendation of my Lord. Therefore I shun the lawful as being inexpedi-

ent and choose that which will issue in the largest spiritual profit."

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." He implies that some courses would not be wise; they would not be profitable; they would not be to the highest spiritual advantage of all concerned. I am sure that is what he had in mind. His question was always: How can I most perfectly fulfil the will of my Lord? That was the secret of his life, from the very beginning. For as soon as he knew, and was able to identify the voice from heaven as the voice of Jesus, he said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And that was always his question.

I think therefore he meant that "all things are not expedient because were I to do certain things, or take certain courses, they would not bring such glory to my Lord as if I were to take some other course."

Is that our supreme desire? Do we carry that with us as we go about our work, and into all the relationships of life? Do we say it as we leave home in the morning: "I am a Christian. The name of Jesus Christ is named upon me. I am His representative. I must behave as a Christian. I must behave as a child of God. I must keep my garments clean, unspotted from the world." Have you noticed a woman in the summer time when she is clad in white from head to toe, when she comes into certain places, how very careful she is so as not to get even a stain or a spot upon those immaculate garments? Do we walk in the midst of a wicked world as though robed in white, careful to keep away from anything that would soil our garments, or bring reproach upon Him Who has robed us in the robes of His righteousness, and bedecked us with all the ornaments of grace? We ought so to separate ourselves from the world that our garments will be without spot or stain.

I am sure Paul had this in mind. I think he felt that he could not do certain things without their having an *unprofitable reaction upon his own spiritual life*. No matter what other people say of us, if we do certain things we are bound to decline spiritually. If we go certain places I am sure we shall lose our influence for good as Christians. And Paul said, "I cannot afford to do that. It would be inexpedient for me to do so. For myself, I cannot afford to miss a day at school, or a single opportunity for spiritual advancement."

I think, too, he felt that *it would be unprofitable to others*. It is the old question, I know: "Am I my brother's keeper? Why should I be brought into bondage to the weakness of other people? Why should I care whether or not they follow in my footsteps? They are just as independent as I, just as free as I. They do not need to do what I do. And if I can do a certain thing without injury to myself, why should I care what effect it may have on another?"

A Sunday School teacher has a number of boys, or a number of girls to look after. He or she would not do anything wrong willingly. But are you going to try to be an example to those whom you teach? That is what Paul said—a daring thing for anyone to say: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." If other people are going to follow you you need to be very careful what you do, what you say, and where you go, if you are going to be a pathfinder for someone else.

Years ago, when I was just out of my teens, when I had just begun to preach this came to me indirectly: a mother had a little boy, the family was a good and re-

spectable family. Let me pause here to say that I heard a story the other day that when her Majesty the Queen visited some children's centre, and talked with a little girl who had her dolly in her arms, and was washing the dolly's face, she said to her, "Be sure to wash behind her ears!" Even the Queen must have had some experience.

Well, this mother had one boy, who was very careless. He did not always wash his hands before coming to the table. One day as he arrived at the table his mother said to him: "Look at your hands." I had no idea I was held up as an example to the children. But she said, "Do you think Mr. Shields would come to the table with hands like that?" He said, "Would he not?" "Well, do you think he would?" "No; I guess he would not. Excuse me." And away he went to wash his hands.

Teacher, did someone see you going into the theatre the other day? "Oh, but it was a very excellent play. There was nothing wrong in it at all. I should not have gone if there had been any harm in it." No; I assume that. But did someone see you go? "I don't know, did anyone tell you so?" Did one of your scholars see you go? Do you not know that that scholar would never stop to consider whether it was a good play or a bad one. He would say: "I saw my teacher going into the theatre, and if he can go (or if she can go) I am going."

Now that is a commonplace, I know, but it is an illustration of this principle that it is not expedient for you or me to be where others might be injured instead of helped.

III.

Here, indeed is AN EXPOSITION OF WHAT THIS CHRISTIAN EXPEDIENCY REALLY IS: "All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." Not all things edify, or build up. If I know I shall not build up myself in my most holy faith, as I am under an obligation to do, by doing a certain thing or going to a certain place, I must expediently refrain from both.

There is a student in the Seminary. Someone says: "Are you free this evening?" "Well, yes, and no. I have no fixed engagement but why?" "Well, could you go with me this evening?" "No." "Why not?" "I have to study." "It would not be wrong for you to leave it." "Perhaps not; but it would not be expedient. It would be perfectly lawful, but it would not build me up. I must stay at home, and build myself up in that particular subject; therefore, I cannot go."

That is the Christian view. We are to keep ourselves in the love of God, and we are to build ourselves up in our most holy faith. We are to do nothing that does not edify. I must so exercise myself that every day I shall, little by little, more and more, be better as a Christian than I was yesterday.

All things do not edify other people either. Have you not met Christians in various walks of life, perhaps in business, perhaps in pleasure and elsewhere, of whom you might enquire, "Is that man a Christian? He does not act like one. He has not helped me one bit toward God." There is another man who did not preach; he did not throw a text of scripture at you, but there was something about him that made you feel, "I should like to be a better man. I should like to be more like that man." What he is, and what he says, and what he does, when he is not preaching, but when he is just being a Christian, and behaving like a Christian, doing his business like a Christian, engaging in his pleasures and re-

creations as a Christian, never off duty, edifies you,—there is something in the man himself that builds you up. Our speech and conduct must be good and such as is of use to edifying. The admonition is, "Let all things be done unto edifying."

IV.

And then this one simple word: OBSERVE HOW THE INEXPEDIENT MAY BECOME UNLAWFUL. The thing that is not wrong in itself, should it provide an occasion of stumbling to someone else, becomes a wrong. That is what the Scripture says. That by so sinning against the brethren, we sin against Christ.

I speak to all of you this morning as to my own heart. Are we seeking the best that God has for us? Are we willing to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord? What a high standard, is it not! And what a high privilege! I can recall many people, that I have known, who did not preach to me, who did not lecture me, did not admonish me, but who walked liked Christians. And every memory of them is an inspiration. Would you not like, when you are gone, you older ones, and the tale of life is told, the chapter is finished, would you not like others to say, "Well, he may not have been very great, but he was a good man. There is not any doubt about that. He was a good man, 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost', he made the religion of Christ real to me, and I thank God that I knew him." Oh, when you are gone, when your life is viewed in perspective, and people have been influenced by you, and come to look at it, would you have them say the reverse of that? "Oh, he was very punctilious, very particular about some things, but pretty lax about others. He did not help me very much."

Let us seek of God grace to be good men—we cannot be great, perhaps, but we can be good. When Queen Victoria was told that she was to be Queen of England, she said, "I will be good".

May the Lord help us so to resolve for His name's sake.

UNDENOMINATIONALISM

(Continued from page 2)

We are always a little afraid of persons who change their names; or who for any reason, endeavour to conceal the name which legitimately belongs to them. And we feel the same instinctive fear of those who are disposed to boast that, religiously, they come from nowhere; they belong to no denomination; they don't believe in sects; and who glory in their irresponsibility and their religious namelessness. We can manage with a Dr. Jekyll or a Mr. Hyde, as separate individuals. We know then whether to meet him with open palm or a clenched fist. But when the same person answers to both names, the situation is a little more difficult.

We name one other objection to this trend toward undenominationalism: *it makes it easy for the religious charlatan to impose upon a credulous public, to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.* The undenominationalist needs no recognition from anyone. He needs no credential or certificate. He may be as ignorant as a Hottentot, and as unscrupulous as an Iscariot, but indirectly he is credentialled by the fact that he is an undenominationalist.

People are taught they are more likely to get the true gospel in an undenominational centre, and this gives the religious fakir his opportunity. We have been in Toron-

to, and in one church, for nearly thirty years—and what a procession of fakirs we have known! There is scarcely a block in the city, it seems to us, where stores or other such buildings could be found, that has not witnessed some sort of religious fraud.

For ourselves, we confess to the name, Baptist, because, historically, it represents a body of biblical truth to which we gladly and gratefully subscribe as the word of God to our souls. If some should drag the Baptist name in the mire—as it has been so dragged in the mire by a multitude of Modernists—we need not abandon the name, but rather stand for the old faith, and endeavour to redeem an honoured, historical, name from its evil associations.

With many of the other denominations, be they Anglican, Presbyterian, United Church, or something else, on some points we claim the right to differ, even as they differ from us. But insofar as they are true and loyal to the "faith once for all delivered unto the saints", in its saving essentials, we regard them with profound respect for having the courage of their convictions, even as we hope they will regard us with respect. We may then agree upon matters which we commonly believe, and agree to disagree in a Christian and charitable way in respect to those matters where opinions and even convictions differ.

But for that type of religiousness which seeks to win its way into the confidence of unsuspecting and undiscerning people by boasting of its namelessness, we have no respect, and can feel no confidence.

WHY I AM A BAPTIST

Lecture by Dr. T. T. SHIELDS

To the Students of Toronto Baptist Seminary,
March 28th, 1940—2.00 p.m.

(Stenographically Reported)

I found a note on my desk a few moments ago to the effect that some of the students had suggested I should speak to you this afternoon on "Why I am a Baptist." I had an entirely different subject in mind, but it can await a more convenient time; and I gladly turn aside for a wholly impromptu discussion of the subject just now suggested.

I suppose many people assume that the cardinal doctrine for which Baptists stand, the doctrine upon which all other matters hinge, is that of baptism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Baptism is merely incidental to the Baptist position. I am not speaking now of modern Baptists.

Some years ago I was in Vancouver where there was a little discussion in a meeting of considerable size, in which there were many ministers. One man, who had gone over to modernism, said, "I am a Baptist. That is good enough for me." I said, "What sort of Baptist are you? Are you a William Carey Baptist, or an Andrew Fuller Baptist, or a C. H. Spurgeon Baptist, or a Thomas Armitage Baptist, or a Shailer Mathews Baptist, or a Harry Emerson Fosdick Baptist? We have at least fifty-seven varieties of Baptists now." Not so very long ago I heard of a new variety—Baptists who have adopted an extreme "dispensational" position, and have excluded baptism as a Christian ordinance altogether. They are called "Dry Baptists"! I have heard of dry ice, and of "dry" sermons, but I had not heard of "Dry Baptists" before.

When I speak of the Baptist position I speak of what is understood as the historical Baptist position, such a position as that taken by Dr. Armitage of New York for this continent, and men like Fuller and Spurgeon and many others in England.

I.

As I conceive it, the central truth in the body of truth represented by the term "Baptist" is A RECOGNITION OF THE SUPREME LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST, WITH ALL ITS IMPLICATIONS. If we accept Christ for what the Bible represents Him to be, the Incarnate God, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, the Messiah Whose coming is predicted in the Old Testament, and the Man Whom God hath appointed to judge the world—if He be all that then He is our Lord.

Now that was the central thing in Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost: "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." That being true, He is not only our Saviour in the sense that He atoned for our sins, not alone our Example in that He exemplifies the principles of the Gospel; but He is supremely and sovereignly our Lord. He is, in fact, the highest Authority we know.

If you relate that to the divine programme announced in the beginning when God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," at which time He delegated to Adam the right to name all things that were, and said to him, "Have dominion", you will see that in the beginning man was not made a slave but a sovereign. Later it is said, in the eighth Psalm: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands". Man was created himself a sovereign, subject only to the higher Authority of God Himself. God was shut up to the problem of whether He would create a man or a machine, and He created a man, and endowed him with all the qualities, the rights and privileges and responsibilities of a separate, independent, volitional creature, who could say, "I will" or "I will not". And having made him a king, He gave him a kingdom, and said to him, "Have dominion".

Then ensued the Fall with its dreadful consequences, and that is summed up in the New Testament in the second chapter of Hebrews, where it is said: "But now we see not yet all things put under him". Man has lost his dominion, and even his individuality, his power to will and to direct himself, and he is described as being led captive by the devil at his will.

What was the divine plan and programme in the new creation? The Son of man was "manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Christ came that He might re-make man in His own image. In the eighth chapter of Romans we are told "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate"—what for? Not to escape hell, and get to heaven; that was but incidental—rather, "to be conformed to the image of his Son." That is to say, the end of redemption is that the work of sin should be completely undone, and that men should have restored in them the image they have lost, and become re-endued, re-possessed with the powers which they had surrendered.

So then, Christ came, *not to build great institutions,*

but to make men, to make individuals. If you study the record of His life, you will see what emphasis He always laid upon the value of an individual. One of His profoundest discussions was delivered to one woman. Another profound treatise was delivered to one man. He dealt with men individually. In His parables He emphasized the same thing. There were ninety and nine sheep in the fold, and the shepherd went after one which was lost. There was one coin lost, and the house was swept until it was found. There was one prodigal son. Emphasis was always laid upon the individual. He spoke of Himself as the Shepherd Who called His sheep by name, and led them out. And "how much better is a man than a sheep?" And while it is true that He always had compassion on the multitudes, He always dealt with people individually. I do not think you can find an instance in the New Testament where Christ ministered to the multitudes as such, and pronounced a benediction, like the pope, upon some vast mass of people. Even when He fed them with the loaves, He commanded them to make the people sit down, and they sat down by fifties. They were numbered, every one of them, and He divided the bread to them. He never in His ministry, so far as I can recall, allowed the individual to be merged in the mass. He dealt with men one at a time. I think that is the implication of the whole teaching of the New Testament.

Now remember that *the Lordship of Christ, the absolute supremacy of Christ in all realms, will settle once and for all the problems of biblical criticism.* I do not mean to say that we must not study other books than the Bible to be thoroughly informed on all these matters, but our supreme Authority on all questions is the Person of Christ. I have a book on my shelves entitled: "Is Christ Infallible, and the Bible true?" If He is infallible the Bible is true. And you find that those who would cast doubt upon the authority of Scripture, always begin with the Person of Christ. Whether it be the Unitarian position of reducing Him to the measure of a man, involving the denial of the virgin birth, and the supernatural character of His life; or whether the half-way house of the *Kenotic* theory, that He emptied Himself and was made in the likeness of man, and subjected Himself to all the limitations of His contemporaries, and that during that time of subjection His word was no more authoritative than the word of anyone else—you will invariably find that the attack is made upon the Person of Christ; because if you regard Him as the supreme Authority, then all attacks on the Bible go by the board; because He has put His own imprimatur upon it, and certified to its divine authority.

Now that is the central thing, that we have come to see in Christ, not only our Saviour, the Substitute, the vicarious Sacrifice, but the risen Lord, the Truth Incarnate, therefore the supreme Authority of life. For in that view, He becomes Lord in all realms of life, not only in the spiritual realm, nor yet merely in the physical realm, for you remember that Paul says, He brings into "captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ". The Apostle Paul, great scholar as he was, delighted to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, even in the realm of the intellect. He said in effect: "I have no thought apart from Him." That is the motto of the Seminary: we eschew and repudiate everything that is not "after Christ".

II.

THAT PRINCIPLE MAKES US INDIVIDUALS. One of the foundation truths of the Baptist position is the doctrine of individualism. We are not saved in the mass. We are not here to build great churches: we are here, under God, first of all to become men ourselves, and then to be divine instruments in making men: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God". That doctrine of individualism puts on every one of us the responsibility of thinking for ourselves, and knowing for ourselves and acting for ourselves. Contrast that with the Roman Catholic conception of things, which involves a great institution, and the regimentation of men and women in subjection to the authority of that institution. To them the individual has no right to interpret the Bible for himself: the church will interpret it for him! The individual does not seek forgiveness of sins for himself, going directly to God: he goes through the medium of the confessional and priestly absolution. The whole Roman system involves the stultification of every principle of individualism. The individual is lost in the mass, and becomes a machine to do as he is told, and not to do any thinking for himself. The Roman Catholic Church is the original fount of the doctrine of Totalitarianism, and Authoritarianism. In its claim to temporal power it is the supreme example of collectivism as opposed to individualism.

We Baptists are at the opposite pole. Between the two there are gradations. There are forms of Protestantism which are more Romanistic than Protestant, more Collectivist, than Individualist. The Baptist position is that we are responsible for our own thinking. We must examine the Scriptures for ourselves, and if we practice baptism, for example, it is not because we are specially wedded to a particular ordinance, and prefer immersion to some other forms: it is only because we are subject to one supreme Authority, to the Scriptures which the Lord Himself has certified, and knowing no higher authority, it is our glory that as kings we are subject only to the King of kings. We bow to His sceptre. And we practice immersion for the simple and only reason that the Word of God commands it. We find, of course, in it the great central doctrine of the gospel, the death and resurrection of Christ, and so on. But that is our reason for practicing it.

III.

Then OUT OF THAT COMES OUR CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH. I remember a good many years ago when Prof. Robert Law of Knox College, was also minister at Old St. Andrew's Church, we lived in the same district, and we used to come down to our services on Sunday morning on the street car together. We often held on to a street car strap together. One Sunday morning, after a little conversation he said to me: "Am I correct in this assumption, that Baptists are fundamentally and essentially individualists?" I said, "Dr. Law, that is a summary of the whole Baptist position." We are individualists, individually responsible for our faith in Christ. We must believe for ourselves; hence we reject in baptism the whole system of godfathers and godmothers, not only because it is unscriptural, but because it is unreasonable. It is contrary to the very genius of Scripture. All that we do we must do for ourselves; we must believe for ourselves, pray for ourselves, obey for our-

selves, learn for ourselves. We are personally responsible to God for everything. We recognize no one's right to come between the soul and God. I think it was Dr. Mullins who expressed the view in the phrase, "The competency of the soul unto God". That is to say, the individual human soul is perfectly competent to come into direct commerce with God, through Jesus Christ, without any intermediary. That is the very essence of individualism.

You will see the bearing of that upon our view of the church. The Roman Catholic Church is one big organization. This Roman Catholic Church, nearest to us, on the corner of Sherbourne and Carlton Sts. is just as much subject to the will of the Pope of Rome, as is any Roman Catholic Church in Rome itself. It is one big organization, subject to one authority, registered, of course, through many media, but notwithstanding, the authority resides there.

That same principle is true in respect to other than Roman Catholic churches. I have an article in THE GOSPEL WITNESS this week on Denominationalism. The Anglican Church, or the Presbyterian Church, the United Church, are all ultimately subject to a central authority. It is quite correct to speak of "the Church of England in Canada." There are local congregations, but there is a central authority. The same is true of the Presbyterian Church. There is a certain measure of local autonomy. A local church functions within certain limits. But the ultimate appeal is to the Presbytery. That is the genius of the Presbyterian Church: it is ruled by the Presbytery. There the final word resides. In the United Church you have a combination of the old Methodist polity, and the Presbyterian polity. They have their Presbyteries; and again, the ultimate authority is not with the local congregation, but with the central body. Hence, convocations of the English Church, and general meetings or conferences of the Presbyteries, or various sub-organizations within the United Church, have, in their respective spheres legislative authority: they pass measures which are binding.

But in the Baptist "Denomination" we have only associations of people who profess the same things. They come together for mutual edification and inspiration, and they cooperate with each other, pooling their resources for their collective efforts in educational and missionary work. But no Baptist Convention has any legislative power. It can pass a resolution, but it is only a resolution, not a law. The church can do as it likes about it after: a Baptist Convention's voice is advisory not authoritative. Each Baptist Church is independent.

That is bound to be so if you recognize the principle of individualism as underlying all. You cannot hold a man responsible for his actions if he has no liberty of action. Each Baptist Church is a separate, independent, unit, a law unto itself.

That, of course, has its disadvantages.

A Baptist Church, in its polity, that is, its principle of government, is like our Canadian democracy here—and I believe myself that the democracy of this country, and of Great Britain, and of the United States, in their principle of popular government, are direct products of the Gospel. It is the teaching of Scripture that attaches value to the individual, and puts responsibility upon the individual, and hence democracy.

We had an election on Tuesday! It was *not quite* unanimous, but the minority have just as much right as the majority; and when Parliament assembles, and committees are struck, all parties in the House will be represented on the various Committees, and will have their various functions to perform. They are there, as the elected representatives of the people, and they are called His Majesty's Loyal Opposition. That is to say, it is recognized that though they are in the minority, they are just as loyal to the Crown, and to the interests of the country, as are the majority.

Well, in a Baptist Church, the affairs of the church are conducted by majority rule. But if and when a minority disagree on a certain matter, that does not mean they may be excluded from the church. They have a perfect right to disagree. They say, "In our opinion that is not the best way of doing, but the majority rules, and we will cooperate." That is the principle of Baptist polity, and it grows out of our individualism.

There is very much more that might be said, but are there any questions arising out of what has already been said?

A STUDENT: It is understood, is it not, in a church, that while the minority has the right to disagree, they are expected not to prove a hindrance?

DR. SHIELDS: Oh, yes; if you have a minority in a church that disagrees, that is to say, who are not in full agreement with certain measures adopted by the church as a whole by majority vote, they should recognize the principle of majority rule, and cooperate just as loyally as if they were the majority.

There were some millions of people who voted against the Government on Tuesday. That was their right. They were outvoted, but they will have to pay their taxes just the same. It would not do for anyone to say, "Because I did not vote for the Government, do not send me an income tax statement, I shall not pay: I am in opposition." There could not be any Government if people carried things to that length. It is absurd to suppose that a house divided against itself can stand when it is divided in an active way, one part pulling one way, another part pulling another way. Progress would be impossible on any such principle.

Independence in any sphere has some disadvantages, and yet, I am sure that Jarvis St. Church is an outstanding vindication of the autonomous principle; because when we settled our great controversy in nineteen hundred and twenty-one the opposition sought reinforcement in the Convention. They circularized, secretly, of course, every church in the Convention, sending enough copies of a scurrilous letter to every church for distribution to every individual delegate, planning to have a packed Convention that would pass a resolution that would try to undo the decision of the Church. They thought they could come with such a resolution and hammer the majority in Jarvis St. into submission. But as politely as we could we told the Convention, and everybody else outside the church kindly to mind their own business.

There would have been no such Jarvis St. as there is here to-day had there been a Baptist Synod, or Presbytery to appeal to. So I say, the autonomy of the church was vindicated. It is suited for a spiritual

body. There are some disadvantages, but on the whole, I am positive it is the scriptural pattern.

A Baptist, to be worthy of the name, must be a somebody. It may be all right to be a nobody in a church with a hierarchical government, but if you are somebody, you need to be a Baptist, for every true Baptist is a somebody!

PRE-RAPTURISM AT ITS WORST

The article below, by Mr. D. M. Panton, from his book entitled, "Rapture", was sent to us some weeks ago, probably for our instruction. But if this article is not an example of confusion worse confounded, we have never seen such an example. We publish the article just as it was sent to us, emphasis and all, without change.

Can anyone suppose that a God of infinite wisdom and grace would set out such a programme in His Word as is represented by this article? How are ordinary people, with normal imaginations, ever to guess at such ingenious interpretation? Here we have a doctrine of selective rapture; and apparently the indispensable condition for qualification to be included in the rapture is, not merely that one should be born again and be a child of God: everything is conditioned upon his *watchfulness*. And so, if the bride should be so busy putting on her garments, or putting her house in order, as momentarily to forget to look out of the window for the coming Bridegroom, the wedding is either to be cancelled or indefinitely postponed. Indeed, the writer goes so far as to say, "Our Lord assumes it possible for the whole church to be asleep." So then the redeemed church of Christ, purchased with His blood, precious in the sight of her Lord, may possibly "sleep in" on her wedding day; and so not be married at all!

In dealing with the subject of dispensationalism, we have endeavoured to speak mildly and kindly, but really we are constrained to speak strongly in respect to an article like this. In our view, it is sheer, unmitigated rubbish. It is destitute of logic, and of common sense; and, in its whole concept, represents the very antithesis of sovereign grace. We not only reject it, we repudiate it, and abhor it. In our view, anyone who could write thus, and equally those who believe it, need the services of a psychiatrist.

THE CONDITIONS OF RAPTURE

(From his book "Rapture") by D. M. Panton

Our attention is now directly challenged to the conditions of Rapture; for it is the assertion of our Lord, in the passage relating to the Church just considered (Matt. 24:40) that while one is taken, one is left. ARE THESE BOTH BELIEVERS? A closer study of this Church section of the Prophecy thus becomes essential. The Ark of the Parousia, invisible, and silently moored in the heavens; a world so absorbed in the things of sense as to prove it wholly incredulous of a coming judgment; a sudden closing of the Ark on certain rapt persons, followed by a judgment-flood so universal that this rapture out of the inhabited earth is the sole heavenly escape: "As were the days of Noah, so shall be the Parousia of the Son of man: one is taken, and one is left. WATCH THEREFORE" (Matt. 24:37). It is certain that here our Lord indicates a rapture of heavenly escape.

A woman mill-hand in Scripture stands for the extreme social contrast to royalty (Ex. 11:5); the rapt will be amongst the humble of the earth; and all who would now rise in the social scale are proving themselves fools in the sight of God (Is. 2:12; Luke 16:15). Shut in above the storms of wrath until the SEVENTH (the millennial) month, and liberated on the 17th of Nisan, the resurrection day, they issue forth at last to rule a world washed clean by the storms of judgment.

Who then are the unrapt? Of these two closely associated souls—"one is taken and one is left"—is the one left an unbeliever? **THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE**; because: 1—It is the natural inference from our Lord's words that it is the unwatchfulness of the one left, and his unwatchfulness **ONLY**, that has prevented his rapture. "One is taken and one is left, **WATCH THEREFORE!**" For watchfulness implies a heart already awakened by grace. we do not tell the dead to watch. "Watch therefore" for ye know not on what day **YOUR** Lord—the Lord of both the taken and the left—"cometh." The one is taken because "watchful" and "ready" (vs. 42, 44) therefore he who is left remains only because he is unwatchful and unready. 2—**NONE BUT THE DISCIPLES WERE PRESENT**; and in Luke 17:22, 34 our Lord says "I say unto YOU, watch YE"; so Paul, after the warning—"Let us watch and be sober"—adds—"Whether we wake (keep awake, are alert, wakeful, watchful; the word is so used throughout the context) or sleep, we shall" **AS ALL BEING BELIEVERS**—"live together with Him." (1 Thess. 5:10). The sole distinction stated by Jesus is a distinction of watchfulness; therefore both are believers, for between the believer and the unbeliever stretches an infinitely wider gulf. 3—Our Lord directly **FORBIDS** the unbeliever to watch. To unregenerate Pharisees, inquiring the date of the Advent, He says: "The Kingdom of God cometh not **WITH OBSERVATION** (with watching) for lo, the Kingdom of God"—so far as you, unregenerate souls, are concerned—"is **WITHIN** you" (Luke 17:20) it is an internal matter; for "except a man be **BEGOTTEN** from above, **HE CANNOT SEE** the Kingdom of God (John 3:3). For the unbeliever to watch for the Advent is to watch for his own fearful judgment. 4—Would an unbeliever watch for Christ's return, if told to do so? To be caught away to Him would be, even more than death, a disgust and a terror, for it would be an immediate transition to the throne of judgment. No soul can **WATCH** for Christ until it **LOVES** Christ; and even of those who love Him, few love His appearing. 5—Three passages are here (Matt. 24:37-51) knit closely together—the unwatchful disciple, the robbed householder, and the unfaithful steward: obviously they are all warnings pointed at one target: if then, they are warnings for worldlings, for hypocrites, for empty professors, **WHY DOES THE LORD NOT SAY SO?** He drops no hint to that effect: none but true disciples, so far as can be seen in the narrative, fill His vision. If the left disciple, the robbed householder, and the unfaithful steward are all unregenerate souls, **THEN THESE COMMANDS ARE NOT FOR CHRIST'S DISCIPLES AT ALL**. Why then does our Lord speak them to disciples only, and why does He not tell them to pass them on to the world, whom alone they concern? 6—Had these warnings been for the world, Christ's words to His own must have been profoundly different: instead of rousing His disciples by exhortations to watchfulness, He would have comforted them with explicit assurances that since rapture rests on sovereign, electing grace alone, whatever their conduct at the moment of the Advent, their rapture is sure—**AN UTTERANCE THAT NEVER FALLS FROM HIS LIPS**. 7—An overwhelming proof still remains. **CAN** a believer be unwatchful? **IF SO**, he instantly falls under the penalty involved, and if unwatchful at the moment of the Advent, he must be left. Were the Apostles watchful in Gethsemane? Did Peter watch in the judgment hall? Were Ananias and Demas and Diotrophes **WATCHFUL** believers? Why did our Lord tell the Sardinian Angel to become watchful again (Rev. 3:2), if it is impossible for a believer to be anything else? Can we search our own hearts and our own past, and say that **WE** have **NEVER** ceased watching, and never backslidden for an hour? But if Christ had come—as He might, and as He will for some one—in that hour, He would have found **US** sleeping. **OUR LORD ASSUMES IT POSSIBLE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH TO BE ASLEEP**: "Watch therefore; for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh: lest coming suddenly he **FIND YOU—you all—SLEEPING**" (Mark 13:35).

The matter is infinitely grave for us, now in the last hour. For precisely as, in the actual moment of rapture, Satan will **PHYSICALLY** dispute the ascent of his supplanters (Rev. 12: 5, 7); so now, **SPIRITUALLY**, his supreme aim is so to dissipate watchfulness as to prevent rapture through unripeness: **AND ALL TEACHING THAT THUS LULLS THE CHURCH IS HIS AIM**—however sincere its motive, or pardonable its error. That no other view lays on watchfulness a tithe of the emphasis laid on it by Scripture is a manifest

proof of error. Therefore let us heed our Lord's solemn call to all His own all down the ages, a call never more urgent than now: "**WHAT I SAY UNTO YOU (APOSTLES) I SAY UNTO ALL (DISCIPLES) WATCH**" (Mark 13:37). For it is "to them that **LOOK** for Him" that our Lord "shall appear a second time, apart from sin, **UNTO SALVATION** (Heb. 9:28) a salvation, not now from sin, but from coming world-tribulation; a redemption, not of the spirit, but of the body (Rom. 8:23) a deliverance, not from Hell, but from Antichrist.

For unwatchfulness is most perilous. **CHRIST APPLIES THE FEARFUL CATASTROPHE OF LOT'S WIFE, NOT TO THE WORLD, BUT TO BOTH PEOPLES OF GOD**. He slips in a pregnant warning—"REMEMBER **LOT'S WIFE** (Luke 17:32) between a command to His earthly people to flee, and a command to His heavenly people to watch: her unset face is the peril of both. For Lot's wife was, up to a point perfectly obedient. God said "I will destroy Sodom" and she believed it; God said, Flee—and she fled; God said "Stay not in all the plain" and she stayed not. A soul effectually called out, full of faith in God's coming judgments, anxious to escape, and with face turned towards Jehovah on high, **SHE DISOBEYED ONLY ONE COMMAND**. The Jehovah Angel had said, "escape for thy life; **LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE**, neither stay thou in all the plain, **LEST THOU BE CONSUMED** (Gen. 19:17). It was no plan or desire of God that His child, one of the escaping Household of Faith, should be blighted near Sodom; He had given her full notice of the coming storm—had told her the exact conditions of escape—and had sent His angels for her. Yet she broke one condition of deliverance. She never **WENT** back, for she is no type of an apostate: she only **LOOKED** back—she abandoned the face set for rapture; and a look can reveal a heart. "For her disobedience' sake, Lot's wife must bear a temporal punishment; but her soul is saved: 1 Cor. 5:5" (Luther). Sodom's destruction never touches her; she was not of the world, and so **THAT** doom is not hers; she has a judgment all her own; for God knows how to inflict just penalties on His own servants for disobedience without confounding them in the eternal destruction of the lost. "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, **AND MADE NOT READY**, nor did according to his will" shall be beaten with many stripes (Luke 12:47).

TWO FINE ARTICLES

We publish below two informing articles from the West, one by Rev. Morley Hall, of Alberta; and the other by Rev. Andrew Grieve, of British Columbia.

Obviously, Baptist principles—by which we mean the principles of the gospel—are not indigenous to this terrestrial sphere, nor native to this world's climate. They have always to battle for an existence; but, like the Lord of Whom it tells, the gospel is made "after the power of an indissoluble life", and in spite of all opposition and difficulties. Baptist principles survive. We found these two articles a veritable tonic, and we commend them to our readers.

REGULAR BAPTIST MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP OF ALBERTA

By Rev. Morley Hall

(The spirit of William Carey is still alive among Western Baptists, as a reading of the two following articles will show. The one is written by Rev. Andrew Grieve, one of the stalwarts of the British Columbia Regular Baptist Convention. The writer of the other, Rev. Morley R. Hall, is well known in our Union as the founder of the Timmins Church in Northern Ontario. He left there ten years ago to accept the call to Westbourne Church, Calgary. During his ten years' ministry in the West he has lengthened his cords and strengthened his stakes in such a way that some fourteen churches and missions, together with the Western Baptist Bible College, are now grouped together for a sound and aggressive New Testament ministry.

It is most gratifying to the Union of Regular Baptists of Ontario to have such causes as these in which to invest missionary contributions. They are one with us both in their

faith and in their devotion to the New Testament teaching concerning the church and the ordinances. Baptists can, therefore, support them without reservations of any sort. And they are worthy of the heartiest support, as the following accounts of their missionary activities will demonstrate.—W.S.W.)

The Regular Baptists of Alberta have found it necessary to pioneer all the way. Westbourne Baptist Church in Calgary is the only cause in the Fellowship which was at any time affiliated with the Western Union. Because of their failure to support the Budget (and at the same time accepting one in leadership who was opposed to baptistic principles), they were dismissed from the Baptist Convention of Alberta in 1923.

Under the leadership of the above party (Mr. William Aberhart, now Premier of Alberta), they launched a major building project, known as the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, to which the members contributed about \$12,000.00. In the spring of 1929, when the membership was a little over two hundred, a division took place, and nearly half of these withdrew and returned to their former building, retaining their original name.

For the next two or three years after 1929 this work passed through a transition period. Under the ministry of the present pastor, New Testament principles and policies, as interpreted by Regular Baptists, were introduced. These were opposed and rejected by a certain faction which gave occasion for many to leave the Church. This is mentioned in order that you may realize some of the early struggles encountered. While we were busy here and there in extension work a reconstruction was going on at the home base. Needless to say, on various occasions neither sun, moon, nor stars were seen for many days. However, out of it all the Lord preserved this local Church, and led into its fellowship some of the finest Christians in the city.

While this was in progress, a mission Church at Benalto, assisted by Westbourne, was also coming to the same Baptistic position. They had procured, studied, and adopted the statement of faith of the Regular Baptists of British Columbia.

Thus as two struggling, limping causes, we had come out of the wilderness, and stood face to face with our Jerichos. One by one the walls crumbled and we have been marching in, slowly but steadily possessing the land.

Edmonton

Following our first Rally in June, 1930, we held our first series of special meetings in this capital city. At the end of two weeks, Mr. Gordon Searle from the Toronto Baptist Seminary, joined us and took over this pioneer cause and late in the same summer the Norwood Regular Baptist Church was organized. This is now a self-supporting work under the leadership of Mr. C. S. McGrath, another Toronto Baptist Seminary student.

Drumheller

In May, 1931, this city was entered with the Gospel. Rev. James Fraser (now of Hamilton) took over duties for that summer. In the fall or early winter, Rev. H. C. Phillips (now of Ruth Morton Church, Vancouver) moved his family from Benalto and settled here. This was a very difficult field to pioneer, but a mining camp of 8,000 presented a tremendous challenge. Pastor and Mrs. Phillips did valiant service and to-day we have a self-supporting Church, property valued at more than \$5,000.00 and clear of debt. Rev. E. V. Phillips is the present pastor and is enjoying much blessing in his ministry.

Crossfield

Just a couple of weeks after entering Drumheller, we conducted special services here and received much encouragement. As this town was only thirty miles from Calgary, we were able to pay a weekly visit during the summer months, and saw many saved and built up in their faith. Rev. J. H. Pickford is the present Pastor, and this too is a self-supporting cause with its own church building and parsonage.

Baptist Pastors Scarce

About this time other fields were entered and we had to man them with Baptist men who had been trained in interdenominational institutions. Pages could be written about our unfortunate experiences which would not make pleasant reading. We wasted our effort and money as far as New Testament Churches were concerned.

Western Baptist Bible College

This was the only solution of our problem. Baptist Pastors had to be trained in Baptist institutions. The Toronto Baptist Seminary was too far distant and our young people were seeking training near home. Anti-Regular Baptist institutions were training our workers.

In October, 1934, we opened our class rooms and as we complete our six college years on May 3rd, twenty-eight consecrated young people will have graduated.

Only those who carry on this type of work can appreciate what an enormous task it presents, but self-sacrificing labourers have been raised up, who shrink not at working overtime and carrying heavy loads.

We Have Our Failures Too

Not every town and hamlet we preach in opens immediately and provides a self-supporting cause. Like those drilling for oil, we do not strike a "gusher" every time. Several causes have been started as missions that have never become organized Churches. Some of these have been abandoned, while others have been kept open in order to carry on evangelistic work in needy districts.

Our Present Objectives

The Crow's Nest Pass has several mining towns and two married men are giving full time in these. Mr. W. O. McKee is stationed at Bellevue and Hillcrest. He has means of self-support and relieves the Fellowship financially. Mr. J. W. MacDonald is assisted by the Fellowship and works Blairmore, Frank, and Coleman.

The Irrigation Block presents a real challenge to us. It is thickly settled and no aggressive gospel testimony has been carried on there for years. Mr. D. H. Scrimgeour is stationed at Brooks where he is erecting a substantial church building. He also preaches at Duchess and Millicent where large congregations greet him at all services. Mr. E. E. Hartford is working at Bassano and Gem, where he is receiving much encouragement with a goodly response to the gospel.

Space does not permit enlarging more fully and giving further details regarding other causes already established, as well as many preaching points linked to those formerly mentioned.

EXTENSION WORK IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Rev. Andrew Grieve

In writing of the Extension work of our Convention, one is reminded of the text of William Carey's deathless sermon (Is. 54:2-4), and also of the "two brief biddings" into which "he packed his message": "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."

These we seek to do, fearing always lest the failure of our faith so determine the limits of our efforts as to keep us from realizing the full purpose of God in our ministry.

For the purpose of fostering and encouraging the missionary spirit among our people, to the end that the work and sphere of our testimony may be extended throughout the Province, the Convention annually appoints a standing committee known as the Extension Committee. Through their efforts, or with their encouragement our work has been extended considerably in recent years. At the same time there are areas in our Province where our testimony should be given, and New Testament churches established.

Our great needs seem to be the common ones—Men and Means. Men of God whose hearts are filled with the love of God and whose great desire is to glorify Him in the spread of the gospel of grace. Men who count not their lives dear unto themselves, and are willing to do and suffer for Christ's sake, that others might be brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. And Means—Sanctified means. Money that has been given to God for His glory in the spread of the gospel of the glory of the Son of God. Both are needed, and both are in God's method of doing His great work in the world in this age.

REVELSTOKE is the farthest point eastward to which our work has extended. Less than two years ago the Regular Baptist standard was raised here by Pastor W. Robertson, a graduate of Western Baptist Bible College, Calgary, on the ruins of a Baptist work abandoned for almost a quarter of a century. Under trying and discouraging circumstances the work has been carried on. The great need of the little group

under Pastor Robertson is a church home: a place of meeting they can call their own.

On the North our work extends into the PEACE RIVER district, with ROLLA, 500 miles north of EDMONTON, ALBERTA, as headquarters. Here Pastor Burnett and his good wife are settled on a field of great dimensions, among a people who are poor and in great need of the gospel. To meet some of the material needs of this district, large quantities of clothing have been sent by churches of VANCOUVER and VICTORIA. These have been made a blessing as a means of contact for the gospel. East and West of ROLLA, Pastor Burnett has some 6 stations where Sunday Schools and services are conducted when the roads are passable and the places can be reached. The Lord is blessing the ministry, but there are many places and souls still unreached by the message of grace. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest."

On our West we have VANCOUVER ISLAND with CENTRAL CHURCH in VICTORIA, and work established at LUXTON, BRENTWOOD BAY and DUNCAN farther North. In these places, north of VICTORIA, we have seen the work begun and grow under the mothering care of CENTRAL CHURCH with its much-loved pastor, Dr. J. B. Rowell. But north of these places there is land yet to be possessed. PORT ALBERNI with its 3,000 population affords an opportunity to step in with our testimony to meet the spiritual needs of a needy people. CUMBERLAND, COMOX and COURTENAY too, call to us to attempt something for God. Such places do not offer "soft jobs" for religious nincompoops, but they do call to hard work and real sacrifice for Jesus Christ.

Toward the south, our borders extend in the direction of the U.S. line to CLOVERDALE and district. This is in the FRASER RIVER VALLEY. Wherever we have churches established in the valley a good work is being done. The same is true of the work in the interior of the PROVINCE throughout the OKANAGAN VALLEY. The encouraging thing is that our churches everywhere are seeking to reach neighbouring towns and villages with the gospel. This is as it should be, and we thank God for it. But still there is much to be done. The day of the Lord is drawing near. The opportunity of giving the message of grace will soon be gone. May the Lord stir our hearts to pray, and give, and go in obedience to the Great Commission "till He come".

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 4 Second Quarter Lesson 15 April 14th, 1940

CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF CANAAN

Lesson Text: Matthew 15:21-39.

Golden Text: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."—Matthew 15:28.

For Reading: Matthew 15:1-20.

I. The Exercise of Faith—verses 21 to 28. Read also Mk. 7:24-30.

Christ withdrew from the hostile Jewish leaders and from the jealous Roman Governor to the mountainous coastal region of Phoenicia, in the vicinity of the ruined cities of Tyre and Sidon. He must needs visit that section again where many had previously been blessed (Mk. 3:8; Lk. 6:17). The Phoenicians belonged to a Canaanite tribe, and they were sometimes called Syrophenicians (Mk. 7:26), to distinguish them from the Phoenicians who dwelt in Libya, North Africa. They were, of course, Gentiles.

At first the appeal of the troubled soul was received with perfect silence on the part of the Saviour. How eloquent the silence of God! He waits that He may be merciful (Isa. 30:18; 2 Pet. 3:9).

The disciples interpreted the silence of Christ as a token of indifference and unconcern. They thought that He was such an one as themselves (Psa. 50:1, 3, 21), and that He, too, was annoyed by the insistent cry of the woman. It is human to desire to be rid of vexatious circumstances or people, but the Lord taught us by example and precept that His way is to have compassion on the needy, and to minister to them in their distress (verse 32; Matt. 14:15-19; 19:13-15).

Our Lord explained to His disciples the reason for His

strange silence. The woman of Phoenicia had addressed Him as Son of David, the Messiah of the Jews. He was indeed the Son of David, but if she were to approach Him on Jewish ground, He would be compelled to refuse her the right of access, for she was not merely a Gentile, but a Canaanite, upon whom a curse rested (Joshua 3:10; 17:18; Ezra 9:1). Under the law she had no part in the privileges of the Jews, and the official ministry of Christ at the time was to fulfil the word of the Lord as spoken through their prophets (Compare Matt. 10:5, 6).

True faith will not be discouraged by seeming denial (Lk. 11:5-10; 18:1-7). Christ had not sent her away, He was merely testing her faith. She drew nearer, feeling His sympathy, and, prostrating herself at His feet, cried, "Lord, save me". To her He was no longer the Jewish Messiah, but her personal Deliverer. She came, not as a representative of an alien race, but as a penitent sinner. Grace can bestow what the law must withhold (Rom. 8:3, 4).

The Master tested her once more. She was not a child of Abraham, to whom the promises pertained, but a Gentile, whom the Jew would call "dog" (Psa. 22:20; Matt. 7:6; Phil. 3:2). Even so, just as the dogs were free to take the crumbs from beneath the master's table, so would she claim that which properly belonged to her. She was willing to take the lowest station, and to be counted worthless, if only she might receive the droppings of mercy.

Such humble, believing prayer will be rewarded in the Lord's own time. He hears the cry of the contrite heart, and heals the broken spirit. Her faith was commended (Matt. 8:10; Lk. 7:9), and her plea was granted (Matt. 9:22, 29; Lk. 7:50).

II. The Evidence of Compassion—verses 29 to 31. Read also Mk. 7:31-37.

Wherever the Saviour went the people followed Him in search of healing. He had compassion upon them, and as many as touched Him were made whole (Matt. 9:20; 14:35, 36).

His touch has still its ancient power; no word from Him shall fruitless fall. He will give sight to those whose spiritual eyes have been blinded by Satan (Isa. 42:7; 2 Cor. 4:4-6), hearing to those who have been deaf to His call (Isa. 42:18), strength to the faltering, and life to the dead (Eph. 5:14).

III. The Exercise of Power—verses 32 to 39. Read also Mk. 8:1-9.

The Lord Jesus Christ is concerned for the physical as well as the spiritual welfare of His people. He is the Saviour of the whole man. Wherever Christianity has gone, humanitarian methods and institutions have arisen. The Lord had compassion upon the hungry ones, and He would not send them away until He had satisfied their need (Lk. 1:53).

The disciples do not seem to have profited by their previous experience of the Lord's power; they considered not the miracle of the loaves (Matt. 14:15-21; Mk. 6:52). They wondered how the multitude could be fed when the supply of food was so scant. What stupid scholars we are in the Lord's school! The same lesson must often be taught and re-taught before it is mastered.

It may be necessary to teach some of the boys and girls to give thanks at meal-times (1 Tim. 4:4, 5). Our Lord set us the example (Mk. 8:6; 14:23; Lk. 22:17, 19; John 6:11, 23; 1 Cor. 11:24).

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