

The Gospel Witness

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AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

IS DEMOCRACY SCRIPTURAL?

A Sermon by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 17th, 1940

"One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."—Matthew 23:8.

Not so long ago, only a short time before Dunkirk, it was the fashion in many circles to hold democracy up to ridicule as an effete form of government, a relic of an outmoded century. Both in the totalitarian countries and here under protection of the freedom of speech afforded by our laws, there are many enemies ready on the slightest provocation to cast grievous reproaches at the democratic way of life. And alas there were only too many provocations. Even some of Democracy's friends began to wonder if it were not intent on giving a demonstration of the truth that "that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away". We can all recall only too vividly each step of that sad history of daring decisiveness on the part of the brutal dictators, of faltering inaction on the part of the democracies. First came the bloodless victories—the occupation of the Rhineland, the annexation of Austria, the rape of Czechoslovakia. Then the "blitzkrieg" against Poland, the invasion of Denmark and Norway, then the march through Holland and Belgium, and the collapse of France. Was democracy done for? It seemed like it.

And then came the epic of Dunkirk: democracy in action, aroused from its lethargy, fighting for its life and for the life of the world. And after that the world heard with bated breath and with grateful heart the word that came from air raid shelter and from ruins of cottage and castle alike: "We can take it", and take it these wonderful English did. "You are a great king", said a London woman to the king as he was inspecting the ruins caused by a German bomb. "And you," said the king, "are a great people." Democracy was not dead after all!

It is no longer in fashion to cast reproaches at democracy. Our critics of yesteryear have vanished, and in their place have come representatives of movements that wish to capitalize on the success of democracy by claim-

ing it as their child. Roman Catholic propagandists in this country are busy attempting to teach us that their church was the birthplace and cradle of democracy! A few years ago Russian propaganda tried to make capital of democratic sentiment by announcing the "democratization" of the government of the Soviet Union. The masses in Russia were not reported to be unduly elated, indeed they have probably not yet heard the news. Nazi Germany, too, has from time to time claimed to have all the advantages of the democratic system and none of its disadvantages. They all want to climb on the bandwagon. In the face of such claims and such criticisms it is our solemn duty, both as citizens of a great free Commonwealth of Nations and as Christians, to see the underlying significance and the religious implications of democracy.

The word democracy comes from two Greek words which mean the rule of the people, and it was the Greeks who made the first experiments in democratic government. The tiny city-states in ancient Greece organized themselves into little self-governing republics. Each citizen had the right to vote in the local parliament or "ecclesia", as they called it—a word of the greatest interest for us since it was used later in the New Testament of those other little self-governing republics, the earliest Christian churches. The Greek experiments in democracy produced some of the finest and best things the world has ever seen. Our own civilization is heavily indebted to these liberty loving people of the ancient world. Their great thinkers have continued to inspire men for more than two millenia. A contemporary thinker has said that philosophy since then consists of marginal notes on the pages of Plato and Aristotle. But their great and noble achievements did not prevent their defeat at the hands of a ruthless foe, though they first gave to posterity the name of Thermopylae as a rallying cry

of liberty against the brute force of barbarian invaders.

Anglo-Saxon democracy, however, does not trace its direct line back to the ancient Greece. The English Mother of parliaments and the ideals of which it is the expression sprang not from a political but from a religious source, not from ancient Greece but from Christianity. The British Constitution is not written; it is not the invention of any particular age or group, but in the course of centuries has "slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent". It is the product of the wisdom and experience of a thousand years of British history. But the greatest and most beneficent developments in our political thought took place under the impetus of a great religious awakening in the Seventeenth Century. It was during this period that the battle for democracy was fought and won.

It was no chance that the great heroes of that movement were men of profound religious conviction—Pym, Hampden, Cromwell. Their speeches and letters are as deeply religious as Milton's "Paradise Lost" or Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress". It was a theological age and religious experience was the mainspring of the Puritan revolt against a tyrannous and unfaithful king. Cromwell's men went into battle with psalms on their lips and Scripture written on their banners. In camp common soldiers engaged in field preaching and exhorted privates and generals alike. At a time of crisis the staff officers met for seasons of prayer, sometimes protracted for days, to seek the mind of the Lord. General Cromwell demanded that his army should be composed of men of good character and strong religious conviction: "Such men as had the fear of God before them and made some conscience of what they did." And he welded them into a body of fighting men that scattered the finest cavalry of Europe like chaff before the wind. His dispatches after famous victories were summed up in Scriptural phrases such as: "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands."

It was in this age and under the influence of such men as this that democracy as we know it began to take shape. Lord Macaulay describes this epoch as "one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind, at the very crisis of the great conflict between Oromasdes and Arimanes, liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice." "That great battle," says Macaulay, "was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were staked on the same cast with the freedom of the English people. Then were first proclaimed those mighty principles which have since worked their way into the depths of the American forests, which have roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of two thousand years, and which, from one end of Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the oppressed, and loosed the knees of the oppressors with an unwonted fear."

The Puritans' passionate love of personal liberty, civil liberty, religious liberty, did not spring from speculative theories or philosophic abstractions. These men loved freedom because they were free men. In the depths of their souls they had felt the power of a deliverance from the most slavish of all servitudes by the most radical experience that it is given men to know. They were free indeed because the Son had made them free. They found much about freedom written in the Bible, as indeed any one will who reads it. They rejoiced in such words as

these: "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye servants of men." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." The Bible is the most revolutionary book in the world and the gospel the most radical power in the universe. Of the greatest preacher of the gospel it was said, "They that have turned the world upside down have come hither also." These clarion calls to liberty were translated from the Book and written on the fleshly tables of their hearts—they lived them, they were God's free men.

Long familiarity with well worn words and phrases may lead us to forget the vital meaning they express. A year or two ago I had an amusing illustration of this. Our Seminary students used to go to jail each Wednesday afternoon to hold a religious service for the benefit of the inmates. The prisoners always enjoyed the singing, and if there was a good swing to the music they joined in the Gospel hymns with gusto. One afternoon the student in charge announced a familiar Sunday-school hymn without noticing all the verses. The men joined in the singing with their usual energy, and eighty jailbirds united their voices in the line

"Free from the law, O happy condition,"

and not one of them smiled. To these men, they were empty words, devoid of meaning.

But to the Puritans the glorious promises of spiritual freedom were not empty phrases. Having once enjoyed the liberty of the children of God they could not and would not be in bondage to any man. O that the God of our fathers would write His perfect law of liberty afresh in our minds and engrave it on the soul of the Empire. It was thus that our liberties were won and only in this way can they be successfully defended to-day. For in our time as in all times since the world began, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." Our first line of defence is in the spiritual realm. May God enable us to recognize this great truth and strengthen the peoples of the Empire with His might.

You may strike the shackles from the limbs of a slave, but unless his spirit is free it will soon drag him down to a more abject bondage than before. The slavish mind begins by accepting bonds and ends by being ill at ease without them.

"The linnet born within the cage

That never knew the summer woods"

may not have enough spirit to fly out of its cage when the door is opened, or having flown out it may return from God's free air, preferring the ease and protection it finds in captivity. But those who are the Lord's free men, made free indeed by the Son, will never submit to the yoke of any bondage, civil or religious.

The pattern of government before the eyes of our Puritan forbears was that of the earliest Christian churches as recorded in the New Testament. The democracy of the New Testament churches was closer both to their knowledge and to their religious experience than the example of the little self-governing republics of the ancient Greek city-states.

Let us look at the picture which inspired history has seen fit to give us of the earliest Christian churches. In respect to church government there is special need for

us to discover what the Bible really says and not what we have always assumed it means. In some of the art galleries of Europe one sees pictures of Christ and His apostles dressed in the garb of medieval Roman Catholic priests. Nothing could be more unhistorical. Yet we are only too often guilty of equally bad anachronisms when we read the Bible.

The first translator of the English Bible, the great Tindale, saw this danger and sought to use plain words, free from misleading ecclesiastical associations. In place of the word "church", for example, he employed the word "congregation". "Church" he said, had come to be synonymous with the clergy, "the multitude of the shaven, shorn, and oiled". And "congregation" was more in line with the meaning of the Greek of the New Testament than with the hierarchical and sacerdotal associations which had become attached to the word "church". Indeed the general assemblies of the ancient Greek republics had been called "ecclesiae", as we have noted, and this was the very word the New Testament writers employed of the early churches, which were also little self-governing republics.

You will find in these early Christian churches no popes nor dictators, for all were brethren; no priests of a special order, for all were priests who came to God directly through the great High Priest, the one Mediator between God and men. An examination of the election of the Seven, as recorded in the sixth chapter of Acts will reveal democratic principles in action in a sovereign, self-governing body of brethren: "Then the twelve called the *multitude of the disciples* unto them" . . . "Wherefore, *brethren*, look ye out among you seven men of honest report" . . . "and the saying pleased *the whole multitude and they chose Stephen*" . . . (Acts 6:1-6). The choice was not made by a college of cardinals but by the "multitude of the disciples". The function of the "brethren" was not to shout "Heil", but to make their own free choice.

In the fifteenth chapter of the same book we find another democratic gathering of free men to decide a doctrinal issue. The Word of God was recognized as the final authority: "And to this agree the words of the prophets", said James. The emphasis this inspired history places upon the part played by the "whole church", the "multitude", the "brethren", is noteworthy. It was the church at Antioch that determined that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem. "And being brought on their way *by the church*" . . . "and when they were come to Jerusalem they were received *of the church* and of the apostles and elders". And when the letter was written it is explicitly asserted that it pleased not only the apostles and elders, but the *whole church*. "And they wrote letters to them after this manner; the apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren . . . it seemed good unto us being assembled with one accord." And when Paul and Barnabas arrived back in Antioch, "when *they had gathered the multitude together* they delivered the epistle". Such democratic procedure did not come about by chance. It was the natural and inevitable outcome of the direct relation of God to each individual soul. Each believer had direct access to God, and He spoke to each directly through His Word and the illumination of His Spirit. There was no scale of hierarchical orders ascending from lowest to highest.

A few years ago I made the acquaintance of a young French-Canadian professor who was studying at the University of Chicago. As we were the only Canadians in a large group, we saw a good deal of each other and often our talk turned to religious matters. On one occasion my friend made a strong condemnation of Roman Catholic priests. Knowing that he was himself a Catholic I asked with some surprise, "How can you say that and still be a Catholic?"

"Oh," said my French-Canadian friend, "I believe that the Church and its priests are supreme in strictly spiritual and ecclesiastical affairs, but when they step outside of that realm they are only men as I am and have no right to demand my obedience or to be exempt from my criticism."

I tried to point out to him that if the priest had the magic power to change a wafer on the altar into the body and blood of Christ, if he had the authority to remit sins on earth and the power of the keys in the world to come, that such an one as this would stand for us in the place of God, and we would not dare oppose him in any realm which he chose to enter, for fear of undoing our eternal salvation which he alone dispenses. If a priest has almost unlimited prerogatives in the unseen and eternal realm, then we ought gladly and joyfully to confide ourselves to his control in the infinitely smaller affairs of time and space.

But my anticlerical friend clung to his position. Many devout Catholics in France, he said, were anticlericals, it was a concession made by the more advanced priests to members of the intelligentsia. He even went so far as to say that one of the earliest bishops of New France was at heart an anticlerical. A few years later I met this young French professor again, this time in Toronto. Once again he spoke of religion, but, he said with a smile, "I am not now a Roman Catholic. I call myself a Liberal Christian." He had been forced by the logic of his position to quit the Roman Church. And that this is the inevitable outcome of anticlericalism no one is more insistent than the members of the Roman priesthood.

The cry of anticlericalism is now being hurled at the Prime Minister of Quebec and his supporters because they have had the temerity to suggest that the Roman Catholic school system of the province is in need of reform. The reforms suggested are of a very mild nature, apparently little more than laying greater emphasis on the teaching of English and a larger provision for technical and business training.

Democracy is not a plant that is native to Roman Catholicism and it does not flourish there. If perchance it be transplanted into such soil it must either be choked to death or by its own vital strength burst the bonds that seek to destroy it. We wonder if this is not the key to the present situation in our neighbouring province of Quebec where for nearly two centuries British law and order have guaranteed liberty, both religious and civil, to French and Catholic Canada.

Democracy is not to be identified with a particular form of government, or a method of registering votes, or a special pattern of administrative machinery. It is, to borrow President Roosevelt's phrase, "a way of life", and it is a way of life that is founded on a distinctively Christian conception of the worth of the human soul and the freedom of access it has to its Maker.

There may be some who will feel that the relation I have traced between democracy and Christianity is too remote to be valid. Well, I invite you to read English history. Is it a coincidence that Protestant England still stands and that she stands to fight for her own freedom and that of the whole world?

I have used British history as an illustration of these great fundamental principles of the gospel. But by their very nature these are personal matters. Let us then proceed from this great and glorious illustration to the very heart of things. While rejoicing that we were born free citizens of the greatest empire the world has ever seen, have you the still greater liberty of the sons of God? Are you God's free man? You are grateful for your Protestant heritage, of the doctrine of direct access to God through the one Mediator—a truth for which thousands of martyrs died—but have you personally met God?

When you vote under British law you are guaranteed secrecy so that none may intimidate you, but you must yourself do the voting—there is no provision made for a proxy vote. You do not vote en masse or shout "Heil" as a voice in a great throng. Your privileges as the citizen of a free country entail a personal responsibility that you alone can discharge. You must make your own choice, it cannot be made for you. And in like manner your personal responsibility before God is entailed in the Gospel message of the shepherd who left the ninety and nine to search for the one. The parable of the Prodigal Son is the necessary complement of the story of the lost sheep and the lost coin. The sheep and the coin were found by patient search and reclaimed to usefulness, but the Prodigal came to himself in the far country and said, "I will arise and go unto my father." You cannot be saved en masse, you must make the choice for Christ as an individual, for yourself. God grant to us the grace so to exercise the will He has given us.

"THE MOST IGNORANT PROVINCE IN THE DOMINION"

By W. S. Whitcombe, M.A.

The words of our title were not written by an Orangeman from Ontario, but by a French-Canadian Roman Catholic from Quebec who makes it his boast that he never has and never will attack any dogma of the Church nor its priests as such. Mr. Jean-Charles Harvey, editor of the French language weekly "Le Jour", makes this scathing indictment of his native province as "the most ignorant province in the Dominion" after a life-long study of the Quebec system of education.

In recent weeks another voice in Quebec has dared to call attention to the necessity of reforming the Quebec school system in the direction of a more practical education for young French-Canadians. None other than the Prime Minister of the Province, the Hon. Adelard Godbout, broke the age-long tradition of fear and silence and was bold enough to say frankly and without equivocation that the French Roman Catholic schools of Quebec stand in need of reform. He advised French-Canadians to learn English and thereby brought down a storm of criticism on his head, but Mr. Godbout did not stop there. He added, "Our young people ought not to be trained until they are twenty years of age by an education that prepares them for nothing unless they wish to become priests." Of this statement the Prime Minister and his party will not hear the last for many a long day. In reply the leader of the opposition, Hon. Maurice Duplessis, a former Prime Minister who gained much notoriety by his infamous Padlock Law, was not slow to raise the cry of religion. "I regret", said Mr. Duplessis, "the

attitude taken by Mr. Godbout and his friends on this question of education. For in our province, in the face of such a fine work accomplished by our educators, a public man has not the right to insult them."

It is apparent that in Mr. Duplessis' thought, to criticize the educational system is to insult the educators. How strange that would sound in Ontario! But who are these poor insulted educators of whom Mr. Duplessis is thinking? The same speech made it abundantly clear, for according to the report of it in a Roman Catholic daily, Mr. Duplessis "denounced those who criticized our houses of education and the members of the clergy who devoted themselves to the education of the people as does the seminary of Sainte Thérèse." The editor of "L'Action Catholique" of Quebec City used similar words of those who criticized the Quebec school system, branding them as those "who would above all undermine the normal influence of the Church".

Strange as this may sound to English-speaking Protestants, who are well aware of the necessity of constantly improving their methods of teaching, the reasoning of the Catholic paper and the Catholic politician is perfectly consistent if the terms of their argument are once admitted. They argue thus: 1. The Church is infallible; 2. The church controls education; 3. Therefore, those who criticize the educational system criticize the infallible church. It is, of course, undeniable that the Roman Church in Quebec is undisputed master of the school system; but Protestants do not admit that the Roman Church is either infallible or beyond criticism. And recent events in Quebec make it clear that there are also many French-Canadian Roman Catholics who in practise, whatever their theory may be, refuse to bow in servile submission to the dictates of an infallible church that would regulate and regiment the smallest detail of their every-day lives.

Mr. Duplessis' philosophy of education is of special interest not because of his profundity of thought, but because it describes the present state of affairs in Quebec and at the same time gives expression to the Roman Catholic ideal in matters of education. Speaking at a political rally at Saint Thérèse, the former Prime Minister said: "I declare that education is not the concern of governments nor politicians, but of parents and the clergy. These are the ones who must direct in this domain and not the politicians. We are against the state control of education, and with respect to education we do not recognize that Mr. Godbout or Mr. Blanchard, any more than Mr. Perrier, has the right to take the place of the parents and the religious authorities. We believe that each one ought to remain in his own place. Education is not the affair of the state." Mr. Duplessis' statement sums up in a few words the Roman Catholic view: the church should have control, while the sole function of the state is to provide the funds and then hand them over to the church to spend as she sees fit; to criticize a Roman Catholic school system is to insult the priests who are in charge.

This ideal of Roman Catholic education probably comes closer to realization in Quebec than in any other country in the world today. This province has the distinction, if such it be, of having no ministry of education responsible to the government. The department of education is directed by an appointed council. Some lay members are included in the Catholic committee of this council, but their influence and authority, if by any chance they should happen to run counter to the bishops, may best be imagined. But it is not only in the formation of general policies that the church controls the schools. Much of the actual work of teaching is done by brothers and nuns. In the year 1938-39 there were 11,149 Catholic lay teachers in the primary schools of the province, while there were 10,445 teachers in orders (religieux). These figures do not include 4,871 teachers in independent institutions which are in a large part under the sole control of various religious orders.

What are the fruits of a school system so completely under church control? Anyone with a speaking knowledge of French who has travelled in the province of Quebec can give the answer, but we shall limit ourselves here to observing a few facts which will speak for themselves. The following figures are taken from an official Dominion government publication, ("Illiteracy and School Attendance, Census monograph No. 5") and is based on the 1931 census.

The percentage of illiterate male population 10 years of age and over in the two provinces is given as follows:

Ontario	2.71
Quebec	6.21

Startling as the figures are, they do not tell the whole story as there are many French-Canadians in Ontario, and many English-Canadians in Quebec. Hence the following statistics for the whole of Canada give a truer picture of the fruits of a Roman Catholic school system:

The percentage of illiterates in Canada (10 years of age and over):

British races	0.88
French	6.18

In short, this means that French Roman Catholicism produces approximately 7 times as many illiterates as are found among those of British extraction, the majority of whom are Protestant.

This fearful plague of French-Canadian illiteracy is no doubt aggravated by the absence of any law of obligatory school attendance in Quebec. The church has always strenuously opposed such legislation. The results of this policy are shown in the following extract from an official report presented to the Catholic committee of the Council of Education in May last. The report deals with rural schools in Quebec:

"1. More than 30,000 children from 7-13 years of age have not attended rural schools at all during the year 1938-39.

2. Of 282,865 who are enrolled, 16 2.3% have been absent, on an average, each day. That is to say, the majority of the pupils have missed about one day per week.

3. Of a total of 25,133 pupils who did not return to school, 8,453 are enrolled in another institution. There remains, then, 16,680 children who have finally left school some after the 4th year, the others after the 5th, 6th or 7th."

The scale of salaries paid to teachers is a fairly reliable index of the efficiency of the system of which they form so important a part. In the teaching profession as elsewhere one generally gets what one pays for. The "Canada Year Book, 1939" gives the following official figures for average annual teachers salaries in the two provinces:

Quebec:

Roman Catholic Schools—	
Brothers and nuns	\$ 417
Lay teachers	460
Protestant Schools	1,136

Ontario:

Public Schools—	
Rural	\$ 740
Urban	1,471

These figures are for the year 1936. An official note in the Year Book states that the Quebec statistics are not available for 1937, nor do they appear in the following year.

More eloquent than these figures is an election statement made by the former Prime Minister. Said Mr. Duplessis in praise of the alleged virtues of his government, on the basis of which he appealed for re-election: "We have made grants to the rural school commissions of hundreds of thousands of dollars in order to make it possible for them to increase the salaries of the teachers and to bring them up to three hundred dollars per year." ("et de le porter à trois cent dollars par année".)

The above paragraph in the Hon. Mr. Duplessis' speech was headed "the Salvation of Education". If this is the salvation of education, we cannot refrain from wondering what its condemnation would be. In any case, there is only a margin of three hundred dollars between "the salvation of education" and its antithesis. But Mr. Duplessis threw out the following bait for votes in the next paragraph: "It is the Union National government which saved the reverend Sulpician Fathers who have done and are doing so much good in the province, by making them a loan of five millions of dollars".

Three hundred dollars a year for rural school teachers; five million dollars for the reverend Sulpician Fathers. Such is the manner in which education, religion, and politics are related in Quebec!

The training of youth is one of the most important tasks that confronts any civilized nation. The effectiveness of its educational system is therefore an accurate criterion by which to judge a state. "By their fruits", said the greatest

of all Teachers, "shall ye know them". The fruit of a Roman Catholic educational system is the most ignorant province in the Dominion. The church in Quebec has for three centuries had undisputed sway in education, yet one of its own sons, the Prime Minister of Quebec, in sheer fidelity to the truth, is forced to confess that the system is good for nothing but to produce priests. Of those who do not become priests a large proportion as indicated by the figures quoted, are apparently to be votive offerings on the altar of ignorance. This is "Catholic Action" in practise: keep the people in ignorance in order that they may be kept loyal sons of the church. Catholics strenuously deny that such is the aim of their church but the facts we have presented here are the proof. Only when confronted by liberal and enlightened opinion in the face of Protestant teaching, does the hierarchy grudgingly consent to meagre reforms. We shall watch with interest the outcome of the present struggle for school reform in Quebec, but in the meantime our neighbouring province provides a striking example of Roman Catholic principles in action.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

November 20, 1940.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sirs:

A few weeks ago, if I am not mistaken, on the opening Sunday of the Catholic Hour on CBL, for the Radio League of Saint Michael, the Reverend B. Lamphier, Director of the League, accused those who see a "Pope's Fifth Column" throughout the world, of ignorance or prejudice or imbecility. Each of these terms was accompanied by strengthening adjectives. Those who read the announcements in any of the Toronto daily papers of the larger churches of the city, would find the reference perfectly clear. The denunciation could hardly be stronger.

Last Sunday, November 17th, the same reverend gentleman, in his newscast and review of religion, declaiming against those who would, according to him, set religion against religion, said there were

"a few pitiable and contemptible examples which we have witnessed in this city within the past few weeks."

He declared that

"those who attempt to set religion against religion and Catholic against Protestant by talking about the Pope's fifth column are beneath contempt."

You will agree that this is offensive language.

My chief objection, however, is not so much to the vilification. I was under the impression that you did not allow religious controversy over the air. Personally, I should welcome such discussion, provided both sides were given fair play.

Accordingly I am writing to ask whether Dr. T. T. Shields, Pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, and Editor of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, is to be allowed in the immediate future to make over a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation station in Toronto, indeed over the same station as that used by Father Lamphier, such statements as Father Lamphier denounces.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) W. GORDON BROWN.

NEWS OF CHURCHES OF THE UNION OF REGULAR BAPTISTS

REV. D. MACGREGOR AT SUDBURY

"The ten days I spent in Sudbury were the realization of a long anticipated visit to one of our Northern fields, and in this case realization was better than anticipation. I had heard much about the work in Sudbury; I expected much from the work in Sudbury, and I was not disappointed, for in that city a solid substantial Baptist work is being built under Mr. Boyd's ministry. That much had been accomplished was evident; that much will yet be done needed no special prophetic vision to see, for such a people under such a Pastor, with such a gospel in a city of such opportunity, must go forward.

We saw and were inspired by the Bible School which gathered Sunday morning. It seemed as though there was a never ending procession of children pouring into the Hall. House to house visitation and the persistent visiting of prospects and absentees has given the Berean Baptist Church a really strong Bible School, such as might satisfy another church, but which to the Sudbury folk is an incentive to increased effort. The other services of the day were well attended, and a more appreciative congregation could scarcely be found.

It was my privilege, also, to listen to Mr. Boyd's broadcast. This is a tremendous burden for anyone to carry. Mr. Boyd carries it because he knows that by this means many hear the gospel who otherwise would remain untouched. How many told us that each Sunday they listened and were blessed! Mr. Boyd did not say so to me, but I feel sure he would be happy to have others share with him the heavy obligations he has assumed, and all who would be making a worthwhile investment indeed.

The church building, in which the special meetings were held at Minnow Lake, is ideally located. In the centre of an ever growing community this church will serve a great number of needy souls. The seed was sown both in tract form and in the preached Word, and we trust that the Lord will yet bring much blessing from the effort. The work being carried on in Sudbury and district would itself justify the policy of our Union in recent years, but moreover in some measure this work is being repeated in other northern cities and to have visited one of the Home Mission causes is to desire to visit them all."

SPECIAL MEETINGS AT LINDSAY

"I am glad to be able to report good times in the church", writes Rev. J. Fullard. "We have just finished a two weeks evangelistic effort with Mr. Fred May and Mr. Ken Baer. I think that the church has never seen such crowds before, on more than one occasion the building being literally jammed. Scores of people were contacted who had never been in William Street before. A number of young folk accepted the Lord, the Christians were wonderfully blessed, and altogether the church received a splendid uplift. The Sunday before the meetings started three were baptised, one an elderly man in his seventies, who came out for the Lord during our meetings at Lifford a while ago. Last Sunday four more walked down the aisle desiring baptism. The children's work is doing well and last Friday there were 163 present at the Happy Hour."

SARNIA ANNIVERSARY SERVICES

Rev. John Byers was the special speaker for the occasion. His messages were delivered in great power in his own inimitable manner, and great good was undoubtedly accomplished in both Sarnia and Brigden. At the evening service in Sarnia when Mr. Byers preached to a packed house two people indicated their desire to return to the Lord and one accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord. It was a day which will long live in the memories of the people who attended. Every saint could not help but be enriched in soul by the fine spiritual feast. The offering for the day in Sarnia went well over the \$100.00 mark, which was also very gratifying. It was our third anniversary. We rejoice in what God has wrought in three years.

H. MacB.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE GOLDEN WEST

An Unique Service at Brooks, Alberta

It is almost incredible to think that a year ago the folks at Brooks refused to rent us any building to hold services in, so determined were they to keep our denomination from entering their town: but the friends all around the country rallied to our case, and a new church was built at Brooks. Rev. Morley R. Hall, President of our Fellowship, took a carload of Calgary friends and drove 135 miles to hold special services there on Sunday, September 1, 1940. Mr. Hall preached at Duchess in the morning, and at Millicent in the afternoon, two preaching stations opened up in connection with Brooks. Then in the evening Student Pastor David H. Scrimgeour, of Brooks Church, a graduate of Western Baptist Bible College, held an unique baptismal service in the Brooks swimming pool, which had been kindly lent for the occasion,

and 23 candidates were immersed, while hundreds of spectators lined the fence around the pool. And, to cap all, 150 folks packed the little Brooks church at night to hear Pastor Hall's closing message. It was a glorious day for Brooks, with guardian angels hovering near.

Driving back next day Mr. Hall called on Student Pastor Ernest Hardford, another graduate of W. B. B. College, at Bassano, who also holds services at Gem. So you see the great western irrigation district is being opened up, and our outlook is hopeful. With the prayer and help of all you loyal eastern friends, we are going forward joyfully in the Lord's work in this needy prairie west.

A. R. Clark.

NORTHERN ITINERARY

Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, Secretary of the Union, plans to spend the next three and a half weeks among the churches in the North. The proposed itinerary is as follows:

Kapuskaing—November 22nd to 24th.

Timmins—November 25th to 30th.

Kirkland Lake—December 1st to 4th.

Noranda—December 5th to 8th.

Val d'Or—December 9th to 15th.

The visit to Timmins will include a French School which all the Pastors in the North are planning to attend. Pray for them that the gift of tongues may be theirs, and that this gathering may be one of both spiritual and linguistic profit.

"When a Man Bites a Dog"

Rev. J. R. Armstrong left a flourishing church at Hespeler several weeks ago to take charge of a pioneer mission in the great city of Montreal. Though he has had no more time in this work in the Snowdon district than it takes to turn around, we ventured to write asking for something that would serve to keep this promising cause in the minds and prayers of all our churches. Our Union has an opened door before them—but there are many adversaries. We call special attention to Brother Armstrong's appeal for prayer.

Mr. Armstrong writes: "You will find enclosed the receipt for the sum which was so promptly sent to me on the first of the month. It is the first Home Mission grant that I have ever received and I find that it is just as welcome as any money I have ever received from a local Church. Thank you very much; I trust that it will not have to be so large for long.

"We have followed up all the contacts which we were able to find that had been made by the other men and have been able to find a number of others who are interested in the work. We have also done a considerable amount of house to house visitation and have found a few whom we believe will bear fruit if they are well followed up. When the weather is good the visitation goes very slowly for it is only about one place in three where one can get an answer. Consequently I have done considerable visiting in the evenings. As soon as the weather gets a little colder I believe that that difficulty will be eliminated.

"We are more and more convinced that this work can only be done by the power of God. We need much prayer and while we may not have a large company of praying people standing by us at this end we are more than ever convinced of the value of such an organization as the Union. The large churches may be able to get along by themselves but the smaller ones are desperately in need of spiritual support from others.

"We are not working in a French district but even here I find I ought to know French. In house to house visitation I have met with several who could not speak English and even those who could speak English but whose own language was French were almost unapproachable on spiritual matters because they did not have a religious vocabulary. I am trying to do a little reading in French and will surely be with you for that week of French which you mentioned in THE GOSPEL WITNESS last week. If I could once get enough of the sounds to understand the programs of the radio I am sure that I would soon be able to follow a conversation in French.

"I shall write you a more interesting letter as soon as there is truly some news. After all it is not news if a dog bites a man, but we shall let you know when the man bites the dog.

"Please do not publish much of this letter. Just mention the fact that we are encouraged by what we have seen but that we are in need of much prayer,—especially that teachers may be raised up for the Sunday School."

Bible School Lesson Outline

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

Vol. 4 Fourth Quarter Lesson 48 December 1st, 1940

THE VICTORIES OF SAMSON

Lesson Text: Judges 15.

Golden Text: "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him"—Judges 15:14.

For Reading: Judges 14.

I. Samson Punishing the Philistines—verses 1 to 8.

In accordance with the marriage customs of the Jews the parents of Samson had arranged his betrothal to one of the daughters of the Philistines, who lived in Timnath (Judg. 14). In view of the Lord's prohibition of alliances with the alien nations (Deut. 7:2, 3; Josh. 23:12), the fact that Israel's judge should form such an association with a member of the enemy race would seem strange, had not the explanation been given (Judg. 14:4). The Lord, Who rules the affairs of individuals and of nations (Prov. 20:24; 21:1; Isa. 40:15; Jer. 10:23), was setting the stage for the Philistines to display their wicked designs (Deut. 2:30; Josh. 11:20). Evil must be exposed before it can be punished (2 Thess. 2:8).

The betrothal contract was regarded to be as sacred as the marriage bond, so that the parents of the Timnite woman were guilty of a breach of faith. Their conduct was symptomatic of the character of the Philistines as a whole. A nation devoid of honour does not deserve the respect of the righteous.

Samson was determined that he would be blameless as far as the Philistines were concerned. If he should allow them to continue in their evil course without rebuke, he would not be just to them, nor to himself. To overlook sin may be to condone (Prov. 17:15; 24:24; Isa. 5:23), and even to share it (1 Tim. 5:22; 2 John 10, 11).

From the context of the narrative we understand that Samson was acting as God's instrument in punishing the Philistines. The cause of the judgment was the wickedness of the Philistines; the breach of faith on the part of the people in Timnath was merely the occasion. It is God's prerogative to choose the time, instrument and manner of vengeance for sin (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 32:35, 36; Rom. 12: 19-21; Heb. 10:30). We dare not take it upon ourselves to punish those who wrong us except at the clear command of the Lord.

The reaction of the Philistines was characteristic. They did not acknowledge their wrong, nor did they dare to approach Samson, but in cowardly fashion they turned upon the maiden and her family, whom they had threatened on a previous occasion (Judg. 14:15). Israel's enemies were cruel and oppressive, unjust and cowardly. In adding sin to sin they laid themselves open to fresh punishment.

II. Samson Prevailing Against the Philistines—verses 9 to 20.

The territory occupied by the tribe of Judah was west of Philistia in the southern part of Palestine. The men of Judah seem to have been terrorized by their powerful neighbours. At any rate they were content to remain under the domination of the Philistines. They chose the easy path rather than the right path; they were willing to submit to their foes rather than to risk facing them. Such an attitude is common among nations and among individuals. The men of Judah went so far in their policy of non-aggression as to betray their own judge. His courageous resistance to the Philistines aroused their anger to such an extent that they were at first disposed to kill him themselves, when they should have praised him for slaying some of their foes. Those who put policy before principle are liable to be kind to their enemies and cruel to their friends.

Although the Philistines shouted against him, Samson was made strong when the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him (Judg. 14:6, 19), and he was able to free himself from the cords upon his arms. It is ever the Lord's way to give us grace to meet each need as it arises (Deut. 33:25; 2 Cor. 10:9).

Samson was more than conqueror (Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:4). The Lord gave him extraordinary strength, so that he was able not merely to break loose and escape from the Philistines, but also to wage an aggressive campaign against them.

Samson used a strange weapon in his warfare—the jawbone of an ass. The place was hereafter known as Ramath-lehi, "the lifting up of the jawbone" (verses 9, 14). It seems to have been the only instrument at hand, but the strong man wielded it with great effect (Josh. 23:10; Judg. 3:31). It made little difference to Samson whether he used a weapon or not (Judg. 14:6, 19), for his strength depended upon his submission to the Holy Spirit of God (Judg. 16:20; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 2:1).

Periods of exaltation may be followed by periods of depression. It was so with Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-4), and it was so with Samson. The one who had been delivered from death at the hand of his enemies feared that he would die of thirst (Exod. 17:3; Num. 20:4, 5). And yet, notwithstanding his weakness and lack of faith, the Lord had mercy upon him (1 Kings 19:5-8; Psa. 105:40, 41; 106:44, 45; 114:7, 8). God "clave the hollow place that is in Lehi" (verse 19, Revised Version. Lehi means "jawbone"), and caused a spring to flow for the refreshment of His weary servant (Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:11). The spring was given the name En-hakkore ("The spring of him that called"), to commemorate the Lord's answer to Samson's cry. Christ is the Rock of Ages, smitten for us that we may have life through him (1 Cor. 10:4).

It was well for Israel that Samson was their judge for twenty years, which constituted half the period during which they were subject to the Philistines (Judg. 13:1).

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