

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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A CORNISH CAROL

Welcome! that star in Judah's sky,
That voice o'er Bethlehem's palmy glen,
The lamp far sages hailed on high,
The tones that thrilled the shepherd men;
Glory to God in loftiest heaven,—
Thus angels smote the echoing chord,—
Glad tidings unto man forgiven:
Peace from the presence of the Lord.

The shepherds sought that birth divine;
The wise men traced their guided way;
There, by strange light and mystic sign,
The God they came to worship lay:
A human babe in beauty smiled
Where lowing oxen round him trod;
A maiden clasped her awful child,
Pure offspring of the breath of God.

Those voices from on high are mute;
The star the wise men saw is dim;
But hope still guides the wanderer's foot,
And faith renews the angel-hymn:
Glory to God in loftiest heaven,—
Touch with glad hand the ancient chord,—
Good tidings unto man forgiven;
Peace from the presence of the Lord.

1827.

R. S. Hawker.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit.

CHRISTMAS "IN THE DAYS OF HEROD,"—AND OF HITLER

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 21st, 1941

(Stenographically Reported)

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem."—Matthew 2:1.

There must be very few among us who do not feel the strange incongruity between Christmas bells and bursting bombs. It seems almost like a vulgar burlesque for part of a family to try to make merry while the other part is away making war. Some of us perhaps may wistfully recall happier years when the music of the angels was not marred by the sound of the trumpet, and the alarm of war.

There was something symbolic about the beginning of the new war, in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii. I remember meeting a friend some years ago who said he was going to Hawaii in missionary service, and I said to him, "I fear I have no sympathy to waste on you. I understand that is a kind of earthly paradise." So it was supposed to be, a paradise to which wealth resorted to take its ease, and "eat, drink, and be merry." But in reality there is no earthly paradise. Let the Evolutionist, and the Modernist of every degree, explain it as they will, the indisputable fact remains that so far as this wide world is concerned, paradise is lost: there is a blight for every rose, there is a vulgar foot to trample every immaculate lily in the mire, there is a locust for every blade, a worm for every root; a waiting Herod for every lovely child that is born:

"There is no flock however watched and tended
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no fireside howsoever defended
But has one vacant chair."

In reality, our days differ from other days, not in kind, but only in degree. Through the narrow channel of the twenty-six words of this text which I have announced, all the world's history flows.

I.

Here flow together in contrast THE INNOCENCE OF CHILDHOOD, WITH EVIL FULLGROWN. A beautiful Babe is born, and comes to this world "in the days of Herod the king." This Child came to reveal the nature—I use that strong word, nature—of the constituents of human life. Other children were unnoticed by Herod: this Child, so to speak, brought Herod into the open, and showed what he really was.

Evil in the world is old and hoary, fullgrown and strong. There are no infant evils: they are giants every one. This world has never been kind to little children. Its atmosphere has never been favourable to their growth and development. Side by side with childish innocence one sees on every hand, evil, matured and fullgrown. Sometimes you see it in the family. I have seen it—a lovely child who seemed to speak for Heaven, as though it were a little bit of Heaven let down to earth; and under the same roof a vile and wicked father who, one cannot help feeling, ought never to have been permitted to have

a child. But there they are in contrast with each other.

Sometimes one fears to have little ears hear what may be heard; or little eyes to see what can be seen. One is sometimes led to wonder why a gracious God permits any child to be born "in the days of Herod the king."

But the Herods ever flaunt their evil before the eyes of childhood, open and unashamed. We are filled with horror at Europe's slaughter of women and children. Yet roundabout us here, roundabout this place of prayer, there are—and I do not exaggerate—slaughter-houses licensed by Government, by the operation of which a Government composed of supposedly sane men, profits. On this street alone, within one block of this church, nine people were slaughtered, met violent death through drink—a fullgrown Herod. Five were burned to death in that hellhole across the street; and four others, a father and three little children, perished by the father's hand. Yet Herod goes on his way, and the innocence of childhood seems, even at this late day, to have very little protection. Herod is still with us, and beneath the pall of his evil influence little children are still being born.

II.

There is another suggestion here, THE APPARENT HELPLESSNESS OF GOODNESS, AND THE SOVEREIGN MIGHT OF WICKEDNESS. A little Child is born in a stable, and laid in a manger. All children are lovely; this was the loveliest of all; and He was—and, blessed be God, still is—"altogether lovely." Goodness is symbolized in that helpless Babe. "Oh yes", says some cynic, "cherish your ideal if you want to; try to be good if you think you can. But that does not work in this wicked world; you must be hard." What is the word? We must be "tough". Always we see unarmed and undefended goodness in sharp contrast with some regal Herod crowned with sovereign might.

How difficult it is to deal with Herod! No one proposes to do so. He was Herod the king. He represented "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life", firmly established upon an impregnable throne. Goodness appeared in this wicked world in the guise of a little Child, without strength, without might to defend itself. If one were to judge by the sight of his eyes, he would despair of the world. "Behold", said this same Jesus at a later date, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." What insanity! How impossible for sheep to survive amid wolves! "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

I know it is quite easy to say it does not pay to be good. Say some, "Goodness is as a little child. I would rather be on the side of Herod with his great sword." The principle has application to every one of us. What-

ever goodness there is in us—if there be any at all—is in a very small quantity. You are not very good, are you? Not as bad as we might be, possibly, but none as good as we ought to be. If there were any method by which our moral natures could be subjected to exact analysis, I fear the quantity of goodness would be found to be in very small proportion to the whole.

Likely to die out, is it? How terrible the might of the enemy! This is Pearl Harbour! This is Hong Kong! This is Singapore! Evil always appears to be well-armed. The strong man that keepeth his palace is ever "a strong man armed," as we have discovered to our sorrow.

The principle applies to every one of us in whom by grace Christ has been formed "the hope of glory". The Christ in us is a very little child, is He not? That new life is but the life of a babe so far, with not much strength, or goodness, or righteousness, or truth there; apparently helpless in the presence of the organized might with which one is surrounded. Yet before I have finished, I shall offer you some word of hope and good cheer.

III.

Here is another contrast: THE LIGHT OF TRUTH SHINING AGAINST THE WORLD'S DARKNESS. What a dark, black world it was in which Herod was king! How little light there was, even from scribes and priests! How little did men know of that "sure word of prophecy" which ought to have been to every one as a light shining in a dark place! Then to Bethlehem there came a little Child. He later explained His coming: "I am come a light into the world, that whoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

But what a flickering torch this spiritual light seems to be! Even after the passage of many years, how terribly dark in spiritual matters this world is! How little knowledge of God there is anywhere! How little desire for a knowledge of God! I told you of a woman who met with me by accident as she came into the office to get some sermons. She was a Roman Catholic. Coming out of St. Michael's Cathedral she had met some Roman Catholics from the South who had come to Jarvis Street, instead of going to their own. They talked with her, and she decided to get some sermons for herself. She was rather a tall woman, who spoke, not harshly, but at some points almost pityingly. She looked at me half sneeringly and said, "And what do you think you are going to do? You know, the Roman Catholic Church is very strong." I said, "I admit it: so is the devil. But that is no reason why we should not fight him, or fight the Roman Catholic system."

It is very dark, you say. Yes, it is very dark; but One has come to be a light in the world; and some of us, in spite of the prevailing darkness, have light in our dwellings. You remember the story of Egypt when a clear line of demarcation was providentially drawn between Egypt and Goshen in which the children of Israel lived? Egypt was a complete "blackout", a darkness that could be felt enveloped the land; but "all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." There was night on one side of the street, and morning on the other. There are people who cannot understand you when you talk about those things. They rather fancy that you have escaped the examination and decision of a psychiatrist. You really do not know what you are talking about because you speak positively of some things. But to us, Jesus has really been born; and "God, who commanded the

light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." So because we have light, we are sure. There is no perhaps or peradventure in our appraisal and appreciation of the future; we *know* that Jesus Christ is come.

Only a candle light? So it may seem to some, but not to others. The Light of the world has come, Herod notwithstanding.

IV.

There is another suggestion here. I wish I could make you see it as I think I see it. TERRESTRIAL GLOOM IS TOUCHED BY CELESTIAL SPLENDOUR. There was not much to live for in Herod's world. There is not much for which to live in Hitler's world. Lord Robert Vansittart speaks of the destruction of "four hundred million happinesses". That is the way he puts it in speaking of the European situation, the destruction of "four hundred million happinesses." Not much left for which to live in France, or Belgium, or Denmark, or Norway, or Czechoslovakia, or Yugoslavia, or Roumania, or Bulgaria, or Greece, or Crete. These are "the days of Herod the king." It is a gloomy world.

But you do not need to go so far afield as that. I could find people right here who have quite enough of it. One of the brethren said to me last evening at the prayer meeting, "I visited the other afternoon several homes, and every home was one of trouble. There was trouble everywhere." You do not need to leave your street to find it: it may be next door—and mayhap it will come to you in the morning mail. Oh, this is a gloomy world. Wise men are not saying, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry." I repeat, there is no paradise to which we may escape in this wicked world.

But is there no hope? Oh yes: Jesus is born. He comes down from the skies. And since the Light of heaven has fallen athwart the darkness of this wicked world, there is a brightly lighted path that leads elsewhere.

Years ago, one Saturday night as I contemplated the morning, and was rather happy in anticipation of a message that I expected to deliver, suddenly my message went from me, and I lost all taste for it. I was sure that it was not the message for the morning. I spent the whole night trying to find another, but I could not. Daylight came. It was in the early summer—late May or early June—and I heard the voices of the day, and the birds were singing. I had prayed all night, but had no word at all for my morning congregation.

Then there came out of the unknown, like a radio message, into my mind a text of Scripture. It began to sing itself through my mind, and it was this: "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say." As it came, that word, "NOW", became like an illuminated sign, as though spelled in great capitals. I said, "I see it." Trouble in retrospect, joined with praise for a great present deliverance. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side"—away back there where I did not know it and could not see it—"NOW, NOW, NOW, may Israel say! I could not say it yesterday, but I can say it now."

I turned to the Psalm, turned it over in my mind, and I told the Lord He had taken my carefully prepared message from me, and that I had nothing left but this. So I came to my pulpit. I looked over the congregation, and down in the middle of the church I saw a man in a gray

summer suit, who resembled a man whom I had known quite well, a man many years my senior, a Presbyterian minister. I asked myself if it were he, but was not quite sure. I had not seen or heard of him for years. I told the story of my strange depression during the night, of how my message had left me, of this text that had come to me, and said, "I suppose in the providence of God it is designed for someone here."

I preached as well as I could, and when the service was over this man left his seat and I met him in the aisle. We had known each other well, and he said, "Hello, Shields." "Is it you, Doctor?" "Yes; I have been in the United States. I have had a world of trouble—all trouble. I thought I would like to get back under the flag. I just got back to Toronto yesterday; and this morning I was about early, and I fell on my face and asked the Lord if He would guide me to some place where I might get some help in my trouble. And, Shields, just as distinctly as though a voice had spoken to me, came the answer, 'Go to hear Shields.'" He gripped my hand and said, "I thank God I was not the cause of your depression, but I am sure I was the occasion of it." I replied, "And did the Lord meet you this morning?" "Yes; I cannot say the clouds have wholly cleared away, but there is just a patch of blue—enough to make a sailor's suit."

I had to speak with others, and I asked him where he was staying, that we might have further communication. He gave me his telephone number, and went away. It was a few days before I had leisure to call, and when I got the number of the telephone he had asked me to call, I asked if I might speak with Dr. So-and-So. They replied, "Have you not heard? He was taken suddenly ill on Monday, was taken to the hospital for a serious operation, and died under the anaesthetic before the operation could be performed." "NOW may Israel say"! I knew that God had permitted me to bring a last word of cheer to a hard-pressed soldier.

Oh yes, "the days of Herod the king." You cannot make this world into a bright place in such days. It is very dark; but it is touched with celestial light. There is still hope, my friends; for "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king." The skies of this dark world have enough blue in them to make a sailor's suit.

V.

I offer you another simple contrast: A LIFE IMMORTAL IN THE PRESENCE OF AN ANGRY BUT TEMPORARY DEVOURER. Here is a little Child Who seemed to have little chance of survival. That is true of little children in general. Children are the most helpless of the young of any species. The young of other than the human species can help themselves a little almost from birth, but a little child is utterly helpless, dependent upon parental care and protection. This little Child had but very poor people about Him. There was no royal guard to watch over His cradle. It seemed impossible that such an one could survive.

But that is God's way of doing things. There is a significant word in the New Testament, which is a New Testament recital of Old Testament events. It tells of a wicked king who sought to destroy all the Hebrew children. When he had issued his decree that all the children were to be put to the sword, the New Testament says with great daring, "IN WHICH TIME Moses was born." And here you have a parallel case—the other was really

symbolic and prophetic of this. Herod the king issued his decree for the slaughter of the innocents; yet this little Child survived.

Go back over your history, and you will find that the great movements for righteousness and truth have invariably begun in times of great darkness. Re-read your history of the Napoleonic wars, when the tyrant Napoleon seemed as though he were going to trample the world under his feet. People then wondered whether he were indeed "the man of sin". If you trace the stream of modern missionary endeavour to its source, you will find the missionary societies were born about that time. It was just then that the great stream of spiritual benevolence and vivification, the British and Foreign Bible Society, came into being, and a river of truth flowed through the world.

I know that Hitler is abroad; but I cannot help believing that a gracious Providence is kindling a light here, and a light there, because in the long ago "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king." There are even now movements afoot which will survive the destroyer.

The angel came and said, "They are dead which sought the young child's life." Wickedness is mortal, death-stricken; but if indeed that life-divine has been kindled in your breast by the Spirit of God, though it may have to struggle for survival, and though you may have to go from Bethlehem to Egypt, and anon turn aside into Nazareth—that life will still be growing and glowing when Herod's grave is dug.

There are principles too that are a part of God. The moral constitution of the universe derives its nature from the nature of the Creator Who gave it being. Righteousness, and truth, and goodness, and mercy—these are principles which are part of the divine constitution; and when the name of Hitler is remembered only with loathing, and he has passed for ever from this scene of action, these principles that are related to the "young Child", will still live.

We must not despair of the world. Some people are inclined to talk as though the world were going to slip backward. Mr. Churchill said—not that it would, but that were we to fail of victory, the world would be wrapped in a darkness unequalled in the history of the past, or words to that effect. But our God is a forward-looking God, and a forward-moving God. The record of His achievements reads always as in the record of creation, "And the evening and the morning were the first day." And the second day! From darkness to light, not from light to darkness. From evening to morning—and daybreak, in due course, will come for this old world; for the Book closes with the story of a city that is so full of light that even the sun and the stars shall have faded out of observation, and from memory—"and there shall be no night there." Toward that, God is always moving; and this world will not be permitted to slip back into the unrelieved darkness of the days of Herod the king. Herod had his day, but this Child was "without beginning of days, or end of years". "From everlasting to everlasting he is God." Therefore we must not despair of the world.

VI.

Once again. HERE IS THE WISDOM OF FAITH IN CONTRAST WITH THE BLIND FOLLY OF UNBELIEF. Herod the king knew nothing, would learn nothing; was blind to

all spiritual reality. But there came to Bethlehem in his day wise men from the east. Of course, I know they were called wise by worldly standards, but they were men whom God had made wise with the wisdom that is from above, that is first pure and then peaceable.

I know, I know that this is an irreligious day. There are people who are more in sympathy with Herod than with the young Child; but there are always some who come to Jerusalem who are more interested in the young Child than in Herod, because God has made them wise. He never leaves Himself without witness: He does not do so now. And God will have His witnesses always.

VII.

What if I were to speak then—and I name it only—of THE MEEKNESS OF LOVE, AND THE MIGHTINESS OF HATRED? Why did He come? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." That is the whole message of the gospel.

When I came to Jarvis Street first, now more than thirty years ago, there was a man who was very critical, a man I had never met until after I became Pastor. He wrote me a letter asking for an appointment. We sat down together, and he said to me, "Did I understand you to say last Sunday evening that Jesus Christ had to come into the world to make God willing to save sinners?" I replied, "I have not the remotest idea what you understood me to say; for I have no measurement of your understanding. I only know that I could not even in a nightmare have made any such declaration as you assume, of Christ's coming to make God willing to save a sinner. My dear friend, have you never read the verse that all the little children learn, John three, sixteen: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' It was because God loved the world that Jesus Christ came. He never would have come had that not been true."

You got "out" with someone with whom you had been in correspondence, you did not like his or her last letter. There was no open break, but you were not eager to reply. So the weeks passed by until they became months, and months lengthened into years; and now there is no communication between you. If God had not loved you and me, He would not have spoken to us. He would have said, "I will break all communication with earth." The mere fact that God condescends to speak at all is the mightiest certification of his undying love for us.

Yet how simple was His message, in the form of a little Child, born in a stable, and laid in a manger; and beside Him, Herod the king. Hatred entrenched, and in the ascendancy: Love in meekness, unostentatiously coming to the manger-cradle. That is God's way of doing. He comes still, meekly, to every one of us.

VIII.

I offer this last suggestion: A CONTRAST BETWEEN DEGENERATION AND REGENERATION. Herod was symbolic of a degenerate world, of a degenerate human nature, representative of the world of Adam by whose transgression "sin entered into the world"; but when it seemed to be at its blackest, "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea", the Beginner of a new race: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Jesus came as a little child to make it possible for us all to become little children again, that He might release such regenerative powers as would

make it possible for us to be born again, and to become children of God; and "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." I think it was W. Cullen Bryant who wrote long ago:

"When little boys with merry noise
In the meadows shout and run;
And little girls, sweet woman buds,
Brightly open in the sun;

"I may not of the world despair,
Our God despaireth not, I see;
For blithesomer in Eden's air
These lads and maidens could not be.

"Why were they born, if Hope must die?
Wherefore this health, if Truth should fail?
And why such Joy, if Misery
Be conquering us and must prevail?"

"Arouse! our spirit may not droop!
These young ones fresh from Heaven are:
Our God hath sent another troop,
And means to carry on the war."

"Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king"; and in these days, our days, of darkness, of cruelty, almost of despair, we do well to remember that God has not abdicated His throne. Regenerative forces are really, unseen by us, potentially at work; and it is verily true that "our God will send another troop, and means to carry on the war."

Let us pray:

"O Lord, we bless Thee for the sunshine of Thy truth, for Thou hast in Thy grace often made us thankful even for a star. We bless Thee that in spite of all untoward circumstances, in a world at war, we can rejoice in God our Saviour. Bless our simple meditation this evening. May it bring good cheer to our hearts, steadfastness to our spirits, resoluteness of will, and rest of mind; for Thy name's sake, Amen.

THE IMMEDIATE IMPERATIVE

By DEAN LYNN HAROLD HOUGH
Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A.

From *The British Weekly*

Through the Jarvis St. Pulpit and the columns of this paper we have been saying this in principle for years: "We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak."—Ed. G.W.

"Men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do."—1 Chronicles xii. 32.

There are many ways of being innocuous. One is never to state a truth in such fashion that any hearer is annoyed. The apostle of lofty generalisations gives one a sense of great heights. But somehow there is no battle above the clouds in the regions to which he mounts. Often he has a very beautiful face. It is all alight with a distant spiritual radiance like that produced by sunlight on the snow. His face is not marred more than the face of any other man. In fact, it is not marred at all. When he says that he is a prophet of the eternal, he does not mean that by means of his ministry time is shot through with an eternal glory. He substitutes the sense of the eternal for the awareness of time. And so in the oddest possible fashion he is betrayed by his very loftiness. His picture of the transfiguration does not include the epileptic boy in the valley. His very rightness becomes a subtle wrongness because it is a rightness somehow unrelated to the actual situation in which men live. He goes about like a soul without a body. He has no adequate instruments of contact with the contemporary world. He is utterly unlike the persons described in the First Book of Chronicles by the words, "Men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do."

I.

The fierce tensions of life demand the leadership of the apostle of concrete demands. The moment he appears, the

air becomes electric. It is not that he ignores the heights. But he always returns from the mountain top with the tables of the law. And when he finds his people worshipping a calf of gold or any other sort of idol, he is ready with unhesitating action. He is constantly restoring a lost authenticity to a religion which has substituted a golden fog for a cutting wind of actuality, which clears all mists away. He lives in your world. He meets your problems. He feels the stifling heats which burn your body and the deadly colds which freeze your blood. He understands the treachery of other men who betray you. And he understands your treachery which betrays other men. He comes straight from God, his face white and awed with the vision he has seen, to speak to this very world and this very situation in which you live. "He has understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." And his knowledge becomes a constant imperative of concrete demand.

There is, in truth, a profound moral evasion which hides under the name of spirituality. And the very refinement of the self-deception which fails to see the mockery of such an escape from responsibility is a tragic aspect of the experience of such spiritual ecstasy. The man who speaks impotently of the tragedy of the present war and turns to some inner sanctum of spiritual meditation without making a serious endeavour to understand the moral issues moving through the conflict, cherishing only spiritual distaste for conflict while men die for the very liberty which he enjoys, pays too great a price for his lonely house of the mind where worship itself is blighted and turned into a deceptive pride. The inner peace which can come only when the moral intelligence has been put to sleep is the peace of a pseudo-spirituality. There is such a creature in the Church as a spiritual epicure. His vices are all vices of the inner life. And sometimes he corrupts society even more than do those who are guilty of grosser sins.

II.

For it is the nature of true spirituality to burst into a destructive flame in the presence of evil. Elijah can have no peace with the prophets of Baal. There is no appeasement on Mount Carmel. True, Elijah must have his own lonely hour of humiliation, and must feel the very transforming power of God touching his own life. But even the voice of gentle stillness has no rebuke for his stern heroism on the Mount of Decision. The capacity for moral indignation is a part of all true spirituality. It would be a bitter thing if any Church were to come to this hard hour with a host of young people incapable of understanding the wrath of God against cruelty and tyranny and oppression. There is a hidden materialism in that sentimental substitute for virile religion which has no power to blaze with destructive energy against that which ought to be destroyed.

Archibald MacLeish has been confessing the utter inadequacy of the intellectuals of his own group as they faced the approaching cataclysm. Is it true that the same sort of inadequacy must be laid at the door of many a Church leader?

III.

How curiously unrelated to the real meaning of these stern days are the voices of those whose enthusiasm for national isolation has caused them to lead many of our young people into a moral and spiritual isolation which is even more tragic. There is a sense of ethical frustration about the very services of many a Church. And in many a pulpit stands a man who has almost made a fine art of misunderstanding the times.

Do the voices of the betrayed all about Europe mean nothing to us? Do the cries of the cruelly persecuted rise in vain to our ears? Do we dare wait for an act of God while we have been brains and strong right arms through which God can act if we will allow Him to do it? Do we dare to read the morning paper happy if the dying of other men and other men's sons has brought nearer—as we trust—the defeat of Hitler, while we remain spectators in an hour whose first and great demand is action? Have we not seen the meaning of the advancing mass of barbarism in Europe? As other nations have been divided and made helpless, have we completely failed to apply the lessons of their experience to our own land?

How do we expect history to measure our part in these terrible years when divided counsels and false idealism have palsied our hands? And has not the Christian Church its own particular place in the shame of this hour?

To be sure, there are minds which understand. There are voices which speak the ringing words of true leadership. And the relation of these words to an ethical religion should be made clear by a Church which understands that an hour which demands the clarion speech of the trumpet cannot be met by an appeal to the cooing of the dove. A moral religion must be a religion of moral action.

IV.

In every age there have been men in the Church who were helpless in great emergencies. They have divided the counsel of earnest souls and confused the discussion of desperate issues. But there have always been the men who knew that Israel must act. The immediate imperative has not been hidden from their eyes. The spectacle of courage betrayed by misguided thinking and of cowardice hiding under spiritual assumptions, of minds confused by false principles is always woeful enough. But there is the other good spectacle of the men who understand the times and who know and declare what Israel ought to do.

The Need of the Hour

The crying need of this, as of every other day, is a Heaven-sent revival. The irreligion of the masses, and the indifference of the vast majority of professing Christians even to great moral issues, to say nothing of the indifference toward the direct claims of Christ in the gospel, is little short of appalling. It seems as though our multiplying calamities are having a definitely hardening effect upon the human conscience.

Before the Great War, the whole world shuddered at the sinking of the *Titanic*; then it was shocked at the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*. But gradually we became accustomed to casualty lists containing tens of thousands of names; and now the public mind seems to be benumbed. Nothing can shock it. Lord Robert Vansittart recalls the world-wide revulsion occasioned by the injustice done to a single Jew, Captain Alfred Dreyfus in the nineties, compared with apparent world-wide indifference to the sufferings of millions of Jews in our day. Surely we need to make every effort to keep our consciences tender, and never to allow our natures to become callous toward the sorrows of our kind. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

The Canadian Protestant League

We are glad to be able to report something more than progress in respect to the LEAGUE. The membership is increasing at a very rapid rate. It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that memberships are pouring in. Certainly, they reach the office in goodly numbers by every mail.

At the close of the Sunday evening service we met a lady who is not a member of Jarvis Street Church, but of another congregation, who had been in the office to get a good-sized package of Constitutions and envelopes. She was a business woman, and said she was going to try to enroll every Protestant where she works. We thought this was an excellent idea. The LEAGUE office will send Constitutions and envelopes, without charge, to anyone applying for them.

Why should not every member of the League try to enlist dozens of others? If we go about it properly, there is no reason why we should not have one hundred

thousand members within a year. The announcement of the formation of the organization has met with such a ready response that we are thrilled at the prospect of increase.

Furthermore, we take courage from the virulence of our opposition. There is nothing Rome fears more than an alert, vigorous, aggressive, Protestant organization. Rome prefers to work quietly, and in the dark. The technique of the Fifth Columnists must have originated in Rome. But the Protestant League is determined to turn on the searchlight. Rome will never waste ammunition upon a dead organization, and will walk softly to avoid waking a sleeping one. We ask no quarter from Rome, we expect none—and we are determined to give none.

Only this week a French-Canadian Roman Catholic called to see us. We told him we had no quarrel with individual Roman Catholics; we had no word to say against French-Canadians; nor had we any desire to find occasions to speak against them; nor had we any intention of speaking against Quebec as a province. But we told him that with the Roman Catholic Hierarchy we would hold no diplomatic communications at all; that so far as we are concerned, we are the implacable enemy of Roman Catholicism. And even as the Lord said "He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation", so must Evangelical Christianity be always at war with the Roman Catholic Church until the Lord Himself shall come to destroy it.

The Ottawa Meeting

Letters continue to reach us from Ottawa. Many more members have been added; and we have heard from a host of people who were disappointed in being unable to find entrance to our last meeting in Ottawa. At the earliest convenient date we propose to visit Ottawa again, and shall hold a meeting in the largest available auditorium.

We venture to exhort the entire membership of the LEAGUE to be always at it, helping to roll up a mighty LEAGUE membership.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 6 First Quarter Lesson 1 January 4th, 1941

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

THE NEED OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Lesson Text: Romans 1:1-20; 2:1-16.

Golden Text: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"—Romans 1:16.

For Reading: Romans 1:21-32; 2:17-29.

FOR JUNIOR SCHOLARS:

The truth that everyone needs Christ may be emphasized by means of illustrations suggested by such passages as these: Psalm 130:3; Isa. 53:6; 57:20, 21; Jer. 10:23; John 8:34.

FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS:

I. The Prologue of the Epistle—1:1-17.

Paul introduces himself to his readers as a bond-slave of Jesus Christ (Tit. 1:1; Jas. 1:1; Jude 1), and as His apostle, one chosen and designated for a specific task (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1, 12). The Romans, among whom slavery

was an established institution, would readily understand the term "bond-slave" as implying one who yielded unquestioning obedience to his Master.

Paul had been commissioned to preach the Gospel of God (Acts 9:11-16; 22:12-15; Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1:25), the Gospel which centred around the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is pre-eminent in His humanity and pre-eminent in His Deity. On the human side He was of noble parentage, born of the princely house of David (Isa. 11:1; Matt. 1:1; Lk. 1:32, 69; 3:23, 31; Acts 13:22, 23). On the Divine side He is superior to the angels and all the heavenly hosts (Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 1:1-8; 1 Pet. 3:22). His humanity was shown in His Incarnation and His Deity was attested by His Resurrection (Acts 2:27-31; 13:35-37).

Paul considered himself as the ambassador of God, appointed to call all people to allegiance to their Ruler. In receiving the message of salvation they were displaying obedience to the Divine command, for faith is the exercise of the will. Men are commanded to repent and believe the Gospel (Mk. 1:15; Acts 6:7; 1 Pet. 1:22). As Sunday School teachers and workers we are the Lord's representatives to speak His message in His name (2 Cor. 5:18-20), and those who reject the Gospel are answerable, not to us, but to the Lord (Rom. 14:12).

Paul was called to be an apostle (verse 1), while his readers were called to be saints (verse 4). The word "saint" as used in modern times sometimes means "absolutely perfect" or perhaps "sanctimonious", but in the Scriptures it describes the believer as one who is considered holy in Christ (1 Cor. 6:11). God in His grace looks upon us, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Christ, with Whom we have become identified (Gal. 3:27). Let us walk in accordance with our holy calling (Eph. 4:1).

Since the Apostle had been commissioned to preach the Gospel among all nations, and the Romans had been called of God, a visit to their country was included in the official program of the Lord's ambassador. Furthermore, it was in line with his personal desire (verses 8-12) and his private duty (verses 13-15). Such intense zeal for the spiritual welfare of others should characterize each one of us.

Paul regarded himself as being in debt to everyone. He held the Gospel as a sacred trust; he was the trustee of the inheritance, and was under obligation to distribute the riches of the grace of God to those for whom it was intended (1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:10, 11). Sometimes we fail to grasp the responsibility of being Christians (1 Cor. 9:16-18).

The theme of the Epistle to the Romans is clearly and concisely stated in verses 16 and 17. The Gospel is the revelation of the righteousness of God, and the terms on which that righteousness is bestowed upon man have been established by the Lord Himself. The Gospel came as the dynamic of God, as "the highest and holiest vehicle of divine power", showing men the way of life and enabling them to walk therein. Faith in Christ is the only condition upon which salvation may be obtained, and it is the universal condition. All men, without distinction of race or culture, must be saved by faith, if they are to be saved at all.

II. The Guilt of the Irreligious World—1:18-20.

God's holiness is revealed to believers as grace, but to unbelievers as wrath (Heb. 3:2). The wrath of God is His holy energy displayed in the condemnation of sin (John 3:36). The knowledge of His attitude toward sin can come only as a revelation from Himself, just as also the knowledge of His plan of salvation from sin (verse 17). In declaring the message of God we dare not omit the stern truth of God's wrath against sin.

Ungodly conduct is frequently the secret of ignorance of the truth; unbelief springs from unrighteousness (1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9). Men may hold, or rather hold down the truth by not facing up to it, as it were, by not allowing it to hold sway in their lives. While they remain in their wickedness they cannot comprehend God, for only the pure in heart shall see Him (Psa. 24:3, 4; Matt. 5:8).

God gives light to every man coming into the world (John 1:9-11). He has revealed in nature His Divine attributes, such as His majesty, wisdom and power (Psa. 19:1-6; 107:23, 24), so that those who refuse to know Him are without excuse. He has also revealed Himself and His will to the consciences of men (Rom. 2:15).

The rest of the chapter deals with the origin of idolatry and the philosophy of history. The history of religion among primitive tribes is a story of deterioration, not of evolution.

The majority failed to live up to the knowledge which was available, and hence lost the sense of God's eternal wisdom and power,

III. The Guilt of the Religious World—2:1-16.

Among the Romans, Greeks and Hebrews there were certain leaders who judged themselves superior to the common people. It is the same in our day. These condemn the sinners of the baser sort and lay down rules for others to follow (Matt. 23:1-4). While outwardly respectable, they secretly practise the very sins which they condemn. Their guilt is equally as great as that of the irreligious sinners. The holy eyes of God can penetrate all pretense; there is nothing which can be hidden from Him (verse 16; Prov. 15:11; 1 Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:13).

There are those who misinterpret and presume upon the kindness of God. Because He does not judge their sin immediately, they wrongly infer that He will overlook their iniquity. All sin will be punished, but in God's own time (Lk. 13:3; 2 Pet. 2:4-6, 9). When He seems to be silent, His holiness is manifesting itself in grace upon the sinners; He would have them come to repentance (Isa. 30:18; Acts 17:30, 31; 2 Pet. 3:9-11).

"Time works for God"; the impenitent who refuse His overtures of grace are continually adding to the sum-total of their iniquities. Although they may go unpunished for the time being, the measure of their sins will some day be complete, and the righteousness of God will then be fully revealed and vindicated. (Gen. 15:16; Matt. 23:32; 1 Thess. 2:16).

The judgment of God is described in this chapter as being according to truth (verse 2), inescapable (verse 3), righteous (verse 5), future (verse 5), according to men's deeds (verse 6), impartial (verse 12) and according to the standards set forth in the Gospel (verse 16).

In general, all men, regardless of race, privilege or condition, are divided into two classes; the godly and the ungodly; those who seek after those things which are good, eternal and glorious and those who resist the good. God will reward each according to his deserts (Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; Rev. 20:12, 13). First among the good works which God requires is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:28, 29).

Knowledge of the will of God is of no avail without obedience (Jas. 1:22-25; 4:17). There are evidently degrees of punishment for sin to correspond with the differences of priv-

ilege (Matt. 10:15; 11:20-25; 23:14; Jas. 3:1). The Gentiles did not have the laws of Moses, but they did have the law of God written in nature and in their consciences. All men are sinners before God, and all are without excuse.

Self-Explanatory

Venomous Anti-Catholic Is Aldermanic Candidate In Ward One

Opposed by Mr. R. Allen.

Toronto Ward One, at the forthcoming municipal elections, will be the scene of a contest specially interesting to Catholics. One candidate, Mr. Robert Allen, is a Catholic. Opposing him is the notorious Leslie H. Saunders, bigoted anti-Catholic agitator. Leslie H. Saunders, besides being Field Secretary for the Orange Order is editor of "Protestant Action," a paper that outdoes the "Orange Sentinel" in spraying the poison gas of bigotry; he is also secretary-treasurer of the recently-started Protestant League, of which the Rev. T. T. Shields is President. Leslie H. Saunders

The above is a photostatic reproduction of an item in last week's *Catholic Register*. We feel sure Protestants in Ward One will accept the challenge, and vote for Mr. Saunders. The best way to insure Mr. Saunders' election is to vote for Mr. Saunders only.

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