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"THE GOODNESS OF GOD"

THE Cynic rails at the concept of goodness, and finds none in heaven or on earth. The Unbeliever mocks at the idea of a Benign Providence overruling human affairs. The Evolutionist logically assumes the negation of a Personal Transcendent Deity; and that which, to such minds, may take the shape of a definitely formulated concept, is liable to become atmospheric in literature and current journalism, until the truth that God is good is in danger of being evaporated from human thought. Notwithstanding, "the earth is full of the goodness of God"; and the Believer can say, with Whittier, if we may quote him extensively:

"More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know:
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

"I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

"I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

"Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

"Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

"The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate,—I know
His goodness and His love.

"I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

"I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong.

"I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

"And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

"No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

"And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

To be devoid of a conviction of this truth is to be without any foundation for faith or hope. Never in human history has such goodness found an Incarnation as in the Man, Christ Jesus. He was born, He lived, He loved, He died; as no other man ever lived, and loved, and died. His presence in the world of men was no accident. His solitariness, His uniqueness, admits of but one explanation: He came down from Heaven, and brought the goodness of Heaven with Him. No phase, no experience, of human life, escaped Him; nor was there ever a human infirmity by which He was not touched. Yet cynicism found no place in His thought; nor did any but gracious words proceed out of His lips.

There is, therefore, no greater question than that which is directed toward the identification of His origin: Whence could such goodness come? Whom did such love as His reveal? To all this there is but one answer—Jesus Christ was, and is, God; and if He be God, then God is good; and we can understand why "the earth is full of the goodness of God".

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

The Partnership of Jehoshaphat and Ahab

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 12th, 1948
(Stenographically Reported)

"And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

"And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

"And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel.

"And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken.

"And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim;

"But sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.

"Therefore the Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honor in abundance.

"And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah."—2 Chron. 16:13—17:6.

"And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem.

"And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.

"Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God."

—2 Chron. 19:1-3.

"And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers.

"Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings."

—2 Chron. 21:19, 20.

I WOULD like you to give your thought for a little while this evening to the inspired biographies of two men, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and Ahab, king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was one of the best of Judah's kings: Ahab was not one of the worst, but *the* worst of the kings of Israel: "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." And yet the Scriptures tell us that somehow these two incompatibles, these two opposites, got together, and for a while were in political and military partnership; they wrought together for the same end, although they were so completely unlike each other.

It is a most interesting study, which I trust may be as informative, and as instructional as it is interesting.

I.

I begin THE STORY OF THE GOOD KING JEHOSEPHAT by remarking that, *Jehoshaphat came of a godly ancestry*. He had the great advantage of having a godly father. King Asa walked in the ways of the Lord. He was one of the truest of Judah's kings, and he was repeatedly divinely commended for his virtues; and was greatly honoured of his people when they laid him away in the sepulchre as having been a good and a godly man. It is written of him: "Concerning Maachah, the grandmother of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and

Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days." Jehoshaphat was peculiarly fortunate in having had such a father, having been privileged to enjoy his precepts, and his example. A tremendous responsibility rests upon the son of such a father.

So is it with us if we have had the special privilege of having been born into a godly home, where we were early blessed by the example of godly parents. I can say, though all should deride the Christian religion, and mock at the sincerity of the disciples of Christ—I can say before all the world that I know, beyond all possibility of doubt, that there were at least two genuine Christians, one was my father, the other was my mother; and the memory of their godly lives has been a perpetual inspiration to me.

I say to you parents here: you can leave your children no greater legacy than the memory of lives spent in the service of God. I do not mean mere church membership. I have had some sad experiences as a Pastor. I have known people who could pray and praise like angels, in church; but who played the very devil at home. I have known not a few who were very saintly in public, and almost fiendish in private, whose children were glad to escape from home, to get away from a fiery temper, and an ugly disposition, and a place that had become

little better than Hades. Oh, let it not be so with any one of us! By all means let us pray and praise in the house of the Lord; but let us see to it that before those who live with us every day we become exemplifications, incarnations, of the gospel we preach. Otherwise, better that you should make no profession at all, than that your children should be blighted by the memory of a hypocritical father or mother.

As for those of us who were blessed with godly parents, remember we shall be called to account for our special privileges. Young people who so begin life, have an inestimable advantage over those who fare long on life's pathway before they come to know the saving grace of God. To begin life with God, right from the beginning, is an advantage of incomparable estimation.

That was the story of Jehoshaphat. But *we cannot be saved by proxy*. It is of no use for you to say, "Oh, my father was a good man, and my mother was a good woman!" It is said of Jehoshaphat that he "sought to the Lord God of his father"; that he "prepared (his) heart to seek God". I think he said, "I am going to be a true servant of Jehovah, just as my father was." The God he knew was not the God of a book: He was the God of his father, Whose help and grace he had seen exemplified in his father's life. So he sought the Lord early, and determined he would walk in His commandments, "not after the doings of Israel". For himself he would abide strictly by the commandments of God, and walk in His ways.

You cannot, safely, make the best man or woman in the world your example, for at one point or other every one of us fails in some particular. God may help us in many ways, and He does; but if we go astray at one point, we are likely to lead other people astray. If you follow a human example, good as it may be, if you follow it blindly, you are far more likely to emulate that one's vices than his virtues.

I may have told you of a great preacher in the Midlands, in England, many years ago. I heard the story when I was a small boy. He was a very popular man, and his ministry was attended by enormous throngs of people. He was a great scholar, a man of mighty intellect. Sages sat at his feet. He was looked upon by many of the wise men of his day almost as though he were an oracle. But he had one defect: he had a very poor voice, and, poor as it was, he was unable perfectly to control it. Sometimes in some of his more fervent passages, when he became very emphatic, this indifferent voice of his would break, and go off into a most unpleasant squeak. But people put up with his squeak for the sake of the rest of his ministry.

Of course, such a man was followed by many young, budding, preachers, who wanted to learn how to preach. Hence they went to hear this great man; and resolved to copy him, to be a preacher just like he was. But the only thing they succeeded in copying was his squeak. That nearly always happens when you set before you a human example. It will be his defects rather than his virtues you will be likely to acquire.

Grateful, as doubtless he was, for his father's example, *Jehoshaphat sought the Lord for himself*. He studied the word of the Lord for himself. He walked in the commandments of God for himself, and avoided the errors of his kinsmen of the kingdom of Israel. So ought we to do.

I suppose it would be right to say that Jehoshaphat, putting it into New Testament language, was a converted

man. He sought the Lord with all his heart, and gave evidence of having found Him, by later walking in the way of His commandments. It is not enough that we should have the blessing and the memory of a godly home: we must have the greatest of all blessings, a personal acquaintance with the Saviour Himself. We must know Him for ourselves. We can be saved only by Christ's righteousness. "Godfathers" and "godmothers" notwithstanding, no human proxy can save us.

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the door
Of heaven, and let us in."

So far as Jehoshaphat had power to do so, he removed all traces of idolatry—not all, but so far as he was able to do so, he effected reforms in his kingdom. He removed many of the high places, and sought, by every means in his power, to root out all tendencies toward idolatry in Judah.

We cannot be too meticulous and careful in abiding by the teaching of the word of God. We must set ourselves constantly against the slightest deviation from that which is plainly and unmistakably revealed in the Scriptures. Let others take liberties with the Holy Scriptures if they will, but let us not do so, even though we may be called "narrow", "bigoted", "intolerant", and all the rest of it. Let us see to it that we are just as intolerant as the Bible. For years and years I have been asked to remember the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, very often reminded of it accompanied by a fist shaken in my face. My answer is this: by all means let us love, but let us never forget that love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth", and that which condones the slightest departure from revealed truth is not love, but the opposite: "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Jehoshaphat further gave public testimony to his faith by meeting all the emergencies of life in prayer. Jehoshaphat did not resort to all sorts of carnal expediences in order to further the prosperity of his kingdom. When an emergency arose, and he was faced with some great enemy, he always first of all turned to prayer himself, and called on the whole nation to seek the Lord. He was not afraid to let people know that as for himself his dependence was wholly upon God. Oh, what a blessing if we had public men like that to-day!—men who would openly, and before all the people, say: "Here is a national emergency. Here is a great difficulty, and the only One Who can solve it is God Himself, so let us get down before God and pray." I do not mean to talk about praying. I do not like people who talk much about praying. I don't like people to come to me, and say, "Now I have prayed about this." That may be assumed so far as the Christian is concerned. By all means let us pray about everything; and when we pray publicly, or give our testimony to our confidence in God, publicly, as we ought to do—the redeemed of the Lord should say so—let us do it without ostentation, and without boasting. I do not mind seeing anyone carrying a Bible: I like to see it. But I do not like to see anyone parading his Bible: "See, I am going to church, and I have my Bible with me"! Do not be ashamed of your religion. *Boast yourself in the Lord your God*; and let it be known that as for you, you meet the exigencies of life with prayer. But

there is a way of doing that, so that people will know it, without Pharisaically boasting about it. I do not need to boast that I breathe. I do not need to say to people: "Look at me! I breathe!" They would say, "Of course you do." We do not need to tell everyone that we pray—we pray—we pray! Of course we pray, if we are Christians. That may be taken for granted. But there are times when some great matter faces us, when we ought not only to pray ourselves, but to call others into cooperation with us in the ministry of intercession, and not be ashamed to let all the world know that as for ourselves we are willing to, "Commit (our) way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Jehoshaphat was a *very practical man*. He was king. He was responsible for the integrity of his kingdom, for the inviolability of its boundaries; and though he trusted in the Lord, and committed his way unto the Lord, he had a standing army of more than a million men. We read of how he "placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken". He fortified his whole kingdom. What for? Against the incursions of the enemy. He put his people on guard. He said, "You are not secure. You must always stand on guard, with the blessing of God, and defend your kingdom."

A few years ago prohibition was enacted in this country. I am not ashamed to say I am a prohibitionist. Then certain people set to work to bring the whole law into disrepute. What ought to have been done in that day was to put forces in all the garrisons. We ought to have remembered that the enemy would come back again, that there would be a counter offensive, and we ought to have been prepared to meet it. You cannot fight once and for all and be done with it. It was so in the last war. It is so in the battles of the Lord: "These are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan." Then there is the enumeration of those who were left. The Lord said to one generation, "The next generation must fight the same battles as you have fought. The next generation must pass through the same trials you have had." So has it been through all the history of the Christian church: we have to be like Jehoshaphat, continually on guard against the incursions of any possible enemy, even from the land of Israel.

But Jehoshaphat did more than that. *He commissioned five princes, and called a large number of Levites*, and he said to them, "You go throughout all the cities of the kingdom, gather the people together, and teach them the law of the Lord." Jehoshaphat believed that prevention was better than cure, and so he would have his people so taught that they would immediately recognize any departure from that which is wrong.

Spurgeon used to talk about people's being inoculated with "Bible". It has long been my ambition, as Pastor, that by giving you "line upon line", "precept upon precept", "here a little, and there a little" you should be so filled with the knowledge of God's word, and so fortified against any attack of the evil one that you would instantly discern anything that is unscriptural, that there would be within you a kind of divine instinct that would say at once, "That is not right; that is not of the Lord": The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you

of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." So Jehoshaphat tried to instruct the people of the Lord.

If you know the truth of scripture, you are made a trustee of that truth; you are put in trust with the gospel. And you have that trust in order that you may share it with someone else. If you know the way of life, you are under obligation to share your knowledge of the way of life with someone else. If you were motoring, or walking, and came to a crossroad, and you heard someone say, "I am going to such a place", and you saw that person immediately take the wrong road, would you not think it most neighbourly for you to say, "Excuse me, sir, did you not say you were going to such a place?" "Yes." "Well that is not the way. If you want to get there, take this road." Shall we let people take "the broad road", and not warn them, and invite them to take the right road?

Jehoshaphat not only sent princes and Levites, but *he went himself*, and called the people together, and he, himself, though a king, instructed them in the ways of the Lord. What followed? He went, it is said, "to bring the people back to the Lord".

Now *what happened to this good king?* He enjoyed peace and prosperity. He had great riches and honour, and the fear of the Lord fell upon all the nations round about, so that Jehoshaphat, himself, on his own account, had no war, and had no real use for his horses and chariots of war. What a great man he was! I believe the Lord does prosper us. He may not give us riches and honour, but His are the ways of wisdom whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace". There is nothing that can possibly harm us if we be followers of that which is good.

I will defy all the enemies in the world, the Devil included, to do me any injury. If we fear God we need not be afraid of anyone. Fear the Lord and you need not be afraid of anything that walks, or flies, either. Depend upon Him, and if you do, you can be absolutely independent, not of *some* people, but independent of *all* people. Stand with God: that is the main consideration.

II.

I turn now to THE STORY OF JEHOSEPHAT'S PARTNERSHIP WITH AHAB. *Jehoshaphat had one weakness*. He was a very sociable, agreeable, man. He wanted to be hail-fellow-well-met with everyone. He wanted to be on good terms with everyone. Historically, there had been a sharp separation of Judah from Israel because of Israel's idolatry. But Jehoshaphat said, "That is ancient history. I do not see why that should bother us now. I think I will go down and make a social call upon Ahab." I suppose Ahab was greatly surprised when Jehoshaphat went down to see him. He was delighted, and he killed oxen, and sheep, and made a tremendous ado, and lavished the most bountiful hospitality upon Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was well received. They fell to talking about certain things, and Ahab said, "By the way, do you know that Ramoth-gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?" "Oh," said Jehoshaphat, "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses." Do you want help? Here I am!" Ahab said, "That is fine. Let us get ready." Then he called his four hundred prophets of Baal, and he said, "Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they

said, Go up." They knew what Ahab wanted them to say, and they said what they were expected to say.

But the fear of God that was in Jehoshaphat came out, and he said, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?" Ahab said, "Yes, there is one, but I don't like him. He is so narrow, so bigoted: he always prophesies evil and not good." But he sent for him. And Micaiah came, and first of all mocked Ahab by repeating what the others had said. But at last he told him the truth, saying that if he went to Ramoth-gilead he would never come home again. Ahab said, "Did I not tell you? Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son, and say, Thus saith the king. Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." As he was being led away, Micaiah said, "If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me."

Now was Jehoshaphat's chance. He ought to have said, "Now Ahab, the Lord is against this adventure of yours. We have it on the authority of His word. I said I would go with you. I wanted to be neighbourly; but you are my witness that I proposed that we should inquire of the Lord; and there is no use inquiring of the Lord if we do not do what He tells us to do. So if you go to Ramoth-gilead, you go alone: I am not going with you." But he was not strong enough to say that. Far away in Judah he could have said it, but he could not say it in the company of Ahab. He had no business to be there!

Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. Now the Syrian king had said, 'Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.'" And as soon as the Syrians saw Jehoshaphat they said, "There he is! Get him." When Jehoshaphat saw that the battle was gathering around him he cried out, and said, "I am not the king of Israel!" Poor silly man! So wise, so great in so many ways, and so utterly foolish and weak at one point!

But there was someone in that Syrian army who took an arrow from his quiver, and drew a bow at a venture, and as he drew a strong bow, an unseen Hand was laid upon his, and the arrow flew "and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness." Oh, unsaved man, you cannot disguise yourself. God knows how to send His arrow into your heart. Then the king cried out to the driver of his chariot, "Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. . . . And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the Lord which he spake. And that was the end of Ahab."

Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem in peace. He almost lost his life by that adventure; but he escaped by the mercy of God. But when he got home there was someone waiting for him. Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to him, "Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." What were you doing in Sa-

maria? What right had you to join affinity with Ahab? It was an evil partnership. You escaped; but 'wrath is upon (you) from before the Lord.'

My dear friends, let me say this to you: *Be very careful of your social affiliations.* Be very careful of the company you keep. Do not be so sure that you can turn them in your direction. Give them your testimony, but be very careful of your social connections. There is a proverb which says that "A man is known by the company he keeps"; "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful". It is very necessary that even Christian people should keep out of bad company.

A young man I knew once, when bicycling was all the rage, belonged to a certain bicycle club. He had not been a drunkard by any means, but he was slightly addicted to drink. He professed conversion, and came to our prayer meeting, and gave his testimony. Again and again I said to him, "Have you given your testimony to your ungodly associates, those whom you meet about your work?" "No; I do not know that I have." "Well, go to them, every one, and say to them, I am a Christian, and I want you to expect from me the behaviour of a Christian." But he did not do so.

One day he came to me greatly crestfallen. I said, "What is the matter?" "Oh, I have fallen into the old habit; in fact, I went further than I have ever gone before. The other day I really got intoxicated. I went bicycling with my friends from the club. We came to an inn, and the boys said, 'Come on in, and let us have a drink.' I had not the strength to say, 'No'." I said, "So-and-So, don't you see that you had selected the very worst, most difficult, spot on earth in which to confess Christ? Why did you not tell those boys one by one, until you had told all that you were a Christian?"

I shall show you *what happened to Jehoshaphat by cultivating the society of Ahab.* In the first place he became involved with him politically, and militarily. He got into battle with him. He became entangled with the affairs of another king, something that was not his affair at all, and something with which he need have had nothing to do.

I wonder if we do not sometimes put ourselves directly into trouble. God can preserve us; but if you deliberately put yourself into the fire, you are likely to be burned. That is the meaning of the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation". Jehoshaphat's mistake was in calling upon Ahab in the first place. He ought to have kept out of bad company. I rather think that by the fact that he visited Ahab, and by volunteering the use of his army to assist Ahab, he encouraged that wicked king in his evil doings. Ahab might not have attempted it left to himself. But when Jehoshaphat said, "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses", thus reinforced, Ahab said, "Oh, I can win." Be careful lest by your very presence, and by an unwarranted, and unwise generosity you may help people to do what ought not to be done.

Then Jehoshaphat did what he had never done individually, as a man, when he saw what the word of God said: *in association with Ahab he had not strength to resist the evil influences of Ahab, but acted in direct opposition to the word of God.*

I have had hundreds of people come to me in the course of years, and say, "The church where I go troubles me very much." "Why?" Well, my minister not only does not preach the gospel, but he sometimes makes light of

the Word of God. He denies some of the fundamentals of the faith. I don't know what to do." I have said to them, "That would be a very simple problem to me." "What would you do?" I said, "If I heard my minister talk like that this Sunday, that would not be "my church" next Sunday. I should get out."

Some business men came to me one time, and asked me to go to a certain city to preach at 8.30 at night in a great theatre meeting. They said they always had great crowds, and they advertised the visiting speaker. I said, "How do you manage to support your own churches, and to get through your services, and get up to that theatre, and make all preparations for that great service by 8.30? How do you manage that without neglecting your own duty in the churches to which you belong?" "Oh, we don't go Sunday night. We have to get to the theatre to get all things in readiness." I said, "Might you not do more good if you stayed at home, and helped in your own church?" They replied, "But what if you belonged to a church that had no testimony?" I said, "I would not belong to such a church. I would not support a church where the Word of God, and the Deity of Christ, and His vicarious atonement were denied. I would not support it by my presence, nor by my gifts": "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." If the compromising Jehoshaphats who keep step with the Ahabs of our day, ecclesiastically, would just put the Lord first, and stand for Him, we should have a revival. But instead of being at home, attending to business, they are off somewhere helping Ahab in his evil enterprise.

III.

Poor Jehoshaphat! WHAT HAPPENED IN THE END? God had mercy upon him, and the judgment did not fall in his day. But Jehoshaphat had a son, whose name was Jehoram, and Ahab had a son whose name was Jehoram. They had become so friendly that each called his son by the same name. But Ahab had a daughter, too; whose name was Athaliah. She may have been a very attractive young woman. And the son of Jehoshaphat, because his father visited at Ahab's home, made the acquaintance of Athaliah. He married the daughter of Jezebel, and she was a facsimile of her mother. She was another fiend in human form.

What happened to Jehoram? I have not time to tell you how that whole house went to ruin. Jehoshaphat went into partnership with Ahaziah, the successor of Ahab, in building ships to go to Tarshish for gold. But the Lord sent a storm, and those ships were broken in the very dockyard where they were made: they never did sail. But as for Jehoram, the affinities which his father, Jehoshaphat, had established with the house of Ahab, absolutely destroyed him, and his family; blotted it out. And when he died, as I read to you to-night, there were no spices. He died unlamented, and they "made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers". He died "without being desired". The whole kingdom said, "Good riddance!" Why? Because his father made the mistake of cultivating the wrong society, and introducing his son there, it nullified all the influences of Jehoshaphat's godly character, and brought Jehoram's whole family to absolute ruin.

My simple messages to you this evening is to keep just as far away from Ahab and his family as you pos-

sibly can. Walk in the ways of the Lord. Keep the company of Christian people. Find all your friendships and associations among those who love the Lord as you love Him, and they will never tempt you to turn away from His commandments. I know that for a little while that sort of association and partnership may seem to be profitable, but mark my words—nay rather mark the word of the Lord: In the end of the day when the sun goes down the dogs always lick the blood of Ahab, and Athaliah, and of Jehoram. You may laugh at the word of the Lord in the morning, but when the evening of life comes, you will find it always comes to pass "according to the word of the Lord".

This, young people, and older people, this is the only safe guide in family life, in our social relationships without the family circle, in our church connections, in our business, in everything let the word of the Lord be our guide.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the teaching of Thy word, and we pray that every one of us may be separated unto Jesus Christ, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

By request, we shall sing the great hymn, "Abide with me".

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good with healing in Thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me!

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Be Thou Thyself before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee.
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Amen.

RELIGIOUS TEACHING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A JEWISH Rabbi has raised somewhat of a storm by complaining that the giving of religious instruction in public schools in some cases is affording opportunity for teachers to try to convert Jewish pupils "to Christianity". On the other side loud protests have been made denying the Rabbi's allegation.

In this instance we are on the side of the Rabbi. It is no part of the function of the State to teach religion; and to introduce religious teaching in the schools in any form is almost bound to involve infringement of the rights of conscience. We have said this so often, we need not dilate upon it here. It is enough to say that, in principle, the Rabbi is on our side, and we are on his.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

The Charge to Preach the Word

An Address Delivered to the Convention of the Union of Regular-Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, October 21st, 1948

By Rev. John Wilmot, of Highgate Road Baptist Church, London, England

"I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."—2 Tim. 4:1-2.

I DESIRE to thank our Chairman for his kindly words of introduction, and to acknowledge the welcome which has been accorded me by the President and Mr. Slade, the Dean and Professors of the Seminary, the friends here in Jarvis Street Church, and indeed, generally.

The Pastors here present will suffer the reminder that their chief ministerial calling is to preach. The delegates from the churches will recognize that their pastors are so called, and will see that, in the midst of the many and varied claims made upon them, they take time with the Word of God to prepare themselves unto this high duty. The students in the Seminary pursue their studies mainly that they also may become disciplined effectively to follow this calling. From my youth up I always wanted to preach, and most of my public life has been spent in attempting to do so. Now, for a while I am undergoing a kind of conversion, not too successful I think to myself, from preaching to lecturing, endeavouring to contribute such as I have to the common fund of Biblical training that these young men may become preachers of the Word. It has been said that the difference between a sermon and a lecture may be decided in this way: of a lecture one may take notes, but not of a sermon. The lecture is addressed to the mind, the sermon to the heart. Both, of course, are given orally, but the sermon only is preached. Preaching is the principal thing.

Today preaching is largely at a discount. In designing their meeting-places, though unattractive as compared with the amenities for worshippers in our time, and affording little comfort to the congregation, our Non-conformist fathers saw to it that the pulpit was given the central place. Mr. Whitcombe has referred to the rather ornate marble and alabaster pulpit in the church where I minister in London, and where some years ago we had the pleasure of a visit from him. I have sometimes remarked, as did my predecessor who preached there for fifty years, that the rest of the building being much less elaborate, seemed scarcely in keeping with the pulpit; but it certainly was given a central position, and perhaps even its material attractiveness was considered by its designers over seventy years ago not unbecoming in consideration of the high purpose of its use, namely, for preaching the exceeding riches of God's grace.

The earlier generations considered preaching the chief ordinance committed to the Christian Church. If attraction were needed, it was not to be found in ceremony

or ritual, or in the choir, or the niceties and decorum of ordered worship, not even in the personality of the preacher himself—though there were mighty and eloquent preachers and withal due reverence in the meetings—but in the *preaching*, because faithful men then preached the *Word*. That is apostolic. Was it not Paul's guarded objective that his speech and his preaching should not be with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power? And wherefore? That the faith of his hearers should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Cor. 11). How extensively has the church departed from, if not abandoned, her original standards. Non-conformists, Baptists included, following the ceremonialists, now construct their places of worship with the pulpit in the corner, giving the central place to the table and sometimes to the open baptistery also. Thus the observance of the Church's ordinances have been reduced to a formality, because the prior ordinance of preaching the Word has become displaced and is accorded a subsidiary place in the service; for preaching is, indeed, in a corner, cramped and confined. Consequently *sermons* are becoming a thing of the past; essays and homilies take their place, and whereas formerly preaching occupied most of the service time—and time is essential for Scripture exposition—now ten or at the most twenty minutes are considered time enough. "We gather for worship", some ignorantly say, "not for preaching". But what is preaching, as Mr. Spurgeon remarked, if of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and received in penitence and faith unto effectual working, but worship in its highest form? "In God I will praise His Word," said the Psalmist. "I will praise Thee, even Thy Truth, O Lord."

I.

To preach, then is a SOLEMN CHARGE, a charge invested with divine authority as the commandment of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37). The apostle was about to conclude his own preaching ministry, recognizing that the time of his departure was at hand. Years before he had anticipated this and had declared his determination never to abandon his preaching vocation until the appointed end even though he had been advised that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Undeterred by such and seeking no well-earned ease of retirement he said: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself that I may finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord

Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Paul had received appointment to preach, and from that day he had kept the faith (1:11; 4:7); Timothy now was under a similar charge (1:6-8), and was in turn to appoint others (11:2), and so with Paul as their exemplar (3:10, 14; cf. 1 Tim. 1:16), the preaching succession should be maintained in the Church until the Lord's appearing.

Prepared by his training in the Scriptures from childhood, Timothy had now become a "man of God", a prophet, thoroughly outfitted unto every good work, and of chief importance, to preach the Word. In the perilous times of his own day, as we in ours, of which forewarning is given, he would continue in the things he had learned of his faithful teacher Paul, even the profitable and sufficiently equipping instruction of the God-breathed Scriptures; and being fully persuaded, would find himself possessed of a determination and spiritual competency to meet the varied oppositions of the enemy by preaching the Word. Moreover, with equal seriousness he would anticipate the Divine scrutiny. The "charge" is made in prospect of judgment ahead (4:1). Some ministers would seem to view the office as a pastime or picnic wherein to entertain their auditors. They may, indeed, have received some honours from the schools, but to "the blessed ordination of the pierced hands" they are strangers. Timothy had not so learned Christ; neither have we. Preachers are doubly accountable to God. "Each one of us shall give account of himself to God", but preachers are responsible for their churches or congregations, therefore it is enjoined: "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). Thus Timothy was exhorted, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:17).

Are not these counsels applicable today, and so being, do we not well to covet a quickened sense of vocation? "How shall they preach," Paul reasoned, "except they be sent?" Being himself thus sent, the apostle never allowed other duties, however important and divinely imposed, to supplant preaching. All else was subsidiary. "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel", he wrote the partisan-minded Corinthians; not because he undervalued believer's baptism, for he doctrinally taught it (Rom. 6), and even when some were found already to have been immersed but without due instruction and understanding, he counselled a repeated baptizing (Acts 19). But baptism was in a name, and the name involved a new loyalty (e.g. 1 Cor. 10—Moses). To some therefore, who named Paul their party leader he asked, "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" He had himself officiated in few instances anticipating this very snare. What opportunity was his to make disciples unto himself, to make himself a name; but Paul never competed for leadership. Moderatorship was nothing to him, but "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel", expressed his solemn sense of duty, and so he took occasion of the Corinthian divisions to declare himself with some emphasis upon the priority of the ordinance of preaching (1 Cor. 1-11).

Did you ever read the "Imaginary Letter" which appeared in THE GOSPEL WITNESS some time ago (Sept. 5, 1940) copied from *The Scottish Guardian*? It is supposed to represent, not exaggeratedly, we think, how

the apostle might have aired his importance and become a mere time-server, losing the sense of vocation as is the case with so many today? Here it is:

Dear Sir and Brother:

Doubtless you will recall the invitation you extended to me, to come over into Macedonia and help the people of that section. You will pardon me for saying that I am somewhat surprised that you should expect a man of my standing in the church seriously to consider a call on such meagre information. There are a number of things I should like to learn before giving my decision, and I would appreciate your dropping me a line addressed to me at Troas. No mention was made of the salary I was to receive. While it is true that I am not preaching for money, there are certain things that need to be taken into account. I have been through a long and expensive course of training; in fact I may say with reasonable pride that I am a Sanhedrin man. The day is past when you can expect a man to rush into a new field without some idea of the support he is to receive. Kindly get the good Macedonian brethren together and see what can be done in the way of support.

You have told me nothing about Macedonia beyond the implication that the place needs help. What are the social advantages? Is the church well organized? I recently had a fine offer to return to Damascus at an increase of salary, and am told that I made a very favourable impression on the church at Jerusalem. You might mention these facts, and also that some of the brethren in Judea have been heard to say that if I kept on, in a few years I might have anything in the gift of the church. I will say that I am a first-class mixer, and especially strong on argumentative preaching. If I accept the call, I must stipulate for two months' vacation and the privilege of taking an occasional lecture tour. My lecture on "Over the Wall in a Basket" is worth two dollars of any man's money".

The letter supposes how the apostle may have acted had he been imbibed by the spirit of modern professionalism, nor would the writer's imagination have been so prompted were he not aware of examples of this kind of thing. Alas, the sense of vocation, of a solemn charge and call from God, the appointment and the placement of the Holy Ghost, is largely absent, and pastoral settlement even in the Baptist denomination is made subject to a carnal officialism. Small churches contributing to a sustentation fund with a view to receiving financial aid when a call is given, may exercise their freedom in so doing with judgment and prayer for the divine leading; albeit, the choice may be of a spiritually minded and in other respects a suitable man, but unless this have the approval of "headquarters" such expected assistance is denied. Not the mind of the local assembly but the machinery of the central authority ultimately determines the settlement, and so the "charge" is not a matter of faith but of formality. Baptists will need to learn over again appropriately to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free", or be shackled with officialism. Formerly recognition was of a man's spirituality and preaching and pastoral ability, that is, of the divine call. Today the ministry has degenerated to a profession or trade. Men know that, as in a trade union, submission to headquarters secures a job and a wage. Some years ago, responding to a friend's invitation to address anniversary services, his Pastor met me with his car and as we rode alone he asked, "How long have you been at Highgate Road?" I told him. "And you here?" I asked. "Oh, nearly three years," he replied, "but I've put my name down." Not being conversant with this way of things I asked him to explain, and I learned that while nothing in his church warranted a change so

soon, the minister having already held short pastorates in different counties, had no other reason than his desire "to see Devonshire or Somerset", and had put his name on the moderator's list for transfer! I believe he accordingly was accommodated on official recommendation. Let us rather seek a solemn sense of vocation, of being called and sent and charged by the Spirit of God, and so to "preach the Word".

II.

The charge is to PREACH: and always to preach. Of John Berridge, whose tomb (in Bedfordshire, England) recently was renovated by some who revered his memory, it is said that he frequently preached in parishes other than his own. His Bishop, having received complaints of this, called Berridge to give account, whereupon he assured the Bishop he had preached without his own parish on two occasions only, and referred his lordship to these words—"in season and out of season". Yes, that is when we are to preach, and the season of some faithful men may be more out than in. "Whether they will hear or whether they will forbear", was the corresponding injunction to the man of God of old (Ezek. 11:5, 7). In preaching the instruction is to "reprove, rebuke, exhort", in accordance with the declared profitableness of the Scriptures in the knowledge of which, it might be said, Timothy had graduated; for the Scripture is profitable for teaching and conviction in doctrine, as also for correction and instruction in duty. Preaching would also include teaching and should be exercised with long-suffering, which, apart from the positive forewarning that such would be the case, supposes conditions of hostility to the wholesome Word.

But why *preach*? Might not some other procedure or methods be employed to accomplish the evangelical purpose of God? It is to be noticed that the comprehensive achievement of the holy scriptures is the making wise unto salvation, and that salvation is through faith in Christ Jesus (3:15-17). The implication, therefore, is that apart from the ministry of the Word of God men are found without wisdom and faith; and are, therefore, both foolish and infidel. And such is the case. The Word alone is calculated to remedy this situation in which spiritually mankind otherwise is irretrievably ruined.

There are *fundamental reasons* inherent in the divine good pleasure which make preaching indispensable. It is far too late in the course of the world's speculations to experiment with any other saving proposition, for "after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). Not irrelevant to this declaration is the fact that when the Scriptures mark the *divine pleasure*, order and beauty and law and equity and balance are in view. The devil and sin overturned this in the beginning, and by God's redeeming undertaking a restoration is effected. "He will beautify the meek with salvation." "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." His pleasure in creation also will be restored (Rev. 4:11), and in "the dispensation of the fulness of times" all will have been perfected "according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1). "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased", was the Father's testimony to Him Who as our Representative when He came into the world, He saith, "I delight to do Thy will. O God, yea Thy law is within My heart (Ps. 40; Heb. 10). And so, it

was predictively written of Him: "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53). Now, it is the accomplishment of this divine good pleasure which constitutes the word of the truth of the gospel we are charged to preach, and by the preaching of which it is His pleasure to save believers, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11). We observe, therefore, the integrity of the prophet's rejoinder to the sinful nation when he declared the Word of the Lord: "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth", and "yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal, O house of Israel. Are not My ways equal? Are not your ways unequal?" (Ezek. 18).

Somehow, then, the preaching of the Word and Faith which is born of it contribute to the restoration of the divine order and equity and balance of things in a world rendered chaotic through sin's upheaval, for both preaching and believing please God. We are told that "faith cometh by hearing the Word of God", and in the sequence of the appointed order issuing in the sinner's salvation, the being "sent" to "preach" that Word is essential, for if "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved", they must believe in order to call, and hear in order to believe, and men must preach in order that they may hear, and be sent in order to preach (Rom. 10). "But," the argument continues, "they have not all obeyed the gospel for Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" How and whence, then, came unbelief? Tracing things to their origins, as the Scriptures do, we answer, By hearing. What preacher? The Deceiver, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, who, Paul tells us, "is transformed into an angel of light", perhaps, as a messenger of truth, so that "it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11). Hence, he "blindeth the minds of them that believe not" (2 Cor. 4). The modern emphasis is often placed upon living, upon practice, to the disparaging of doctrine which is to be expounded and preached, and the exemplary is stressed rather than the expository. But unbelief and sin entered, not through example, but through preaching and hearing, the preaching and hearing of the lie: "Hath God said?" Salvation, therefore, for the divine ways are equal, cometh not of example, not even the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, but of preaching and believing the gospel of the grace of God, proclaiming how the crime and guilt of our unbelief and sin are atoned for in the satisfaction effected by the guiltless, sinless, holy Son of God Who as our Representative lived and died and rose again. Our Puritan theologians called this achievement of the Lord Jesus the meritorious cause or ground of salvation, and preaching and faith its instrumental means.

How long, we may be allowed to enquire, did that lying angel of light preach in Paradise ere he accomplished the overthrow of the two creatures made in the likeness and image of God? It seems certain that "the anointed cherub that covereth" who was "in Eden the garden of God", "full of wisdom and perfect in beauty" until his heart was lifted up because of his beauty and his wisdom corrupted by reason of his brightness", was set there as the servant of man, the attendant upon the human creation (Ezek. 28; Luke 10:18). His heart lifted up in the pride of jealousy, he forfeited his station of trust and became the tempter, and by employment of the serpent, with beguiling subtilty, compassed, perhaps, gradually, the fall of the two

noble, federal beings made in the similitude of God. In this evil sense he may have been patiently persistent, even longsuffering, until he gained ear, eye, mind, heart, and the whole being capitulated. For even now in our fallen strengthlessness (Rom. 5:6), temptation does not usually gain the mastery with abruptness; there is a weakening of resistance by persistent enticement. Is it not written that this evil one left our Lord but "for a season"? We do not know, therefore, the duration of the first Adam's subjectness to the tempter's devices; but we do know that this deceiving preacher persisted until he gained his object. Thus unbelief and sin entered the world through preaching. And the point of emphasis here is that the restoration, by the law of faith and the equitable balancing of things required that through the preaching and hearing of the Word of Truth, faith unto salvation should be effected. The promised Seed of the Woman, first ministering in life and then giving His life a ransom, has balanced the account, and by men of God qualified by knowledge of the inspired Scriptures to preach that gospel, believing sinners are reconciled to God.

But there are *circumstantial reasons* for preaching sound doctrine occasioned by conditions in the churches. Not only is preaching an ordination instant until the end of the age, but a peculiar urgency may demand it. "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine"; therefore, preach it! "They shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables"; therefore, preach the Word. Is not this "time" now with us? Is there not a prevalent distaste of wholesome doctrine? A dearth had visited the land, and the sons of the prophets gathered wild gourds with the herbs to make pottage. "And it came to pass as they were eating that they cried out, O man of God, there is death in the pot. But he said, Then bring meal" to counteract the poison (2 Kings 4:40-41). The Word of God is competent to meet every situation. A discerning pastor, accustomed to "feed the flock", recognizing some spiritual decline in their midst, addressed them one morning in fashion different from his accustomed manner, which quickly evoked some reaction. "That was not food today," remarked a deacon. "No," said the pastor, "it was medicine." As John Newton expressed it:

"When my faith is faint and sickly,
Or when Satan wounds my mind,
Cordials to revive me quickly,
Healing medicine here I find;
To the promises I flee,
Each affords a remedy.

"Shall I envy then the miser,
Doting on his golden store?
Sure I am (or should be) wiser,
I am rich, 'tis he is poor;
Jesus gives me in His Word,
Food and medicine, shield and sword."

What else can one do with sound doctrine than preach it? When substitutes are found for the Word, preaching itself succumbs. Paul used no clever tricks; no dishonest manipulation of the Word of God (see 2 Cor. 4). When, during the war, Mr. Winston Churchill made his memorable speech to the Canadian Parliament, he remarked that if licensed to preach he would choose a certain text, which he announced, suitable to those times. But statesmen and politicians do not *preach*, and Mr. Churchill recognized a distinction which, it

would seem, many who occupy the pastoral office fail to see. Sermons are preached, not addresses or speeches. Preaching is exclusively the privilege and duty of a "witness and minister of Jesus Christ". And it is preaching which in particular encounters hostility and is unpopular. The persecuted apostles were charged not to preach; they were not forbidden privately to follow the Christian way. Nor because he lacked academic or cultural ability did Paul refuse to use "enticing words of man's wisdom" at Corinth, or to respond to the demand for "signs" and philosophic argument. Well able as he was to meet these disputants on their own ground, or to soothe their "itching ears", he rather determined not to recognize anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that is a subject for preaching, even "the word of the cross". None save those who, thus appointed, know and love Christ's Gospel can really *preach*.

During the war we were permitted to visit the public shelters, and when the Mayor of our London borough at my instance convened a meeting of clergy and ministers to discuss arrangements, the Roman Catholic priests opposed the request—not to visit or engage in personal conversation about religious matters, but—to preach. They were fearful of the effect of preaching, as well they might be. It is by preaching that God has chosen to save sinners. Have you noticed what a varied programme is often substituted for preaching in the churches today? I speak of England, but I notice you are much ahead of the Old Land in religious sensationalism. But we have Group Discussions, Brains' Trusts and Forums, Community Singing, or, as you call it here, songfest and songspiration. There are Squashes especially for young people, and, of course, Youth for Christ, with its unscriptural distinction and misplaced emphasis. We are told to Splash the news; to Get the message across; to give addresses and talks and such-like. Sermons, however, are not in demand because they necessitate biblical preaching, and preaching is not popular for it is God's ordination. Carnal reasoning and worldly methods impress their mark upon modern evangelism, not unfittingly called, "Hollywood evangelism". With none of it, and indeed, without a tittle of modern religious organization and machinery, the apostles did the work of the evangelist and received the manifest blessing of God Who alone "giveth the increase", for they preached and nothing else, and the excellency of the power was of God and not of men (2 Cor. 4).

There is no proposed alternative today against the traditional canons of biblical preaching but has already received negative answer in advance in the Scriptures. Our Lord distrusted those who professed faith "because they saw the miracles", and apostolic ministry was not without similar instances of rebuke. Supernatural manifestations are not necessarily of God. Egypt's magicians imitated Moses until a creative act appeared, when even they were compelled to admit "This is the finger of God". Creation is by the Word; thus the Law was written with the finger of God (Ex. 31:18); and our Lord, acknowledging that the exorcise of demons was not essentially a mark of God's power, and answering the false criticism of his foes, said: "If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? But if I with the finger of God cast them out, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Luke 11:19-20). It is not denied, of course, that sane and

sober methods may effectively be employed to supplement preaching, but when these become substitutes for the divine ordinance, they must be seriously doubted. Even the circulation and personal reading of Scriptures do not render preaching unnecessary. The eunuch read in Isaiah the Prophet, when returning from Jerusalem, and if we judged of such a case by some enthusiasts for distributing the printed page, we would have to say, Release the evangelist for other needy areas where they have not the printed Word, for the Spirit will effect His Own work, where the Book is read! But will He? Did He? On the contrary, Philip was called away from a sphere of preaching crowned with copious blessing, to join himself to this Bible reader, who being asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" replied, "How can I except some *man* should guide me?" Whereupon, we might suppose, Philip entered into discussion with him, or engaged in some conversational personal work. But no. "Philip began at the same scripture and *preached* unto him Jesus" (Acts 8). Even personal work can be no substitute for preaching. It has been well said that Pentecost's 3,000 added to the Church is the answer to that. They were the fruit of preaching. When the Lord Jesus said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me", how did the early Church understand this appointment? The answer is, "they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." And when officially they were charged to be silent; and indeed for their own peace and comfort, might quietly and privately have employed themselves in personal work, they prayed, "And now Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word", that is, publicly to speak and so to preach it (Acts 4).

By other methods than preaching, it is sometimes protested, good results are obtained; and in any case those disposed to employ means which they consider more suited to the temper and needs of the time, are well-meaning, and therefore, should not be subjected to criticism. One of the Spirit's bestowments is the quality of discernment, and "he that is spiritual discerneth all things". Perhaps, no gift of the Spirit is more needed to be constantly in exercise than this. We are to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good". We shall thus learn that undertakings for God, right in themselves, may be pursued in ways which are wrong: David, for example, had his heart set upon building the temple, which even the prophet whom he consulted, approved. Yet, while the Lord's intention was to build the temple, David was not to be the divine instrument. And earlier, may we not learn from David's mistake that while motives may be excellent, wrong methods may be employed? David perceived, when established in the kingdom, that the time had arrived for the Ark's return to its resting place. But disaster befell the undertaking with fatal consequences. David apparently considered, as is so often said today, that the *best* must be given to God and so "they set the ark of God upon a *new cart*", an imitation of the world, for so did the Philistines who were ignorant of the law of God respecting the removal of the Ark. God had ordained that the Levites alone should bear it, and by them later it was brought to safety, whereupon David confessed, "at the first the Lord made a breach upon us because we sought Him not after the due order" (1 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 13:15). The end never justifies any kind of means. Not our best, but what is God's behest, should be our enquiry. God's work must

be done in God's way. "I have seen an end of all perfection, but Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Moreover, while the end may even be achieved and results forthcoming, the means employed may be disapproved. In their wilderness journeyings Israel murmured for water, and as on a former occasion, "the people chode with Moses". The instruction to Moses was that he "*speak* unto the rock before their eyes and it shall give forth his water". In his not unwarranted impatience with a stiffnecked people Moses, instead of speaking, "*smote* the rock twice". The desired "results" were forthcoming; the supply was granted and the need met, though God's servant was disobedient to the precise command, and the means adopted disapproved (Num. 20). God may be grieved, yea, dishonoured, before the people, by the manner in which His work is engaged in, yet withal, He may graciously bless His Own Word. In a day when we are frequently told that the Church should be more abreast of the times, by which is usually meant, should accommodate herself to the demands of the times, especially in her ways and means, it is well to remember that the preaching of the gospel is no speculation but an eternal purpose which cannot fail of its utmost achievement. Be it ours to be able to say, examining our preaching by the Scriptures, "So we preached"; and its effect upon our congregations, "So ye believed".

III.

The Charge is to Preach the WORD, for it is by the instrumentality of His Word that God's works are performed. By it all things were made and are yet maintained. The devil, in the beginning compassed the dissolution of God's fair world by the denial of His faithful Word; and brought to ruin the grandest of His creation, humankind upon whom His Own image and likeness was stamped. For as by the preaching of the lie man's ruin was compassed, so by the preaching of the truth, his restoration is effectuated. The Word is the truth (v. 4), and is wholesome doctrine (v. 3), and makes the believing sinner whole that he may be "presented perfect in Christ Jesus". The volume of Holy Scripture animate with the life of God, inbreathed as was Adam's perfectly fashioned body, bears the impress of divinity, and by it as of incorruptible seed, man is born again. It is the "record which God hath given of His Son", "Who is himself the image of the invisible God", the exact impress of the substance of Deity, the perfect expression of the mind and will of the Infinite Who, being the eternal Word, when He cometh into the world, He saith, "a body hast Thou prepared Me; I delight to do Thy will O My God, yea, Thy law is within My heart". And thus, the Second Man, in the form of a servant, "He humbled Himself becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross", thereby becoming the Meritorious Cause of salvation, "Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus".

This Word alone provides the remedy for a decadent age, and by its preaching we, as Timothy, may make full proof of, and so fulfil, the ministry. Therefore, let us hold fast everything, even "the *form* of sound words" (1:13). See to it that the old theological terms are given the old theological meaning and are not whittled down. The devil's way at the beginning, and it is his accustomed way, was to divest a word of God from its real significance, as when he commented, "Ye shall not surely

die", as though death, already pre-announced as the penalty of the broken law of Paradise, did not mean death; as though unbelief would bring a larger understanding, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil". Use, therefore, God's words and give them their full value. For instance, the death of our Lord Jesus is explained as an "at-one-ment" by hyphenating the English syllables, so divesting the term of its penal and legally satisfying character, thus making it the equivalent of reconciliation, the being at one. Whereas, atonement is the root and reconciliation the fruit, atonement is effected by ransom-paying, and penalty-bearing, and involves the imputation of sin to the blessed Substitute. That is the Word we must preach. Again, how frequently is our Saviour spoken of, and in modern choruses and testimonies, as living, which, of course, is true but not strictly the doctrinal truth set forth in the Word of the truth of the gospel. There are anti-Christian cults which also declare their belief that Jesus is living. Do they mean what we mean? "Living" could signify merely the survival of the spirit, whereas, the New Testament preachers and their written doctrine emphasize a *risen* Saviour, which means that the body in which He perfectly performed the Will and Law of God as our Representative, until on the tree He cried, "It is finished", was raised from the dead. So, "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the dead" and they "preached Jesus and the resurrection". Living, He is no Saviour, for He was eternally the living One; but risen again, He lives as being invested with all authority to save, saying: "Fear not, I am the living One which became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore and have the keys of death and of hades". Therefore, preach the word of resurrection, even as the apostle here charges Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from the dead according to my gospel" (11:8).

And as we hold fast everything, so must we also hold back nothing (Acts 20:20-27). "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you" was Paul's testimony, and that which was profitable included "all the counsel of God". Never think the divine Word needs your guardianship or that those who listen need to be guarded from the Word in its high doctrine, lest they misconceive its purport and are stumbled. Was it not very high doctrine which the apostle wrote to the infant Church of the Thessalonians? The Word is to be preached unto evangelization and edification. The gospel is for the saints as well as sinners. We must, of course, use spiritual discernment in the selection of suitable Scriptures as our subject matter according to the object we may have in view and the constitution of the audience we address; but we must be ready also to allow that the Sovereign Lord of this Word may apply it to ends the reverse of our objective and expectation. The Word which goeth forth out of His mouth will accomplish that which He doth please; and sometimes displease or surprise us! Yes, we must use our judgment, but why is it so generally conceived than an "evangelistic service", for instance, must be in lighter vein, with some specially entertaining programme, songs of the jazz type, and emotional appeals? Why this modernism of method which excludes the grand doctrinal hymns of the Church as though they could contribute nothing to the great end that sinners may be converted unto the Lord? That should certainly be banned, whatever it be, in which the Word finds no place, for by preaching

the Word, according to this injunction of Paul, we "do the work of an evangelist". "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace", upon which Mr. Spurgeon, commenting, remarked: "Thank God for a gospel that can be carried on two feet. Some evangelists would require a pan-technicon to convey all their paraphernalia. But then they would have great difficulty in getting it over the mountains". What would that mighty evangelist have said to the paraphernalia of modern campaigns of evangelism? "Go, preach the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3).

The same Word is to be preached unto the edifying of God's people, for He employs no other instrument in ministering to their heart and mind and soul and strength. In this Word, indeed, are contained all things necessary unto life and godliness. We, therefore, like the apostle, must fight the good fight of the faith, laying hold on eternal life; for "in the last days perilous times shall come", and some will "resist the truth", "and their word will eat as doth a canker", therefore, is diligence required in order rightly to divide the Word of Truth, that the Church, herself being built up on her most holy faith may be strong, "earnestly to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints"; that we being good soldiers of Jesus Christ, as Oliver Cromwell reminded his men, may know what we fight for and love what we know. Such would appear to be the "burden of the Word of the Lord" in these last writings of the apostle. The students take their courses in systematic theology, and pastors should preach and expound the Word systematically unto their congregations that they may become "grounded and settled and not moved away from the hope of their calling"; not "tossed about with every wind of doctrine", nor "being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from their own steadfastness, but may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

"BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER"

POPE'S BLESSING TO FRANCO, SPAIN

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ROME, Dec. 13.—Pope Pius XII sent his "affectionate blessing" to Generalissimo Francisco Franco and to the Spanish Government at the same time as he sent it to the Spanish people this morning on receiving the new Spanish ambassador to the Holy See, Joaquin Ruiz Jimenez Cortes. He expressed hope that the world may concede to the Spanish people "that esteem which many services rendered to the cause of religion and civilization give them a right to expect."

Among the many bitternesses that afflict him, said the Pope, one of his greatest consolations is to know that he is at all times supported and assisted by the love and prayers of his beloved sons throughout the world among whom, are the Spanish people. "How could we, therefore," he added, "withhold our affectionate blessing from them and from the head of the Spanish state and his government? May the God of mercy and of truth always protect the Spanish nation—a land fecund of saints—so that above all dangers, and thanks to the heroic zeal of its worthiest sons, it may always remain faithful to its noble Christian vocation."

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Fifteenth in a Series of Week-Evening Lectures on the Doctrines of Grace

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, April 30th, 1931

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Read: John 14:15-18; 16:7-11; Acts 1:4-8.

I WAS to speak to you this evening on the subject of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, a very large subject that could not possibly be treated in one, or, indeed, in a good many addresses. I think for this evening I will content myself with a mere outline of the Spirit's work, and then when we come to a study of the biblical doctrine of sanctification we may see there something more of the Spirit's operation in the believer's life.

There are to-day two extremes among professing Christian people. On one side there are those who deny the supernatural in the Book, and as an element in Christian experience. The Christian religion is reduced to a mere system of ethics, a laborious striving toward the attainment of an ideal. There is a concept of Christianity from which the supernatural is excluded. Then, on the other hand, there are those who believe in nothing but the supernatural. It is all supernatural. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit particularly is carried to unreasonable extremes.

It is important for us to know the teaching of Scripture in respect to this matter, and to know that Christianity, while it is supernatural in every aspect of it, never does violence to the natural, to the laws which God has written in our own constitutions.

I shall cover some familiar ground this evening, for the refreshment of your memories.

I need not, surely, remind you of the distinctively Trinitarian position which recognizes in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, three equal subsistences in one divine Personality; or, as it is more commonly expressed, three Persons in One. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the Scripture as a divine Personality. All the qualities of personality are attributed to Him. He is much more than a mere benevolent influence: with the Father and the Son, He is one God.

The Holy Spirit was the agent in creation: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The Holy Ghost was the Inspirer of the Holy Scriptures: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." He was also the Revealer of divine secrets to the prophets. There is a distinction between revelation and inspiration. Abraham received many revelations from God, but he was not inspired to write any of those revelations. He himself preserved no written record of the revelations which were communicated to him.

Revelation has to do with that which God divinely discloses, that which He makes known to His people, which they could not discover for themselves. Inspiration is that operation of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men by which they were moved to write the record of that which was revealed. So, while Abraham wrote nothing; neither did Isaac, nor Jacob, nor Joseph,

God in due time moved Moses by the Holy Ghost to write for our learning a record of all that God had revealed to the patriarchs. In the doing of that, the Holy Spirit must have exercised His peculiar office of bringing to the remembrance of Moses that which had been formerly revealed to those who had preceded him. But the Holy Ghost is at once the Revealer of the substance of the Book, that is, the Revealer of the truth; and the Inspirer of those who were moved to write a record of that which was revealed.

Then, in some measure, the Holy Spirit dwelt in the lives of the Old Testament saints. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson. We read at a later time that "he wist not that the Lord was departed from him". When the Spirit of the Lord withdrew from that mighty man he was weak as other men were.

You will find many references in the Psalms, for instance, to the Holy Spirit. David prayed, notably in the fifty-third Psalm, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." So that even in Old Testament times the saints of God were subject to the ministry of the Holy Ghost.

Our Lord Jesus was not as fully revealed in the Old Testament as He is in the New, and yet you will find Him in the Old Testament. He appears again and again as "the Angel of the covenant". He speaks in the Old Testament. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. But the New Testament era, the parenthesis in our Lord's life which we speak of as the Incarnation, was distinctively the era of the Son, when God appeared among men, when God was manifest in the flesh.

I read to you how our Lord promised that He would return to the Father, and that He would receive the promise from the Father: "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you"; "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." So our Lord departed, and on the day of Pentecost we read of the coming of the Holy Spirit, when the promise of the baptism of the Holy Ghost was once and for all fulfilled to the early church.

Let me pause here, however, to say what perhaps I should have said a moment ago, that as the Holy Spirit was present in the Old Testament dispensation, so He was present in the life of our Lord. He was the Agent in the incarnation. At our Lord's baptism He appeared in the form of a dove, lighting upon Him. Jesus Christ went up into the wilderness and was tempted of the devil, but He was sustained by the power of the Spirit. It was also said that the Lord gave not the Spirit "by measure" unto Him. So that the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, was with the Son even as the Son and the Holy Ghost were ever with

the Father, for Jesus said, "The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." You see, therefore, these three elements in the divine essence, these three distinct personalities—I think it was Joseph Cook who used the word "subsistences"—in the Godhead were never separated the one from the other: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were always one.

But there are, in the course of the divine revelation, special manifestations of the Son and of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost came at Pentecost to take up His administrative work. He is represented in the New Testament as the Executive of the Godhead; He is the Administrator of His church, and carries on the work of God in the believer's life.

In the first place, it is by the power of the Holy Ghost that sinners are made alive, that they are quickened. The Holy Ghost is the life-giving Spirit. No one is saved by preaching. No one is saved merely by reading the Bible, without the quickening of the Holy Spirit. No one is saved, or can be saved, by any sort of human effort. These are but agencies employed by the divine Agent, whether it be the preacher, or teacher, or the written word, or the truth of the written word in sermon or lesson; the quickening power, the Agent in conversion, in regeneration, is the Holy Ghost.

I think it was Henry Drummond who said that God had reserved a point at the genesis of life for His own direct appearance. He has delegated to no one else the power to give life: that is His prerogative. When the soul dead in sins begins to live again it is because that soul has been quickened into life by the Holy Spirit. The miracles of the incarnation, of the virgin birth, of the resurrection—each of which is ascribed in the Scripture to the power of the Spirit of God—are repeated and combined in the personal experience of everyone who is born again.

That which we are accustomed to speak of as conversion, sometimes as regeneration, is described also in the Word as a new birth. We are begotten of God, and it is said that we are born of the Spirit: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." We must be re-created, spiritual, men and women; a new life must be imparted. "If any man be in Christ he is"—not only a new creature, but he is a new creation, so made by the power of the Holy Ghost. So that the Holy Ghost is not only the Agent in the first creation, but also in the second creation. His is the creative power by which dead souls are quickened into life.

Then, *the Holy Ghost is the sustaining power*. He dwells in the believer. "If a man have not the Spirit of God he is none of his." We all, if we are Christians, have the Holy Ghost resident within us. He may not be recognized as He ought to be. We may not obey Him as it is at once our duty and our privilege to do; but if we are Christians, the Holy Ghost dwells within us, and without Him there can be no spiritual life whatever, for He is the living, the vital, principle as well as the living personality, dwelling in His people always.

Let me briefly explain the verses I read. His work in conversion is analyzed in the sixteenth chapter of John, and is said to be threefold. He convinces the world of sin, and then that sin is defined—not theft, not untruthfulness, not lechery, or anything of that sort. The Bible is written in pregnant speech. The Lord can pack a volume, not into a sentence, but into a syllable. I once

heard my father say, "The Lord is a great Packer. He can pack an oak into an acorn." Neither you nor I can do that.

The Holy Spirit convinces us of sin, and that sin is the fundamental sin upon which all other iniquity rests. It is the cardinal sin upon which everything else hinges; it is the mother-sin from which all other sins issue: "Of sin, because they believe not on me." You, and I may persuade people that it is wrong to steal or lie, but a good many people think they ought to be given the degree of Doctor of Philosophy because they refuse to believe. They make a virtue of their unbelief and plume themselves upon their superiority; yet unbelief is the only thing that can shut the doors of heaven and open the doors of hell. The Holy Ghost has come to convince men that they are sinners because they believe not on Christ.

"Of righteousness." Ah, nobody knows what righteousness is. Were we to ask the opinion of this congregation this evening in respect to any course of conduct we might have as many opinions as we have persons. The difficulty is, we are without a standard of righteousness. We are each a law unto himself in that respect.

There is a popular theory that whatever the majority decide upon is right. I heard of a man once who used to travel with a pack on his back, selling what we should call in this country, dry-goods. It was before one could find a store on every corner, and before business was done by mail. He carried a pack on his back of calico, dress goods, and that sort of thing. So that he might not be too heavily laden he used his walking-stick for a measuring-stick—and the farther he travelled the shorter his yard became, for he was wearing off his stick all the time.

The farther we travel the more our standards are reduced, because our sense of the oughtness of things, of that which is right and righteous, is likely to be dulled; and we become at last accustomed to short measure. Our Lord said in effect, "When I am gone nobody will know what a righteous man ought to be. When I have ceased to be manifest among men the world will be without a standard of righteousness; there will be no scales by which a man can weigh himself, no norm by which he can compare himself and judge whether he has fallen short of the glory of God or not. Therefore the Holy Ghost will come and convince the world, negatively, of sin, and then of righteousness, because I go unto My Father, and ye see me no more." The Holy Ghost is to give to our hearts and consciences a revelation of what we ought to be, a standard of righteousness.

"And of judgment." That verse is often quoted in prayer-meeting—and a good many people misquote it by saying, "and of judgment to come." The text does not say that. The Holy Ghost has come to convince us of a judgment that *has* come, not of a judgment to come. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." If there were two men, participants in the same crime, equally guilty or innocent, as the case might be, and they were both awaiting trial, and one man were tried first and found guilty, and condemned, the other would say, "That is what awaits me. I am as guilty as he. I did exactly the same thing he did. I am subject to the same law as he is. If he is judged and condemned, I shall be judged and condemned too."

The Holy Ghost shows us ourselves judged and condemned at the cross where God's wrath is poured upon sinners, and where the prince of this world is judged.

You remember our Lord's saying, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." At the Cross that was effected. The Holy Ghost comes to do His work in the hearts and consciences of men, convincing them of sin, because they believe not on Christ; of righteousness, because they have no one by whom to measure themselves any more! He says, Stand up beside that. He shows that we are short measure; of judgment, showing us to have been judged and condemned at the place of a skull.

That is a simple analysis of the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. It is conversion, regeneration, resolved into its elements.

And now you will see what I meant a moment ago when I said there are people who would reduce the Christian religion to a merely natural plane, and that there are others who would make it wholly supernatural. What the Holy Ghost comes to do is to spiritualize the natural. It is supernatural, but in that process of regeneration, convincing the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, He so operates upon the minds of people that their judgment becomes active and their consciences quickened, and the man responds, apparently spontaneously, as though he were co-operating with the Holy Ghost, when, as a matter of fact, the Holy Ghost is enlightening the mind, and engaging the affection, and energizing the will.

The man says, "I saw that I was a sinner, and I repented." No! No! "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." That is how He gives repentance, by showing us that we are sinners. We do repent, but only through His work.

So of the mind and of the will—of all the faculties of the complete man. The Holy Ghost comes and makes them all alive, and they operate on God's side instead of against God. That is regeneration.

Then He dwells in the believer. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you," into all the truth. He comes thus to dwell within us.

Let me pause a moment to speak of that great outpouring, that effusion, of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Our Lord promised that the disciples would be "baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence": I wish we could see this clearly. I would not strive about words to no profit, nor be pedantic in censuring people who use words unwisely; but I cannot see that it is ever appropriate that any of us should ask to be "baptized" with the Holy Ghost. "In one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." The promise of the baptism of the Holy Ghost was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. When the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, and they were led to repentance, in signification of the divine acceptance of the Gentiles, when Peter went to Cornelius, as he later declared, "The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." He identified that with the baptism of the Spirit, for he remembered that it was said, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Nowhere, later in the Acts, or in the epistles, will you find any apostolic preacher, or any of the New Testament writers, commanding or exhorting anybody to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost was for the whole body of God's elect, and once and for all at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came; and He does now abide in the heart of every believer.

You say, "Many people who profess to be Christians

do not act as though they were spiritual men." Quite true! No doubt many people who profess to be Christians are not, and many who are Christians sometimes behave as though they were not. I have seen a little boy who comes from a good family, whose parents are well-to-do, and who could well afford to keep him spick and span, go out and play with little street urchins, and become as black as any one of them. But he was not the same. He belonged in another sphere. Thus the Lord's children may soil their garments.

If you are a Christian you have within you, by God's sovereign grace, all the potentialities which will make you the perfect saint God designs you shall be. We are admonished to be "filled with the Spirit". We do not need to pray for fresh air in this building. What a stupid thing that would be, would it not?—"Lord, fill this place with fresh air." All we need to do is to open the windows and the air will come in.

The Spirit of God is abiding with His people. Oh, the tragedy of it!—if you and I are not being used as the divine instruments, if we are not growing as Christians, it is not because of any straitness in God, for He has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness". He has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." He has given us a light that is adequate to our full and complete illumination at last in respect to the divine purpose in our lives. He has given us in the Word the "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." He has made every necessary provision, and it is for us to yield ourselves to the Holy Ghost, and to permit ourselves to be used.

In our study of sanctification—it is a large subject, it is a subject which I fear is greatly misunderstood, and sometimes grotesquely treated, the subject of sanctification—we shall find that it is the process of spiritual education; it describes what God the Holy Ghost does for the princes of glory. Born to a high vocation, destined at last to judge angels, we ought to become thoroughly educated in divine things, and to know something, by God's communications to us, of the divine mind,—and all that is included in the process called sanctification. But we will leave that for another evening.

The Holy Spirit dwells within us in order that He may enable us to understand the mind of God, and deliberately to choose the will of God, and then voluntarily to do God's will, having chosen the better part.

The temptation in the other direction is to assume that the Holy Spirit has come to nullify, to negative, to make unnecessary, all human effort. We may become authorities over night! Some little boy or girl of a few months' experience of divine grace—let us charitably assume they have it—suddenly becomes an expert, an authority, and talks about when they "obtained their sanctification"! Oh, the crass ignorance that abounds to-day! I sometimes wonder where the devil does the deadliest work: whether by his denial of the supernatural, and his reduction of everything to the naturalistic plane, or whether by the teaching that the supernatural may be super-imposed by the divine will upon the human will so that we become nothing but automatons.

God is always sovereign. But the idea that God ever dispenses with my reason, my judgment, my memory, my will, and super-imposes Himself upon me,

and makes me a mere puppet in His hands is erroneous. There is nothing in the Scripture to justify that view.

People speak about being "led",—"I am not led to do so-and-so." Therefore they sit down until they are led, as though the Lord may be expected to come and by some supernatural revelation take them out of themselves until they see and do something that is quite beyond their own understanding. God leads us by His Spirit, but He leads us through a legitimate spiritual exercise of an enlightened intelligence, through the energizing of our surrendered wills. He always respects the powers with which He has endowed us, and works through us by securing their cooperation with His divine plan and purpose.

How wonderful it is! That, after all, is the simple lesson of this evening. We have not an absentee Saviour, for Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless (orphans): I will come to you." Did you ever go into a home where there was no mother? and where father has just been laid in the casket, or in the grave? The little children are there, but they do not know what to do or where to go. They are children, but they are orphans, they are left alone. Our Lord said in effect to His disciples, "I know how you depend upon me, therefore I will not leave you alone." In His high priestly prayer He said, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost . . . Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me."

Dr. Keirstead told me that he once heard Dr. Joseph Parker preach on that text, "And they came and told Jesus." They had been to a funeral, they had buried their master, their great teacher, and the world was empty—and "they came and told Jesus". Dr. Keirstead said he could never forget Dr. Parker's closing word. After he had spoken at length of the privilege of telling Him everything, of going to Him always, he concluded his sermon like this: "And they went and told Jesus—and discovered they had told God".

Is it not a great privilege to be able to talk to God? The disciples had depended upon Him, and He said, "Now I go my way to him that sent me . . . but because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. You will have no one to depend upon after I am gone. There will be no one to whom you can tell your sorrow, nobody to help you after I am gone,—so you think. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you (the Paraclete, the One Who comes to stand by); but if I depart, I will send him unto you."—"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." And he did come to His disciples again, in the person of the Holy Ghost.

While we believe the Bible, and rejoice in its promises, and through the medium of this divine revelation look into the future and rejoice in the prospect before us, yet it is our present comfort that we are not alone. He has come to us; He is with us; He will be with us as we pray, when we praise, when we are in temptation, and when we are almost beside ourselves with some excessive joy—whatever our experience we have a Saviour Who is with us. The Holy Ghost is with us.

That, dear friends, is the lost note in the modern church. It is as though the power had been cut off. The first Sunday I preached in this church, nearly twenty-one years ago, there was a severe thunderstorm,

and the electric lights went out. There were a few gas jets in the building; we had a dim religious light, enough to make the darkness visible. The gas jets were lighted in substitution for the electric light. That is what the modern church is doing, cutting off or ignoring the divine power, and lighting their little candles,—and they are not even "dips"—half of them,—as though the church were engaged in an afternoon bridge party.

Individually and collectively we must do what we do by the power of God. He has not left us alone: He has come to us.

WHOM TO VOTE FOR IN TORONTO MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

WE SELDOM have anything to say about such matters; but we feel constrained to say something about the municipal elections of January 1st.

In the first place, we hope the proposal to elect the Council for a two-year term will be voted down. It is bad enough to have to put up with some of them for one year. But for the expense involved, we should like to see them required to give an account of their stewardship every six months. But certainly to give the Council a two-year tenure of office would be a great mistake in our judgment. We hope everyone who has a vote will vote against it.

We have nothing to say about any Alderman, but only about the candidates for Board of Control.

Controller Balfour is a Roman Catholic. He is put on the Board of Control to do the will of the Church, and he is a typical Romanist. His every utterance shows that he is always on the side of "the world, the flesh, and the devil". We have no doubt that the Roman Catholic "faithful" will be commanded to vote exclusively for Mr. Balfour, which, of course, would give him the lead over all other candidates for the Board of Control by the number of Catholic votes cast. We have little doubt that hitherto Mr. Balfour has been elected by the Roman Catholic vote.

We know another candidate for Controller, Alderman Lampert, only as we read about him in the press. Obviously, he is another man who is on the side of "the world, the flesh, and the devil". We do not know what he is religiously, or whether he has any religion or not; but he favours a wide-open Sunday, and we may be sure will be supported by "lewd fellows of the baser sort". For that reason we venture to suggest that no Christian should support him.

Another candidate is Alderman Leslie H. Saunders. Mr. Saunders is a Salvationist, and a Protestant. We believe he will always be found standing on the right side, where moral principles are concerned. This Editor will vote for Mr. Leslie H. Saunders for Controller, and he will vote for Mr. Saunders *only*. We suggest that all Toronto Protestants might well do the same. There may be other good men who are candidates for the Board of Control; but we suggest that Protestants vote for Mr. Leslie H. Saunders *only*, so as to give him the lead over all other candidates, by the number of the Protestant votes cast.

We believe the Protestants of Toronto should elect Alderman Leslie H. Saunders to the Board of Control, and we hope they will. But, voting for him for Controller, be sure to vote for no other Controller, and so help push Mr. Saunders to the top.