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When The Occasional Obscures The General

WHEN people can talk about nothing else, they can always talk about the weather; and that is well. It is a good starting point, and conversations must have a beginning.

We have all heard people remark on the coldest day, the hottest day, the wettest day, or the cloudiest day; and these remarks but suggest the human mental habit of allowing the immediate to monopolize one's thought, and divorce him from the past or the future, and always to describe our present difficulties with superlatives.

This habit sometimes produces rather distressing results. We must all be prepared for off-days. We cannot live, always, on the mountain peak; and it is well to learn how to apply the law of averages to the ordinary experiences of life: "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: but if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many."

Sometimes a minister has an off-day in the pulpit. He anticipated, perhaps, a triumphant service; but for some inexplicable reason the sermon seemed to fall flat in its delivery. It may be that someone upon whom the minister greatly depended, in whose prayerful support he rejoiced, was absent. It may be that he saw a little wood in the pews, which were usually so filled that he could see nothing but people; and when the service was over he found himself pretty much in the dumps.

This writer recalls at this moment a story told him by his father, who was a preacher. When a young man, he had had just such a day as we have described. He went home in the evening feeling that he had been utterly defeated. He was accompanied by a mature man who was an officer of the church. The minister said to this man, "After this day I feel I must resign. I feel that the day has been such a complete failure that my work here must surely be done." The older man was very wise. He did not combat the views of his young Pastor. He said, "Well, Pastor, if that is how you feel, I think

I would resign — but not to-night, and not just now. Just wait a week or so until some Sunday you go through the day like a full-rigged ship, with the wind in all your sails, ploughing the deep, and throwing out the spray before you; when you have seen people converted, and have listened to the shouts of triumph from the people of Zion. Then go home and write your resignation; but not until then."

That wise man knew that it was dangerous to try to appraise the general current of things by what appeared to be an occasional failure. Wait until next Sunday, or the Sunday after. Wait for the coming of the day of great victory, and then resign. Of course, he knew that under such circumstances no sane man would resign.

We pass that on to our brother ministers, with this suggestion, however, that it is best to keep your gloomy cogitations to yourself, and not even entrust them to the most intimate friend: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

Sometimes one is distressed by some great disappointment. Someone upon whom you have depended has failed you, and you are disposed to magnify that failure to the utter forgetfulness of earlier days of constancy and faithfulness. No one of us can fairly be judged by the occasional outburst. It may be foreign to the man's general behaviour. Try to view his failure in the light of his multiplied faithfulness, and your disappointment will be dissipated.

Cynics are made by magnifying occasional experiences. Circumstances are often awry. Not infrequently it may seem as though men and things were conspiring against us. We may, cynically, exclaim: "All men are liars"; and because of some singularly bitter trial, one may put himself out of joint with life generally. We must not do so. Here and there in the record of the years this writer has been disappointed in others, as no doubt others have been disappointed in him. But sometimes we recall the great multitude of the Lord's people, whom it has been our privilege to know, and we can say of the great

majority, "We give thanks on every remembrance of them."

Life has its difficulties, its disappointments, its rough roads, and steep hills, its bad weather, and its aches and pains, its uncongenial associations, and exasperating trials; but if these were all put together, as representing our occasional troubles, they would be as nothing compared with the days of sunshine and gladness, and the multitudinous blessings which we have received at the hand of God.

Perhaps we have written it before, but we write it again: the secret of a contented life is found in an appreciation of its perspectives, and a maintenance of its balances. When you are disposed to say, "This is the hottest", or "driest", or "coldest", or "wettest", or "cloudiest day I ever knew," consult your weather man. Let him read to you from his records, and you will find it is nothing like as bad as many a day last year. You survived those days, and you will survive to-day.

Oh, how often have we read it! There has been a late frost, and the papers say: "It will ruin the tomatoes, and the peach blossoms, and we know not what else, and we must be prepared for a small crop of peaches in the fall, at high prices." And very often the frost amounted to nothing, and the peach crop was bigger than ever: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof". Borrow courage from the past if you can, and say: "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." Look forward into the future if you can, and remember you have not exhausted your supply of "exceeding great and precious promises". But in any case, set your teeth to meet the present with calmness and confidence, and if you cannot sing to-day, commit your hymn of thanksgiving to memory so that you will be ready to sing it in the sunshine of to-morrow.

A dark world! Yes; elsewhere in this issue we have recognized that fact. But with a deeper devotion to duty than has ever characterized us, let us be like the ploughman who ploughs in the cold March weather, in order that he may join in the song of harvest.

A TRIP TO SOUTH AMERICA

AMONG GOSPEL WITNESS readers, there will no doubt be some who wish to make the trip to South America to the Pan-American Evangelical Conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 16-24, 1951. Not only will it give them a chance to view this regional conference of the International Council of Christian Churches at close range, see the nature and scope of its work, but also, anyone making the trip will gain first-hand information concerning the conditions, in Latin America, mission possibilities, new fields, etc.

National representatives from every country in South America, leaders from Europe and many others will attend. Some 200 leaders and visitors from the United States will also be present.

Plane fare for the trip will be very reasonable. Around-the-continent plane fare is \$825.00, including tax. This fare is based on the trip starting from Philadelphia to Havana, Lima, Santiago, across the Andes to Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Sao Paulo, Rio De Janeiro, and return. The return trip may be made from Lima, or up the east coast from Rio, or the itinerary may be reversed by going down the east coast first and returning up the west coast.

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The short trip plane fare is \$673.00, including tax. This fare is based on a trip starting from Philadelphia, to Havana, Lima, Sao Paulo, and return.

Departure may be arranged, in groups of 15 or more, from Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, or other major cities, with each group meeting the balance of the travelers at such points as Havana. Flights will be made with Braniff International Airways or Pan-American Airways, using regular flight schedules set up by these companies, which will be good for 60 days.

It is estimated that a person may take the entire around-the-continent trip for a total cost of between 1,000 and 1,100 dollars.

The dates of departure will be announced later. However, it will take at least 26 days to go around the continent, and departure will be made around June 30, or the first or second of July. Departure for Sao Paulo directly will probably be about July 10-12.

More information on clothing and such will be published at a later date. The baggage allowance will be 66 pounds for the flight.

Any GOSPEL WITNESS readers interested in the trip or in securing further information may do so by writing Miss Ruth Trato, Transportation Secretary, Box 218, Collingswood 7, New Jersey.

JOHN BROWN'S ROUGH, STRONG WORDS

From John Wesley's Journal

I preached at the Lower Span, seven or eight (northern) miles from Newcastle. John Brown had been obliged to remove hither from Tansfield Leigh: (I believe by the peculiar providence of God.) By his rough and strong, though artless, words, many of his neighbours had been much convinced, and began to search the Scriptures as they never had done before; so that they did not seem at all surprised when I declared, "He that believeth hath everlasting life."

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"The Oil of Joy For Mourning"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 8th, 1951
(Electrically Recorded)

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-score furlongs.

And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

And certain of them, which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

—Luke 24:13-35.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We rejoice, O Lord, in the privilege of coming into the immediate presence of the Lord of life and of light on this cloudy and dark day in the experience of this world. We thank Thee for the truth to which we have listened just now in song, and for the assurance that our Lord is the Sovereign of the sea, and that all authority is given to Him in Heaven and on earth, and that He will in due course exercise the authority which is His in the interests of His people and the well-being of mankind. We thank Thee that we have proof of this in the cross at the place called Golgotha. We bless Thee that this Man, this God-man, took upon Himself our nature, and was made under the law, to redeem them which were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons. We thank Thee that He carried our load of sin to the end of the road; that He was our substitute, and as such illustrated the tremendous truth that the wages of sin is death, when in our room and stead He bowed His head and gave up the ghost at the place called Golgotha, which by interpretation, is the place of a skull. We thank Thee that He has explored and experienced the utmost reaches of human woe; He has descended to the depths; He has comprehended all the sins of the world, and has carried them to the cross and nailed them there.

Oh, we thank Thee for the truth that Christ Jesus is come into the world that we might have life through Him. Help us to rejoice in it, yea, rather to revel in it, for this is the supreme miracle; this is the outstanding and most conspicu-

ous manifestation of Divine grace, when Deity, in our behalf, submitted to the nails, and bowed His head in death. Who would not worship Thee, Thou risen Saviour? Who would not serve Thee, Thou Son of man, Thou Son of God?

Help us to see Thee this evening. Our vision is so beclouded; we move among the miasmal mists of earth. At the very best we do but see through a glass darkly; we know in part, and we prophesy in part; we see things in segments and fragmentarily. We find it so difficult to comprehend the whole, and yet in Christ Jesus, in Whom all things consist, we may have some apprehension of Thy purpose of grace for this poor wicked world. How shall we pray for it? How shall we pray for ourselves, except first of all that amid the darkness we may at least have light in our dwellings, even as the children of Israel had, when darkness that could be felt enshrouded Egypt's land. Oh, may Thine own dear people in Thy light see light! May we so read the events of the day, and be so enabled to interpret the cross-currents of human life, that we may have the profoundest conviction and consciousness that Thou art working toward the morning; and that as the evening and the morning were the first and the last days of this material creation, so the evening and the morning must mark the progress of Thy programme of grace until Thou shalt bring us all to that Capital city where there shall be no night. What should we do if we could not look forward to such a desideratum as this? We thank Thee, Lord, for this prospect of faith.

We pray for the troubled world. We cannot pray particu-

larly or in detail, for we have no wisdom to know what we ought to ask for. We only pray that, as we have heard in this song this evening, as Thou didst come at one time in the ship, and at another time on the waves of the sea, that Thou wilt come on these dark billows that threaten to engulf us, and show Thyself Sovereign of the mighty waters which are the nations of the earth, and in Thine own way and in Thine own time, bring peace to this troubled world.

Bless our rulers we pray Thee, in this land, and throughout the Empire, and in the land to the South of us. May all who are charged with the affairs of State have that Divine wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, and then peaceable.

Thus Lord, in the security of Thy promises, in the assurance of Thy Providential power to effect all the councils of Thy grace, we would rest in peace this evening.

Now as we come to Thy holy word help us to understand the truth that is written. Illuminate our minds, we pray Thee, shed light upon the sacred page, and as Thou, with Thy master key, didst open the heart of Lydia, so come this evening and open our minds and hearts to the reception of Thy truth, that we may receive it in the love of it, and be profited thereby, because it shall be mixed with faith in all who hear it.

For the sad and suffering, for those who are upon beds of pain in hospitals or at home, for those who kindly minister to broken bodies and troubled minds, physicians and nurses, and all these special ministries which are but the by-product of Thy gospel, we pray that Thy blessing may attend their exercise this evening, that so everywhere the Father's blessing may rest upon His troubled children. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

IN THE chapter which Mr. Slade read this evening, a unique programme is defined and promised. There is one upon whom the Spirit rests, Who has been anointed "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord;" and we are told what will happen in that acceptable year—"to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Did ever this weary world need more urgently the implementation of such a promise as this, the carrying out, the execution of such a programme? You will recall that when our Lord began His public ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth, and stood up to read, and there was handed to Him the book of the prophet Esaias, He did not open it at random, but "He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me . . ." He quoted this passage from Isaiah, and as they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth, "He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Indeed, that sixty-first chapter of Isaiah is a brief but comprehensive outline of the whole programme of Divine grace. Therefore should we conceive of His saving grace as being the very oil of joy, outpoured for the alleviation of the griefs and sorrows of a mourning world.

I.

The story of the travellers on the Emmaus Road is parallel to the latest news item of today, for **STILL THE HIGHWAYS OF LIFE ARE TRAVERSED BY THOSE WHO WALK AND ARE SAD.** Is it not true? Are you not witness to the fact every day you live, wherever you may go, that one may hear the same manner of communications which take the joy out of life and bring sorrow to the heart and sadness to the countenance?

True there are many pleasure seekers, on the road, people who seek the opiate of sensuous pleasure, as

though it were the great desideratum of life. We come each Saturday night to the place of prayer, and we find these streets, East and West, North and South, crowded with cars, the street-cars unloading people by the thousands. One might suppose there were some serious matter on hand. What is it? A company of men knocking a piece of rubber across the ice. As though life were made for such puerilities as that! But they find pleasure in it, and I suppose surcease from daily toil, and a change of mind. But when it is all over nothing has been accomplished.

And there are many still walking the highways of life who are not only pleasure seekers, but *merry makers*. I travelled for a few days in the Southland, and came back last Tuesday. We were in all kinds of restaurants, and even in some of those that seemed to be quite respectable they had a box of noise, I think they call it a juke box, and somebody would get up and put a nickel in, and then there would peal forth the most horrible combination of tones that could be imagined. I remarked again and again how strange it was that anybody would pay for that kind of thing. I heard of an Italian street-piano man being brought before a magistrate for something, I do not know what the offense was, whether it was a traffic offense or not, and the magistrate said, "How much do you make a week with that machine?" He said, "Twenty-five dollars one week." "Twenty-five dollars a week for playing that?" "No, no, no," he said, "twenty-five dollars one week for shut up, go away." Well, I often felt like saying, "You put in a nickel, I will put in a quarter to shut it up with your consent."

I know there are a few like that; notwithstanding, *the prevailing tone in human conversation is in a minor key these days.* It is so personally. Life is so full of disappointments. Things do not turn out as we hoped they would. We are disappointed in things; we are disappointed in persons, and disappointed in ourselves. And we must often write our hopes, as did these travellers on the Emmaus Road, in the past tense. "We trusted, but a few yesterdays ago — we trusted that it should be he that would have delivered Israel, but it was a vain hope. He is gone."

How full of tragedy is *domestic life* in our day! I am told that in the United States very often before marriage there is a private contract to the effect that they will try to live together for at least six months. "Till death shall you part" is hardly a part of the programme of to-day. Oh how much of that sort of thing we Pastors see—broken homes and broken hearts in every direction, dreams unfulfilled, hopes that lie buried apparently beyond all possibility of resurrection.

In the *evening-time of life* as the sun goes down upon a day of failure and frustration how sad the whole prospect is! Can you believe that there was a man who was President of the United States who said that the first world war was "a war to end war"? That the purpose of it was to "make the world safe for democracy"? Then the great depression, then the second world war, and now the horrible fear that even another is possible. There isn't a statesman in the world that will speak with confidence of tomorrow. I say the tone of human conversation in the main is in a minor key:

"The earth is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The voice of Rachael for her children crying
Will not be comforted."

Yes, you can find a parallel to the conversation of those two people on the Emmaus road, when every hope they had cherished has come crashing down about them, now the world is dark, and there is little hope for the future.

II.

Let me go farther, and remark that STILL INQUIRY AS TO THE REASON FOR THE SADNESS THAT PREVAILS MUST FIND THE SAME ANSWER. A Stranger draws near, and takes account of their sadness, overhears their conversation. I fancy they were speaking, not in subdued tones, but expressing their sorrow and their grief in such a way that even one who was a passer-by might hear what they had to say. So He said, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? What are you talking about? May I be included in the conversation?"

First of all they had said, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" There were no newspapers and no telephones, but no one but a stranger in Jerusalem could be unaware of the great tragedy that had taken place on the hill called Golgotha. He, quite casually, said, "What things?" "Why," they said, "concerning a great happening in Jerusalem, of a great prophet mighty in deed and word, and the chief priests and our rulers, the religious leaders of the day, condemned Him and crucified Him." And then they told Him the story.

What was that story? Is it still true? Yes. It was a story to the effect that *in Jerusalem moral worth was at a fearful discount*. The noblest Man the world had ever seen, the greatest Benefactor of His race that had ever come to earth, a Man who was mighty in word and in deed, instead of being hailed as a deliverer and as a benefactor, had been treated as a felon, and suffered a felon's death.

What is characteristic of our day? It is that men are busy digging graves in which to bury out of sight every moral thing that could remind them of their obligations to God. I do not care where you look, in business, in politics, in Governmental affairs. Of course there are always exceptions, but in the main the righteous man, the man of truth and honour, the man who really lives for the welfare of his kind, is set but small store by. Moral worth is not appreciated in our day. Why, my dear friends, there was a day when such a thing as that crime investigation committee in the United States would have shocked the world. Here was a man who had been mayor of the second largest city in what has become the most powerful nation on earth, obviously saturated with evil, given to graft and racketeering and bribing, and exercising his high office for his own aggrandizement. Unperturbed they bring him to the witness box, members of "murder incorporated", are also heard. Can you believe it, that in a civilized country like this such a thing should take place, and that a judge should say that twenty-five million dollars a year was paid the police in New York for purposes of corruption? The very guardians of the law bribed to work evil, the burial, I say, the repudiation of moral worth! I do not know what television is going to do, but I do know that the proceedings of that investigating committee was broadcast, and it took precedence of the war news on the front page of all the papers of America, while millions of people saw and heard every word of it in their own

homes, yet nobody was shocked, as though we had become insensible to the invasions of moral evil in every direction, as though the conscience of mankind had been drugged into a long and deep sleep.

Just in passing, it is worthy of mention that O'Dwyer and all his associates are Roman Catholics, and I can predict that he will not be required to resign his ambassadorship to Mexico, and that he will not suffer any kind of reproof. Why? Cardinal Spellman will see to that. If only you are a devout Roman Catholic you can get away with murder in the United States, or in Canada.

III.

What did they say? "THESE THINGS". — What were they? An exhibition of *the principle that Deity was now held in contempt*. There was no regard for God. Even the religious leaders of the day had no regard for God. God was an abstraction; His law was merely a written statute without force or authority. People in our day have no fear of God before their eyes. You cannot make laws that will keep people straight if the fear of God is banished from their minds. Here was a Man who was the world's first Standard of Righteousness. Since Adam's sin the world had never seen an exemplification of flawless righteousness until they saw it in Jesus Christ. God said, "There is my Man; that is what I made man to be—like Him." He was One who was the very incarnation of truth itself, to whom any shade of falsehood was abhorrent. But He walked with men, and they took Him to the cross and nailed Him there, and buried Him, as they supposed, out of their sight.

When I was younger I foolishly supposed that all one had to do was to prove his case, that he was right, and that a certain thing was true, and then you would surely win. I have long since learned that the generality of men say, "What if it is right; I do not care. What if it is true; I am not concerned." In our battle for the Book I thought we had only to prove that this was the word of God. I have long since learned that that does not matter to some men. Why? They have no fear of God, they do not listen to Him, they do not hear Him. It is the same story, and that is at the root of the world's sadness, just as it was at the root of the sadness of these two travellers on the Emmaus Road. In general, we live in a day of the ascendancy of evil everywhere. Do not say I am pessimistic. When a doctor pronounces the dread word "Tuberculosis", or "Cancer", he is not a pessimist; he merely tells the truth in the hope that something may be done about it. That is all.

But what is back of it all? Just this. *It is still the story of the historic cross, and the grave in the garden*. These were objective historic realities, and these two people did not understand it. There is no disputing the cross; there is no attempting to contravene the empty grave. These are established truths of history. What is the trouble with our day? The same as the trouble with these two people. As yet they did not know the meaning of the cross, nor were they fully persuaded that the grave was empty. Some of the women had been there, and they had seen a vision of angels, but that was all.

IV.

What was troubling these people? I will tell you. **THE APPARENT FAILURE OF RELIGION TO REDEEM LIFE FROM ITS SORDIDNESS.** The empty sepulchre and the

vision of angels cannot dispel the gloom, my dear friends. Do not forget that simple sentence — all this they saw and heard about, "But him they saw not." Everywhere we hear about the failure of religion, and if you were to read the accounts of the conferences of some big Denominations you might really suppose that the church existed to give ministers a job, and that the main concern should be to see that they had a good salary and a fair parsonage. Whether they are doing anything, whether any souls are being saved, and lives transformed, and God being honoured — that is not so much the question. Again I say that there are blessed exceptions, but I am speaking of generalities.

V.

Then let me tell you that STILL THE OIL OF JOY FOR MOURNING IS CONTAINED IN THE WELL-SPRINGS OF THE HOLY BOOK. What did this Stranger do when they met Him? He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Here, my dear friends, in this Book is really, after all the antidote for the world's poison. I am not speaking speculatively or theoretically; all history attests the truth of it. When Europe was so dark that there was scarcely a star in the sky, when Wycliffe arose, who was later called "the morning star of the Reformation," and when people turned to the Bible, and the Reformers, one after another, perhaps the most conspicuous of all being Luther, substituted the authority of Scripture for the authority of the church, and began to tell what the Scriptures had to say, it transformed the face of Europe. In our day it is supposed to be wisdom to refuse to believe. I suppose there is hardly a class in a University anywhere where students are not taught to put a question mark after everything that is written in Holy Scripture. Oh I meet them. We who believe the Book are old fashioned and outmoded, and I know not what else, and it is supposed to be philosophically clever, and ethically unanswerable to deny the oughtness of the cross, that Christ ought to have suffered; to deny the essentiality of the atonement by the blood of Deity, is everywhere daily ridiculed. Not everywhere. No, no, there are blessed exceptions again, but I mean by the many. And yet, somehow or another, those who are doubtful still, when they hear the word, find their hearts strangely warmed by the truth of it. I knew an outstanding Modernist who said to a friend of mine, who was a very conspicuous preacher of the gospel — he was at one of his services at which it was my privilege to preside, and this Modernist came up afterwards and said, "I love to hear you preach, old boy, it does me good. Of course I do not believe a word you say, but still somehow or another there is something about it that warms my heart, and it does me good."

This Stranger talked about the Bible. They didn't understand what He said. He opened the Scripture and told them about some great Character there that was to come, that was to die and rise again. He said it is written about Him in Moses and all the prophets, and their hearts burned within them, but they didn't believe. Let me tell you something. Read the stories of the resurrection, and you will find that, according to the inspired Record, nobody ever believed in the resurrection of Christ until he had seen Christ for himself. They heard the story of it and were interested in it, but they were not convinced by circumstantial evidence at all.

VI.

And so we come to this, THAT MOURNING WILL GIVE PLACE TO JOY ONLY AS THE STRANGER OF THE HIGHWAYS OF LIFE, BY HIS ABIDING, IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS THE LIVING SAVIOUR. They were not far from believing, were they? Their hearts had been warmed, and when they came to the place whither they went He made as though He would go further. The Lord of glory always awaits an invitation. It appeared as though He was going to leave them, but they could not let Him go; they constrained Him, and said, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening." He went in with these people of sad countenance and sorrowful conversation into their humble home to tarry with them, and as they sat at meat He took bread, blessed it, and gave it to them, and their eyes were opened! And He vanished out of their sight. But they had seen Him; they knew that He was alive.

I point out to you that if we are to get rid of our sadness and sorrow we must not let the Stranger leave us; we must constrain Him to abide. "Won't you stay with us tonight? Won't you tarry with us?" And He went in. I would remind you that He disclosed Himself in one of the commonplaces of life. The reality of Christ and His salvation is proved in the common things of life. Formal religious services, like this, have their place and value, and the observance of ordinances, such as we witnessed tonight, is Divinely commanded. Public worship is a Divine ordinance, but life does not consist for you in sitting in those pews, nor for me in standing in this pulpit. There are common things with which we have to do in the workaday world. What is your religion? A Sunday religion? Ah, my dear friends, it is when we know Jesus Christ in the common things of life, when He helps us in the home and in the office, in the shop, and on the street, in our recreational life, in every aspect and sphere of life — when Jesus Christ becomes a reality, and He takes of the things we have to do, and we have to use, and blesses them, and our eyes are opened, we say, "I knew He was near; it was He who helped me through." Only as we get His blessing thus upon the commonplace shall we be able to prove the truth of His religion.

But we must hear the exposition of the risen Christ; we must listen to His explanation of His death. It was no accident; He tells you that He came that He might die instead of you; He came that He might redeem you from all iniquity; He opened the grave for Himself that He might open the grave for all believers. You saw it this evening in that ordinance. "Buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

I saw a minister baptize in the Southland, and I was impressed with his method of baptism. He told us what it was, and then as they came one after another into the water, and they made their confession, as he baptized them he lowered each one into the water and he said, "In the likeness of His death," and then as he raised them up he said, "In the likeness of His resurrection."

To recognize Christ will give a new prospect and a new impetus to life. These people were tired, they had heard all the rumours of the day. It was toward evening and nothing had come of it; there was no certainty at all. I rather think it was Cleopas and his wife; I think the second was the wife of the first. They went home, and they said, "Well, the day is over, there is nothing more

to stay here for, let us go." They went home, and the Stranger went in with them; they saw Him and knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight. What did they do after that? Did they pull down the blinds, shut the door and lock it for the night? No. They said, "We are not going to bed; we could not sleep tonight." "Where are you going, Cleopas?" "I am going back to Jerusalem, and I want you to go too." "Well, I wanted to go; I am glad you are going. We will go together." And so they set out to retrace their steps, and went back to Jerusalem. When they got there they found a company of disciples just like themselves; they were all full of the story—"The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." "We don't need to weep over the grave any more; we don't need to be sorrowful. We know now why He came; we know now why He died and is risen again, and in Him we have everlasting hope."

Oh, my dear friends, let us all emulate the example of these two travellers of the Emmaus Road, and if the Stranger draws near to whisper His comfort to our hearts, let us constrain Him that He may abide with us, for it is toward evening.

Lord, so let it be. Thou art with us now; Thou art in every pew and beside every worshipper. Hear Thou the prayer of every one who in his heart whispers to Thee, saying, "Lord, leave me not; Oh, abide with me and never leave me again." We ask it in His name; Amen.

Let us now sing,

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!

NOT CHANCE BUT DESIGN

There are no loose stones in God's quarry; every one is marked for a place: why should the stone that is marked for the base complain that it was not marked for the pinnacle? Why should the stone marked for the pinnacle complain that it always catches the high winds, and the first snow that falls coldly upon it? whereas it ought to have been hidden in the earth, where it would have been saved from many inconveniences and from all exposures. There is one Builder: let him put us where he pleases. We cannot all be in the pinnacle, we cannot all be in the foundation; it is the Lord's Temple, let him put the stones where he wants to put them.

—JOSEPH PARKER

A MOTOR TRIP TO THE SOUTHLAND

Address by Dr. Shields

Thursday Evening, April 5th, 1951

INSTEAD of the usual lecture tonight I have decided to tell you a little of our trip to the South, after about four thousand miles of travel.

We left Toronto three weeks ago this morning, and returned last Tuesday evening. We were out of the city just twenty days, and in that time covered practically four thousand miles. You who are particularly good at mental arithmetic will be able to see that we averaged about two hundred miles a day, and some days of course, we did much more than that. I had intended to stay rather longer, but Dr. McCaul was not able to remain with us beyond a certain time, and I did not relish the idea of being a couple of thousand miles away from home, and having all the driving to do myself. I am fond of driving, providing I haven't too much of it to do. Dr. McCaul quite fell in love with my car, he is a fine driver, and he did most of the driving. I relieved him occasionally, but never because he really required it.

First of all, about the travel itself. Many of you have been down to the Southland. We didn't go to the Florida Coney Island, Miami—we went only as far as Daytona Beach, across into the middle of the country, and then returned. Most of the way the weather was ideal. We still learned that it could rain, and one or two days it rained as it did here, and as apparently it did all over the continent.

What I am especially interested in telling you is that we were able to attend a number of religious services, and I had the privilege of doing what I can never do at home. Were I to go into a religious service here in Toronto and sit in a back seat, in about one minute it would be known at the platform, and I should upset the apple-cart, generally. Even if I had the time it is very seldom that I have the opportunity of attending service outside of this church, except when I go away to preach, and then I still have the preaching to do. Dr. McCaul and I found it to be a real luxury to go to the house of the Lord as private worshippers, nobody knowing who we were, and just to enter happily into the enjoyment of the service.

At Florence, and Collingswood, N.J.

Dr. McCaul had made an appointment at a place called Florence, in New Jersey, not far from Camden. He had informed them, after we made the arrangements, that I was to be with him, and so I was pressed into service. There were quite a large number of preachers there, and every one of them I found is a GOSPEL WITNESS reader. So I found myself among friends. The church was not large, but it was filled to capacity, and we had a very good time. That was on Friday evening.

In Brooklyn, N.Y.

Then, as we were so near New York, Dr. McCaul suggested that we might just as well go on to New York and have Sunday in his church, as to go somewhere else. So on Saturday we saw something of Dr. McIntire's work in Collingswood, and drove from there on to Brooklyn, where it was my privilege to preach on Sunday evening. We had a good service, and I met a number of good friends, old friends and new friends, and among them our own Dr. Porcheron and his wife. They live

at a distance which requires an hour and three-quarters for travel—a long distance away, but when he is free from duty at the hospital, where he is taking a special course in surgery, they are always at Dr. McCaul's church. Mrs. Porcheron is a very skilful violinist, and she played on Sunday evening. Altogether we had a very happy time.

Like Abraham, "Going On Still Toward the South"

On Monday we started back over the road we had come for a distance, and then turned South, avoiding the larger cities, like Richmond, Washington and Philadelphia, striking down between them to Williamsport in Pennsylvania. If any of you at any time have a little leisure, and you want to really revel in the glories of nature, I recommend you to motor through the hills and the mountains of Pennsylvania and Virginia. Really it is indescribably magnificent and we enjoyed every minute of it. As we got down to Virginia we saw signs of spring more clearly than here, and the farther South we went the greener things became, and the higher the temperature.

At Savannah, Georgia

At length we got to Savannah, Georgia, and we saw a steamer across the street announcing a "Revival" Meeting in the City Hall. We decided to go there, so we had dinner, and then went over to the City Hall. We found it quite a large building. I didn't know who the preacher was, but listened with great interest to a sermon which was perfectly sound. I saw the stage set for the dramatization of something, which I didn't especially enjoy, but it was there. The preacher preached the gospel of salvation through the blood of Christ very, very faithfully, and there wasn't an unsound note in his whole sermon. Then he attempted to show by this dramatization of things how the promise of the blood ran through the entire Bible, from the sacrifice of Abel right down to the end of the Book. I really think the service would have been just as effective, and for me a little more effective, if he had omitted the dramatics. I have always observed that when religious people compete with the theatre in that way it is an amateur sort of performance; and if I wanted that kind of thing I would go where people could put on something worthwhile. I never did like half-way doing in anything. But, however, in spite of that, the sermon was sound. Then the preacher gave the strangest invitation I think I ever heard, or an invitation couched in the strangest form. His invitation was to all those "who would like to be saved before they die." That is a pretty broad invitation. If you believed anything at all, if you are not an out and out infidel, I am sure anybody who was not already a Christian would feel in duty bound to respond to that invitation. He made it easy, and asked them to raise their hand, and a number did. When he had got them part way he got them on their feet, and then got them down to the front. I should suppose that at least a hundred people expressed their desire to be saved before they die.

I couldn't help wondering what the result would have been if he had asked for a decision now. After all that is the gospel, isn't it? "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." A friend told me years ago of hearing Mr. Spurgeon preach one time. He led his congregation up to a very great climax, and

there was the profoundest stillness in the great Tabernacle. Then he paused and was silent. He said, "Listen, can you hear it?" Everybody could hear the clock ticking on the face of the gallery. "Do you hear it? Do you know what it is saying? I will tell you. 'Now or never, now or never, now or never, now or never.'" My friend said it was the most solemn moment he had ever experienced. It made that vast audience feel that they had come to the cross-roads, and they must make a decision now. I was sorry that the preacher was not more explicit in asking for an immediate decision, because that after all is the devil's trick, getting people to put off to some more convenient time something that ought to be done today.

In the course of the exhortation that followed, announcement was made that there were records for sale at the end of the service, and I do not know what else. I discovered that the preacher was a man called Jackie Burris, who has been here in Toronto, and I bear this witness for him, that he at least preached the gospel of salvation through the blood of Christ. So I dismissed the other accompaniments which were not so palatable, and praised the Lord for the privilege of hearing the gospel preached to sinful men. That was in Savannah, Georgia.

The Southern Baptist Convention

We learned something about the Southern Baptist Convention in our journeyings. It has a nominal membership of between seven and eight million, and between seventeen and eighteen thousand Baptist churches east of the Mississippi River were holding two weeks' "revival" services. They call Evangelistic services "Revivals" in the South; they are always a Revival. It ought to be a Revival, but whether it is or not, that is what they call it. Where they found all their preachers I do not know, but every pastor was reinforced by some other preacher, not an evangelist, but a pastor from the district. We had, in different towns, the opportunity of attending some of these services.

At Daytona Beach

We spent a Sunday at Daytona Beach, in Daytona, off the beach. There is a strip of land, then the sea beyond, and a river between, and a lot of bridges. But we spent Sunday at a place in Daytona. Dr. McCaul went to a morning service, but I frankly felt that I was justified in "sleeping in" that morning. I did not know what I should find, and I was very very tired. I have a good car, but I have decided that the motor car has not yet been made that can make a journey comfortable for a man of my dimensions. I do not quite know where to put my feet or my head, and I don't know which end I could best afford to part with. So I have to cuddle up somehow, and too long a journey is, I confess, a little tiresome. I expect to reap the benefit of our journey in days to come. It is always so with a vacation. That is the first I have had in a long time, but when any of you go to the beach, or somewhere else, in the summer time you are just worn out packing up to go, and worn out packing up to get home, and when you do get home you feel as though you needed another vacation to get over that one. That is always so. But, however, the benefit consists in the change, and it is a good thing to have a change of mind, a change of scenery, and a change of circumstances. Especially for a preacher it is a good

thing to get away occasionally, and see how other people do it, and incidentally occasionally to see how some people don't do it.

The First Baptist Church, Daytona

At Daytona we went to the First Baptist Church Sunday night. We found that they had had three services Sunday morning — it was a large church, and they had had three services in succession to accommodate the people. Sunday evening the place was crowded, the seats and the aisles. The pastor, a Mr. Nichols, a very gracious man, baptized I do not know how many, but at least twenty-five or thirty I suppose, with a delightfully dignified informality. There was nothing cheap or tawdry about it, and yet it was informal, he was like the father of the family. There was one thing about that baptismal service that was a little bit unusual. A fine strapping young fellow came into the baptistry, and the pastor stood there, put his hand on his shoulder, stood back and said, "Gee whiz! the first time I saw this boy he was about so long. See how he has grown." Even the "Gee whiz" was not in the least irreverent.

There was evidently deep affection between him and all those who were baptized, and he could do almost anything, and say almost anything, and it would pass muster. I enjoyed that baptismal service; it was beautifully administered, and was really a means of grace to my soul.

The singing was about like our own, good congregational singing. There was a song leader, Mr. Herman Iauch (pronounced Yaw), and he was a master. I decided what I have long since known, that in the leading of singing it is not the waving of the hands or the baton, it is the personality of the leader which determines the result. This man gripped the whole congregation — he told them what to do and they did it, and in the singing there was no jazzy music, good old-fashioned hymns, and well and heartily sung. I am sure every one of you would worshipfully have participated in that service.

I wondered what the preaching would be like. The preacher was Dr. C. E. Wilbanks, a pastor of a Baptist Church somewhere in Arkansas. He preached on a most unpopular subject, an X-ray photograph really of human nature. His text was, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." It was a terrific sermon, searching, profoundly Biblical, and nothing superficial about it at all. It was like a great surgeon probing to the very depths. The sermon was so strong and profound that I felt very sure there would be no immediate response when the invitation was given. You are surprised at that, but I will tell you why I was not surprised. A patient goes to see his doctor, and the doctor says, "Oh, I understand; a slight indisposition: I will write you a prescription, and you can stop at the drug store as you pass and get it filled, and you will be all right in a few days." He smiles, and says good-bye to the doctor; he goes into the drug store and gets his prescription filled. But in the other case a man goes to the doctor, and the doctor says, "There is something here a little bit beyond me; I think I shall have to have an X-ray." Maybe he has one or two, and then the doctor says, "You are a very, very sick man." "But I don't feel it doctor." "It doesn't matter whether you feel it or not; you are. It is a matter of life or death now, and I ask you to decide. You will have to submit to a most serious and critical operation if your life is to be saved. What do you think?" The man bows his head, and says, "I shall have to think that over; I

cannot make so momentous a decision on the spur of the moment. I must give it thought." "Well," says the doctor, "don't postpone it." "I will see you again doctor, but I must have time to think about it." There is a superficial kind of preaching which gives people a prescription for the drug store—"Take the little pills and you will feel better tomorrow." That was the kind of thing that was meted out in Savannah to all who would like to be saved before they die. They came up in swarms, I should think not less than a hundred people went back into the enquiry room. But when the invitation was given following that terrific sermon in Daytona there was just the profoundest silence and no response. I believe that every unsaved person in that room felt it was life or death. It meant a serious operation; it meant separation from everything. They felt they would have to think it over. I am positive that is the kind of preaching that night, there were profound results I am sure, which we need, and though there wasn't any apparent result would appear in later services.

I enjoyed that service very much, and I came away feeling thankful to God that there were some churches that were crowded in the morning, and crowded in the evening, where there was no clap-trap appeal to the superficial and the tawdry to interest people — they were there to hear the whole gospel of the grace of God. I felt profoundly thankful, as did Dr. McCaul, that there were still some who were Baptists who believed the glorious gospel of the blessed God. When I thought of that church as being one of between seventeen and eighteen churches, I said, "If they have preaching like that all over the Southland we shall hear in time of great results."

Another Great Service

I cannot remember all the places, but we attended another great Baptist service, with a large congregation. The pastor was assisted by a visiting minister by the name of Muckle, and he too preached the gospel, but he preached it in such a way that it was very, very difficult to get all that he said. Still I got enough of it to know that it was all good, and the service as a whole was interesting and instructive, and in response to the invitation at the close of that service I think there were three who went forward, and as is the custom in the Southland, they were received into the church, some to be baptized later, the others to be received by letter or experience.

At Roanoke, Virginia

Last Sunday we were near a place called Roanoke, in Virginia. It is quite a large town, and there are fifteen Baptist churches in that town. We passed on to between Roanoke and Newmarket, and found a motorcourt there where we stayed over Sunday. Dr. McCaul drove back to Roanoke for the morning service, and he reported having had a glorious time in a great church, the First Baptist Church, that was full to capacity, and he said he had heard a magnificent sermon.

He related a story which the preacher told, and which I will pass on to you. I think it is a very good one, and I am sure many of you will quite understand it. The preacher said he had a little daughter, and one morning that little daughter was a very naughty little girl. She had got out of the wrong side of the bed, and was just as ugly as a little girl could be, and even little girls can be ugly sometimes. This one was particularly ugly that morning. The preacher said that when it was a minor

punishment he inflicted it himself, but when it was a major one he handed the trouble over to his wife. So his wife subjected the little lady to some useful discipline, and when breakfast time came she came to the table smiling and happy, like her own lovely self. He said, "I am glad that little girl I met earlier this morning didn't stay to breakfast. My, she was cross and ugly. I am glad instead of that ugly little girl that we have this lovely girl. Oh, I am very glad that ugly little girl didn't stay to breakfast." She sat up in her chair, and said, "Daddy, I am still here!" And the point was that the old man can put on good manners sometimes, but the old man is still there, and you cannot get rid of him quite so easily.

A Methodist Church, at Newmarket, Virginia

In the evening there was no Baptist service in this town of Newmarket, Virginia, but there was a Methodist service. I used to know something about Methodists. They have gone out of fashion in Canada, and we haven't any left, but suppose we go to the Methodist church and see what brand of religion they have now. And there, also, if you please, they were just beginning what they called "a revival", and the owner of the motor-court, where we had found asylum for the night, I saw with his wife sitting up in front. There was a visiting preacher, and I wish you could have heard him. He was a lovely preacher, full of a passion for Christ, and for the souls of men. So unsophisticated, so natural, so profoundly sincere, that you felt that really you were in the house of the Lord, and that the Spirit of the Lord was presiding over the meeting. There were some responses to the invitation, I do not know how many, but again we had a great time.

There were two or three other week-night services we attended, but I cannot quite remember where they were. We met with no disappointment anywhere. In some places the table was spread a little more generously, and a little more appetizingly, than in others, but there was good food everywhere, and enough to minister to any hungry soul. Again and again I remarked to Dr. McCaul, "Can you understand how Christian people, who are not obliged to preach, who are not charged with the responsibility of spreading the table for other people, but who have the high and holy privilege of coming to the house of God, care-free, with hearts attuned to His Spirit — can you understand how people would unnecessarily absent themselves from the house of God?"

Well, frankly, thinking of all those churches, and sampling a number of them as we did, I felt greatly encouraged. It was such a contrast to what we find round about here, even among many people who are called Bap-

tists. There wasn't any doubt about their devotion to Christ, and their belief in the Bible as the word of God, and in the gospel of salvation as the only means of being saved.

We had a good time the little while we were in Florida, we stayed several days, and when we left Florida a week ago this morning it was uncomfortably hot, a very warm sticky day. The oranges were on the trees, and so were the grapefruit.

Florida and Ontario

It is a wonderful country, but I wouldn't exchange Ontario for Florida any day. Apart from the climate, and the fruits which such a climate can produce, it doesn't compare with the country where you live, Mrs. Rex, the country around Barrie, or anywhere else for that matter. Our is a glorious country. We left Florida without any particular regrets. We had hoped to go around, by Alabama and Louisiana, and up through Memphis to Kentucky, and home, but when Dr. McCaul could not stay with us longer we decided to come back pretty much the same way as we went, which we did, and arrived here on Tuesday evening.

The Lord Is Still With His Church

Let us be encouraged. The Lord has not forsaken His church. There are churches, thousands of them; where the people still believe the Bible, and where the preachers still preach the gospel, and where the Holy Spirit still works in saving the souls of men. I said to Dr. McCaul, "It seems to me that this Southern country is a kind of preachers' paradise. The people go to church here." We found too that there was a general respect for the church, and for religion in general, that is not common here. Advertisements were displayed in store windows, in garages, and everywhere, and people talked about "revival" — they were "having a revival in the Baptist church" or they were "having a revival in the Methodist church", and it was really like being carried back to the early days of my ministry, when that was not an uncommon experience.

So may we still pray that God will visit us in like manner. We found in a number of places our friends who follow all that goes on through THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

NOTHING TO PAY

Nothing to pay! Ah, nothing to pay!
Never a word of excuse to say!
Year after year thou hast filled the score,
Owing thy Lord still more and more.
Hear the voice of Jesus say,
"Verily thou hast nothing to pay!
Ruined, lost art thou, and yet
I forgive thee all that debt."

Nothing to pay! the debt is so great;
What will you do with the awful weight?
How shall the way of escape be made?
Nothing to pay! yet it must be paid!
Hear the voice of Jesus say,
"Verily thou hast nothing to pay!
All has been put to My account,
I have paid the full amount."

Nothing to pay; yes, nothing to pay!
Jesus has cleared all the debt away;
Blotted it out with His bleeding hand!
Free and forgiven and loved you stand.
Hear the voice of Jesus say,
"Verily thou hast nothing to pay!
Paid is the debt and the debtor free!
Now I ask thee, lovest thou Me?"

—F. R. HAVERGAL.

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The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 16 Second Quarter Lesson 4 April 22, 1951

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

A BRIDE FOR ISAAC

Lesson Text: Genesis 24:32-51.

Golden Text: "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."—Psa. 48:14.

I. The Explanation: verses 32-48.

This chapter may be considered from at least three standpoints; as a historical narrative, as illustrative of the search for the Church to be the Bride of Christ, and as illustrative of the quest of individual souls for Christ. Teachers and workers will find this passage full of suggestions for their own service for Christ. The portion assigned for study commences with the arrival of Abraham's servant at the home of Laban.

Since the chosen seed would be descended from Abraham through Isaac, the choice of a bride for Isaac was a matter of great importance. The purity and separation of the race must be guarded. For this reason, Isaac must not take a wife who belonged to any of the heathen idolatrous nations.

The search for the bride was carried on upon the basis of an oath. Our heavenly Father has entered into a solemn covenant with His Son on our behalf, and by reason of His faithfulness we may with confidence invite sinners to come to Christ (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:15). The servant, who was probably Eliezer (Gen. 15:2), had been asked to pledge himself to be faithful to his master's trust. We are not under law, but under grace. Nevertheless, let us renew our covenant with the Master, Who has appointed us to perform a special task for Him (1 Cor. 9:16; 1 Tim. 1:11).

The servant's responsibility was great, yet limited: he was bound to be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2), but he was not bound to succeed (v. 8). He must plead his master's cause to the best of his ability, but the burden of decision rested with the maiden. Each individual must make his own choice (Rom. 14:12). Let us see to it that we are clear of the blood of the souls to whom we take the message although we cannot answer for their response (Ezek. 33:7-9).

The search for souls must be commenced and continued in the spirit of prayer. Eliezer had prayed very definitely that his errand might be prospered: not indeed for his own praise, but that glory might come to his master. He had also requested a sign in order that he might be sure that the Lord had shown grace to Abraham (Gen. 15:9-17; Judg. 6:17, 37; 2 Kings 20:9). While the request for signs is not an indication of mature faith, for we are to walk by faith, not by sight; yet, God stoops to our weakness and sometimes gives the encouragement of an outward manifestation of His will. God had heard and answered the prayer for guidance (Isa. 65:24), because Eliezer was willing to walk in the appointed path. God gives explicit guidance in return for implicit obedience (vv. 27, 40, 48).

Abraham's servant did not forget to give thanks to God for His mercy and truth, for His grace and faithfulness (Gen. 32:10; Psa. 89:1; 92:1, 2; Lam. 3:22, 23).

II. The Entreaty: verses 49-51.

Eliezer talked only of his master—his master's wealth, his goodness and his gracious will. The Christian steward is likewise free to display his Master's boundless wealth, given by the Father to the Son (John 3:35; 1 Cor. 3:21-23). He need make no apology for calling men to Christ; he offers them riches beyond comprehension (Eph. 1:14, 18; 2:7; 3:8). He will not exalt himself (John 3:30), but will reveal to men the glorious Person of Christ, His wealth and His purpose to bring them to Himself (John 16:13-15; Eph. 1:3-6).

Abraham's servant was not content merely to inform Rebekah and her family concerning the love and wealth of his master; he pressed for decision. We must faithfully teach people about Christ, but we must also urge them to decide for Christ. Eliezer put the issues before Rebekah clearly and forcefully. If she would receive the gracious offer and accept as true the account given her of the excellencies of Isaac, let her say so. If she would spurn the offer and thus deal unkindly, ungraciously and dishonestly

with the master (Rom. 2:4; 1 John 5:9-11), let her say so. But there must be no trifling (Josh. 24:15; Exod. 32:26; 1 Kings 18:21; Matt. 27:22). He was not there to amuse her or merely to interest her, but rather to urge her to accept the overtures of love.

If the maiden were not willing to leave her country and go to Isaac, Isaac must not leave his country to go to her (v. 5; Jer. 15:19). Salvation necessitates a departure from the sphere of the world into the Kingdom of God's dear Son; an emigration from the dominion of Satan to the sovereignty of Christ; a translation from the old line of Adam to the new line headed by Christ (Col. 1:13).

The enemy would have men tarry (v. 55), but Christ calls for immediate decision (Acts 22:16; 2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7). The time for action had come. All the required explanations had been given, and Rebekah must tell the servant "now" (v. 49) what she intended to do. To delay would have meant that she forfeited all claims to be Isaac's bride, and the servant would have departed and sought for a bride elsewhere. She could not be a bride and remain where she was: she must go to Canaan, and go at once (Lk. 15:18).

"Wilt thou go with this man?—I will go" (v. 53). The similar question and answer which are part of the wedding ceremony illustrate the transaction which takes place between the believing soul and Christ. As we accept Him, He receives us. There is mutual love, trust and surrender. As teachers ask their scholars the question, "Wilt thou go with this Man?" may their reply be "I will go".

Rebekah had learned to love Isaac even before she saw him (1 Pet. 1:8), but how great was her rapture when at last she stood in his presence (v. 64; 1 Kings 10:7; 1 John 3:1, 2). Their meeting was the beginning of long years of fellowship, even as the time when the Christian first learns to know the Lord is the commencement of an eternity to be spent with his Lord (Rev. 21:2-8).

The trusted servant was able to give his report to the master with joy (v. 66; Mk. 6:30; Heb. 13:17). No doubt he received the commendation "Well done" from his master, but his greatest reward would be to see Rebekah's union with Isaac (1 Thess. 2:19), a union brought about because of his own faithful presentations of the claims of another, which caused her to leave her country and kindred and follow him (v. 61), as he led her to the beloved bridegroom (Prov. 11:30; Dan. 12:3; John 1:42).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

April 16—Marriage Instituted Gen. 2:18-25
 April 17—Marriage Confirmed by Christ Matt. 19:1-6
 April 18—Christ Attends a Wedding Feast John 2:1-12
 April 19—Ornaments of a Bride Psa. 45:1-17
 April 20—Presents for the Bride Gen. 35:51-55
 April 21—Polygamy Introduced by Lamech Gen. 4:16-24
 April 22—Christ and Divorce Mk. 10:1-12

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love. My Jesus, I love Thee.
 Jesus is tenderly calling to-day. Loved with everlasting love.
 The sands of time are sinking. Jesus loves me, this I know.

GOD IS THE SOUL'S HEALER

Whether we look at sin as disease or as guilt, or as both together, we find that in regard to it we must deal with God alone. The medicine, the skill, the pardon, the deliverance, are in His hand. With no other must we transact in the matter of sin's removal; not with self, or man, or the flesh, or the church, or a creed, or a priest, but with God himself; and that directly, face to face, alone, without any medium or intervention. All others are physicians of no value. They heal not at all, or they heal slightly, or they increase and irritate the disease. Health is with God alone. He heals effectually and eternally. He who is the soul's life is also the soul's

Whatever be the sickness, deep or slight, of long or brief standing, connected with the eye, the ear, the hand, the feet, the head, or the whole spiritual being, the counsel which must be given to the sick soul is go straight to God; deal with Him; and let Him deal with you.

—HORATIUS BONAR.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH-STATE DISREGARDS LAWS

From The Scottish Rite News Bulletin

AS REPEATEDLY pointed out by the Scottish Rite publications of the Southern Jurisdiction, the Roman Catholic Church-State, a foreign sovereignty, has little or no respect for the laws of our sovereign states. It violates them in several respects, and succeeds in doing so because of the political influence of the Roman hierarchy in the various localities where the laws are violated, the ignorance of Protestants and others of the laws of liberty established for them, or because of the supine attitude of these Protestants and others, who would sacrifice the potency of these laws to keep the peace while the Roman Church-State moves on to the total destruction of our liberties.

We have called attention to the two Supreme Court decisions in the State of Missouri upholding the Constitutional provisions of that state against state aid being given to parochial or sectarian schools. These decisions, it was pointed out, were the result of actions brought against the Roman Church for violations of the State Constitution. Did the Roman Church-State cease and desist in its violations in other areas of the state, as was expected of it and as any law-abiding institution would have done? It did not? Today, there is said to be some seventy places in Missouri where it continues to operate in violation of the law, according to well-informed authorities.

Because of these violations, approximately \$300,000 is paid annually from the state treasury in Missouri to nuns, brothers and priests who conduct so-called public schools. This is just one group of twenty-five such schools. The Roman Church-State has again forced the patriots of Missouri to bring another law suit. This is being done by the Missouri Association for Free Public Schools in the Cole County Circuit Court to restrain (among other things) certain public authorities from any further diversion of tax funds for the support of any sectarian institution. Charging that the funds are being diverted in both direct and indirect ways, the Rev. A. G. Williams, Methodist minister and treasurer of the Association stated that more than 100 garbed nuns are on public school teaching staffs, and the payment of public school funds goes to bus drivers to haul parochial school pupils to and from their schools.

According to a recent Supreme Court decision in the State of Washington, any aid to a parochial school pupil from tax funds is aid to the institution which he attends. Upon this principle, under the Constitution of the State of Missouri, bus service to such pupils is a violation of that constitution.

The courts of Iowa have also handed down decisions on the above kinds of violations by the Roman Catholic Church-State, and there, too, it continues to act contemptuously against our sovereign state laws. We are in receipt of a newspaper clipping from a Clinton, Iowa, paper, dated November 11, 1950, which reports that the public school at St. Donatus is being operated as a parochial school. L. L. Long, who became superintendent of schools in Jackson County eighteen months ago, has filed a petition in the district court asking that the board of education there be restrained from operating the school as a parochial institution. The superintendent took action only after first warning the board. He

claims that St. Donatus board employs as teachers two Roman Catholic nuns who appear regularly in the school-rooms in religious garb, and that part of their earnings goes to their religious order; also that the board rents a building from the Roman Catholic diocese at Dubuque and has used public funds for repairs. The superintendent also points out other acts of the board favoring the Roman Catholic schools, which appear in violation of the Constitution of Iowa.

As stated above, the Roman Catholic Church-State knows the laws of our states, but it snaps its ecclesiastical fingers in the face of them.

How much longer will the American people tolerate this character of subversiveness and contempt upon the part of this ecclesiastical, foreign, sovereign power, which is fastening its medieval, pagan clutches upon our liberties and destroying the pure Christian culture of the founders of our country?

Plan of the Roman Church at Work in Wisconsin, Too

In a few areas of the United States, the Roman Catholic Church has brought influence to bear in consolidating public schools so that it will reap benefits therefrom. This is seen in Kentucky, Missouri, Iowa, and now in Wisconsin.

In the Averill school district of Wisconsin, parents of eleven Protestant pupils do not want their children taught by nuns of the Roman church. Their protests have brought a bitter controversy which has begun to extend beyond the state because of its similarity to the same causes in other states.

At Lima, six miles from Durand, is the Sacred Heart School of Holy Rosary Parish, which, as the name implies, is a school of the Roman church, a foreign institution. On the first floor of this school building, owned by the Holy Rosary Parish, is a public school with 197 pupils, whose parents are members of the Roman church, and six of its seven teachers are nuns of that church. Five public schools are now combined with the Sacred Heart elementary school in that building, which is now the Lima consolidated state graded school. The nearby Averill school was closed and added to the Lima school. Some 30 pupils of the Roman church left the Averill school to attend the Holy Rosary School at Lima. The Protestants undertook to keep the Averill school open and refused to vote for the consolidation plan in a referendum, but were locked out by the new consolidated school board. They sent their children to Durand, but the school officials there ruled that the parents of these children must pay for the tuition and transportation of each of these pupils at the approximate rate of \$200 per year.

A question raised is: If the Averill Protestant parents refuse to send their children to the Lima school because it is Romishly operated, must they pay tuition to send them to some public school they may choose?

Another question is the violation of the 1st Amendment of the Federal Constitution, supported by the 14th Amendment thereof, as well as the Constitution of Wisconsin, on the principle of separation of Church and State. Dr. Ellis H. Dana, executive secretary of the Wisconsin Council of Churches and a member of the Executive Committee of POAU, was emphatic in his criticism of the Lima situation, in which the Romish adherents managed to consolidate a number of public schools in the building owned by the Holy Rosary Parish

and operate same out of some funds raised from public taxation. Doctor Dana said: "I am opposed to any religious group teaching in public schools."

One suit has been filed and another is in preparation, both apparently by Mr. William C. Cox, chairman of the dissolved Averill school district. The former would throw out the consolidation on the grounds that the merger was invalid because of a previous pending appeal. The latter challenges the constitutional right of the Lima Sacred Heart School to receive state aid for conducting a public school.

The Lima Sacred Heart School has been operating as a public school since 1937 and receiving aid from public funds. Beginning with classes held in just one room, the consolidation of schools on the property finally reached the present situation. As true in some other states where the law is being violated, the Roman church receives rent for the use of its property while its teachers of religious orders operate a public school. The Holy Rosary Parish received \$1,000 annual rent for the use of the first floor of the building at Lima.

Though enjoying every privilege of Protestant American denominations, the Roman church, a foreign institution, in fact a foreign state sovereignty, cannot keep its hands out of the public treasuries of our states and Federal Government. For the past thirteen years it has been a party to such action at Lima, and very likely in other parts of the state, without a murmur from either citizens or school officials or other responsible state officers.

The State Superintendent of State Schools, George E. Watson, according to *The Milwaukee Journal* of February 11, 1951, stated that nuns could teach in public schools provided they have state licenses. One wonders to what extent the superintendent has satisfied himself as to the qualifications of the nuns in this respect. He certainly was aware of the laws of his state and the Federal Government with respect to the legality of the financial aid these Romish-taught schools have received since 1937. As a public official, why did he not question and enforce the law instead of waiting embarrassment by his laches in the present situation?

We direct attention to this unhappy condition to warn other superintendents and public officials in other states who are equally negligent in taking prompt action to uphold the laws against the inroads of a foreign institution, or the violation of our laws by sectarian American institutions for that matter.

Citizens of this country have long and patiently endured the affronts of the Roman church but they are now becoming alerted and, in a mistaken attitude of tolerance, will cease being imposed upon through the violations of the laws of their country.—E.R.

THE FOLLY OF UNBELIEF

What would you think if there were to be an insurrection in a hospital, and sick man should conspire with sick man, and on a certain day they should rise up and reject the doctors and nurses? There they would be—sickness and disease within, and all the help without! Yet what is a hospital compared to this fever-ridden world, which goes swinging in pain and anguish through the centuries, where men say, "We have got rid of the Atonement, and we are rid of the Bible"? Yes, and you have rid yourselves of salvation.—Becher.

TRAINING FUTURE FRENCH WORKERS

The work of missionaries and pastors in French Canada has aroused great interest in evangelical circles in the last few years. For this we are most grateful to God. What has been accomplished is but the beginning of a great work of which only the fringe has been touched as yet. The key to this missionary enterprise as to every other, is the worker. Many earnest Christians who are eager and sacrificial missionary supporters do not appreciate at its true value the importance of preparing future workers, without whom missions are humanly impossible.

Last week-end a group of future missionaries to French-Canadian Roman Catholics, gathered at beautiful Kenhaven on the shores of Balsam Lake to devote themselves to an intensive study of French for three days with a view to preparing to enter this needy field in our own land. Language study is never carried on entirely "sans pleurs" but there were many compensations for the difficulties of the task in the warm spirit of Christian fellowship. And our Christian hosts did everything humanly possible to render our retreat delightful. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bauman were there not merely in an official capacity (Mr. Bauman is a trustee of the Seminary) but to lend their aid to English-born students to learn French. They made a large contribution not only linguistically but spiritually and also to the general atmosphere of good fellowship and fun. Letters in French were received from former students who shared similar occasions in past years and who are now on the field at work. In a few short weeks the present student body will scatter to various fields of service to apply what they have learned in the Seminary to the work of preaching the Word when the memory of these three days of blessing and the profit of their linguistic studies will come to their aid.

—W.S.W.

THE KOREAN CAT-AND-MOUSE GAME

Wednesday morning, April 11th. The above note was in type before the press announced that President Truman had relieved General Douglas MacArthur of his command. We have no change to make, except to add that we hope General MacArthur will now come home and help to "fire" President Truman.

IT IS reported that the politicians in Britain and in Washington are greatly disturbed by General MacArthur's expression of political opinion. It seems to us there never was a crazier war than this in Korea, and never was there any evidence in such a conflict of such clumsy, political leadership. We do not blame General MacArthur: we pity him; and we greatly admire his endurance in sticking to his job in spite of President Truman. Perhaps he is technically in error in expressing his opinion politically, but actually we believe he has defined the only possible way to victory. Meanwhile, while politicians blunder thousands of brave soldiers die.

One does not need to be a military expert to know that if an army, operating from the south, are told they must not pass the 38th parallel, or must not trespass across the Manchurian border, he is engaged in a warfare where success is impossible.

We have wondered if the political leaders in Britain and in the United States have taken leave of their senses. This Editor has a lovely dog, whom we call "Lucky".

We think he is lucky, and we count ourselves lucky to have him. We have a large lawn at the back of the house, and many trees. Roundabout, not on our premises, there are flocks of pigeons. They may be beautiful birds, but they can be a thorough nuisance. The pigeons come down upon the lawn. We say to Lucky, "Lucky, pigeons!" Immediately he is off the verandah at full speed, and he drives the Reds or the Greys or the Blues, or whatever colour they may be, beyond the 38th parallel. Then he comes back to the verandah, having scored a great victory! But by the time he is back on the verandah, the pigeons are back on the lawn.

That is what General MacArthur has been asked to do: play the game of Lucky. Chase the pigeons off, but don't shoot them. Drive the enemy back beyond the 38th parallel, or even into Manchuria, but no airplane must cross the border. No bombs must be dropped on the enemy's supply line.

No war was ever won by such asinine methods; and never will be. The United Nations ought to fight through to victory, and absolutely break the prestige and power of Red China, or else give up the cat and mouse game, and go home.

We suppose we have ordinary intelligence, and we have ceased to be interested in reading of the United Nations "Lucky" driving the Communists away. Oh, for a Churchill in London, and for something other than pettifoggery politics at Washington!

Whatever the war news to-day, it is reasonably certain that the pigeons will be back to-morrow.

WAS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

We reprint here from *The Christian Beacon* the second article by Charles Haddon Spurgeon dealing with what he called the "Down-grade controversy". The principles he enunciated in his day are equally applicable in ours to what is now known as "Modernism", or, more accurately, "unbelief".

Our Reply to Sundry Critics and Enquirers

ACCORDING to the best of our ability we sounded an alarm in Zion concerning the growing evils of the times, and we have received proof that it was none too soon. Letters from all quarters declare that the case of the church at this present is even worse than we thought it to be. It seems that, instead of being guilty of exaggeration, we should have been justified in the production of a far more terrible picture. This fact causes us real sorrow. Had we been convicted of mis-statement we would have recanted with sincerely penitent confessions, and we should have been glad to have had our fears removed. It is no joy to us to bring accusations; it is no pleasure to our heart to seem to be in antagonism with so many. We are never better pleased than when in fellowship with our brethren we can rejoice in the progress of the gospel.

But no one has set himself to disprove our allegations. One gentleman, of neutral tint, has dared to speak of them as vague, when he knows that nothing could be more definite. But no one has shown that prayer-meetings are valued, and are largely attended; no one has denied that certain ministers frequent theatres; no one has claimed that the Broad School newspapers have respected a single truth of revelation; and no one has borne witness to the

sound doctrine of our entire ministry. Now we submit that these are the main points at issue: at least, these are the only things we contend about. Differences of judgment upon minor matters, and varieties of mode in action, are not now under question, but matters vital to religion. Others may trifle about such things; we cannot, and dare not.

Instead of dealing with these weighty things, our opponents have set to work to make sneering allusions to our sickness. All the solemn things we have written are the suggestions of our pain, and we are advised to take a long rest. With pretended compassion, but with real insolence, they would detract from the truth by pointing to the lameness of its witness. Upon this trifling we have this much to say:—In the first place, our article was written when we were in vigorous health, and it was in print before any sign of an approaching attack was discoverable. In the second place, if we were in a debate with Christians we should feel sure that, however short they might run of arguments, they would not resort to personalities; least of all, to those personalities which make a painful malady their target. Incidentally, this breach of Christian courtesy goes to show that the new theology is introducing, not only a new code of morals, but a new tone and spirit. It would seem to be taken for granted, that if men are such fools as to adhere to an old-fashioned faith, of course they must be idiots, and they deserve to be treated with that contemptuous pity which is the quintessence of hate. If you can find out that they are sufferers, impute their faith to their disease, and pretend that their earnestness is nothing but petulance arising from their pain. But enough of this: we are so little embittered in spirit by our pangs that we can laugh at the arrows aimed at our weaker member. Do our critics think that, like Achilles, our vulnerable point lies, not in our head, but in our heel?

We are grateful to the editor of *Word and Work* for speaking out so plainly. He says:—

"In *The Sword and the Trowel* for the present month Mr. Spurgeon gives no uncertain sound concerning departures from the faith. His exposure of the dishonesty which, under the cover of orthodoxy, assails the very foundations of faith is opportune in the interests of truth. No doubt, like a faithful prophet in like evil times, he will be called a 'troubler of Israel'; and already we have noticed he has been spoken of as a pessimist; but any such attempts to lessen the weight of his testimony are only certain to make it more effective. When a strong sense of duty prompts public speech it will be no easy task to silence it.

"The preachers of false doctrine dislike nothing more than the premature detection of their doings. Only give them time enough to prepare men's minds for the reception of their 'new views', and they are confident of success. They have had too much time already, and any who refuse to speak out now must be held to be 'partakers of their evil deeds'. As Mr. Spurgeon says, 'A little plain-speaking would do a world of good just now. These gentlemen desire to be let alone. They want no noise raised. Of course thieves hate watch-dogs, and love darkness. It is time that somebody should spring his rattle, and call attention to the way in which God is being robbed of His glory and man of his hope.'

"Only those who have given some attention to the progress of error during recent years can form any just

idea of the rapid strides with which it is now advancing. Under the plea of liberalism, unscriptural doctrines are allowed to pass current in sermons and periodicals, which, only a few years ago, would have been faithfully resisted unto death. When anyone even mildly protests, preachers and journalists are almost unanimous in drowning the feeble testimony either by sneers or shouts. Throughout the wide realm of literature there seems to be a conspiracy to hate and hunt down every Scriptural truth. Let any man, especially if he belongs to an evangelical church, denounce or deny any part of the creed he has solemnly vowed to defend, and at once his fortune is made. The press makes the world ring with his fame, and even defends the dishonesty which clings to a stipend forfeited by the violation of his vow. It is far otherwiser with the defender of the faith. He is mocked, insulted, and laughed to scorn. The spirit of the age is against him. So in greater or lesser measure it has always been. But when he remembers who is the prince of this world, and the ruler of the age, he may be well content to possess his soul in patience.

This witness is true.

Let no man dream that a sudden crotchet has entered our head, and that we have written in hot haste; we have waited long, perhaps too long, and have been slow to speak. Neither let any one suppose that we build up our statements upon a few isolated facts, and bring to the front certain regrettable incidents which, might as well have been forgotten. He who knows all things can alone reveal the wretched facts which have come under our notice. Their memory will, we trust, die and be buried with the man who has borne their burden, and held his peace because he had no wish to create disunion. Resolved to respect the claims both of truth and love, we have pursued an anxious pathway. To protest when nothing could come of it but anger, has seemed senseless; to assail evil and crush a vast amount of good in the process, has appeared to be injurious. If all knew all, our reticence would be wondered at and we are not sure that it would be approved. Whether approved or not, we have had no motive but the general progress of the cause of truth, and the glory of God.

Had there been a right spirit in those who resent our warning, they would either have disproved our charge, or else they would have lamented its truthfulness, and have set to work to correct the evil which we lamented. Alas, the levity which plays ducks and drakes with doctrines, makes game of all earnestness, and finds sport in Christian decision! Yet, surely there is a remnant of faithful ones, and these will be stirred to action, and will cry mightily unto God that the plague may be stayed. The gospel is too precious for us to be indifferent to its adulteration. By the love we bear to the Lord Jesus we are bound to defend the treasure with which he has put us in trust.

That ugly word "pessimist" has been hurled at our devoted head. We are denounced as "gloomy". Well, well! The day was when we were censured for being wickedly humorous, and many were the floggings we received for our unseemly jests. Now we are morose and bitter. So the world's opinion changes. A half-a-farthing would be an extravagant price to pay for the verdict one way or another. In truth, we are quite able to take an optimistic view of things. (Is that the correct word, Mr. Critic?) We are glad to admit that there is much of Christian zeal, self-sacrifice, and holy perseverance in the world.

Possibly there is more than ever. Did we ever say otherwise? We rejoice in the thousands of gracious, holy, large-hearted men around us. Who dares to say we do not? We see much that is hopeful and delightful in many quarters. Is this at all to the point? May there not be much that is beautiful and healthful in a countenance where yet there may be the symptoms of a foul disease? The church is large, and while one end of her field may rejoice us with golden grain, another part of it may be full of thorns and briars. It often happens that causes of sorrow may be increased at the very same moment when occasions of joy are most numerous. We judge that is so just now. The cause of God goes on in spite of foes, and his truth is sure to conquer in the long run, however influential its opposers. No, no, we are by no means despondent for the Lord's kingdom. That would be a dishonour to his eternal power and Godhead. Our amiable critics may possibly be pleased to know that they will not find us bathing in vinegar, nor covering our swollen foot with wormwood, nor even drinking quinine with our vegetables; but they will find us rejoicing in the Lord, and buckling on our harness for the war with as firm a confidence as if all men were on our side. Bad as things are from one point of view, there is a bright side to affairs: the Lord has yet his men in reserve who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

We have said, with deep grief that we should have had to say it, that many ministers have departed from the faith; and this was no unkind suspicion on our part, but a matter of fact, ascertained in many ways, and made most sadly sure. We trust that the Baptists are by no means so far gone as the Independents: indeed, we feel sure that they are not. Still, we do not say this in order to throw stones at others. A well-known Congregational minister, who is preparing a book upon this painful subject, writes us—"I have not a large acquaintance with the state of opinion in your denomination. I groan over my own. There are many faithful to Christ, and to the souls of men; but, alas! it seems to me that many have no kind of gospel to preach, and the people are willing that it should be so. Some of our colleges are poisoning the churches at the fountains. I very much fear that an unconverted ministry is multiplying." To the same import is a letter from another brother of the same denomination, who says—"I cannot agree with *The British Weekly*, that you take an 'extremely pessimistic' view of the evil. On the contrary, I am disposed to think that your conviction is faint compared with what the reality would warrant. . . . College, for example, continues to pour forth men to take charge of our churches who do not believe, in any proper sense, in the inspiration of the Scriptures, who deny the vicarious sacrifice on the cross, and hold that, if sinners are not saved on this side the grave, they may, can, or must be on the other. And the worst of it is, the people love it." We could multiply this painful evidence, but there is no need, since the charge is not denied. It is ridiculed; it is treated as a matter of no consequence, but it is not seriously met. Is this what we have come to? Is there no doctrine left which is to be maintained? Is there no revelation? Are the sceptics so much to the fore that no man will open his mouth against them? Are all the orthodox afraid of the "cultured"? We cannot believe it. The private knowledge which we possess will not allow of so unhappy a conclusion; yet Christian people are now so tame that they shrink from expressing themselves. The house is being

robbed, its very walls are being digged down, but the good people who are in bed are too fond of the warmth, and too much afraid of getting broken heads, to go down-stairs and meet the burglars; they are even half vexed that a certain noisy fellow will spring his rattle, or cry, "Thieves!"

That the evil leaven is working in the churches as well as among the ministers, is also sadly certain. A heterodox party exists in many congregations, and those who compose it are causing trouble to the faithful, and sadly influencing the more timid towards a vacillating policy. An earnest preacher, who is only one of a class, says: "The old truths are unpopular here. I am told that I have preached the doctrines of grace to my cost—that is, in a pecuniary aspect; and I know that it is so. I cannot find anything to rest upon in the modern theories, but this places me in antagonism to the supporters of the chapel. They find fault, not with the style of my preaching, but with the subjects of it." In another place the witness is—"Our minister is an able and gracious man, but there are those in the church who are determined that no one shall remain here unless he is in favour of advanced opinions." Yes, the divergence is every day becoming more manifest. A chasm is opening between the men who believe their Bibles, and the men who are prepared for an advance upon Scripture. Inspiration and speculation cannot long abide in peace. Compromise there can be none. We cannot hold the inspiration of the Word, and yet reject it; we cannot believe in the atonement and deny it; we cannot hold the doctrine of the fall and yet talk of the evolution of spiritual life from human nature; we cannot recognize the punishment of the impenitent

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and yet indulge the "larger hope". One way or the other we must go. Decision is the virtue of the hour.

Neither when we have chosen our way can we keep company with those who go the other way. There must come with decision for truth a corresponding protest against error. Let those who will keep the narrow way keep it, and suffer for their choice; but to hope to follow the broad road at the same time is an absurdity. What communion hath Christ with Belial?

Thus far we come, and pause. Let us, as many as are of one mind, wait upon the Lord to know what Israel ought to do. With steadfast faith let us take our places; not in anger, not in the spirit of suspicion or division, but in watchfulness and resolve. Let us not pretend to a fellowship which we do not feel, nor hide convictions which are burning in our hearts. The times are perilous, and the responsibility of every individual believer is a burden which he must bear, or prove a traitor. What each man's place and course should be the Lord will make clear unto him.

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