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## "KEPT"

"Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."—I Peter 1:5.

By Dr. John Wilmot

THE Lord has charged Himself with responsibility for His people's security, even as He is the Author of their salvation. Initial salvation is variously represented in Scripture: here it is a begetting (verse 3). Sinners become *children* of God in the only way possible, they are begotten. Thus their title to the heavenly inheritance is the most valid: they are born unto it, for involved in this relationship, effected "according to His abundant mercy" and "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ", is heirship; the inheritance is our birthright, and it is "reserved in heaven", changeless, spotless, timeless. No element of deterioration within can accomplish its decay — it is "incorruptible"; no evils of environment can contaminate it—it is "undefiled"; consequently it endureth forever—"it fadeth not away".

In human affairs the security of the inheritance does not necessarily carry with it the security of the heir. Calamity, death, may ensue ere the time to possess arrives though the title to possession be established. The estate may in every way be most excellent: it is so here; but what is there to ensure that the rightful heirs shall succeed to it? Here is an inspired assurance written to encourage us to "hold fast the confidence of the hope steadfast unto the end".

"For you who are kept." Salvation was obtained by the Lord Jesus Christ; by Him alone and exclusively; there is no other saving name (Acts 4:12). It is of grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). But grace produces graces, and faith brings forth her fruits. And the evidential language of Scripture conditions salvation accordingly, as, for example, by our endurance (Matt. 10:22), our continuance (Col. 1:23), our holding fast (1 Cor. 15:2). There are "things which accompany salvation" and prove genuine our claim to it (Heb. 6:9). The righteous, it is said in this epistle, are saved with difficulty because of the forces of evil ranged against them (4:18).

What provision is made for all this? The answer is, they endure and continue and hold fast and grow and bear fruit, who are "kept". The epistle views faith tried

in fire, the saints buffeted by the world, suffering on the behalf of Christ. And the fruit of the Spirit becomes the more apparent by reason of the barren environment. The word itself supposes assault and peril. It is a military term: "kept", that is, as in a garrison town besieged by the enemy. The inheritance is in heaven, reserved; but the heirs are on earth in a hostile situation; but they are guarded by God's power.

The epistle warns us against our several foes, foes which, should they finally conquer, must deprive us of the inheritance. "Your adversary, *the devil*, goeth about like a roaring lion" (5:8). By his subtlety, strategy, strength, he would overcome the saints, for before their emancipation they were his captives, his servants. Every soul begotten of God is translated out of the authority of darkness. Can we wonder that we henceforward become the chief and special objects of attack? God would, therefore, have us beware of our foe who is here described in his true character and intent. We must not underestimate his power from whom we have been so mercifully delivered, for that deliverance necessitated "abundant mercy" (3); nor may we regard him with levity as though we may presume now that we are no longer in his power, for even Michael the archangel could but refer the devil to the Lord for rebuke (Jude 9). Notwithstanding, we have no cause to fear, for we are "kept".

The Evil One has two accomplices, within and without, the flesh and the world. He has intelligence within the citadel, so to speak, a quisling within! Therefore it is written, "Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" — the enemy within. Again, "the time past of our life may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles" — the world without (4:3). The *flesh* and the *world* also are described in their true colours. Satan would deceive us and allure us from Christ by sin's pleasures and fashions and follies, so that we should lose our pilgrim character, so that we should become "short-sighted, and not see afar off and forget that we were purged from our old sins" (2 Peter 1:9). Therefore

must we keep ourselves unspotted from the world if we would gain possession of the spotless inheritance. And that is impossible except we are "kept"; hence this blessed assurance. But how are we "kept"?

"By the power of God through faith". Our inherent weakness, and evil environment, and the strength of the enemy, demand a power superior to this triple combination, the world, the flesh and the devil, and such is the power of God. The power by which we were quickened is the power which keeps. "By" may well be "within", signifying the sphere in which we are kept. That is to say, sinners, when begotten of the Spirit and believing, are brought within the sphere of the effective and protective operation of the very power of God. Who can estimate the might of that power which raises the dead so that the soul, on believing the gospel, is given a spiritual resurrection, a quickening into the life of God, a translation into the kingdom of His dear Son, which, except a man be born from above, he can neither see nor enter? (Col. 1:13; John 3:3-5). Into the realm of the operation of such power believers are introduced, and thus it is they are kept.

Further, this is the power which raised up Christ from the dead (3) which Paul describes as the "mighty power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead" with its objective "to usward who believe" (Eph. 1:19, 20). His enemies had said, "This is the Heir, come, let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours". So they killed the Lord Jesus. And the joint-heirs would have perished with Him. The fortunes of the heirs presumptive are bound up with those of the Heir apparent. But that was their hour, the world's, and the power of darkness, soon to be superseded and vanquished by God's hour and the power which raised Christ again. What power is greater than death? All is impotent in its presence. Death is the issue of the trinity of evil against which we are kept. For sin within, the flesh, brings forth death (Jas. 1:15). The sorrow and pleasure of the world worketh death (2 Cor. 7:10; 1 Tim. 5:6), and Satan held authority over death, that king of terrors (Heb. 2:14). But God's people are kept by a power which has demonstrated its superiority over the utmost that the combination of their foes can accomplish.

No power can overcome Him Who is Himself the Overcomer of death, and within His power believers are kept. Yes, believers, for God combines the operation of this power on His part with the exercise of faith on ours. It is "through faith"; faith which is the instrumental means of our salvation and of our security. What comfort is in this word. The *strongest* saint does not keep himself; God's power keeps him through faith as its instrument in operation. So also "the *feeblest* saint shall win the day though death and hell obstruct the way". A child, it is said, was observed to continue long in prayer, for she had heard and sung the words, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees", and desired to make the Devil tremble a long time! To what end are we kept?

"Unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." The preposition is related both to purpose and time. God will keep His people unto their salvation's completeness. Then all danger will be past. But there is more than immunity from danger in this word; it corresponds to the hope and inheritance (3 and 4) and is ready await-

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ing the time of unveiling. When is that time? It is said to be "the last time". Not till then will the salvation be revealed. The last, that is, the most, extreme or remote, that which concludes the duration of this present evil world. God, then, will keep His people unto the very consummation, of which the Saviour spoke when He, the risen One, charged His apostles with the evangelization of all nations. Right through the predetermined course of the Church militant, through Satan's "short time", through the final insurrection to the extreme point, until the glorious and victorious unveiling of the Saviour from heaven for whom we look (Phil. 3:20). "The last time" will see the last sinner saved, the last enemy destroyed, and all the saints kept inviolate from the first to the last. Yea, when surrounded by the "manifold trials" (1:6) or passing through "the fiery trial" therein partaking of Christ's sufferings, even then shall they be kept, "that when His glory shall be revealed they may be glad also with exceeding joy" (4:12-13).

Let not Christ's people sing rapturous songs about His coming, and vow in consecration hymns to suffer, live and die for their Lord crucified, when the lines are fallen unto them in pleasant places, and yet fail in true witness to Him in the perilous times of apostasy. Let us be willing to suffer reproach for His name, not deceiving ourselves by any erroneous persuasion that escape may be had from the severest testing, but finding incentive unto patient-endurance in the prospect that salvation shall be revealed in the last time when "grace shall be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (13). Let us not forget the gracious and sufficient assurance that unto that time, unto the uttermost, and therefore through the severest trial-times, the Church shall be guarded in His almighty power, a power superior to the combination of the principalities and powers of the great adversary, and she shall prove how grandly God can keep. Let us then be strong in the faith of Christ Who triumphed over every foe of His and ours, and through His guardianship until the very final moment, we shall triumph too.

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## "My Kindness Shall Not Depart From Thee"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, May 20th, 1951  
(Electrically Recorded)

"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."—Isaiah 54:10.

YEARS ago, when I was but a boy, I heard my father preach from this text. What he said at that time I do not remember, but I never forgot the text. The music of it registered itself in my memory, and hundreds of times before I became a Christian I used to listen to it like a chime of silver bells. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee." Years later, after I became a preacher, but before I came to Jarvis Street, I ventured, as this text echoed and re-echoed in my mind, to attempt to preach from it. At that time there was a paper published in Montreal — it had been published for half a century or more — which had a large circulation, known as *The Montreal Witness*. They asked me for the manuscript, I do not know why, but I sent it to them, and it was published *in extenso*. Thereafter for days and weeks I received letters from different parts of the continent — some from the United States, and many from Canada — telling me that the Lord had been pleased to use that message to bring comfort and inspiration to some of His severely tried children. I cannot recall all the letters of course, but I do remember, and have never forgotten the substance of one of them. It was a letter from a minister of the gospel, who lived somewhere in a country place in Nova Scotia. He wrote, I cannot give you the exact words, but to this effect: "Some time between midnight and morning I was sitting at the bedside of my wife, whom I knew was dying. She was in a semi-conscious state, sometimes dropping into unconsciousness, and then having a few lucid moments, and during one of her periods of unconsciousness I saw on a chair beside me a copy of *The Montreal Witness*. I turned it over, and I found your sermon. I was impressed by the text. There was not much light in the room," he said, "the lamp was shaded that the light might not fall upon the patient, but I bent over and I read the sermon, and with the reading of it God came to me afresh. The text entered into my mind, and the truth of it flooded my soul with joy and comfort. Glancing occasionally at the one who had been the light of life to me, and who was about to leave me, I turned back again and again, and not only read the sermon, but repeated the text: 'My kindness shall not depart from thee.' My wife has now lost all consciousness, and I know that the end is not far off. But I am just stopping to write you this note to tell you what a blessing the Lord brought to my grief-stricken heart through your message."

I replied to him, expressing my sympathy, and later I got another letter. He said, "My beloved has passed over the river. I live in a country place, (it was winter time)

the land is heavily covered with snow, and the roads are drifted. We had to travel a long way by sleigh bearing her precious body to the place of burial. It was a cold and hard drive," he said, "but all the way along the music of that text kept echoing in my mind: 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.'"

I learned from that experience that there are a great host of people in the world who really need comfort. We have heard it from this Book of Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

I do not know why, but I could not this afternoon, recall that I had ever repeated that sermon. I think it has been printed again, either in *THE GOSPEL WITNESS* or in one of my books, but I cannot recall that I ever preached it again, and at this moment I could not, for I really do not know what I said.

I went in to see Brother Dempster, in his great agony, this afternoon. He had a spinal operation, you know. A piece of bone was taken from one of his legs and grafted on the spine, and he will be in hospital for about six months. But notwithstanding his pain, he was as cheerful as ever. "What was your text this morning, Doctor?" he said, and I told him. And he said, "What is the text going to be tonight?" I said, "I haven't an idea." "What!" he said. Then he laughed. I tried to say a few words of comfort, and we had a word of prayer. As I went home my old text came back to me: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." And I said, "I wonder, I just wonder if I could manage to preach from that text tonight."

I did not refer to the other sermon, because I did not know where to look for it, to tell you the truth, but anyway, the wells of Scripture, as I have often said to you, are full of water; and also we can always borrow a score from this orchestral music, that brings to us the music of the spheres. You pray for me, will you? and for yourself, and ask the Lord to help me to look into this text, not as I did years ago; but there are other things in it: God always has more light to bring forth from His word.

We are always on solid expository ground when we have a clear and unmistakable New Testament interpre-

tation of an Old Testament passage. This fifty-fourth chapter is carried into the New Testament by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the numerous children spoken of in the chapter are identified as the children of that great family which belongs to the New Jerusalem which is from above, and which is the mother of us all. Hence the lovely sayings of this chapter are for you and for me, and for all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; including, of course, this particular promise which I have read to you, "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." — "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Therefore His promise to us is, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

## I.

WHAT TREMENDOUS SYMBOLS ARE HERE EMPLOYED! What significant pregnant figures of speech! "The mountains — the hills." What do they stand for in your mind? Awe-struck I have looked up at the lofty peaks of the Rockies, and in a like spirit at the mighty peaks of the Alps, and from the clouds I have looked down — I was going to say, almost with contemptuous admiration, at the things below me. I have seen Etna and Vesuvius; I have had a distant view of the Himalayas, the mountains of Indonesia, the mountains and hills of the Antipodes. How they speak to us of the Divine Majesty! What symbols they are of strength and power, of stability, of perpetuity, of everlastingness! Landmarks to all the generations. How they have impeded the progress of would-be conquerors. They have baffled the Caesars and the Napoleons; they have proved again and again to be a refuge to people who are tried.

What does this text mean? I think we may take it symbolically. It does refer to that which symbolizes all that is strong and mighty, lofty and noble, enduring and immovable and dependable, that abides as the generations pass, and is always there — that is how they impress me, these great works of nature. I listen to the thunders of Niagara, and say to my soul, "The mighty cataract was thundering its music in Abraham's day, and when Enoch walked with God, and from the beginning." And so what is spoken of in the Scriptures as the "ancient mountains", and "the everlasting hills", surely represent to us the highest, the noblest, the loftiest, and most enduring things in this earth of the Divine creation. Sometimes the mists cover them; sometimes the fogs obscure them, but anon the sun shines out, and the atmosphere is clear, and they are still there! I repeat, they were there in Abraham's day; they were there in Noah's day, for the waters mounted "until the tops of the highest hills were covered," and they are still with us.

But in comparison with the loving kindness of the Lord, even these are but fleeting and transitory things. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." Relatively, yes, as the generations pass. But here we are led to think of "the highest part of the dust of the earth," spoken of in Proverbs, and we remember that it is written, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from ever-

lasting to everlasting, thou art God." And He is always the same; His qualities, His character, His infinite grace and power and might will outlast the earth, and survive the passing of the mountains. But what fools we are! It is said of some, "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings." But "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." That is the cardinal thing, that is evermore the all important, the eternally essential thing, that we should think of the requirements of the soul.

My dear friends, my text suggests that all those things to which men look, the strong things — "Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong," the Psalmist said. Yes, that is true, but that mountain shall depart. O how we all fail, don't we? So often I think of men of whom I say to myself that it does not seem quite right that they should die; they ought to live on. The world will be impoverished by their passing. O no; we think so, but our friends will leave us, the strongest of them, the noblest of them, the most God-like of them, in all respects the best of them. Like the mountains they shall depart; like the hills they will be removed. Institutions, organizations, great cities, mighty nations, world-girdling empires — in our folly we used to think that nothing could breach the walls of the British Empire, nothing could diminish the power of the British sceptre. But the mountains are departing, the hills are being removed, and the mightiest things of earth falling like autumn leaves. If we could read the daily newspapers with enlightened minds, we should find that God is speaking to us from the ends of the earth, telling us that the things which are seen, the mightiest and the best of them, are temporal. They are really not worth living for. Sometimes we wish it were not so; sometimes we wish our friends could remain with us; sometimes we wish that we could see something established in this world that would be impervious and impregnable to the ravages of time. But it is forever true that here moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal. There is nothing enduring — that is the lesson of my text. Even those symbols which represent to us the earliest and the latest and the loftiest and the mightiest of all the elements of the Divine creation on this planet, are death-stricken. I read in the Book of Revelation of a time when there will be a great earthquake, and the stars from heaven shall fall, and every island and every mountain shall be removed, and the kings of the earth and the chief captains seek refuge in the crumbling hills, and call upon the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, and from Him that sitteth upon the throne.

We need something more enduring than even the mountains. And here it is: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee." A haunting memory comes to my mind now — I will not attempt to recall it, but it does seem to me that in that earlier sermon I tried to say something of how the kindness of God is revealed in the works of His hands, in the loveliness and beauty and sublime harmony of the created order, and how God may be known

even from the works of His hands. But I have no time for that this evening.

## II.

I would RATHER REMIND YOU OF THAT WHICH IS BASICALLY ETYMOLOGICALLY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS WORD "KINDNESS." It really means "kinness", kinship if you will. Why it is in this chapter, "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer," thy God, thy next of kin, is the Holy One of Israel. His kinship will not be changed; He will not deny the relationship into which He has graciously brought Himself, when He wrapped Himself in human flesh, and made Himself bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, touched with the feeling of our infirmity — our glorious Kinsman, who by the blood that flowed from His own heart hath redeemed us from all iniquity. That kindness, that abiding relationship, can never be changed. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but," saith the Lord, "I will never cease to be your kinsman, and to play a kinsman's part; my kindness shall not depart from thee."

Such truth as this was in Mrs. Browning's mind in what she wrote of Cowper's grave, who had so often in his mental aberration imagined himself deserted. Said Mrs. Browning:

"Deserted! Who hath dreamt that when the cross in darkness rested,  
Upon the Victim's hidden face no love was manifested?  
What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the atoning drops averted?  
What tears have washed them from the soul, that one should be deserted?"

"Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather;  
And Adam's sins have swept between the righteous Son and Father:  
Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken —  
It went up single, echoless, "My God, I am forsaken!"

"It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,  
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!"

I wish we could all catch the music of that part of the text at least, can you? Did you ever have a tune come into your mind which you could not forget? It followed you day and night. You went to sleep with the music of it, and awakened in the morning with the echo of it. It was singing through your mind all the time. The Bible is full of music, full of lovely passages, full of silver bells, which the Lord would hang in the tower of the city of Mansoul, so that they may perpetually ring, and we may never forget that "the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

Forgive me if I say it, will you? My father had one of the most extraordinary voices I ever heard, and whether in private conversation or in public speech every word was a note of music. Oh, many a time I have longed "for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." But I can hear it, I can hear it this evening, just like the ringing of a deep-toned bell: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

You will need that some time, my brother, when other things are slipping away. What is it Whittier says?—

"When on my day of life the night is falling,  
And in the winds, from unsunned spaces blown,  
I hear far voices out of darkness calling  
My feet to paths unknown.

"Be near me when all else is from me drifting, —  
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,  
And kindly faces to my own uplifting  
The love which answers mine."

And then he confesses—

"No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,  
Nor street of shining gold,  
Suffice it if my good and ill unreckoned  
And all forgiven through Thy abounding grace—  
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned  
Unto my fitting place—

"Some humble door among Thy many mansions,  
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,  
And flows for ever through heaven's green expansions,  
The river of Thy peace."

We shall need the assurance of this text,

"When all else is from us drifting,  
My kindness shall not depart from thee."

A friend of mine told me that he once called upon a mighty man of God, whom I knew well years ago, in the days of my early ministry. He was dying of cancer in a Montreal hospital, and this other minister visited him. He said, "Doctor, I find it hard to believe sometimes some of the promises of God, especially in the light of such an affliction as yours." The sufferer smiled through his pain, and he said, "Which one, Brother?" "Oh," he said, "the promises of God generally." He said, "That won't do; be specific. Name some promise you find it hard to understand in the light of my affliction." "Well," he said, "this one: 'Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.'" He said, "You mean that this is a plague, this is an evil?" "What else could it be?" said the other. "Ah," he said, "but who said that?" "That is the word of the Lord, and the word of the Lord says, 'There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.'" "Well, then," he said, "the logic of faith is this, this is not evil, and this is not a plague. I feel sometimes as though it were, but in my soul I know better." Oh, he was hearing the music of it, whether of this text or not I do not know—"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

I say we shall need it, like that dear brother of whom I spoke in the beginning—I suppose he must have gone to glory long ago, following his wife, for it must have been nearly fifty years ago I preached from that text. He needed it, however, in that hour of trial, and so shall we. And we need it when we have no trials; we need it in the sunshine as well as in the shade. It is well to be able to sing songs in the night; it is well, and we ought to be thankful for it, when we can sing the praises of God when the sun is in a cloudless sky at its zenith at high noon. Indeed, we had better learn to sing in the morning, then we shall find it easier to sing at night. Let the music of it enter into your soul: "My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

"The covenant of my peace." What! Is He Who gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment; is He, who laid the foundations of

the earth, who piled the mountains, who flung a myriad stars into space, and brought into being at His almighty fiat this marvellous fabrication which we call the universe — remember, the God of the whole earth shall He be called — but is He in covenant with me? Has He, the Holy One, stooped to sign a covenant of peace with me, and to tell me that that covenant shall never be broken? "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature." "And there was a rainbow round about the throne," and the pledge of His eternal faithfulness, our Kinsman — as though that were not enough — has made a covenant and — dare I say it? — signed it with His own blood.

O, my dear friends, our Redeemer can never fail us. He who calls Himself our Husband will never divorce us, or even forget us. The Lord of Hosts is His name; and if that be His attitude toward us, if that is His word to us this evening for our everlasting comfort — "My kindness shall not depart from thee" — what shall our answer be? What answer shall we make to such a love as this? Can we say, with the blind Matheson:

"O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

"O Light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.

"O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to Thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain  
That morn shall tearless be.

"O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be."

Let us pray.

Thou hast loved us with an everlasting love, O Lord, and with loving-kindness hast Thou drawn us. Help us, we pray Thee, to yield to the attraction of Thy Spirit, to the drawings of Thy love, that tonight we may be one with Thee, for Thy Name's sake, Amen.

## "THE ERROR OF BALAAM"

A Sermon by Dr. Robert McCaul

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto  
Sunday Morning, April 22nd, 1951

(Electrically Recorded)

"Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord."—Numbers 22:31.

### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON

O God we are reminded that the Psalmist of old looked upon Thee as the dwelling place of Thy children in all generations. And after the lapse of centuries we follow in this long procession of humanity, and we also rejoice in the fact that Thou art our eternal home, and that though sometimes on a wild and stormy sea, we are in port if we have Thee. We thank Thee that by gracious and sweet influences Thou hast been wooing us away from our ordinary occupations and attachments, and hast brought us this morning into the place where prayer is wont to be made, and where we trust we shall see a new vision of the face of Jesus Christ, the Divine Head of the church. We pause before the fountain that is opened up in Zion for sin and uncleanness, asking that Thou wouldst bathe our spirits. Give unto us a sweet consciousness of sins forgiven, the forgiveness of our waywardness and our backsliding. Restore unto us the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold us with a willing spirit.

Breathe Thy blessing and benediction, we pray Thee, upon each worshipping member of this congregation today; and out of Thy great storehouse of grace suit a blessing to every individual need. Bless those who may have come up to Thy house in weariness of body, and perhaps wracked with pain. We pray that Thou wouldst give unto them rest, and that Thou wouldst give them a consciousness of being lifted above all the physical disturbances and annoyances of life, and may they feel that they sit together for a little while in the heavenly places with Christ. Bless any who may have grown cold and indifferent. May there be something in the service this morning that will lift up the cross, and kindle the fires of devotion again upon our altar.

Bless those who may be discouraged. May there be a note of hope, and may they take up again the work of the Lord, and rejoice in reunion with Him. We pray that there may be a word in season unto hearts that are weary, and especially for any that are broken hearted, that Thou wouldst bind up their wounds, and give unto them the balm of Gilead.

Bless us we pray Thee, and with us the shepherd of this flock. May they have a great day yonder in that branch of Zion. Be with us here throughout the hours of this sacred day, this day of all the week the best, emblem of eternal rest, and at its close may we feel like Jacob of old, that we have indeed been in the house of God, and at the very gate of heaven. We ask it for His name's sake, Amen.

**A**MONG the almost ceaseless wonders connected with the Scripture is the fact that we have contained in its pages the most wonderful portrait gallery in the world. We have here an unending series of character studies, different individualities depicted and portrayed, and done with such faultless accuracy that the only conclusion you can come to as you gaze upon these pictures is that they must have been produced by an Artist who is Divine. You have here an exact representation of human nature as it is in its very protoplasm, and in the outworking of all its tendencies. In this great portrait gallery, where you see practically every type of character delineated, I suppose there is hardly any character that is more interesting, and certainly more mysterious, than the character of Balaam. Here is a man who through the centuries of the Christian church seems almost to have defied classification. Some of the pictures in the gallery are very simple; some of the lives are like that of Nathaniel—"an Israelite indeed in whom there is no

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### THE GOSPEL WITNESS

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guile;" perfectly transparent. There are others whose personalities seem to be as deep as the deep sea, whose lives are complicated and all entangled, and they present, as Balaam does here, a dual personality, an ancient version of Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. At one moment they are presenting very noble traits, and the next seeming to take a plunge away down on lower planes. Of these perplexing characters, these contradictory characters, Balaam undoubtedly takes first rank.

#### Balaam's Lofty Utterances

If you were to view him from certain positions, look at him from certain angles, you would be inclined to say that here undoubtedly is a man of very great moral and intellectual stature—a poet certainly, and a man of very great eloquence, an orator of the first water, and one who is capable of casting a spell upon his hearers, a man apparently of striking ability. And then at another moment you find him engaged in utterances altogether unworthy, occupying a plane that is very low, and descending from the plane of a prophet to the practiser of magic arts, and instead of being a man of God he appears in the role of an ordinary soothsayer, bargaining for a little advantage, or as Peter says, loving the wages of unrighteousness. I say if we were to listen to him on certain occasions, and did not know more about him than we hear from his lips at that particular time, we would indeed be deeply impressed. What wonderful words fall from the lips of this strange prophet, for he is spoken of as a prophet of God, or is so regarded in the Scriptures. Take for instance his estimate of the people of Israel. Coming as he does out from the heart of heathenism, and looking probably for the first time upon a great congregation of godly people, he senses a superiority in the Israelitish faith as contrasted with the heathen faith from which he emerges. And when he has been asked to curse the people of God there is something within him which rebels against any such activity, and you remember he comes forth with the noble words, "How can I curse him whom God hath not cursed, or how shall I defy him whom the Lord hath not defied." Then he gives his impression of a godly congregation, and the beauty of it. He says, "From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him." Then he utters a great prophecy of the future of the Jews: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." When he comes to pronounce upon the way in which a man should live so that he will be ready for the hour and article of death he probably has before him the passing of some Israelite in the camp which he is looking upon, and he uses words that millions of people I suppose have used ever since. When we think of our latter end in what better way can we express our aspiration than to use the words of Balaam: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

When you come to look at his doctrine of God, his comprehension of the nature of God, how deeply he penetrates into the Divine nature. He says "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" A high conception of God! And turning again to the people of God he says, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither

is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" We understand that when Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, and heard the first sound come across that marvellous invention, he harked back to the words of Balaam, and exclaimed, "What marvels hath God wrought!"

Then the prophecy of the Messiah: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." "Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion." We are led to believe that when you come over into the minor prophets and read the sixth chapter of the Book of Micah, that it is Balaam who there tells us what is the acceptable worship before the Lord: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God." The answer is in language that is fitting to the later prophets, who distinguish between mere ritual and reality, who set aside the matter of animal sacrifices as being at best a shadow, and that God looks into the heart to find the true attitude of love in His worshipper. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." Mr. Harding, when he was sworn in as President of the United States, laid his hand upon these words, believed to come from Balaam, when he took the oath of office. These are weighty words, these are exalted utterances, and if we did not have any other view of Balaam I think that most of us would not hesitate to say that he should take rank with the great major prophets, take his place beside the golden-mouthed Isaiah, because these words have a celestial tincture, and they seem to have their origin from beyond the blue.

#### Balak Calls Balaam

Then on the other hand we find again, as we said a moment ago, that Balaam takes a plunge from his high position, and appears in a very unworthy guise. We never get the answer I suppose as to what his character really is, except as we trace the record. Notice how he comes before us in the picture that is given to us in this portrait gallery. It is at the period when the children of Israel have finished their wilderness wanderings, and they are encamped in the territory just east of the Jordan over against Jericho. They have no war-like intentions against the tribes that bar their entrance into the promised land; they very politely ask these folk to allow them to pass, assuring them that they will not touch their vineyards or destroy their wells, or do any damage to any of their property; that they will keep to the middle of the king's highway, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, and that no tribe east of the Jordan needs to be perturbed as to their movements. They intend peaceably to go into the promised land. But you remember that the dread of them had fallen upon these nations, as Rahab afterwards confessed, and they felt that somehow or another there was a mysterious power attaching to the movements of the people of Israel, and there were some who could not trust their promises, and who, not waiting for Israel to attack, made an attack upon Israel, among whom of course were the Amorites who hitherto had conquered the Moabite people. You remember how God gave prowess to Moses and his people, and in those two great battles he completely destroyed Og, king of

Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites, completely scattering and destroying them. This spectacle took place before the people of Moab, and the record tells us that Balak the king of Moab was terrified, and as he beheld the way in which the Amorites were destroyed he felt that he probably would be next, and his people. He sent out a word of panic. He saw this great host seeming to cover the earth, encamped over against him. They would lick up everything round about them as the ox licketh up the grass. You who have come from the farm have seen a hungry animal sweep with his tongue and take in the grass as if he were cutting it with a sword. Balak said, "That is what Israel is going to do to us if we don't do something about it." He realized that he was not a military match for the people with whom God had so mightily worked, and who had just been the victors in this recent battle against the Amorites. However, he was not going to surrender easily. We find that this man Balak was a strategist; he knew when he could not be a match militarily for the people who were opposing him, but he said, "There are other ways of winning a battle besides by military might." How true that is, notwithstanding the fact that Napoleon once said that Providence is always on the side of the strongest battalions. Napoleon did not really believe that, for on another occasion he said, "I win my battles not so much with my sword as with my wits." It is by strategy that battles are won. Strategy may be more important than strength; wits may be far more important than weight in battle. Most of the battles of the world have been won by superior strategy of course. Nearly every conflict is a battle of mentality and wits, and intellectual resourcefulness. Balak penetrated deeper than that.

#### Satanic Strategy of Balak

He said, "I think I know where Israel's strength comes from; they have got a peculiar religion. Their God seems to be superior to any other god, and they seem to be in good relationship with Him," as they were. They had just come through the wilderness, and they had had a great many things purged out of their life that had hindered them before, and in proportion as they became pure, they became powerful. When they stood on the edge of the promised land Israel was at her very best; perhaps never before and perhaps never afterwards was Israel quite so much in relationship to God as she was at the conclusion of the wilderness journey, and consequently had the favour of God resting upon her. This was the secret of her strength. She did not engage in battles for the sake of conquest, but when she was obliged to fight God had made her mighty. This is a great truth that afterwards Habakkuk rests upon, when he thinks about how his nation has survived. And why have they survived when so many other nations have gone down? And his answer is, "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die. We have a God who has guided us and strengthened us, and put us where we are," and Balak, heathen as he was, felt as the world does today as it looks upon a godly person, that mysteriously there is a strength connected with godliness. "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure." That is what Balak dumbly felt, and he was correct in his analysis, that the secret of Israel's strength was in their religion, and if that be true they needed to get somebody to tamper

with Israel's religion if they would strip Israel of their power. Who will do this? Who is best calculated to strip Israel of this armour that is put upon her from on high? Not Balak, not someone who is known outright to be a heathen, but someone who knows Israel's religion; someone who can get Israel's confidence, because he can speak in the language of Israel; someone who knows how to spoil their religion by speaking in two languages. And where shall we find such a man? Well, there is such a man living yonder in a place in the East, whose name is Balaam. He has a reputation of being familiar with the religion of the people of God; he knows Israel's God. He has a reputation also that he is successful in everything he undertakes. If he curses a people they are cursed, and if he blesses a people they are blessed. Where does he live? Well the Scripture says that he lives "by the river of the land of the children of his people." I leave you to figure out where that is. I never could find out. "The river of the land of the children of his people." It is as easy as it is to find some places when you are travelling. But wherever it is, people have come to the conclusion that it is somewhere about Mesopotamia, down by the Euphrates, at the cradle of the human race. How does Balaam know anything about God down there? He is outside the pale of revelation; he lives so very far off, and yet he seems to have a knowledge of Israel's God. I suppose that God has not left Himself without a witness in the various places where His revelation has originally been made, and we may explain him on the same basis that we can explain Abraham in a sense. Abraham came from that land in which some truth and revelation of light seemed to linger, and he responded to it, and came out and became the father of the faith. Broken lights of the Divine revelation; scattered fragments of truth, not entirely disappeared from the land of Ur of the Chaldees. Whence did the wise men get their knowledge, coming from the same quarter? Probably a succession of people all through the ages that had some glimmering of the Divine truth, for the wise men came saying, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews? We have seen His star in the East and have come hither to worship Him." Fragments of truth that have been scattered throughout the heathen world, floating like the ark of God upon the sea of idolatry, and maintaining existence in very hostile soil. At any rate, Balaam, whatever be the cause, is one who knows something of the truth of God's revelation, and of the religion of Israel. And they decide to send for him to come and pronounce a curse upon these people that they cannot oppose with military strength.

#### Balaam Lodges Balak's Emissaries

You can imagine the emissaries at Balak's court being sent on a long trip to Mesopotamia, dressed in the livery of the court, and being well supplied with every kind of equipage. The record tells us that when they left Balak he put in their possession the rewards of divination, which we may assume was in the nature of some gold bags perhaps that they carried with them, with which to purchase the services of Balaam if he would only consent to come. I think we can imagine the feeling that would come upon Balaam when one day unexpectedly there came to his humble domicile men who were dressed differently from any visitors he had ever had before. Pretty soon he was astounded to find that they had come from a court at a great distance, to which his reputation



had penetrated, and he noticed also that they were possessed of manners different from any with which he had ordinarily conversed, and that they had some gold bags in their possession. In all probability one of the bags was open, and he saw some of the nuggets or coin, and he never did know that gold could be so yellow as when he looked at it on that occasion. Then when the hint was made that this gold was to be put at his disposal if he felt like responding to their invitation, I do not think you can blame this humble prophet of the Lord, always pinched with penury up to that time, living in obscurity, and never having the world bow to him. To see the world walk into his presence and offer him these presents made him feel what a great man he was, and you cannot blame Balaam, being human, if he sort of chokes back a swelling of pride, and says to himself, "This feels good to have this kind of a proposition made to me. I wonder what it is." So they make the proposition to him and as they do so we find that Balaam shows himself at his very best. Their proposition is that Balaam should leave Mesopotamia and come into the land on the east side of Jordan, and pronounce a curse upon the people of Israel, and if he is willing to do it all of these gold bags immediately become his possession. And how much good you could do in the world, if only you had plenty of gold with which to do it. How easy it would be to persuade oneself — "If I only had the means I could do so much better than I am doing now," and you would see a reason why you would think this is the will of God, and if possible you should respond to it in order that you should get the returns that are offered. I do not think that Balaam did anything wrong when he said to these men, "I don't know what the answer is, but you wait here tonight, you lodge here in my home tonight until I have had an opportunity to pray over the matter, to go up into my oratory and get the will of God on this matter." I know there are some people who think that Balaam at this time is simply engaging in a deeper kind of hypocrisy, that he has made up his mind already to go, and he is trying to cover it with sort of a pious pose, and he is encasing himself in an armour of deceit, and they see no good in Balaam at all, and that when he hesitates it is just in order that he might bargain a little better with these people. I doubt it, knowing what we do of human nature, and seeing how some men start away up on the heights and end away down in the depths. I think it is a little bit simpler to believe that at this stage Balaam does have a knowledge of God, and he has some real respect for the religion of God, and he does really want to know the will of God. It seems as if that is Balaam's mood at this time.

#### What Men Are These With Thee?

Now before the Lord gives him an answer He gives him a little intimation of what the answer is going to be, and we are told that on that night God came to Balaam and put this question to him. He said, "What men are these with thee?" I think that Balaam, if he was in a spiritual mood, began to detect in that question of the Almighty that he was going to get a negative answer, and that he was on slippery ground, and making dangerous contacts and that these guests that had so filled him with pride had brought to him a spiritual peril. So God, uneasy as you might say, looked down on His prophet and said to him, "I am a little bit surprised. What men are these in thy house? How comes it that

you are in this kind of company? Do you know really what these men want to do? The people that they have asked you to curse are my people; my kingdom is represented by the ongoing of the folk of Israel, and you are not to go with these men." But He hints before He gives the actual prohibition by raising the question. "What men are these with thee?" I think God has said that a good many times since He said it to Balaam. He has said it to me sometimes: "What men are these in thine house? What is this that you are giving hospitality to? Who is trying to bargain with you now? Who is trying to buy your services to lead you away from God? It is something that looks very fine on the surface, but it has wrapped up within it a hidden curse. What men are these in your house? Who are you talking with? Don't let them mesmerize you; don't let them steal your crown. They are very plausible, they are very polite, they are great diplomats; they can make black look white, and sin look pure. What men are these in thine house?" Many a man would have been saved from tragedy if he had asked that question. Who is this I am dickering with? Who is this that is making a proposition to me, and what is really involved in it?

#### What About Television?

There are a lot of people in Toronto who will need to ask that question after television becomes as popular as it is in New York at the present time. I do not know what to say about it. People will buy it, no matter what, and you may just as well save your breath. But I will tell you that the devil never did devise any better way to let the messengers of Balak get into the house of Balaam than through this latest invention of the great enemy of our souls. I do not know what the answer to it is. I lose friends all the time, every time I speak of television. Then I am invited right after the service, and the first thing I see in the parlour is television, and I am just out of luck, losing friends all my life, but I seem to survive somehow or another. But when I see the things that are in the parlours, that come by this means — they get in while something good is coming in. You want to take in the good emissary, and Balak's messengers slip in alongside, and there isn't any family on the earth that is discriminating enough to just pick out the thing that is good. Oh the messengers that are in people's parlours now, and coming into your parlours maybe in days to come! And God says, "What men are these in thine house? When did you begin to flirt with Hollywood, and surrender to these people as your teachers and your example?" We are told that some children cannot come to dinner. The television is in the parlour, and the dining room is another room, and the mother has to carry the meals into the parlour because the boy will not leave the television. Then the next morning the teacher cannot teach them in school because they remember what they saw the night before, and they have got one eye on their book but their mind is on what they heard. This is a great new menace that has come up, and that every Christian will have to wrestle with. And when we find ourselves in the presence of it we hear the word of God, "What men are these with thee? What kind of company are you keeping now? You never would have gone out to seek their company, they have come to your door and they have crossed your threshold. They are with you and they make subtle suggestions to you; they buy your time and they ask for your soul." Every day of life we may

hear the word of God, "What men are these with thee?" It is a searching question.

### Thou Shalt Not Go With Them

Of course it was the premonitory signal that he was to have a negative answer. And he had a negative answer. In the morning when he came down — God had met him in the night and told him he must not go with these men. "You will not go with them, because my people are to be blessed instead of cursed." And Balaam refuses to go with these men, and he shows himself a model that we can safely follow at this point. It is fine to see him come down and dismiss the messengers, and to let his better nature triumph, and to say that he will not go upon this errand. But I think you can detect in the refusal of Balaam just a little bit of a whining note. He is something of a Modernist here. He does not deliver to the men who are the messengers of Balak all the message that God has given to him in his prayer room that night. God said, "You must not go," and added to it, "You must not go because this people is blest." He did not deliver all the message, he delivered it in part, and just simply said to the messengers of Balak, "God won't let me go." It was almost as if "I'm badly abused, and I have got a little complaint against God. I wish He would let me go, but I am afraid to go. My heart is there, but He won't let me go, so my body will stay here." Someone has said that God takes hearts to heaven first, and then bodies afterwards. And there is a little suggestion that Balaam's heart is yonder in the place of Balak.

### Watch for Satan's Second Attack

And so the messengers return. We do not find it sufficient to beat the devil in the first encounter, but after you have had a victory over him watch for his return, watch for the recoil. A lot of law cases have been lost by an appeal. Some man has won out in the first court, but the enemy has renewed the attack and lost out on the second. The devil is a master strategist about making you think you have won a victory, and then coming back where he sees a weak point, where he sees a kind of a lingering wish that you could have done the thing, and if you do not make it emphatic enough at the first encounter he is encouraged to return, and he does return to Balaam. Balaam now opens a question which ought to be closed, and asks them to lodge again that night with him. As they lodge that night with him God says to Balaam, "All right you go." And the next thing we read after He tells Balaam to go with the messengers is that He is angry because he goes with the messengers. How are we to account for this apparently contradictory attitude upon the part of God? He first tells Balaam, "Don't go," and he says, "All right, I won't, but I wish I could." Then the messengers come back and say, "We will give you not only money but honour." A lot of people collapse before that. Many a man has lost his ministerial crown when he was made President of the Convention or something else — some honour, something that the world can do. And Balaam is wakened up in his desire to respond to the appeal, so God said, "All right Balaam, you go." Balaam got up the next morning and saddled his donkey and started out, and the next thing you read is that the Lord's anger was kindled because he went. He said to Balaam, "You go," and Balaam went, and as soon as he went God was angry.

### God's Respect for Man's Will

How are you to account for it? The same way I suppose that you are to account for the fall. God had such respect for the human will in the Garden of Eden — He said, "I will surround you with every inducement to righteousness, but if your heart is bent upon eating the forbidden fruit then the human will is such a great thing it will not be resisted." And so the fall of man takes place. God said, "Don't do it." Eve said, "I want to do it." God said, "All right go ahead and eat it, and the shadow of the curse will fall, and nature will start up and say that all is lost." But God will risk the calamities of history without interfering with the human will. He will give Israel a king, but He will be displeased because Israel wants it. There is a boy in the home who hears the call of the far country and wants to go out and listen to those siren voices. His widowed mother says, "My boy, don't make a wreck of your life. Go to the church and become a Christian; do not mix up with worldly company." But he hears the alluring voices, and one night he throws off all restraint. His mother is perfectly helpless, and she stands aghast as he walks out of the house. She knows he is down at the corner saloon or at the night club, or some other place, and she says, "My boy, if you must go of course you will have to go; I cannot stop you." She goes back and drops upon her knees and battles at the throne of Grace, but she has no power to keep him from making a wreck of his life. That, I think, is the explanation of this seeming contradiction in the case of Balaam.

### In the Wrong Road When Obstacles Irritate

How do you know when you are on the wrong track? Sometimes it is not easy to decide what is the will of God. How may you know when you are going in the right way and when you are going in the wrong way? Sometimes it is a hairline decision difficult to determine. How may you know when obstacles are put before you what the intention is? because that is what God does with Balaam. He puts an angel with a drawn sword before him to thwart him in his wilful way. Is that angel put there to stop him, to warn him, to tell him he is on the wrong course? Or is it simply to challenge the best that is in him? How may I know? How may I know when an obstacle is put there to warn me, and when an obstacle is put there to draw the best out of me, to overcome by faith, and to ride over obstacles to my goal? How may I know? Well I think we have a pretty strong hint here. There is profound psychology in this. Balaam might have known that he was on the wrong track, and what that angel was there for. We are told that when he found himself opposed he became irritable and cranky and mad. It is spoken of as the madness of the prophet. If you are on the wrong track one of the first indications of it is that you lose your spiritual peace and your poise. If you are on the right track obstacles will probably bring out the best that is in you. If it brings out a bad temper it is a pretty strong suggestion that you are probably on the wrong course. Sometimes it will bring out bad temper against the very people that are trying to save you from that wrong course. I visited a lady in Creedmore the other day, that great city of the insane. I hadn't seen her for twenty-five years, and when I talked with her she just had one obsession — she hated her sister who day by day wrestles and does everything she possibly can to minister to her. She hates this sister

who is trying to do all she can for her. The Scripture speaks of the madness of the prophet. And when he was opposed on his way he lost all his peace and calm and poise, and turned around and began to beat the innocent little donkey, that had been such a faithful little creature, carrying him all through the days he had served him. He took it out on this little innocent animal. Have you ever seen that? Have you ever seen a drunkard on his wrong course take it out on his wife and children? Have you ever seen a man that takes the wrong course loose all the sweetness of his spirit, and become sour and resentful? It is a pretty good indication you are on the wrong track. I am always afraid to come and preach before a congregation on days when little things annoy me and I am upset over trifles. I know the congregation is going to have a hard time that morning; I am going to introduce a kind of Baptist persecution of the saints, and roll it over on them. There are other times when great big troubles do not bother you at all. If you are in the will of God I think it works that way. And Balaam was so blind in his madness that he just forced his way, and compelled the little beast to go on and on; he took it out on the little creature, and whipped him. Animals have a great sense of injustice. I think before the donkey spoke he acted toward Balaam as much as to say, "I am glad I am not a man; thankful I am a donkey."

#### Talking Donkeys

Then after a while he actually spoke, the record says. Of course the unbeliever says, "Such nonsense! Do you believe a story like that that a donkey actually talked?" Why yes, certainly. The God who made the donkey of course could make the donkey talk. A brilliant woman was challenged by an unbeliever about the supernatural in the Scripture. This man said to her, "Such nonsense as you Christian people believe!" He said, "You don't believe that donkeys talk do you? And you don't believe that thing about Samson killing a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass do you?" "Oh, yes," said the lady, "indeed I do. Why not? There is nothing wonderful about talking donkeys; I meet them every day of my life; I hear them talking in lots of places." And she said, "As to killing the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, right now you are trying to slay the truth, and every time I see your mouth going I say, 'There he is at it trying to slay the truth with the jaw-bone of an ass.'"

What is this? It is easily translated into modern language. You abuse your body—let us say that a man takes to drink, champagne at night and then the real pain in the morning. What is that headache? I saw a fellow a while ago who had been on a week's spree, and he had such a pain in his head that he said no language could describe it. They took him to the doctor and the doctor said, "Man, don't you ever touch that stuff again." He said, "You don't need to tell me that doctor. I'll never touch it again. You just need to have that pain in your head once like I have got it and you will never feel a temptation again." Three days after he was sobered up and went and got drunk again. What was happening? Why the donkey was talking. The body upon which he was driving through life had been abused, and it sent messages up to the head, and said, "Why do you abuse me? Why don't you give me a chance?" Oh you could apply it in so many different ways. It is very wonderful the way in which God speaks to us through these ordin-

ary means. But Balaam compelled the donkey to go on, and the little beast trying to be faithful shied out away from the angel who had the sword, trying to get away and past him if he could. But unable to do it, he flung himself up against the wall of the vineyard, and crushed Balaam's foot, the record tells us. He got a crushed foot.

I heard an awful scream one day on the streets of Brooklyn; I had seldom heard such a piercing cry. I went down to the corner and found that a man who was delivering milk early in the morning had slipped and fallen under the wheel of his carriage, and his ankle had been crushed. He didn't look like a man who cried over nothing, but the pain was so terrific that I can almost hear his shrieks yet. And Balaam, we are told, had a crushed foot.

#### Angel-Led or Lamed?

The message is this. God has two ways of leading His people. One is to put an angel before them to indicate His will, and to beckon them into the right road. Some men will not see the angel; some men will become possessed with a madness like Balaam, and go blind, so that the dumb animal will see it first. He will shut his eyes to the beckoning of the angel, and if he does God has only one other method left to teach him what he must be taught, and that is to let him go ahead until he gets a crushed foot. In other words, If you will not learn under the tutorship of the angel, you must learn in the school of experience. And there are some of us who won't learn some things except we learn them there. Some things are never learned except they are learned in the school of experience. We have all of us been there, and in a measure, I take it this morning, we have all of us in a sense got a crushed foot. None of us walk as we might have walked. I went into the magistrate's court, and they called one man after the other to answer to the docket, and I said to myself as I saw them coming up, that long procession of men, every one limping as he went — What does it say? Simply that they hadn't followed the angel, and they went into the school of experience and got a crushed foot.

So God wants to lead us by the angel, and it is a very wonderful way if we are willing to be led. It is the way that Abraham found, and Jacob found, and the saints of God have found. There were angels last night in the service of prayer. The other world impinged upon this. It is a great place to get your direction. Have an eye to the angel; listen to the angel's voice; don't pay the high tuition in the school of experience; don't get the crushed foot. Follow the angel, and may God do to some this morning what He did to Balaam, and open our eyes that we may see them ready to lead us and then one day see them ready to carry us home.

#### JOY IN THE KING'S SERVICE

If sweet below  
To minister to those whom God doth love,  
What will it be to minister above!  
His praise to show  
In some new strain amid the ransomed choir,  
To touch their joy and love with note of living fire;

With perfect praise,  
With interchange of rapturous revelation  
From Christ Himself, the burning adoration  
Yet higher to raise,  
For ever and for ever so to bring  
More glory and still more to him, our gracious King.  
—F. R. HAVERGAL.

## ROME RULE IN EIRE

### An Example To Be Shunned

THE official propaganda line of the Roman Catholic Church in non-Romanist countries exercises the utmost ingenuity in seeking to meet the charge that priests wish to obtain political control. The smooth-faced, stream-lined advertisements of the Knights of Columbus paint a very rosy picture of Romanism. Unfortunately for the truth of their assertions, the hard realities of priestcraft in lands such as Quebec, Ireland, Spain and Italy, give the lie to the fanciful productions of those Romish apologists who are more concerned with winning converts than with telling the truth. Such an instance has come to light within the last month in Eire, which caused a political and religious sensation of the first magnitude in Dublin and indeed throughout the whole of the Emerald Isle, to judge by the press report before us.

On April 11 last, Mr. John Costello, Premier of Eire, announced to the assembled Dail (Parliament) the resignation of Dr. Noel Browne, Minister of Health. Dr. Browne's resignation was occasioned by a disagreement with his cabinet colleagues who were opposed to his mother and child welfare scheme, which was to have been free to all mothers and children in Eire without reservation. In the debate on this matter in the Dail, the Eireann Premier, Mr. John Costello, accused the ex-Minister of having created a public scandal by his publication of certain correspondence between himself, the Premier and the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. The correspondence revealed that the Irish Roman Catholic Hierarchy at their meeting last October had considered Dr. Browne's proposed mother and child welfare scheme and had decided that the powers that would be taken by the state under it would be "in direct opposition to the rights of the family and of the individual." The Hierarchy also wrote, "Doctors trained in institutions in which we have no confidence, may be appointed as medical officers under the proposed service, and may give gynaecological care not in accordance with (Roman) Catholic principles."

### Politicians Bow to Hierarchy

Mr. Costello himself took over the portfolio of the minister who resigned and pledged himself to introduce a scheme that will be "in conformity with Roman Catholic social teaching." In a letter to the Most Rev. Dr. M'Quaid, the R.C. Archbishop of Dublin, the Premier wrote:

"Your Grace will appreciate that that decision expressed the complete willingness of the Government to defer to the judgment given by the Hierarchy that the particular scheme in question, Dr. Browne's scheme, is opposed to Catholic social teaching."

In his reply to Mr. Costello the Archbishop, the Most Rev. Dr. M'Quaid, stated:

"In view of the clear attitude of the Hierarchy, I may, too, be allowed to express my conviction that the decision of the Government to proceed to formulate another scheme consonant with Catholic principles will receive the very welcome support of the Bishops."

Mr. Costello is also quoted as saying:

"As a Catholic, I obey my Church authorities, and will continue to do so in spite of *The Irish Times* or anyone else."

Mr. MacBride, another party leader in the Dail, also said:

"Those in the Government who were Catholic were bound to accept the views of their Church."

### "No Flouting of the Authority of the Bishops"

Mr. Norton, Deputy Premier of Eire, said that Dr. Browne had exceeded any authority he got from the Government by revealing the correspondence with the Bishops. The position, he said, was that Dr. Browne regarded all this as dictation by the Bishops, and that he was going to fight them. Mr. Norton said there was going to be no flouting of the authority of the Bishops on Catholic social or moral teaching.

Mr. Costello himself expressed the fear that "this affair will be misrepresented in the North," and alleged that the intervention of the Hierarchy was not concerned in any way with politics or State activities but was strictly confined to faith and morals.

### "Expediency the Sole Yardstick"

In handing in his resignation, Dr. Browne wrote to Mr. Sean MacBride, leader of the party and Minister of External Affairs, the following barbed sentences:

"I have bidden farewell to your unwholesome brand of politics. I entered politics because I believed in the high-minded principles which you were expounding on political platforms. I do you no injustice when I state that I have never observed you hearken to any of these principles when practical cases came before us . . . Expediency is your sole yardstick and to expediency you are prepared to subordinate all principles sacred and profane."

We heartily wish that low-browed politicians of this type were limited to Eire, but alas we have seen and heard too many of them in Canadian politics, whose sole stock in trade was fair promises in public to electors and base fawning obedience in private to the Hierarchy.

In the above summary of this incident we have attempted to give an objective account drawn from reports in Irish papers sent to us by readers in that land. We now quote several comments on the matter from Northern Irish sources. Mr. Harry Midgely, Northern Ireland Minister of Education, made the following comment:

### Rome in Politics

What had happened to Dr. Browne was one more piece of evidence as to what those who desired to live in spiritual and temporal freedom could expect were Ulster to be merged in an all-Ireland Republic.

"There is no doubt that the Roman Catholic Hierarchy has entered the political arena and that it is becoming more and more aggressive in extending the frontiers of Roman Catholic authority into the fields of medicine and education," Mr. Midgely said.

"It tells Roman Catholic doctors, nurses, judges, teachers and legislators what they can and cannot do in many of the controversial phases of their professional conduct. It segregates Roman Catholic children from the rest of the community in a separate school system, and censors the cultural diet of these children."

*The Northern Whig* of Belfast made the following editorial remark in its issue of April 13 last:

### Questions

All these things Eire has done and is doing and it is for no one outside her borders to say her Nay. But the North, the Protestant people of the North, have the right to consider these things as they affect Eire, and to consider them in relation to the aspirations of the South to assume governance over this Province. They are entitled to ask if, in a united Ireland, they will become subject to this special position of the Roman Catholic Church, if the social services they desire are to be framed only in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, if they are

to become subject to Canon Law instead of the Common Law and Statute Law.

In face of the situation disclosed by this crisis in Eire's Government, what value are the people of the North to place upon the guarantees which political leaders of all parties in the South have offered them if they will submit to a Dublin Parliament?

### Rome Is Never Satisfied

*The Belfast Weekly Telegraph* drew the following lessons from the incident:

Coming after the objections of a bishop to town-planning in Galway and the insistence that in the courts of Eire canon law must prevail, this controversy shows how Partition is a wise recognition of fundamental differences, which are criss-crossed, we believe, by a radical difference of outlook between North and South in social reform. Incidentally it throws a forbidding light on the men at the top in Southern politics to-day; and confirms the fears of the North, which some of our Southern friends have been telling us for years are groundless.

Perhaps the most searching analysis of the whole matter was made by a Roman Catholic Deputy on the floor of the Dail itself and we reprint the report of this speech as given in *The Northern Whig* following this article. (See "Eire's Real Rulers Are the R.C. Bishops").

### A State Within a State

There is little need for comment on these matters beyond the recital of the facts themselves. It is the kind of double government, a state within the state, that prevails in every Roman Catholic country on the globe, including our own "Catholic Province of Quebec". The sole difference is that it is not often that the sordid business of priestly control is aired in public because there is a great lack of courageous men of conviction in public affairs who are willing to risk their political life, and perhaps their physical life also, to oppose the R.C. Hierarchy.

### How It Works in Canada

A few years ago a courageous French-Canadian Senator dared to criticize education in Quebec, which is under the control of the bishops of that province. Forthwith, the edict of expulsion went forth from the Cardinal-Archbishop's palace in Quebec and within a few hours Senator Bouchard was expelled from his important post as Chairman of Hydro-Quebec. And not one political leader in Quebec or in Canada dared to protest against clerical dictation. The so-called "Liberal" Party, of which Mr. Bouchard was a member, bowed its neck to the priests' ultimatum as supinely as the most vehement Quebec Nationalist would have done.

As we write, the French-language press of Quebec informs us that Monsieur Antonio Barrette, Provincial Minister of Labour, has left for Rome where he will represent the Province of Quebec at the sixtieth celebration of the Papal Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. He will then visit the North and the South of Italy and will return to Rome for the beatification of Pius X. When in Rome he will place letters accrediting him in the hands of the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Montini. Another news dispatch from the same source informs us that the Archbishops and Bishops of the Province of Quebec are holding an assembly in the capital of the province where they will also be present at a regular meeting of the body which controls education, the Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Education,

of which they are *ex-officio* members. We venture to think that the lay members of that educational body are as little likely to question the mandates or the directions of their Lordships the Bishops on the Council of Education as they would be to thrust themselves unbidden into their solemn episcopal assembly and to argue with them on ecclesiastical matters.

### The Ruthless Exercise of Religio-Political Power

Protestants outside of Ireland would do well to consider deeply what priestly domination leads to. "Faith and morals" is a term inclusive enough to take in almost every problem of life and every conceivable act of man, and in this wide sphere the Roman Catholic Hierarchy arrogate to themselves the exalted position of absolute authority. To question their decision is to suffer not only spiritual loss of bliss hereafter but of political power in the here and now. The ruthlessness with which the priests stamp down all questioning of their boundless claims is strikingly illustrated by their language in this case and that of those who act for them in the political arena.

While we admire some enlightened Roman Catholics who dare to point out the inconsistencies of the Hierarchy in condemning in one land what they permit in another and in transgressing the bounds laid down by some of their own teachers, yet in the actual political scene, whether in Ireland or in Quebec or in South America, it is not the enlightened interpretation that finally prevails. It is the crude, brutal exercise of religious authority in politics that the simple-minded, superstitious masses regard as the very voice of God and obey as such. Romanism itself produces anti-clericalism out of its own bosom; it is the prolific mother not only of ignorance and superstition but of infidelity and unbelief on the part of those who despair of any good coming from such a selfish, soulless corporation that presumes to identify itself with Christianity.

—W.S.W.

## "EIRE'S REAL RULERS ARE THE R.C. BISHOPS"

"As a Catholic, I Protest!" Captain Cowan Tells Dail

From *The Northern Whig* of April 3, 1951

When the Dail in Dublin last night resumed the debate on the statement made by Dr. Noel Browne last Thursday on his resignation from the Ministry of Health, Captain Cowan (Ind., Dublin), declared:—

"The most disquieting feature of this sorry business is the revelation that the real Government of Eire may not, in fact, be exercised by the elected representatives of the people, as we believed it was, but by the (Roman Catholic) Bishops meeting secretly and enforcing their rule by means of private interviews with Ministers and by documents of a secret and confidential nature sent by them to Ministers and to the head of the alleged Government of the State.

"As a Catholic I object to this usurpation of authority by the Bishops. As a Catholic I protest against this secretive, occult and objectionable practice.

"As a Dail Deputy I am entitled to know all the factors that enter into consideration of legislation, the enactment of which is part of my duty.

"The people I represent, the majority of them Catholics, are entitled to be similarly informed. It is morally wrong for the Bishops to keep them and me in the dark and to exercise powers in civil affairs behind their and my backs in regard to matters which they as citizens and I as their representative have



express authority under the constitution of this country to deal with.

"That control was exercised by the Bishops over the Government, and that control was accepted and tolerated by the Government without the knowledge of Dail Eireann, and the public has been shocked by the revelation."

#### "Democracy a Fraud"

Captain Cowan said that the Roman Catholic Hierarchy were entitled to express their views on all matters of public welfare, as were the clergy of all denominations. Such views did and must command respect, but they ought and must be expressed in public so that they might be known by every citizen.

"As a Parliament we would be failing in our duty if we did not insist on that.

"If we do not, our democracy is a fraud, the constitution a sham and general elections humbug, pretence and a swindle."

Captain Cowan said that although he might be the only Deputy to speak openly, his sentiments were shared by the majority of intelligent deputies and citizens of every religious denomination.

Dr. Browne had specifically asked the Hierarchy to say whether the scheme was opposed to Catholic moral teaching, but the decision of the Bishops was stated to be based on social and not on moral teaching.

Mr. O'Higgins—Will the Deputy say what the difference is?

Captain Cowan—The Deputy might take a course in moral theology.

#### "Bishops Trespassed"

Continuing, Captain Cowan said that the outstanding objections of the Hierarchy might be taken as an objection to the provision of a free-for-all Mother and Child Scheme.

In setting down the objections the Bishops trespassed on the domain of, and sought to usurp the powers of, the legitimate civil authority. In so doing they acted contrary to the provisions of the Constitution.

Mr. P. Cogan (Ind.)—That was said about Cardinal Mindszenty.

Captain Cowan—The Bishops deal with State taxation, which is a matter for this House, and this House alone. They give views, express prophetic opinions, and seek to determine the meaning of the inference to be drawn from a Statute.

These are matters, as any student of moral theology knows, that are not within the definition of Catholic doctrine on what Bishops may speak with authority to Catholics.

#### Eire Unorthodoxy

The views and opinions of the Bishops also conflicted with opinions promulgated by distinguished priests who were acknowledged to be authorities on Catholic social teaching.

Captain Cowan quoted from a lecture delivered in 1949 by Fr. Augustina Gemini, O.F.M., President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Rector of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, to the National Conference of Social Security organized at Bologna by the Italian Roman Catholic Action.

That eminent authority on social teaching, he said, affirmed that orthodoxy was on the side of State medicine. His lecture took a line entirely opposed to the line taken by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of Ireland.

"As a Catholic," Captain Cowan observed, "I am entitled to accept that authority on social teaching, and I do."

The Government, within the declaration made by the Bishops, was not entitled to fix \$700 a year as suggested by the Minister for External Affairs, or \$660, or £500, as the limit of income below which a free scheme would be available.

#### OUR THANKS AGAIN TO REGINA

This time for a generous gift of \$25.00 to THE GOSPEL WITNESS Fund. Your continued interest is deeply appreciated.

## AMONG THE CHURCHES

By H. C. Slade

### A Flourishing Church

Rev. W. C. Tompkins of Fort William writes:

I must ask you to "magnify the Lord with me" for one man, well up in years, who openly professed Christ a week ago. Also for several who have requested interviews at which I answered questions concerning the Christian way. Evident signs of quickening are manifest in our midst quite frequently. We look for others to come out boldly very shortly.

Then the Sunday School has soared over the two hundred mark recently, and the Junior and Primary Departments are "bursting at the seams", and the challenge has gone out for more teachers and a rearrangement of space facilities.

I was pleased when the Y. P. suggested a "students' night" which includes writing to our four students now due to go out in summer work, and receiving reports from them at a meeting which would be given up to prayer for them. This would include also Miss Joan Jackson from our church, now under Missionary-nursing service in Africa.

Other plans for the summer will be mentioned another time. Midweek Meditations, the weekly radio testimony, continues summer and winter.

Thus in every way we seek to proclaim "Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God."

### Priest Controls Mail

Last week I made a trip to the . . . . . district, and found not a few interested people. One especially, a man with a family of six, who is a storekeeper in the place and owns a farm, wrote for a New Testament during the winter and sent us a few encouraging letters. We had a good visit with him, although he is a bit fearful yet of the influence of the Church of Rome.

I found out that the French paper, *La Voix de l'Evangile*, has been sent to homes in that district for over a period of three years, but the people never once received it. One of the women supplied the answer: "The Post Office is in the priest's house. He controls it all, and you can be sure it never reaches us, for he told us to burn our New Testaments."

This is only one of a great number of places where the priest controls everything in the small village. Sometimes I wish we could do something about this "controlling" of mails, but the day may come when we have enough converts in these places to rebel against such treatment.

(Rev.) Yvon Hurtubise, Malartic, Que.

### Church Organized at Heaslip

Mr. Aceti reports activities in the Kirkland Lake-Heaslip field as follows: In Kirkland Lake one girl eleven years of age professed faith in Jesus Christ some weeks ago, and gives evidence of genuine regeneration. The radio ministry is beginning to bear fruit. Judging by the scores of letters we have received from many places, the Lord is using it to bless His people, and without having made any appeals for money over the radio, sufficient funds have come in.

Recently we organized a church at Heaslip, which is about thirty-one miles from Kirkland Lake. Some Christians from McCool—which is about fourteen miles from Heaslip—have also joined the little church. Yes-



terday, May 6th, at our regular Sunday service at 3 p.m. we had 37 present.

At McCool, gospel services were started last Sunday evening and — Lord willing — shall continue every Sunday.

**Baptisms at Calvary, Ottawa**

Rev. D. G. Olley reports as follows:

The Lord has been pleased to encourage us in the salvation of souls. One lady who was a Roman Catholic, professed faith in Christ, and since her conversion has been successful in bringing her husband, who is a Protestant, to the church on different occasions.

A man who had been attending the services regularly and listening attentively, when called upon in his home, trusted Christ as his Saviour, intimating that he had been anxious to be saved for some time, and since trusting Christ has given us great joy in witnessing his desire to please the Lord.

Some four more have been baptized and others have indicated their desire to obey the Lord in this matter.

We believe that a number are convicted of sin and would covet the prayers of God's people for their salvation.

## Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 16 Second Quarter Lesson 10 June 3, 1951

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

### JOSEPH IN PRISON

Lesson Text: Genesis 40:5-23.

Golden Text: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant."—Psalm 25:14.

#### I. Joseph the Sympathetic Guard: verses 5-11.

Joseph had been put in prison when he refused to sin against the Lord (Gen. 39:7-20; 2 Sam. 12:9, 13; Psa. 51:4). He could not forget his early training in the ways of God, and even when surrounded by the luxury and licentiousness of Egyptian life, he maintained his integrity. The Lord takes knowledge of those who suffer for righteousness' sake (1 Pet. 3:14). He was with Joseph and extended kindness unto him, although all others seemed to be against him (Gen. 39:2, 21, 23; 1 Sam. 16:18; Acts 7:9). The Lord gave Joseph favour with the keeper of the prison, as with Potiphar (Gen. 39:4; Prov. 16:7), so that his term in prison was made more tolerable. This manifest token of God's presence and pleasure must have been a source of encouragement to Joseph.

The prison proved to be a training-ground where Joseph's administrative ability was developed. Within those walls he was prepared for the position of responsibility which awaited him. The Christian who trusts in God may be a person moulding circumstances, rather than one who is moulded by them. Through God's Providence it is his privilege to be the victor, rather than the victim, of his surroundings. All the experiences of Joseph's life were the rungs of the ladder by which he rose to eminence and power.

The Oriental monarchs ruled as despots. Pharaoh, a typical Egyptian ruler, was very easily offended, and imprisoned his servants for slight causes.

Joseph was a sympathetic prison guard, and he took a personal interest in those committed to his care. His actions were prompted by kindness, and his hearty manner probably contributed to his advancement, for it was one element in his powers of leadership. Joseph was more efficient in carrying out his duties just because of his relationship with God. The Christian should give place to none in the quality of service he renders, for it is his privilege to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Col. 3:23; 1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:10).

#### II. Joseph the Wise Interpreter: verses 12-19.

The experiences of Joseph were parallel to those of Daniel in several respects. Both were captives in a foreign land. Both refused to sin against the Lord (Dan. 6:10). Both suffered for doing right (Dan. 6:15, 16). Both were looked upon with favour by their captives because of the mercy of God (Gen. 39:21; Dan. 1:9). Both were given wisdom by God to interpret dreams (Dan. 1:17; 2:36; 4:24), and it was through this gift as human means that each became a governor in the land he entered as captive (Gen. 41:39, 40; Dan. 2:48).

Joseph was ready to give testimony to God's wisdom when the opportunity came (2 Kings 5:2, 3; 1 Pet. 3:15). He did not forget God when he went down into Egypt, but retained his trust in Him as the One Who could interpret that which was a mystery to man (Gen. 41:16; Deut. 29:29; Dan. 2:28, 47).

The chief baker was encouraged by the prospect of freedom which had been foretold in the chief butler's dream. Quite naturally, he desired that he might have a similar happy issue out of all his afflictions. But not so; God putteth down one, and setteth up another (Psa. 75:5-7).

When Joseph saw the fulfilment of the dreams of the servants of Pharaoh, he probably wondered when his own dreams of dominion would become a fact (Gen. 37:5-11).

#### III. Joseph the Forgotten Friend: verses 20-23.

Joseph thought that his service to the chief butler would result in deliverance for himself, and it did, ultimately, but God's time had not yet arrived. Patience had not had her perfect work (Jas. 1:4). Also, had Joseph been liberated immediately, he might have made his way home to Canaan, and might not have become the saviour of his people. We are sometimes called upon to endure sufferings which are not necessary to us as individuals, but which are profitable for the sake of those to whom we may in future minister (Col. 1:24; Heb. 2:10).

The chief baker was restored to honour, but he forgot Joseph. When they became prosperous, many forget those who have helped them to rise. It is a cowardly act to overthrow the ladder by which we have climbed to success. Such is "man's ingratitude to man." But God did not forget His suffering servant, and He will grant us His presence, even when all fair-weather friends forsake us (Psa. 91:15).

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

May 28—Prisoners Made to Labour ..... Judg. 16:13-21  
 May 29—Fed Bread and Water ..... 1 Kings 22:20-28  
 May 30—Prisoners Put in Chains ..... Acts 12:1-7  
 May 31—Cruelty to Prisoners ..... Jer. 38:1-6  
 June 1—Kindness to Prisoners ..... Acts 16:25-34  
 June 2—Ministering to Prisoners ..... Matt. 25:31-46  
 June 3—Prisoners of Sin Set Free ..... John 8:30-36

#### SUGGESTED HYMNS

'Tis the grandest theme. Though troubles assail. Precious promise God hath given. Begone, unbelief. Simply trusting every day. Leader of faithful souls.

#### THE MALADY OF SIN

Men may become so absorbed in social wrongs as to miss the deeper malady of personal sin. They may lift the rod of oppression and leave the burden of guilt. They may seek to correct social dislocations and overlook the awful disorder of the soul. —J. H. JOWETT

**NEXT SUNDAY IN  
 JARVIS STREET**

**DR. SHIELDS**

**11 a.m and 7 p.m.**

**SEE ANNOUNCEMENT IN  
 SATURDAY PAPERS**

## ABOUT REV. SAMUEL DEMPSTER

The following article has already been printed separately, in advance, and sent to every member of Jarvis Street Church. It is herewith sent to the readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

### A PERSONAL APPEAL FROM DR. SHIELDS

To all who value a true minister of Christ, and a great preacher of the Gospel.

I am writing personally to tell my readers about the case of Rev. Samuel Dempster:

He is Pastor of Courtland and Delhi churches for the present, and a student at Toronto Baptist Seminary. He is one of the finest and most promising students the Seminary has ever had. Already he has shown himself to be a really great preacher of the gospel. I heard him preach one Sunday morning in Jarvis Street Church, and felt then, and have become increasingly convinced since, that he is going to be a really great preacher.

But Mr. Dempster somewhere, no one knows how, sustained a spinal injury. He was in the British Home Defence Fire-fighting Section. He is an Ulsterman from Belfast. He is twenty-seven years of age. He is married, and has two children. It is more than probable that his injury was caused by the handling of heavy hose lines in fighting the blitz in all parts of the Kingdom. While he belonged to Belfast, he was sent to Liverpool, Coventry, Bristol, London, and many other places, wherever there were fires.

But though engaged in just as hazardous a business as those who were in the army, as a member of the Home Guard apparently he is not entitled to a pension.

Mr. Dempster came to us from Manitoba, after a brief stay there, to study at Toronto Baptist Seminary. We sent him to the head Orthopaedic surgeon of Toronto General Hospital, and he has had a spinal operation, which involved taking a piece of bone out of the leg, and grafting it on to the spine. It is expected he will be six months in hospital.

He was operated upon last Wednesday, May 16th, and is on a Stryker frame, and, of course, at the moment suffers excruciatingly; but he is as cheerful as a cricket, and smiles through his pain. He is a favourite with all who meet him, and his wife is very much like him, and is a tower of strength to him.

Like other preachers, Mr. Dempster had no money, and I personally assumed all responsibility for all expenses involved in the operation, special nurses, and six months' hospitalization.

I estimate it will cost a minimum of \$3,000 and may cost a great deal more.

I am writing this article because I am sure among our readers there will be great numbers who will recognize the value to the church, the nation, and the world, of a true minister of Jesus Christ. It was said of both Elijah, and Elisha, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof". The true prophet was more to the nation than all her armed defence. So is it still.

Without the operation, Mr. Dempster would have become a chronic invalid, his invalidism steadily increasing as the years rolled by. With the operation, it is expected he will be restored to perfect health and to a vigorous manhood.

What such a man is worth in dollars and cents it will be impossible for anyone to compute. We believe there

are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of our readers, who would be glad to have some share in putting a really true minister of Christ, and a great preacher of the gospel on his feet for life.

I will, personally, acknowledge every contribution received, and will report the total from week to week in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. You need not be afraid of giving too much. Every dollar you send will go into THE SAMUEL DEMPSTER FUND.

We believe there will be hundreds of preachers who, while having little money themselves, would be glad to send a dollar or more to help a brother preacher back to health and strength. Yesterday, Sunday, a great number of Jarvis Street members expressed the desire that an offering should be taken for Mr. Dempster immediately in Jarvis Street. The first contribution was handed to me at the Saturday night prayer meeting.

I am having this article printed on a special sheet in advance of THE GOSPEL WITNESS issue of this week, May 24, and mailed to every member of Jarvis Street Church; and I should like to be able, in next week's GOSPEL WITNESS to report a substantial offering from Jarvis Street Members. I am sure every member of the Church will esteem it a privilege to participate in this offering. We believe the poorest member of Jarvis Street Church could give at least \$1.00. Many could give \$2 or \$5 or \$10 or \$25 — or more.

This is an appeal, first to Jarvis Street members, and then to all GOSPEL WITNESS readers. I ask you to mail your offering to me immediately. Address your letter:

TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY,  
(Attention of Dr. Shields)  
130 Gerrard St. East,  
Toronto 2, Canada.

And PLEASE DO IT NOW!

Mr. Dempster at first was unwilling to allow me to assume any obligation, and knows nothing at all about this article. But I knew it was impossible for him to meet the expense himself: hence this letter.

I am sure it will greatly assist in his recovery when I can go to him, as I am sure I shall be able to do, in a short time, and tell him that I have sufficient money in the DEMPSTER FUND to cover all expenses.

Please write me at once, and send me as large an offering as you can, and I will personally acknowledge it immediately.

I am counting first on the help of Jarvis Street members, and then on the co-operation of GOSPEL WITNESS readers.

Yours most earnestly and urgently,

