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## "TILL THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR OFFENCE"

**WE** have all offended, for we are all, by nature, sinners." The condition governing the restoration to fellowship the Lord lays down in the fifth chapter of Hosea, the last verse: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early."

God is a God of mercy. There is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared; indeed, we are told that He "delighteth in mercy". In order that, consistently with His justice, He might forgive the sinner, Christ died in the sinner's room and stead. But efficacious as the blood of Christ is, it avails for no one who does not first of all repent and confess: "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Prior to His birth, it was said of Him: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins". He became Incarnate: He lived, and died, and rose again, in order that He might save us *from* our sins. But He will never save us *in* our sins. Not that we must cleanse ourselves as a condition of forgiveness: but we must repent of sin, and invoke His mercy in order that we may be saved from it. Not until David confessed, "I have sinned", was he restored to favour. Only as the prodigal exclaimed, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight" were the father's kiss, and the robe, and the shoes, and the feast of restoration, possible.

If any of our readers have lost their first love, if it seems to you impossible, by faith, to behold the face of Jesus, the reason may be easily understood: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." We must come crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner", or we cannot go down to our house justified.

The principle obtains in any rupture of human fellowships. Sometimes people, once fast friends, become estranged, or children and parents. Sometimes it is assumed that a third party can effect a reconciliation. We venture to believe that this is seldom, if ever, possible. An offence of some sort, real or fancied, underlies all such estrangements, and too often the parties make no effort at reconciliation. If they were to try, they might

find that what they supposed was a justifiable cause for displeasure, had no factual existence, and if only they would get together, they might find resumption of fellowship delightfully easy.

South of the border last week we listened one morning to a religious message by radio. The preacher told a story of an assistant sales manager, who had become very angry with his chief. A certain position in the firm was vacant, and he had expected the sales manager to recommend his appointment. When the position, having become vacant, was filled by another, he felt he had been grievously slighted, and became bitterly hostile in his mind toward the sales manager. He nursed his grievance until it all but overwhelmed him. He lost his health, and feared he might lose his mind. He consulted a psychiatrist who gave him some very foolish advice.

At last he went to his minister, and told him of his trouble. His health was declining. He was unable to sleep; and he feared it might issue in a mental disturbance. All the time he knew that it was his grievance against his chief, the sales manager, that was making him ill.

His pastor told him there was only one thing to do: he was a professing Christian man. He must ask the Lord's forgiveness, and then he must go and see the sales manager, and ask his forgiveness for the hatred he had begun to feel toward him.

When he told his sales manager, his chief replied, "Why, Bill, I knew you were sick, and I was much concerned about you; but I had not the remotest idea what was the cause of your illness. But I am happy to tell you that you are completely mistaken. I had already notified the directors of the company that I wanted to retire from my position a few months hence, as I felt I had served my time. They kindly, but reluctantly, acquiesced in my decision, and asked me what proposal I had to make. And, Bill, I told them there was only one man, and I recommended you as my successor. The directors were pleased, and agreed; but I thought it better not to tell you until nearer the time of my retirement."

The poor fellow had made himself miserable over an

imaginary grievance. If only he had had the wisdom, not to say the grace, to go to his chief immediately, and tell him how he felt about it, it would have saved him months of unhappiness.

Why should we nurse imaginary grievances? Or, for that matter, any grievance at all?

But there are many people who blame others for the breach of friendship, whereas they, themselves, have been the offenders, and their blaming of others is only an act of self-defence: they know the responsibility is theirs.

We have known people to leave the fellowship of the church to which they belonged, because they thought someone had wronged them; and thereafter they have gone from place to place carrying their unjustifiable grudge with them. People in such a case are as uncomfortable as a fish out of water. They know they were wrong. In their hearts they are sorry that they took the course they did, and would give anything to be back in the fellowship they have forsaken, if only they could slip in by the back door, without having to acknowledge that the fault was their own. But there is only one way of reconciliation even between humans, and that is that one should recognize his fault, and acknowledge it, and obtain forgiveness.

In the verse we have quoted God says "In their affliction they will seek me early". How true that is! The Psalmist said: "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word." When the storm breaks, and there is no other help in sight, though the exercise of prayer has been entirely neglected, men are wont to presume upon the divine mercy, and fly to God for refuge. But it is well that we should have the broken connection immediately restored. If your telephone is out of order, have it repaired at once. You may need it before the morning to call the doctor, the fire department, or the police. Let us maintain our correspondence with Heaven so that we may find in God a very present Help in time of trouble. But if we have failed at this point, we may be sure that God has returned and withdrawn His presence, to await our acknowledgement that the fault is all our own.

Why should weary days, and weeks, and months, and mayhap years, pass in utter wretchedness, all for the want of grace to say, "I am sorry I did wrong"?

### SEMINARY OPENS, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

**T**ORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY will open its doors for another school year on Tuesday, September 25. Registration of students will take place on Monday at half past two. We have had excellent reports of the summer activities of all our students and are eagerly anticipating further fellowship in the Word and work of God as we study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed. There have been a number of prospective students enquiring up to date, and those that are already enrolled offer evidence of real quality. We are more concerned on this score than we are about attracting large numbers of men or women, merely for the sake of numbers.

Again we commend our students, the ministers and missionaries of the future, to the prayers of God's people, together with the whole missionary enterprise represented in the work of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

—W.S.W.

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### A FEARFUL BATTLE

From *Pilgrim's Progress*

Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter. Prepare thy self to die; for I swear by my infernal den, that thou shalt go no farther: here will I spill thy soul. And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast; but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.

Then did Christian draw, for he saw 'twas time to bestir him; and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it. Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand, and foot. This made Christian give a little back: Apollyon, therefore, followed his work again, and Christian again took courage; and resisted as manfully as he could. This sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent. For you must know, that Christian by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.

Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now. And with that he had almost pressed him to death; so that Christian began to despair of life. But, as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly stretched out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon's wings, and sped him away, that Christian saw him no more.

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## "IT IS FINISHED!"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, September 2nd, 1951

(Electrically Recorded)

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."—John 19:30.

**T**HERE are many passages in the word of God which are as common to Bible readers as the sun, and the moon, and the myriad stars, at which we may gaze every day. They are as common, and as remote, from our understanding as those heavenly bodies. But, just as we may behold with reverent wonder the heavens as they declare the glory of God, and the firmament as it showeth His handiwork; though it is all so far away that we know little about it; and just as we may throw wide the windows to receive the light and the vitalizing rays of the sun—though that, too, is dazzling in its brightness, and beyond our capacity to understand—so there are Scriptures in this firmament of Truth that, though we do not understand them, we may gaze upon them, and marvel at their brilliance. And there are Scriptures which shine with the light of the sun in his meridian glory, and, though of these we may have to confess that they are beyond our comprehension, we may still throw wide the windows of our soul, and thus expose our minds to their light, and yield our understandings to their warmth.

Who of us would presume to say that he can understand such a Scripture as I have read for a text? The depth, the length, the breadth, and the height of it, is beyond all our abilities of estimation: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

I have felt I wanted to make that verse my text this evening. I could feel something of its significance. But I had to ask myself, How shall I treat it, that there may at least be some semblance of order in our meditation?

"It is finished." What is finished? Where shall we find a substantive for this pronoun, "It" is finished? It is "*finished*". Where shall we find a parallel, a comparison, that we may set beside this perfected, completed, finally finished work, as nothing else has ever been finished?

Well then, to these two categories of thought very simply I invite your attention, and ask you to think with me, as I try to think with you on an *immeasurable and unappraisable pronoun*, "It." What is comprehended in that? And an *incomparable completion*—"finished"—"finished" in such a way that even God Himself could find no room for improvement. What a saying that is!

### I.

What then about what I have called—you can call it something else if you like, but for the want of something

better—AN UNAPPRAISABLE PRONOUN? How can we measure the depth of it, the length of it, the breadth of it, the height of it? "It is finished." What did He mean? To what did He refer? What period of time, what sweep of history, what categories of Divine planning and purposing, what spheres of redemptive activity are comprehended in that simple, yet immeasurable, and inestimably mighty pronoun?

It comprehends a *Divine concept or plan which antedated the dawn of Time*. I am old fashioned enough to believe the early chapters of Genesis are literal history, and that God did create this world in six days, and rested on the seventh. Do not talk to me of impossibilities. I have often said to you that as you open your Bibles you are challenged on the very threshold to yield heart and intellect to its opening words: "In the beginning God . . ." Once postulate God and there can be no impossibilities. Though in six days He created the wonders of this planet, yet the work of redemption occupied millennia of time, for God, in the Person of His Son hath all His mightiest works outdone. I say that this text, this pronoun, is related to the Divine concept which antedated the dawn of time. Redemption is not an after-thought. Marriage is not an antitype, but a type. "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." So said the Divine Creator, and as Abraham desired that Isaac should have a wife, so did the Divine Father plan that His Son should have a bride. And before the foundations of the world were laid He planned who and what manner of bride she should be. A plan was conceived in the Divine mind designed to display the full orb'd glory of the Divine character,—some theatre of activity, some sphere of Divine operation where mercy and truth should meet together, where righteousness and peace should kiss each other, and where God could be shown to be eternally just, and yet the justifier of rebels who had lifted the sword against Him. "It"!

It disclosed also for human understanding *the lurid glare of the flaming sword* at the garden gate which illumined the firmament with the light of Divine justice, brighter than the sun shining in his strength. Oh, I wonder whether I can recall to your memory things which you already know, for after all that is the best kind of preaching, isn't it? The apostle Peter talked about "stirring up your pure minds by way of remembrance," not telling them new things, but reminding them of old things. And Paul, writing of the same thing,

said, "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous,—I do not mind telling it over again—and to you it is safe." We need to be told a hundred times, for the simple and sufficient reason that ninety-nine times are not enough. "Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon."

My dear friends, this "It" went back to the dawn of human history, and it was seen and foreshadowed in the crimson stream which made possible the coats of skin wherewith a God of mercy and of grace covered the nakedness of the guilty pair in the garden at the cost of life. Turn the pages of history and you will see the ark floating triumphantly upon the waves of judgment, and Noah and his family safely shut in from the storm. "It" was there! And Abraham stretching forth his hand to slay his son, when a voice from Heaven stays it, and he lifts his eyes and sees a ram caught in the thicket by the horns, which he offered up instead of his son: "It" was there. And there was one beloved of his father, and hated of his brethren, who was numbered with the transgressors, and shut up in prison. And by and by he was exalted to the throne, and filled his storehouses so abundantly that he "left numbering", and saved the life of nations: "It" was there. "None of you shall go out of his house until the morning." The family gathered within, the blood was sprinkled upon the lintel and upon the doorposts. I can imagine the father going out two or three times, and looking up to make sure that the blood was there. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." In Egypt "It" was there. And in the passage through the Red Sea, the death unto bondage, and the resurrection unto liberty of a whole nation; to be supernaturally supplied with bread and water from Heaven—"It" was in process of formation there. I could go on and on, and point you to the romance of Ruth with Boaz, her goel and redeemer, and as he, the rich bridegroom, passed the corn at noontime, to the one whom he had chosen in his heart already to be his bride—there in that lovely scene—"It" was there. I wish I could sing to you the songs of David, and bring to you his prophetic Messianic Psalm: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." What did he mean? Why, my dear friends, "It" was there. The Son of God, and Son of man, the union of Deity with humanity. And I would like to speak to you of the seraphic songs and predictions of Isaiah; some of them set in a minor key: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Read Isaiah. Moody shut himself up to the reading of Isaiah one time. He read it and re-read it and re-read it; and then went he went out he said that he wanted to take everybody by the lapel of his coat and say, "Have you read Isaiah?" O read it again. "It" is there. And in the tears of Jeremiah who suffered so much for his people; and in the dreadful and wonderful visions of Ezekiel, the seer; and in all the prophets, Daniel, and Hosea, and all the rest of them,—"It" is there.

Until at last a new star twinkles in the sky, and wise men from the East follow its guidance, until they stand in wondering adoration looking down upon the Babe in the manger-cradle, and they worship Him as they present to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Long preparation was there for the advent of Incarnate Deity to this sinful world. We are busy making preparation

now for the reception and welcome of Princess Elizabeth and her husband. That is well. But little preparation did the world as such make for the advent of the Prince of Glory, the Lord of all worlds. But God made preparation.

If you go behind all these prophetic utterances, you find the Sovereign hand of God, and His Providential decrees disposing of the life of nations, and of kings and governments, until Augustus issues his decree that all the world should go up to Jerusalem to be taxed. As there came a woman called Mary, with her husband Joseph, and Caesar did not know that He was the Divine instrument in the fulfilment of prophecy; but thus it came to pass that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, even as the prophet had predicted. So did He come at last, dear friends, and serve our apprenticeship, fulfill our life's day, and go to the cross to pay for our default. When that culmination of millennia of planning and purposing was reached, in the fulness of time Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, and He Himself, realizing the fulfilment of all that was written, cried, not tragically, but triumphantly, to the shock and terror of all principalities and powers, "It is finished."

Sometimes I am inclined to smile a little at some young brethren who are going to improve upon the Gospel. I remember a man years ago—I do not know how many years he had spent in different colleges, and had served intermediately various churches as pot-boilers, as the artist would say, merely something to pay his way. He was leaving, and I said to him, "Where are you going now?" He said, "I am going to take a further course in Chicago University." I said, "What for? What are you going to do?" He said, "I am going to study how to accommodate the gospel to modern life, and how to state the gospel in modern terms." A lady who was a school teacher came to see me from another city not long since, and asked me if I could give her some help. I said, "What for?" She said, "I am trying to re-write the New Testament so that the children will be able to understand it." I said, "I am not competent to help you in that; and frankly, I am inclined to think that the God Who made the minds of children has written His Book so that children can understand it. We have a great many children round about here who seem to understand the New Testament perfectly." And I told her the story of a certain Dr. Brown who published an annotated edition of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," explaining the figures of Bunyan's immortal allegory, and telling his readers what they meant. He was a minister, and one day he called on one of his parishioners. He found her seated in a comfortable chair, with a copy of his edition of Bunyan's "Pilgrim" on her lap. He said, "Mrs. So and So, I am very happy to see you reading Mr. Bunyan." "Yes Pastor," she said, "I enjoy Mr. Bunyan very much." "And you understand him?" "Oh, I understand Mr. Bunyan perfectly," she said, "and some day I hope to become learned enough to understand your explanatory notes." But some little bits of upstarts are going to give us a new gospel, and a new salvation better than that which the God of infinite wisdom planned before He made the worlds, and spent millennia in unfolding His plans. They had better stop that business, my dear friends. Let me here and now say that so far as the gospel is concerned, "It is finished." It needs no supplement, and it will suffer no deletion.

## II.

WHAT DID OUR LORD MEAN WHEN HE SAID, "IT IS FINISHED? In what sense? Well, I think He meant that *He had paid completely the debt of a bankrupt world in an acceptable currency.* He knew that what He gave would be accepted before God. I have found travelling about the world very interesting, particularly in the matter of exchange and inflation. I met with a gentleman in Athens. We were in a restaurant, and he said, "You know you have to be a millionaire in this country to get anything to eat." I said, "Well, I am afraid I shall go hungry then." "Oh no," he said, "you are a millionaire, though you do not know it." Then he began to tell me of the Greek currency. I have at home a little Greek note, I forget what it is called, with a big 500 on it. I found that it was worth something less than one half of a cent. And when I looked at the menu and found that certain things were one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, five hundred thousand, I thought "What in the world am I going to do?" I pulled out my Greek money, and I said, "I have got it." I didn't know I was so rich. One man told me that when he had a debt to pay, he had to find the biggest suitcase he could get to put all the money in to pay a little debt. Some of the bills were half the size of a newspaper, and there were piles of them, but they were not worth anything. I am sure that if he came to you with his suitcase full of debased currency you would not give him five cents for it.

Poor bankrupt mansoul imagines that the currency represented by his good intentions, by his labour, his good deeds, ought to pass at Heaven's bank. He is going to pay his way with God. Ah, but you would have to be more than a millionaire before one cent of your indebtedness could be discharged, by all the works of righteousness which you might do.

But here came One equipped with Heaven's currency, certified notes—"This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." He counted down the ruby drops, and when He had paid the uttermost farthing of a world's indebtedness, He cried, "It is finished." Thus it was receipted, "Paid in full": "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

I believe He meant that *all that was necessary for the reclamation of a lost world was finished.* As though this planet had slipped its moorings, dropped out of its orbit, and was moving along in uncharted, unmoral wastes, and He Who was its Creator, by one almighty act laid hold of it and brought it back: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." It was a big job wasn't it? None but He could ever have done it. Finished was the execution of the Father's will. He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." We read it this evening: "Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God." And in His High Priestly prayer, in anticipation of the cross, but a few hours distant, He said to His Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Thus was he commissioned to redeem the world, and to make it possible that the whole creation might ultimately be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Finished was the new and living way of which we read this evening, the one and only highway to Heaven.

I was driving south of the border a few days last

week, and their roads are very much like ours. Here and there one comes across a big sign: "Road under construction." "Travel at your own risk." By and by there is a red flag, and a single lane. And then, "Detour." Well, I did not complain. If they hadn't got the thing finished I was quite willing that they should do so. We have a subway in course of construction. Perhaps you have heard about it, have you? You may even have stumbled upon it literally in your meanderings about the city. It is not finished yet, but will be by and by. I am not laughing at it; I am quite proud to be a citizen of the only Canadian city that has a subway. My, how big we are getting, aren't we? Well, you know my criticism of a good deal of modern preaching is just this, *they are forever putting up signs:* "Road under construction." "Travel at your own risk." And after a while some bright Doctor of Divinity puts up a sign, "Detour." He knows a better way to Heaven. Well let him take it; I shall not follow him. No, no. "An highway shall be there, and a way." Yes, the King's highway. I asked the way in a certain city, and someone said, "Straight through." I said, "Any broken road? Any reconstruction?" "Not a thing," he said proudly. "A finished highway straight through." I like to preach like that, and to tell poor sinners that the road to Heaven is open now; the sword of the cherubims has been sheathed, sheathed in His heart, Who died for us. The barriers to the tree of life have all been removed, and now the way is open right into the holiest of all. You do not even need a priest, nor a pope, nor even a church. The church has its place. But the highway is finished, and the King of Glory has gone up unto His Father's side. Now He bids us take the only way to Heaven. "I am the way, the truth, and the life! No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

I bring you this bit of good news. No repairs, no detours, no hindrances, no road blocks—straight through to Heaven, "It is finished." Let us pray.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that this is true. Thou hast set our feet in the road that leads to Heaven; Thou hast shown us the path of life, and made us to know that at Thy right hand there are pleasures forever more. Make us all participants in the gift of life, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Now let us sing our Amen to this great truth in one of the greatest of hymns:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

"Not the labours of my hands  
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears for ever flow,  
All for sin could not atone:  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

"While I draw this fleeting breath,  
When mine eyelids close in death,  
When I soar through tracts unknown,  
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee."

# How To Be Hospitable To The Truth

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

"And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

"And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

"Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

"And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

"And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.

"And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us, with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people."—II Kings 4:8-13.

## Prayer Before the Sermon

We would sing unto Thee, O Lord, and make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. We would come before Thy presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Thee with psalms; for the Lord is a great God, and a great king, above all gods. In Thy hands are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is Thine also. The sea is Thine, for Thou madest it; and Thy hands formed the dry land.

We come to worship and bow down, to kneel before the Lord our Maker; for Thou art our God, and we are the sheep of Thy pasture, the people of Thy hand.

We thank Thee for every voice of nature that bears witness to Thy goodness and Thy greatness; but especially for the voice that speaks from Bethlehem, and Calvary, and Olivet, proclaiming the boundless love of God.

How often hast Thou come to us, O Lord! Thou hast visited us in our tent, as Thou didst visit Abraham. Thou hast spoken to us on the hard road, when our pillow was as a stone; Thou hast called to us in all the crimson ritual of the Hebrew tabernacle and temple. Thou hast sent to us prophets; Thou hast thronged us with heavenly visitants. We thank Thee for a place of beginning, where we may come into fellowship with Thyself:

There is a place where Jesus sheds  
The oil of gladness on our heads—  
A place than all besides more sweet;  
It is the blood-stained mercy-seat.

We thank Thee for the angels to whose charge we have been committed; for the angel that shuts the lions' mouths, and meets the tempted one in the wilderness; for the angel-ministries of Gethsemane and the open grave; for the heavenly visitor who comes to shackled saints in the prison-house, and brings them out into a large place. Give us ears to recognize all heavenly voices, and eyes to behold the beauty of holiness, and hearts to respond to every call of God. For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**A**S "all the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again", so whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and if there be any virtue, and any praise, these have their source and end in Christ. He is the ocean whence all goodness rises to be distilled in rain and dews of grace; and He is the end to Whose attraction every virtuous impulse of the soul is due.

We are safe, therefore, in relating any and every "man of God" to the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is He Who makes him a "man of God." We should be quite justified in finding Christ in this narrative, even if we had no specific New Testament warrant for regarding Elisha as a type of Christ. Indeed, I venture to

think this chapter has a special significance and particular teaching for us, such as it could not have if it were found in the New Testament; for there are Old Testament elements in every Christian life. That is to say, Christ comes to us still anonymously. He comes to us in types and in shadows, as well as in the clearer and more direct revelation of His Sonship and Saviourhood.

## I.

I shall use this story, first of all, to illustrate THE HIGH AND HOLY PRIVILEGE OF EXTENDING HOSPITALITY TO THE TRUTH.

The text is the story of an hospitably disposed woman, who is described as "a great woman." In what respects was this Shunammite "a great woman"? She was not in any sense a public character. She lived a quiet, somewhat obscure life. She was an housewife; she cared for the things of her husband. She dwelt among her own people. And yet, although she was not conspicuous in the life of the nation, the inspired writer describes her as being "a great woman." Wherein, then, lay her greatness?

*She had the discernment to recognize the messenger of truth.* That is the beginning of greatness: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Elisha came without a name, without credentials. He came as a stranger who needed hospitality. The door of her humble home was thrown wide to welcome him, and he was hospitably received for his own sake; for she perceived what others did not, that there was a divine quality about him, that he was in communication with Heaven, that he was in very truth a "man of God." She said, "I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let him find in Shunem a place of welcome; let him have a home with us."

And thus, my dear friends, the Lord Jesus comes still in the person of His representatives. He comes to us through the principles of His own Word, through the precepts and promises of His holy Book. And they are wise men and wise women whose hearts are receptive to the truth by whatsoever messenger the truth may come. There are some who do not so receive the truth, the doors of whose minds are fast locked by pride and prejudice. Will you close your ears to the song because you do not know the singer's name? Will you reject the message because for some strange reason you are

prejudiced against the messenger? Will you refuse to open your letter because you do not like the colour of the postman's hair, or because of some peculiarity in his walk? Will you not rather receive God's word, the principles of His gospel, when they come to you, no matter who may bring them? Will you be hospitable to the Lord Jesus if and when He comes anonymously?

There is never a chance for a gracious deed, there is never a need for a kindly word, there is never the knock of a beautiful thought at the door of the mind, but the sound of the Master's feet is behind it; and He will enter by the open door. We are thronged with holy messengers. Is it not said of the angels, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" That is what our Lord meant, I think, when He said: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me: He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." We, too, have opportunity of receiving the message of truth as it comes to us, unnamed, even as did this "great woman" of Shunem, of long ago.

But this woman not only recognized the "man of God" for what he was, but she offered him a *generous, cordial hospitality*. It is said, "She constrained him to eat bread." She did not give him a mere formal invitation, but she pressed him to make his home with her. Some invitations are so phrased as to make it easier to decline than to accept, as when one says, "I suppose you won't come in?" A truly hospitable spirit is always cordial and urgent, as when this great woman "constrained" the prophet to eat bread.

There is a way of shutting the door in the face of the truth; but no Christian, knowing the truth, will do that. It is possible also to extend to it only a grudging, a reluctant, hospitality. There are people who must be persuaded to believe things, who receive the truth as argument compels them to do so. The "man of God" must stand almost like an insurance agent at the door, and then force his way in. But when one is hospitably disposed toward the truth, as was this Shunammite, the door is thrown wide open, with the word, "Come in. I am glad to see you."

Thus we may welcome the truth in every good book we read, in every noble impulse born of the Spirit of God, in every testimony offered to the power of God's grace. In the welcome accorded every promise and precept of the written word, we may be hospitably disposed toward the truth as it is in Jesus.

And as surely as we do, we shall find, as did this Shunammite, that *our Elishas love to come; and, coming, they stay with us a while*. For it is said that "as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither." He knew where he was welcome. He came without embarrassment to this door; for he knew they would be glad to see him within.

It is possible to close our ears against the truth, I say, or to receive the truth so reluctantly that often the things which are good, and pure, and honest, and lovely, and of good report, will pass us by. Someone

recommended to you a book from which he had received great blessing. But when you read it—or tried to read it—you found no interest in it. Someone expressed enthusiasm for the word of the Lord; but you declare that it is a task for you to study the Bible. People there are who come eagerly to the house of God, and who can scarcely wait for Sunday to dawn. There are others to whom the sermon is always more or less of a bore. And, of course, they say it is the fault of the preacher; the preacher has no message. And as for the Bible, there are parts of it they think we can do without. As for the sermon, another will say, "I think twenty minutes ought to be the limit." It ought to be the limit for you, my friend! When Dr. Justin D. Fulton was delivering one of his great messages, there were a few people present who were evidently bored by the great preacher's utterances. After enduring it for a while, they got up to leave; and as they were walking down the aisle, he said, "That is right. As soon as you are full to capacity, go home." There are people who think they reflect upon the preacher because forsooth the preacher could not interest them; whereas their disinterestedness may be attributable to a spirit which is inhospitable to the truth.

There were many in Shunem who offered no welcome to the "man of God"; but this woman did, and because of that, "as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither." Have you not noticed that when you are in the right frame of mind, when the Spirit of God has touched you, and you have a clear view of the face of Jesus Christ, that all your friends seem to speak to you as prophets? You meet a man in the morning, and words of wisdom seem to drop from his lips. In the few minutes you have at your command before leaving home, you open God's word, and, behold, it is like a bush that burns with fire. You glance at the newspaper and, by contrast or comparison, even that has a religious message. As often as the truth passes by, it turns in thither to the heart that is hospitable to its coming.

But why did Elisha delight to lodge in the home at Shunem? This woman said unto her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick—let us make within our home a home for him, and let us tell him that it belongs to him, and that whenever he comes he may open the door and walk in and feel at home in our home." Thus *they made a home for the truth within their own home*. No wonder Elisha loved to tarry there!

What is a Christian? What constitutes a Christian? Christianity does not consist in external acts. That which differentiates a Christian from everyone else is **that he or she has a little chamber specially reserved for God, a place within his or her heart where God dwells**. The Psalmist said, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." He would **make a little chamber**; he would find a place where God can be at home. I read the programme of a certain church not far from here, in which it is said that that church will magnify the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Perhaps one will read that and say, "That is very good indeed." And it is—so far as it goes. But it is indicative of the humanistic drift of the time—"This church will magnify the command: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'."

Would it not be better to resolve, "This church will magnify the first and great commandment: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God'—a place for God first, and then 'thy neighbour as thyself'?"

But that is the tendency of the time, to welcome all the inhabitants of Shunem, yet to have no place for the prophet of God.

A Christian is distinguished from all others by this fact, that he has a place within that belongs to God, and to God alone. And God will take the first place, and be at home within the human heart, if you extend hospitality to Jesus Christ His Son. I question whether anyone can really love his neighbour unless and until he has first learned to love God. That is plain speech. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; but no man loves his neighbour as himself who does not first love God. Some neighbours are not very lovable—and you may not be very lovable to your neighbours either! It requires much grace to love most of us. Indeed, we can never do it unless first of all we make a little chamber for God, and "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Then we can love everybody. The first and the great commandment is always "the first and the great commandment"—it is never the second—a little chamber on the wall reserved for the "holy man of God", a place reserved for the truth.

*This woman desired to have as much of the presence of the "man of God" as she possibly could; and so she gave him, as I have said, a home within her own home. The only way by which she could give him the freedom of her house was to give him first a place for himself alone. I do not mean that we should confine God to a chamber. We cannot confine Him to a little chamber. When I say that there is a compartment in life which should be kept for God, I do not mean that God should be excluded from all other departments of life. You give a guest in your own home his room, and say to him, "This is your room"; and as he feels at home there, he will feel at home in all the rest of the house by your invitation. The truth is, therefore, that it is our privilege to invite the Lord Jesus to live with us, giving Him His own place—the supreme place—and then every room of the house will be blessed by His gracious presence.*

## II.

WHAT WAS HER REWARD? What was the result? Does it pay to entertain angels unawares? The grace of hospitality, to make literal application of this principle, is almost a thing of the past, in some quarters. There are people who seem not to know how to entertain strangers, nor how to entertain anybody. I suppose it is the high cost of living, and particularly the high cost of rents, which makes the little chamber on the wall an expensive luxury. It is not, perhaps, that we would not have it if we could. But does it pay?

What was this woman's reward? First, her reward was the presence of "the man of God" himself. That was a benediction. For some reason the house was different. He brought something with him; there was an atmosphere about him that all the servants felt. But this woman found her chief reward in the presence of Elisha himself.

If a housewife should throw up the windows and open the doors, and you were to inquire, "What are you do-

ing?" And if she should reply, "I delight to entertain the fresh air. I love to open my house to the sunlight. I love the music of the birds, and the fragrance of the flowers", would you say to her, "How are you rewarded by being hospitable?" If you did, her answer would be, "I breathe fresh air; I am warmed by the sunshine; I am thrilled by the music; I revel in the fragrance of the flowers. They are their own reward." And you cannot entertain the Lord Jesus without being rewarded by the simple fact of His presence. You cannot entertain a beautiful thought but your life is enriched by it. You cannot open your heart to goodness anywhere but you are the better for its incoming. There is a "dear delight in doing good", and even if there were to be no great day of rewards when God will reward His servants, there is a delight, a satisfaction, in the truth itself.

But there was a *very special reward in this case*. She entertained the prophet, and one day the prophet said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him." And Elisha said, "Thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?" What if some humble stranger were to come to your door, and you were to entertain him and give him a place in your home? And what if he were to come down in the morning and disclose his identity, and you were to discover that he was one of the richest men on earth, that he had so much wealth, and so much influence, and so much power, that he scarcely knew how to use his resources, and he were to say to you, "You cordially received me. You extended the hospitality of your home not knowing who I was. I place all my wealth at your disposal. What shall I do for you?" Would not that be a great day?

But that is exactly what the Lord Jesus does. That is why He calls. He comes to take up His abode within our hearts—and then forthwith, "Whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." "What shall I do for you?" is God's call to all of us. The programme of that church to which I referred, would rather suggest that it is man's chief obligation to say, "What shall I do for God?" God has never asked you to do anything for Him. There is not a word within the pages of the Bible that suggests that any man is ever required to work for God. He does not need your work. "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." We are "workers together with God." We work *with* God, or we do nothing. We might as well save our energy. God is doing His work in the world. He does not need our puny effort; but, being the channels of His grace, and the instruments of His power, touched by the Holy Spirit, we may be used of God to do God's will in the world. Never has He said to anyone, "Work for me." We must work *with* Him.

But He does say to us, "What shall I do for you?" We must learn, my brethren, that we need God to do something for us. David once sent for his Pastor, Nathan the prophet, and said to him, "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains—I should like to build an house for the Lord." "And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart." But when the prophet was alone with God, the Lord gave him another message. If I may paraphrase it, God said: "When did I ever ask anybody to build an house for me? When I require an house, I will build it myself." And then He drew the curtain and said,



"Look, David; that is My plan. The Lord shall build thee an house." David fell prostrate before God and said, "I thought I had to do something for Thee; but I have learned that all Thou requirest is that I be willing that Thou shouldst do something for me."

"What is to be done for thee?" That is what Christ asks of every one of us. That is why we meet three times a week for prayer—it takes us a long time to tell out the desires of our hearts. What a wonderful privilege is accorded this church! And every church! Only as we give Jesus Christ His place in the life of this church does He come to us and say, "What shall I do for you?" He is the Head of this church; He is the power and the glory of it. He is the same Jesus, and He can do to-day what He did in time past.

"Shall I speak for you to the king", said Elisha, "or to the captain of the host?" Would you have the Lord Jesus speak to the King for you? I think we do not make enough of that. Never lose sight of the fact that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." He went down into the grave, and He was raised again; and "he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs." Hold fast to the truth of the resurrection. He is our risen Saviour; but where is He now? The clouds parted, and He went up, up, up, to take His place at the Father's right hand, until He shall come again. He is now in the presence of God interceding for us. "Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king?" The modern church is not asking Him to do anything; and the great mass of professing Christians fall below this high and holy privilege; notwithstanding, the Lord is in the midst of His people, saying, "What shall I do for you?"

Do we not need Him to do something for us to-day? I want Him to do for me whatever His wisdom wills to do. He comes with that question this morning. He will speak to the Captain of the host: "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." He is the Captain of the Lord's host, and He will look after you, my friend, if you ask Him.

But I must hasten to say that *the wonder of it all was that this woman had no request to make.* She could not think of anything she wanted. And when he said, "I am going up now. Shall I speak to the king, or to the captain of the host?" she said, "I cannot think of anything I need. I dwell among mine own people. The fact is, I am perfectly content." How far her contentment was due to the visits of the man of God, perhaps she herself scarcely knew. It is possible sometimes so consciously to dwell in the presence of God, as to feel a holy contentment, to come to a place where we want only to talk to Him without petitioning Him for any particular blessing. We may often be there, when, for the moment, a holy contentment fills the soul.

And what then? *Someone else will do our thinking:* "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." There was one desire that had wrung this woman's heart this many a year; but she never thought of asking for it—because it was "exceeding abundantly" above all that she could ask or think. It involved a miracle; it involved the stoop of God; and she never dreamed that God would do that for her! Hence the prophet thought for her, and planned for her, and gave her his promise which exceeded her utmost imagining. In due course there came into that house another

life; and there was needed another little chamber. And oh how different, and how happy, was that home!

The Lord Jesus never dwells alone. He makes the spiritually barren life fruitful; He fills the life with joy and gladness; and does for us beyond all our imagining. Has God ever done that for you—something you desired, but for which you dared not ask? This woman had prayed for this very blessing, but did not know that she had done so. It was an unuttered desire. It was a longing of the soul which had registered itself with God.

Once when preaching in a certain city, one of my former deacons, a man of eighty years of age, said to me, "I am going down on the train with you tomorrow just for the ride, and an opportunity for a talk." He had served with a railway corporation, and he had his pass. Next day as we were riding together he said, "I never had much money, but I managed to save a little. I worked forty years, and then retired with a pension. That pension, augmented by the little I have managed to save, just keeps my wife and me. It does not take very much, as we live simply. But it keeps us so that we are not dependent on the children—we are independent. I am eighty years old, and all through my life that has been my desire. I have rebuked myself that I did not put that desire into a prayer, and daily ask the Lord to do that very thing. But I have recently been thinking it was a prayer after all; that the Lord knew my desire, that I might be able to live my closing years without depending upon anybody else. I have come to the conclusion that I was praying all the time and did not know it. The Lord heard my prayer, and now as the shadows gather about me I am receiving the answer to my prayer."

I told him I had no doubt about it. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee—not only the request of thy lips, but—the desires of thine heart." The trusting heart, conscious of the Lord's favour and presence, is filled with a holy contentment, and feels many a desire which defies verbal expression. But the Spirit of God Who dwells within us interprets our desire; the Holy Spirit with groanings which cannot be uttered makes intercession for us according to the will of God. And the answer comes: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

Now unto Him that is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

### WHAT POPE PIUS IX CLAIMED FOR HIMSELF

Cardinal Manning, in his sermon on the Syllabus, quotes Pope Pius IX as declaring:

"In his (Christ's) right, I am sovereign. I acknowledge no civil superior; and I claim more than this, I claim to be the Supreme judge on earth, and director of the consciences of men; of the peasant that tills the field; and the prince that sits on the throne; of the household that lives in the shade of privacy; and the legislature that makes the laws for the kingdoms. I am the last judge on earth of what is right and wrong."

## DOES GOD CALL MEN TO THE MINISTRY IN OUR DAY?

**I**T IS our deepest conviction that God calls men in our day to the work of the Gospel ministry just as truly as the Master long ago summoned the fishermen to leave their nets and to follow Him. The apostles and prophets dared to stand before their fellows and speak the Word of God because they were strong in the assurance that the Mighty God had laid His hand upon them, had called them and commissioned them for their great task. Page after page of the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New, recounts how God graciously condescended to call men by name, to lead them step by step in His way, to empower them for service and to make them His mouthpieces. It belongs to the very essence of the truth of the Bible that the omnipotent power and wisdom that guides the stars in their courses, calling them all by their name as a shepherd calls his sheep, also cares for the sons of men, stoops down to redeem them by His grace, and thrusts them into His service.

Alas, alas, too often even those who profess the name of Christian regard the minister merely as a member of another profession, albeit an honoured profession. We have heard the officers of a certain church speaking of "hiring a minister". A true servant of God cannot be "hired". Granted that financial arrangements ought to be given due and proper place in such matters, and this according to the teaching of the New Testament, yet it is not merely a question of a convenient business arrangement between two parties, one of whom seeks a remunerative position, while the other seeks an official to carry out certain specified duties in the church. God pity the minister who thinks of himself, whether consciously or unconsciously, as simply an ecclesiastic, the holder of an office, the bearer of some dignity. Such a conception of the ministry implies a conception of the church and of the Gospel that reduces the whole undertaking to a machine-like routine that comes from men and touches them with nothing more than a purely human influence. It leaves God out of the church that bears His name, it denies the essential truths of the Bible and sets at naught the power of the Gospel of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a travesty of God's purpose as declared in the Bible such organizations are, and yet of how many groups that bear the name of church must it be said, that they have a form of godliness but they deny the power thereof.

A man who has of his own will chosen the ministry as an seemingly attractive work may possibly continue in it through the vicissitudes of his career without having felt the finger of God in His own life or without having seen it operative in the lives of sinners transforming them into the likeness of Christ. In some churches any other sort of minister would be speedily made to feel exceedingly ill at ease. Such places do not want the Word of God preached in its simplicity and power, the respectable auditors there would be embarrassed to hear themselves described as "lost", as "sinners" that stood in need of divine salvation. They would be highly indignant if anyone made a profession of conversion. And an evangelical preacher who dared to proclaim the truths unmistakably written on these matters in the Bible would soon find himself squeezed out of a "liberal" pulpit by some method or means. The world never has been and never will be a friend to

grace, even when it is dressed up in respectable ecclesiastical habits. The mind of the flesh is enmity to God and always revolts against the truth of the Gospel.

There is no more difficult task than the genuine work of the Gospel ministry. It may seem easy to those who have had no experience in it, but our Master has warned us that just as the world hated Him, so it will hate us. "The servant is not above His master." Yet it is the most glorious task committed to the hands of men. It is not merely to stand before men, but to stand in the presence of God and to speak of Him and offer to lost men the eternal salvation that the Lord of Glory purchased by His own precious blood. The greatest joy that can come to a human being in this world is to recognize that God has dealt with his own soul beyond all peradventure and that through our poor weak instrumentality, He has been pleased to do His gracious work upon others.

It is gloriously true that God calls every redeemed soul to witness concerning His redeeming power, but into the work of the ministry no man has the right to intrude. Some are called to this work, others are not. Spurgeon used to advise young men with the ministry in view, not to take it up if they could escape from it. Unless a man has been compelled by the Spirit of God, constrained by His working, he ought not to consider the pastorate or the mission field. These undertakings are difficult, indeed, humanly speaking they are utterly impossible; there are so many problems, so many seemingly impossible barriers, that unless God is manifestly in it from first to last, no man ought to dare to thrust himself into the office of a minister. "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4). But all this is really a negative way of saying that if God does lay hold upon a man, calling him into the service of the King of Kings, then he dare not refuse. "Woe is unto me," said the Apostle of old, "if I preach not the Gospel." And so says every truly called and commissioned preacher to-day. Such will find days of darkness come upon them, they will be cast down and discouraged as was Paul, but they will always rejoice as he did that they are not forsaken. The only reason that men in these days of worldliness and indifference can persist in upholding the lamp of Gospel truth against all the winds of adversity that blow, is that the Great Head of the Church walks among the golden candlesticks and holds in His divine hand the stars who are the angels, or literally the "messengers", of the churches.

Even those who have felt in the deepest recesses of their hearts the touch of the Master's hand, who beyond all possible doubt have heard the sound of His voice sending them forth into the harvest fields, even such are liable to forget that they are His servants and to make themselves or to allow themselves to be made the servants of men. We therefore need to remind ourselves constantly of our great privilege of standing between the living and the dead, of being the mouthpieces that offer God's free grace to men. Only as we keep ourselves near the Saviour, our ears filled with His Word, our hearts attuned to His command, shall we retain the freshness and the glow of the wonder that God has set us apart for His service.

Such are the kind of young men we desire to aid in Toronto Baptist Seminary. We gladly recognize our limitations, nor would we wish to push men into a life

work into which the Lord of the Harvest has never put them. But under the hand of God, we are confident that we shall be able to help others, as we have thus far been used to help many who are now preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. We do not urge young people to attend this school of the prophets, but if God has already been urging them into His work, then we welcome them here that together we may labour for His glory as we study and prepare for the tasks to which He leads.—W.S.W.

### BINGO STILL FLOURISHES IN R.C. CHURCHES

**I**N our first issue of August we printed photographs of a crowd of 5,000 people publicly gambling for large stakes under the sponsorship of the Roman Catholic Church in Sturgeon Falls, Ontario. We dared to hope that what we said on this matter would bring a blush of shame to Roman Catholics in that neighbourhood, if not to the priests who were responsible for the undertaking. And in case our comment had no weight, we printed in both French and English the scathing criticism of "Bingo" voiced by the Archbishop of Montreal when he laid a ban on all such forms of gambling in his archdiocese. But in spite of the plain speech of this leading member of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Canada, the local priests in Sturgeon Falls have organized another "Monster Bingo". The printed placard advertising the event was sent to us by some good friend of ours, or perhaps he is a friend of the priests, for they appear to have no shame in such matters. We are sure, however, that there are many Roman Catholics who are greatly saddened by the spectacle of their church being made into a "den of thieves" rather than a "house of prayer". They would agree with the words of the Archbishop of Montreal when he said that this sort of gambling in churches "raises a serious problem for the Christian conscience. The Church is not a financial organization, still less a school of gambling." Many Roman Catholics, indeed, must be constrained to wonder if their church is not actually a "financial organization" and a "school of gambling".

The latest Bingo party to be held in this church was in Northern Ontario scheduled for Sunday, August 19, just five weeks after the huge enterprise described in our issue of August 2 at which it was reported that \$6,000 in prizes were offered, including, "two 1951 model cars, a refrigerator, a chrome kitchen suite etc. . . ." And now a little more than a month later, the ecclesiastical gambling school with a branch in Sturgeon Falls has announced that two additional new cars will be offered as the stakes in these games of chance. If such expensive stakes as these are offered, we wonder what huge amounts of profit accrue to the priests' pocket as their share in the gambling.

We further note that the day selected for this monster sporting feature is a Sunday. A supper was served in the parish hall. No mention is made of price, but we may guess that there was nothing free in such a time and place and under such auspices. What a mockery it is of all the high pretensions, all the holy names employed in connection with the Roman Catholic Church to desecrate the Sabbath by gambling, to use the church building for a commercial enterprise and to exploit the name of the church and of religion in order to conduct

gambling on a scale that would otherwise put into jail any other man or organization that attempted to do the same thing.

The hollow falsity of Rome's spiritual claims is made evident by this gambling to all who know how to distinguish between an attempt to minister to spiritual need and an attempt to fulfill the lusts of the flesh for selfish profit.

Again we call attention to the way in which Rome "says and does not". As we have already pointed out, the Archbishop's statement against gambling was excellent, but the Roman Catholic churches both inside of his archdiocese and outside continue to be "schools of gambling and financial organizations".—W.S.W.

### WHY R.C. PRIESTS BURN BAPTIST MAIL

The Post Office Department has finally announced that legal action will be instituted against the post master in Northwestern Quebec who, at the instigation of the local priest, allegedly burnt Gospel literature instead of delivering it to French Roman Catholics to whom it was addressed. Postal authorities are not usually slow in prosecuting those who tamper with the mails, but perhaps the fact that a priest was involved and that the mail was of a religious character gave some reason for caution and for obtaining overwhelming evidence before proceeding to take action. It will be interesting to see what happens to this Roman Catholic priest when he is haled before a civil court on the charge of destroying Gospel tracts which were in the custody of the Post Office.

According to medieval practice, priests of the Roman Church were not liable to the action of civil courts, they were regarded as superior to the common run of men and too holy to be subject to the same laws as the ordinary people. That is still the legal theory of the Roman Catholic Church, though no attempt is made in Protestant lands to enforce such privileges for clerics. Nevertheless, it is exceedingly difficult to convict a priest on any charge, no matter what the evidence be, before any Quebec court. We shall await the outcome of this case with deepest interest. Certainly every possible loophole will be sought out, and every attempt to find scapegoats will doubtless be made.

### The Archbishop Disturbed by Publicity:

The Archbishop of Montreal whose jurisdiction does not extend to Northwestern Quebec has been so disturbed by adverse publicity over this incident that he issued a statement to the effect that "the R.C. Church does not approve of the burning by a priest of mail addressed to Baptists in the Rouyn-Noranda district." The daily press thus reported the statement of the Archbishop:

"With various slight differences of interpretation, the daily newspapers have commented upon the incidents that have taken place lately in the Rouyn-Noranda district," the archbishop's statement said.

"The Archbishop of Montreal wishes to inform the faithful of his diocese that the church does not approve such methods (providing that the statements of the press really correspond to the facts), and he calls upon all the people of good will not to implicate the whole church in a culpable act of one of its members, even though he may be a minister of religion.

Religious truth must possess in itself its own strength

and persuasion. As spiritual leader of his diocese, the archbishop of Montreal disapproves of all measures of violence, as well as those that are contrary to our constitutional freedoms in carrying out the apostolate."

It is significant that the distinguished prelate frankly admits the influence which publicity has upon his church. The Roman Church is supposed by its devotees to be infallible and unchangeable, but it is exceedingly sensitive to the power of public opinion. It is for that reason that we continue to bring these matters before the attention of our readers.

The above statement was evidently intended for consumption by English-speaking Protestant readers. There has been no suggestion made in the French press, as far as we have noticed, that Protestant mail should not be burnt by priests or that violence against evangelists is contrary to the policy of the Hierarchy. It is all very well for the Archbishop to cast the guilty priest to the wolves in order to exculpate the church as a whole in the eyes of Protestant public opinion. But the fact of the matter is that every French-Canadian Roman Catholic is fully aware that to destroy Gospel tracts sent out by Protestants is habitually done on the orders of the Hierarchy; it is beyond argument that the young men who are arrested for preaching on the street corner are arrested on the orders of the priests who are merely carrying out the settled policy of their superior officers.

#### Mob Violence in Quebec

While in Sudbury during the week-end preaching for Rev. John Boyd, Mr. Etienne Huser, our French student-professor at Toronto Baptist Seminary, told me how they were nearly mobbed by an organized gang a week ago when they attempted to hold an open air meeting in a little Quebec village. Mr. Boyd and Mr. Huser, together with two lady-students from Toronto Baptist Seminary, announced from door to door a street meeting in the evening. They had no sooner begun to speak than some dozen or so cars sounded their horns in unison so as to drown out their voices. An organized gang of hoodlums then surrounded them and ordered them out of the village, giving them five minutes to leave with dreadful threats of what would happen if they failed to do so. Each time they attempted to speak they were shouted down and their voices covered with a barrage of sound from the motor car horns. Stones were thrown at them and blows inflicted on them as a token of what would be done if they failed to obey the orders of the organized gangsters. In spite of threats of violence, they stayed till it became apparent they would not be given a hearing. Who that knows Quebec French villages will doubt that the whole performance was conducted at the orders of the priests? Such is the treatment that has been given the Christian Brethren in Shawinigan Falls a year ago; such is the violence which the evangelists in Northwestern Quebec suffer; such is the manner in which the "traffic by-law" is employed to deny free speech in Quebec mining towns.

#### A Prelate's Double Talk

When the Archbishop of Montreal denies any intention on the part of his church to employ violence, he may deceive a few unwary and uninformed Protestants, but he will not persuade priests and "faithful" against persecution, nor will he mislead those who know the cruel teachings and the bloody history of the ar-

rogant papal church. It has never repented of the Inquisition and its horrors, it has never asserted the right of all to the same liberty that it demands for its own people. Double talk and systematic hypocrisy may be useful propaganda for the ignorant, but it constitutes its own condemnation with all who know Romanism.

The Archbishop of Montreal has sought to dissociate his church from blame in destroying Protestant mail, but the following quotation from a Roman Catholic publication on *Freedom of Worship* (By Francis J. Connell, *Imprimatur* by Archbishop Spellman, 1944) makes it clear that in lands where the population is in majority Roman Catholic, the free use of the press and of the mails would be denied to Protestants. We quote the following ideal help up to citizens of the United States by one of their own priests:

#### Situation in Catholic Countries

Besides these principles for the conduct of individual Catholics, there are other principles regulating the conduct of a Catholic government toward the non-Catholics in its domains. If the country is distinctively Catholic—that is, if the population is almost entirely Catholic, and the national life and institutions are permeated with the spirit of Catholicity—the civil rulers can consider themselves justified in restricting, or preventing denominational activities hostile to the Catholic religion. This does not mean that they may punish or persecute those who do not accept the Catholic faith. But they are justified in repressing written or spoken attacks on Catholicism, the use of the press or the mails to weaken the allegiance of Catholics toward their Church, and similar anti-Catholic efforts. For, by such activities, the faith of some of the Catholic citizens—particularly the less educated—might be unsettled and their loyalty to the Church destroyed. A Catholic government naturally looks on these happenings as grave evils of the spiritual order, from which the citizens must be protected, if possible.

Our own government would certainly follow a similar policy in certain circumstances . . .

—Romanism would, if it gained the upper hand in the United States, re-write the Constitution and incorporate into it the principle of special privileges for the Roman Catholic Church and restriction on the freedom of all others. That practice is already followed in Quebec, and whether or not the priest violated the law of the land in destroying Protestant mail, he was certainly fulfilling the spirit and the letter of Canon Law and the behests of his superiors.—W.S.W.

### REMEMBER THE SEMINARY IN YOUR WILL

We suggest that our friends should remember Toronto Baptist Seminary in their wills. The proper form for this is: "I give, devise and bequeath the sum of ..... to Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada, associated with Jarvis St. Baptist Church." We are laying foundations for the future, and we are determined to make it as impossible as it is within human power to do, that not one dollar given to Toronto Baptist Seminary shall be used for anything but the propagation of the gospel. No amount would be too large, and certainly no amount would be too small. We earnestly solicit the gifts of those who believe in ministerial and missionary education.

# Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 16 Third Quarter Lesson 12 September 16, 1951

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

## FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

Lesson Text: Matthew 14:13-33.

Golden Text: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."—John 6:35.

### I. A Crowd Satisfied: verses 13-21.

Read also Mk. 6:30-44; Lk. 9:10-17; John 6:1-14.

John the Baptist had met death through his faithfulness in rebuking the sin of Herod (vv. 1-11). Influenced by the evil counsels of Herodias, Herod, who at first feared John and heard him gladly (Mk. 6:20), came in the end to desire his death. The disciples of John tenderly buried the body of their beloved teacher, then they went to tell Christ of their grief. The ear of the Saviour is ever open to the cry of the sorrowing. Our Saviour called His disciples aside, that they might rest and recover from the shock of John's death.

The miracle of the loaves and the fishes is recorded by all the evangelists. Teachers will find this incident rich in teaching concerning the person and work of the Master. It formed the basis for our Lord's own discourse concerning the bread of life, wherein He declared that He Himself was the bread of life sent down from heaven, and that those who by faith partook of His flesh, given for the life of the world, would receive eternal life (John 6:26-58).

The disciples looked upon the multitudes as a hindrance to their leisure, but Christ had compassion upon them. He considered them as sheep without a shepherd, for they were weary, wandering, distressed and hungry (Matt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34). The disciples would have ignored or dismissed them, but the Saviour ministered unto them. Many in our day seek to evade responsibility for those around them. Christ would recall us to a sense of our obligation, as He did the disciples, by saying, "Give ye them to eat."

That which is impossible with man is possible with God (Matt. 19:26; Mk. 10:27; Lk. 18:27). Notwithstanding the scarcity of food in the desert place, Christ fed the multitude by performing a miracle (Compare Matt. 15:32-38; Mk. 8:1-9). Small and insignificant as our resources seem to be, they will be multiplied when presented to the Saviour (1 Kings 17:14). Let not the hungry multitudes around us perish for want of the life-giving bread which we hold in our hands to distribute in the Lord's name.

All who eat of the bread of life will be filled (John 4:14; 6:35; Rev. 7:16); the Lord has bread enough and to spare (Lk. 15:17). He alone can satisfy the cravings of the human spirit, created for His glory. He gives life abundant to those who come to Him (John 10:10).

There was no confusion when the five thousand were fed. "Order is heaven's first law"; it is one of the principles of the Divine government of the universe, as is evidenced by the stars in their courses, the regular succession of day and night, and the alternate approach of summer and winter. The same sense of order and fitness characterizes the Lord's dealings with His people; He acts according to plan (Acts 15:18; Eph. 3:8-11).

The Divine economy allows no waste; the fragments that remain must be gathered. Care is taken even in the commercial world to see that all work is performed with maximum efficiency and with minimum waste. By-products are investigated with a view to their possible use. We must remember that each child of God has a place to fill, be it large or small. The Lord's work will be accomplished according to His plan, only when each one is fulfilling his proper ministry (Numb. 2:17; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:28-30; Col. 4:17; 2 Tim. 4:5).

### II. A Calm Secured: verses 22-36.

Read also Mk. 6:45-52; John 6:15-21.

While the disciples laboured at the oars, their boat buffeted by the wind and the waves, the Master was alone on the shore, praying for them. Is this not a picture of the present age? The Lord's children toil against the contrary winds of

opposition and persecution, but Christ the Advocate is in heaven pleading for them (John 16:33; 17:15).

The disciples fancied that they were forsaken, but the Lord had not forgotten them (Heb. 13:5, 6). Men are prone to doubt the love of God when they look only at their circumstances. His love is constant and abiding; we must not judge Him by feeble sense, but must trust Him for His grace.

Christ the Saviour went to His disciples at the hour of their deepest need. Physicians tell us that the fourth watch of the night, from three to six o'clock in the morning, as we reckon time, is the period when the vitality of the body is at its lowest point. It is a time of weariness and uncertainty: night has passed, but the day has not commenced. The Lord will bless with a sense of His personal presence those who turn to Him in the midst of their sorrow and distress.

Nervous, over-wrought and excited, the disciples were as fearful at the unexpected appearance of Christ as they had been in His absence. Thinking that they saw an apparition, they found no comfort until they believed His reassuring word: "Be of good courage; it is I; fear not" (Matt. 9:2, 22; Mk. 6:50; John 6:20; Acts 23:11). He bids us trust Him, and not be afraid (Psa. 56:3, 11; Isa. 12:2).

Impulsive Peter ventured to walk on the water to meet the Master. His faith failed, however, when he looked at the monstrous waves and the boisterous winds. Let us keep looking to Christ (Heb. 12:1, 2). Peter's brief cry, "Lord, save me" brought instant deliverance (Psa. 50:15; 91:15; Rom. 10:13).

Christ displayed His authority over nature when He walked upon the surface of the sea. Again, as soon as He entered the boat, the storm ceased to rage (Matt. 8:26; Mk. 4:39; Lk. 8:24), and the ship reached its desired haven immediately (John 6:21).

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Sept. 10—Manna in the Morning ..... Exod. 16:14-18.  
 Sept. 11—Material Bread Insufficient ..... Lk. 4:1-4.  
 Sept. 12—The True Bread ..... John 6:32-40.  
 Sept. 13—Provision for Growth ..... 1 Pet. 2:1-8.  
 Sept. 14—A Filling Portion ..... Eph. 3:14-20.  
 Sept. 15—The Bread of Life ..... John 6:47-58.  
 Sept. 16—The Shepherd's Care ..... Psa. 23.

### SUGGESTED HYMNS

Break Thou the bread of life. O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found. Thou, my everlasting Portion. Jesus, Saviour, pilot me. Fierce raged the tempest. Peace! perfect peace!

### "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; I SHALL NOT WANT"

"I shall not want"—rest: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

"I shall not want"—peace: "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

"I shall not want"—mercy: "He restoreth my soul."

"I shall not want"—guidance: "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

"I shall not want"—courage: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

"I shall not want"—companionship: "For thou art with me."

"I shall not want"—comfort: "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

"I shall not want"—victory: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

"I shall not want"—gladness: "Thou anointest my head with oil."

"I shall not want"—satisfaction: "My cup runneth over."

"I shall not want"—anything in this life: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

"I shall not want"—anything in the life to come: "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

## ORDINATION OF REV. GEO. H. STEPHENS

**A**T the call of the North Bay Regular Baptist Church, our new mission in the "Gateway of the North", some thirty delegates from fifteen churches met in council last Monday, September 3, to consider the advisability of publicly recognizing the ordination of Pastor Geo. H. Stephens. Despite the distance of more than three hundred miles that separates Toronto from Sudbury, where the council was convened, a good company of delegates was present from Southern Ontario and Quebec. The following churches were represented: Courtland, Brownsburg, Dalesville, Essex, Fort William, Harriston, Lavigne, Minnow Lake, Sudbury, Mitchell Square, Sault Ste Marie, Tilbury, Jarvis Street, Toronto, Ironbridge, Millikan. Rev. Duncan Macgregor, Pastor of First Church of Sault Ste Marie was elected Moderator, Rev. George Hicks of Dalesville and Brownsburg, Quebec, was clerk.

Mr. Stephens gave a fine statement of his conversion, of his call to the ministry and of his doctrinal beliefs. He was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and brought up in a godly home where he memorized long passages of scripture which never departed from his mind. He was finally led to a personal acceptance of Christ by hearing the Gospel preached in a United Church, but left shortly afterwards because of his conviction born of the scripture on believers' baptism by immersion. Feeling the call to the ministry he attended Toronto Bible College during which time, he described himself as an "ecclesiastical tramp" wandering hither and yon from church to church and from preacher to preacher. During his last year as a student in that school he came, as it seemed to him then, by chance to Jarvis Street Church. He was attracted to the ministry of the pastor, Dr. Shields, and made the church his spiritual home. After four and a half years in the armed services he returned home to resume his studies with Toronto Baptist Seminary. Jarvis Street members will long remember his steadfast attendance at the prayer meetings and his faithful labours in the church during his student days.

Mr. Stephens statement of faith was one of the finest we have ever heard. It gave evidence not only of a keen mind that is well-trained and thoughtful, but of the deepest convictions of a man whose heart God has touched. In moving that the council proceed to ordination, Dr. Shields called particular attention to the fact that Mr. Stephen's had spoken spontaneously and without notes. Candidates on ordination occasions who slavishly follow carefully prepared manuscripts lay themselves open to the suspicion that sometimes deepens into a conviction, that they have plagiarized most of their doctrines from Strong or Hodge or some other great writer of the past.

A number of brethren took part in giving the usual charges to churches and candidates, extending the right hand of fellowship and leading in the ordination prayer. Those who thus took part included the following ministers: Messrs. W. S. Whitcombe, Geof. Adams, H. C. Slade and John R. Boyd. Dr. Shields preached before a crowded house on the text "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God" (Heb. 5:4). As the moderator remarked in calling on Dr. Shields, it was fitting that one who had been Mr. Stephen's pastor, and whom we all looked upon as our Pastor, should preach the ordination sermon. We shall not attempt

to summarize the message, suffice it to say that "the Pastor" never gets up to speak unless he exalts our glorious Saviour and leads us to rejoice in our great salvation. And when he preaches to preachers, he never fails to magnify their office and to send them away rejoicing in their great and glorious privileges.

Mr. Abraham of North Bay expressed the gratitude of the North Bay friends to their hosts and ours, the friends of the Sudbury Church for their bountiful care of our physical needs on this pilgrimage so far away from home. All who shared in the exercises of these services will pray with renewed interest for the pastor and people of this pioneer missionary work in the City of North Bay.—W.S.W.

## A MUCH APPRECIATED LETTER

**T**HE letter below needs no explanation. We remember Mr. Buckton very well, and heard from him a few months ago. We are wondering just one thing, and that is, how Brother Buckton managed to get away from us without becoming a Baptist. However, he is the next best thing: a warm, Evangelical Presbyterian pastor.

We appreciate the letter below greatly:

Dear Dr. Shields:

Your sermon on August 19th—"God's Care of the Extra Sparrow"—went right to my heart. It was a message of reassurance from God.

Three years ago I was in the midst of a terrible tornado. My wife and I lost almost everything; she was badly injured. The church and manse was totally destroyed.

The night before the big blow I read the following poem to my wife before we went to bed:

### THE LITTLE BLACK DOG

I wonder if Christ had a little black dog,  
All curly and woolly like mine;  
With two silky ears and a nose round and wet,  
And two eyes, brown and tender, that shine.

I'm sure if He had, that little black dog  
Knew right from the first He was God;  
That he needed no proof that Christ was divine,  
But just worshipped the ground that He trod.

I'm afraid that He hadn't because I have read  
How He prayed in the garden alone;  
For all of His friends and disciples had fled,—  
Even Peter, the one called a stone.

And, oh, I am sure that little black dog,  
With a heart so tender and warm,  
Would never have left Him to suffer alone,  
But creeping right under His arm,

Would have licked those dear fingers, in agony clasped;  
And counting all favours but loss,  
When they took Him away would have trotted behind,  
And followed Him quite to the Cross!

—Elizabeth Garner Reynolds.

The next morning at daybreak, without warning, the tornado struck. The huge old manse was a mass of kindling, I found myself under the debris in the basement on a pile of broken bricks . . . and creeping right under my arm my little black dog was licking the blood from my eyes! Instantly I knew Jesus was near. The poem of the night before had become real and I knew then that though I make my bed in hell, lo Thou art there.

Subsequently everything turned out wonderfully. A new church and manse was built and now it's all paid for. And, like Job, our latter end is better than the beginning.

So, dear friend, I feel for you in the loss of your doggie and I'm so glad you preached that sermon.

Your old usher

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS J. BUCKTON.

P.S. Use this letter in THE GOSPEL WITNESS if you care to.

## Cornerstone Laid for Sudbury Church

A SIMPLE but very impressive service was conducted last Sunday afternoon in the open air at Sudbury in connection with the laying of the corner stone for the new building being erected by the Berean Baptist Church. Actually the roof is on and much work inside has already been completed, but the corner stone is to be incorporated in the outer layer of stones that will cover the front wall. After considerable prayer and thought, the building committee of the church agreed upon some such wording for the inscription: "Erected 1951 to the glory of God to offer you Christ's free salvation". Mr. Boyd remarked that it was hoped that the very wording chosen would serve to preach the Gos-

pel to passersby, and, if need should ever arise in the future, to bear witness to future congregations of the sole purpose for which the building was erected.

In laying the stone, Mr. Boyd made use of a mason's mallet which had been similarly employed by Charles H. Spurgeon in the year 1864. This was provided by a faithful friend of the Sudbury cause, who lived there several years. Mrs. Grigg, the "church mother", was called upon to give her testimony and she told how fifteen years ago she was led to ask Mr. Boyd to come to Sudbury and start a Sunday school. Another stalwart who has stood with Mr. Boyd almost from the first, led in the prayer of dedication and offered one of the



Rev. John R. Boyd lays the cornerstone of the new Berean church building assisted by Mrs. Grigg, the "church mother" and Master Lloyd Tettaron, aged 4.

most beautiful and touching prayers that I have ever heard. A number of other workers also spoke including Mr. Etienne Huser, who has worked for three summers with Mr. Boyd in the French work, and the writer.

The building is already well advanced and gives promise of being just what Mr. Boyd has planned and hoped it would be: a thoroughly useful building, economically built yet solidly constructed, centrally located in such a place as to reach out as a missionary enterprise to every part of the great and growing city and its entire region roundabout.

We should like to add a word about the Sunday services. Mr. Boyd pressed the writer to assist him in the Sunday services, and surely if any man is worthy of help it is the hard worked and unsparing pastor of the Berean Church. It was a pleasure and a source of blessing to share again in the life of this busy, thriving hive of activity. Each time I visit the church there are more people there and that means more workers. They represent almost every nation of Europe and every denomination and church known to history, yet they have been welded by an inner divine harmony into a fine body of workers, each bearing his or her own part and pulling a fair share of the load. How eager they are to do the work of the Lord, to preach and to teach and to visit. And how gladly they listen to the preaching of the Word and how hilariously they give—there were four collections on Sunday, and several more on the following Monday. We rejoice in what God has done in Sudbury and earnestly pray and confidently hope that we shall yet see a still greater outpouring of His spirit upon His people.

—W.S.W.

### "AWAY WITH HIM, AWAY WITH HIM, CRUCIFY HIM!"

"Away with it, away with it, crucify Christianity!" If people do not say that, their actions speak thus, and in thousands upon thousands of ways they give up Christianity to ignominy. They still cry out, in their own way, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"

What then must we do away with, fools that you are? Would you do away with the sun from heaven, which gives us light and heat, and by which the fruit and the harvests ripen, by which the ocean is something else than an immense glacier, and the earth something else than an caravan in the desert, without which, in a word, everything would be dead?

Jesus is the sun of the world of spirits. Without him, there is nothing in human life but shadows and despair. There is no road to God, no knowledge of God, no solid foundation, no hope without Christ and the sole guide to life is chance, fantasy and the most contradictory impulses of the most opposed instincts. Whoever may wish to blot out the sun is the enemy of humankind.

—ALEXANDRE VINET

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