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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

When Jesus Sat Over Against the Treasury

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, December 10th, 1950

(Electrically Recorded)

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

"And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

"And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

"For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."—Mark 12:41-44.

Prayer Before the Sermon

O Lord, again we open with reverence Thy holy Book. Every word in it is there because Thou didst inspire men to write it. We pray that we may come with reverence to the study of Thy word this morning. May it speak to our hearts, and bring blessing to every one, for Thy Name's sake. Amen.

IN THE days of His flesh, when the Lord Jesus was here among men He was frequently found in the place of public worship. "As his custom was," we read, "he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day." He went into the synagogue where the Word was taught, and He went into the Temple, and the treasury was in the Temple. And on this occasion "Jesus sat over against the treasury," and He watched, He beheld the kind of service which the people rendered to God.

The Lord Jesus Is Always With Us

The Lord Jesus is always with us, and wherever two or three are gathered in His name He is always in the midst. If you could see Him walk down these aisles and take His place somewhere in this assembly, how attentive we should all be! Everybody's attention would be riveted upon the Lord Jesus.

When the King Came In

I remember, years ago, during the first anniversary of the outbreak of the first World war, in August, 1915, I went to St. Paul's Cathedral. That was before I had lost my reputation, and I was reckoned among "the dis-

tinguished Canadians," if you please, who were in London at the time. So I received a formal invitation from the Canadian authorities in London, to attend the service in St. Paul's Cathedral. They told me how I was to dress, with all the particulars. Traffic was stopped along the Strand, and down Fleet St. to St. Paul's Cathedral; so I took a taxi from my hotel, and when we got to the place where the traffic had been stopped a policeman held up his hand, and the taxi-man stopped. He asked for my credentials, and I showed him the Royal warrant for attending the service at St. Paul's Cathedral. He saluted, and passed me on. From that forward I drove through these assembled crowds to St. Paul's Cathedral without interference. The ushers were important people—I remember I was showed to my seat by a Major General of the British army, and I was seated among the ambassadors of the Great Powers, certainly not more than fifteen feet from the chair that was waiting for His Majesty and those accompanying him, that was, of course, King George V. People had gathered about the church from midnight the night before, and had been waiting all night in the hope of getting into the Cathedral, and those who could not get in, in the hope of seeing His Majesty as he drove in state. And so we sat there in the Cathedral—we were there for some time of course before the time for the service, and then suddenly a great hush fell upon that vast multitude of people, and we heard outside the cheers of hundreds of thousands of

people as the King approached. Presently, as he entered the Cathedral, everybody of course stood, and the King walked down the aisle and stepped into his place, with his mother, Queen Alexandra, and Queen Mary. He sat between the two of them. It was a great service, but what I wanted to remind you of was that everybody was interested in the presence of the King, and when he entered everybody rose in recognition of His Majesty's pre-eminence in that assembly.

A Greater King Is Always Present

Wherever the people of the Lord meet, a greater King than even King George V. comes to His people. When Handel's Messiah was first rendered, when the great choir broke into the Hallelujah Chorus the people stood instinctively. It was the first time, and from that forward it has been the practice always when the Hallelujah Chorus is sung for the congregation to rise. It was performed one time in the Royal Albert Hall in London, and Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, was present in the Royal Box. When the choir began to sing the Hallelujah Chorus of course the whole congregation rose, and all eyes were turned toward the Royal Box. But Queen Victoria did not rise; she kept her seat, until presently the choir reached that part of the Chorus which you all know—"King of Kings, and Lord of Lords," and when they burst into that Her Majesty arose and bowed her head, in recognition of the fact that there was present a greater Sovereign than she.

If we could always remember that when we come to the Lord's house, how reverent and how attentive we should be. "Jesus sat over against the treasury;" He observed how people served the Lord. Now He knows whether you are listening or not. I think if you could see the Lord Jesus even the little children would be quite silent. But He knows whether you are paying attention; He is here to watch. He was present in the classes this morning, and He knows how you attended to the teaching of the lesson. He knows too what preparation the teacher had made for the teaching of the lesson; He knows just the quality of service that was rendered, and He is here now to see how we serve Him. He "sat over against the treasury."

Christ Observed What People Gave

Particularly *He noted the gifts which the people brought*, and among the people there were some quite rich people, and they brought large gifts, and of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God. Now the Lord Jesus did not tell them that they were giving too much; you could not give too much to Him, no matter how much you should give. It would be impossible to give too large a gift to the Lord of Glory. So it is well if we have ability to give to the service of the Lord, that we should give, and give large gifts.

Many Have Abundance

Now what can we give? Well, there are some people who are rich in this respect—they have youth on their side, and many years which they could give to the service of the Lord. And what a blessing it is to see young men and young women, of their abundance, their buoyant spirit, their physical energy, their affection, all there is of them—rich in youth, with all that that means—when you see young men and women and boys and girls, of their abundance giving themselves without stint to the service of the Lord—I am sure the Lord Jesus loves to see that.

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People Have Varying Talents

And then there is more than youth. *Some people have talents; some people have more talents than others.* For instance there are some people who can sing, and there are some people who only think they can sing. But there are some people who can really sing. Well, if we can sing I am sure the Lord Jesus loves to hear us sing. If we are able to give that talent to Him, then let us give it. For instance He comes here of a Sunday morning and of a Sunday evening, and He sees and hears some of you sitting back in the seat, and He knows you ought to be in the choir. You could sing if you would, but you will not exert yourselves enough to go out to practise, and so you withhold that service, and that gift which God has given you, the gift of song, when you ought to be giving it to the Lord. When we do thus give of our abundance to Him I am sure that He notices it. He beheld how the people served Him. Shall we not say to Him this morning:

"Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages for Thee."

Then there are people who have other talents than that. *We are not all alike.* You boys and girls know that. Some are able to learn a little more readily than others; some get first class honours, and some get down to the bottom of the class. I heard of one little girl who told her mother that she was always near the top of her class; there were never more than two ahead of her. "Well," her mother said, "how many are there in your class?" She said, "Just three." Some of you have good memories. It is very easy for you to read, and to remember what you read. Well, if you have, *devote your memory* to the service of the Lord; give Him that talent. Study and remember His holy Word, store your mind, and in giving your service to the Lord you will find a reward in that which you treasure in your memory. Our

memories are a treasury, and the Lord sits over against the treasury to see what we put into it. What do you put into your memory? What do you try to remember? Do you try to remember the good things, or just the things that are not worth remembering? Whatever your talent may be, give it to the Lord. If you are rich in all these things, give the very best you can, and of your abundance cast into the offerings of the Lord.

Everyone Should Serve According to His Ability

Of course if you happen to be rich in this world's goods, the lesson applies there too. We ought to give not little gifts to the Lord if we can give big ones. Let us give the best we can, be it little or much. These rich people gave of their abundance, but *there was one poor widow*. Now you see the Lord knew all about her circumstances; He knew I am sure where she lived, and He knew what a hard time she had to get on in life. He knew that she hadn't much money, like these rich people, she had only a very little, and as she came to the treasury she cast in two mites. I am glad it is said "two mites," because you see if she had had only one, and she had given one, we might have said, "She had to give one or nothing; she couldn't have given less than one." But this woman had two mites, and she gave them both, and she kept nothing back. She cast in all her living. She must have been a woman of great faith I think. Some people who knew her circumstances might have seen her, and they might have said, "Don't you think you are very foolish, when you are so poor and so hard up, to cast in all you have, your two mites? You might, at least, have kept one back. You would have been justified in giving half that you had, wouldn't you? You would have had a very good excuse for keeping one back." I think she would have said, "That would not have expressed my devotion; I had to give all I had, I couldn't give any less to the Lord than everything I had." "But now you have given Him everything what are you going to live on, how are you going to get on?" I think she would have said, "Well the Lord will look after that; He knows whether I have put Him first, and have given Him all that I have. He knows what I have done."

That is exactly what the Lord Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," put Me first, put the interests of My kingdom first, put righteousness first; and these other things, that may be necessary, will be given to you, because the Lord knoweth that you have need of these things before you ask Him. You do not even have to ask for those things; put the Kingdom of God and His interests first."

We Must Not Withhold Our Mites

That of course applies too to *whatever little we have*, and I think the fault with some of us is that *if we cannot do a big thing we fail to do anything at all*. But that is wrong. If we cannot do much, let us do little, whatever the kind of service may be. You remember in the parable of the talents it was the man who only one talent that hid it in the earth and made no use of it, and it is very often the one-talented people, the people who haven't very much to give—who do not give, because they say, "It is so little, if I gave it it wouldn't do any good, and if I withhold it, it will not be missed." That isn't the point. God doesn't need your gifts; He doesn't need mine; He doesn't need anybody's gifts—He is Sovereignly independent. But He permits us to show our love for Him by engaging in some form of service. It may be

giving of our substance, but that is only a small part of it. There are other people who say, "If I were talented like some people, if I could sing like Mr. So-and-so, or Miss So-and-so, I would do it, but I haven't as good a voice as she has, or he has, and so I won't sing at all." But if you cannot sing, make a joyful noise unto the Lord, but give Him what you have, do the best you can.

A Man Who Taught Others to Sing

I knew a man, I know him now—He lives in the United States, and is a teacher of music. I heard a quartet sing under his direction, and I do not think I had ever heard anything better. It was superb, sublime. He could teach other people how to sing. He was a very consecrated man, and so he gave what he had to the Lord, and asked the Lord to make use of it. He learned how to teach other people to use their voices. I asked him, "Where did you get those four members of that quartet?" "Why," he said, "when I got hold of them first each of them said, 'It's no use, I cannot sing; I haven't a voice.' They all said that. How did you like it?" I said, "I do not think I ever heard anything better." "Well," he said, "they were all very modest about it and said, 'We cannot sing,' but I told them that if they would put themselves under my direction I thought I could develop their voices, and you heard the result this morning."

That was the principle of the widow and her two mites. Both the teacher and the members of that quartet did the best he or she could for the Lord, and the Lord blessed it. That is what we must do. Perhaps you say, "I cannot do much, I do not think I could teach a class; I do not know what I could do."

A Quiet Woman Who Knew How to Pray

Let me tell you a story: There was a woman in my congregation in London, an elderly woman, and I never heard her open her lips in public. She was one of the quiet, silent kind. One time I held some special evangelistic services, and one Thursday night there were two women, sisters, who professed conversion. After they had received Christ, and said they had the assurance of salvation, one of them said to me, "You have a woman here that I would like to meet; she certainly knows how to pray." I said, "I think we have a number, but to whom do you refer?" She said, "I do not know. I think perhaps I could recognize her if I saw her, but," she said, "we were here, both of us, Tuesday evening, and we were not interested at all, we just came. This elderly lady was sitting beside us, and when the service was over she turned to us and said, (these were young women, both married women, but young women) 'My dears, are you Christians?'" She said, "We smiled, and said, 'No, we are not Christians.' She said, 'I am sorry. I am going to tell the Lord about you, and ask Him not to allow you to close your eyes in sleep until you have received Christ.'" They said, "We thought that was a strange sort of greeting. We were not in the habit of attending your church, and we rather laughed at the idea." They lived together—one was a widow—and all night long that rang in their ears—"I am going to talk to the Lord about you, and ask Him to keep you awake until you receive Him." She said, "Neither of us closed our eyes all Tuesday night. We felt rather wretched on Wednesday, and decided we would not go to the meeting that night. We were awake all last night, so we will go to bed and have a good sleep. So we went to bed, but we didn't sleep." She said, "Literally, we haven't closed our eyes

since we were here Tuesday night." I said, "I think I know who that woman is." I looked her up and brought her over to them.

She Prayed For a Commercial Traveller

Well, that woman could not do much, but she could pray, and she did pray. There was a commercial traveller who used to come, with his wife, to church. His wife was a Christian, but he was not. They had little children and sometimes his wife stayed at home on Sunday evenings with the children, and he would be there alone. When he went home his way was right past the house in which this praying woman lived, and so they used to walk up together, and as I learned afterwards, she said to him one night, calling him by his first name, "How long are you going to reject Jesus Christ?" He told me afterwards that he treated it lightly, but she said, "I am going to take it to the Lord, and ask Him to deal with you, and not to let you have any rest until you receive Christ." I think it may have been the next Sunday, I am not quite sure of the date, when one of my men, a devoted personal worker, and a business man who employed a large number of people, called me about eleven o'clock. He said, "I have just been walking up and down with So-and-so," naming this commercial traveller. He said, "He is not far from the Kingdom. I have just left him at his house now; what do you think I ought to do?" I said, "I don't know. You had better talk to the Lord about it, and find out what He wants you to do, and if He wants you to go back and see him, go if He tells you to." I said, "If I can be of service, remember I never retire early any night, but especially Sunday night. I shall be up if you want to see me." Something past midnight my doorbell rang, and I opened it, and there stood these two men, this business man and the commercial traveller. I invited them in, and I said to the traveller, "Now Mr. So-and-so, you do not make calls on customers after midnight usually do you?" He said, "No, I do not." I said, "I rather suspect that you came here on business, didn't you?" He said, "I did." I said, "Suppose the three of us kneel down here then and attend to that business." So we did, and the man was converted, and it was then he told me about this woman who had said that she would not cease to pray for him, that the Lord might rob him of his rest and his sleep until he received Christ.

If We Cannot Do Much Let Us Do What We Can

It may be that we cannot do a great thing, but if we cannot do a great thing let us do a little thing, let us do what we can. If we have only two mites, let the Lord have both of them; if we have only a very small talent, devote that to His service; if we cannot engage in His service publicly, then let us pray privately, and have some part in His work. And remember, He is watching, watching every one of you to see what you do in this service this morning, whether you make any contribution to it or not, by a worshipful spirit, by a prayerful spirit. He sits over against the treasury, and He is ready to receive our gifts, our devotion, whatever we have.

The Lord Called His Disciples' Attention to the Widow

He noticed this widow putting in the two mites. And then it is interesting to me to observe that He called His disciples unto Him. His disciples did not notice it, they were not as observant as their Master. They were there, and He called them unto Him, as though He would say,

"Let me show you something." They hadn't seen it, but He had, so now He said, "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." I am sure that first of all that woman had given herself to the Lord. Do not let us run away with the idea that the Lord is a beggar and needs our money. The silver and the gold are His.

The Lord Does Not Need Our Money

I am almost angered when I read of the tricks some churches resort to to raise money for the Lord's work, as though the Lord needed money. The Lord doesn't need money. He uses it when we give it to Him, it is our privilege to have fellowship with Him, but we must not suppose that He is dependent on us. Paul propounded a divine principle when he said, "We seek not yours, but you." I have known rich people in churches who seemed to think that they were very important. I knew of a man some years ago—he didn't belong to this church, but he belonged to another church out of the city, and he came in to live in the city. He was a man who made a great deal of money, and was very energetic in the Lord's work for a while. He gave the church a piano—at least he put it in, and they thought he had given it; he gave freely of his money. Then he got a little out of sorts with the minister, and at a business meeting he sat with a little pocket check book in his hands. He had his legs crossed, and he sat flourishing this check book on his knee, as much as to say, "Now be careful, you know what this is." He tried to threaten me with this check book. When he came to Toronto he came to this church. Some people said, "Now go and see So-and-so." I remember Mr. Fraser was here at the time, and they told him. He came to me, and I said, "Do not go near him." I said, "The man doesn't live who can shake his check book in my face. Tell that man with my compliments if you like, that for the sake of the truth I have had to quarrel with millions. The Lord doesn't need his check book. If he wants to come forward and join this church like anybody else, he may come." Oh, how foolish it is to suppose that the Lord of Glory, Who owns everything, needs the little thing that we could do, or the little bit that we can give. He can work miracles if He wants to. I tell you that when any one of us ever thinks we are important and are needed by the Lord, we are just mistaken, that is all. No, no. The proper place for us all is, like this poor widow—"I haven't got much, but such as I have, give I Thee. Only two mites, but here it is, everything that I have, and I will trust the Lord to look after the rest." Try to sing, try to teach, try to speak—do the best you can, invest what God has given you in His service.

Only One Person in the Church Whom We Should Endeavour to Please

After all, dear friends, there is only one Person that you and I need to please. There is Somebody in this church that I frankly say I try to keep my eye on, the eye of my soul. I want to please Him, and if pleasing Him I can please you too, I shall be happy, but if pleasing Him I fail to please you, I shall not be too much perturbed.

I remember one Sunday, in the beginning of our controversy for the truth, there was a certain man, who was a rich man. I got home to lunch and he called me up—"Well Pastor," he said, "I thought I would like to

tell you that I did not like your sermon this morning." I said, "I did not expect you would. It was not preached in order that you might like it; it was preached for your instruction." He said, "I have often paid you compliments, and I thought it was only fair that I should tell you now that I did not like your sermon." "Well," I said, "when you have handed me a compliment I have not been very much elated about it; I have been grateful if I were able to please you, but the Lord did not allow me to be puffed up just because you said 'Well done.' I wasn't quite sure that you were a good judge anyhow, and now that you censure me I promise you that I will not lose a moment's sleep over the matter. I am Somebody's else's servant, sir, not yours, and you may just as well know it now as later." It wasn't very long before he left us. I expected him to leave.

One May Be Ensnared By His Affection

We used to have a man here, a lovely man. He was a great lawyer, and we used to walk home from church together. I lived on Bedford Road and he lived on Queen's Park, where St. Michael's College is now, and on Sundays my wife would take the car, and he and I would walk home. And also on Wednesday nights, for he was always there on Wednesday nights. He was a man of keen mind, and we used to have fine fellowship together. I looked forward to my walks with him, because we could discuss anything with profit. When I came to church on Sundays, I was so fond of that man, and had such respect for his judgment, that I found my eyes turning toward him, to see how he was taking it. Sometimes he would smile his approbation. Then one day the Lord checked me up, and I said, "This will never do." For years thereafter I used to come up that passageway to the platform, and I used to stop on the steps there to pray, and ask the Lord to help me keep my eyes off that man. I found he was becoming a snare to me; I found myself wanting to please him, and after I discerned that I preached to the other side of the church a good deal of the time, so I couldn't see him. The Apostle Paul said, "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." There is Someone else in the church to be pleased, for you to please. Do not try to please me, please Him, and if you please Him, and you do not please the pastor, it will be because there is something wrong with the pastor. I must try to please Him, and if I please Him and I do not please you, there will be something wrong with you. But if we please Him we shall be most likely to please spiritually minded people, because if we are all seeking to please Him, then we shall all be happy together in the fellowship of the Gospel.

Now that is what I ask you to remember—that the Lord is always present, and that He is always observing, and He is forming His own judgments. He knows the value of what service you render, and what service I may render. Why did He appreciate what this widow had done? Can you tell me? I think He measured the gift, of course, not by what she had given but by what she had left, or what she hadn't left. She gave everything. He said, "There is one who puts Me first: she has cast in all her living." Don't you think the Lord of life undertook to look after her when she had so trusted Him?

The Supreme Reason

Ah, but there was another reason. All the time He knew what He was going to do. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give

his life a ransom (instead of) many." That is what He came for. He came to give the last drop of His blood. I think that is why He commended Mary—"For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." I have an idea—I am not going to insist upon it—that Mary was the only one who really understood that Jesus was going to die. Somehow or another she had come to understand it, and she brought her ointment to anoint His body aforetime to the burial. Said the Lord Jesus, "Here is somebody who is doing just what I am going to do—give everything. She hath done what she could. I do not ask any more of anybody than that he or she should do their best. "She hath done what she could."

A Little Boy's Promise to His Widowed Mother

My dear friends, when we give penuriously of our service, or of our gifts, just a little and keep something back, I think the Lord Jesus must say, "That isn't the way I gave to you; that isn't the measure of my giving. I gave my all—what are you going to do?" One of those women, to whom I referred, that was converted that night, was the wife of a locomotive engineer on the Canadian National Railways. One late afternoon I heard that there had been a collision right in London, and her husband had been killed at the throttle. So I went to see his widow, this woman who had said, "You have a woman here who knows how to pray." But by that time she knew how to pray too, because she was a Christian. I went to see her, and she was sitting in a chair with a blank look on her face. I came in, and I took her hand, and she said, "Pastor," that was all. She hadn't said a word to anybody, she was just stunned. She could not believe it. I didn't know what to say, but I was sitting there with her when her little boy, about five or six years of age, came in. I learned afterwards that he had been accustomed to run errands for the neighbours, and he would get five cents or ten cents, and always he would run away to the store to buy ice cream or candy, like little boys would. But on this occasion his mother was sitting there in an arm-chair, with her hands upon the arms, and this little fellow came in. He came up beside her, took her hand and opened it, and put five cents in her hand. He said, "Mummy, that is for you. I will give you some more some time." Then the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the woman burst into tears. She put her arms about the little man who had come to take his father's place. "It is all I have Mummy, but I will give you some more some time."

When thus we come to the Lord Jesus, give Him our all, and tell Him that we are to be at His service for evermore, I am sure He approves, and you can have no greater reward than to have the consciousness that the Lord of Glory has blessed your offering, whatever it may be, of service, of money, or of anything else, and then He has said to you, "Well done, I am well pleased with you today."

Even a dog barks when his master is attacked: should not I raise my voice when the majesty of God is attacked.

—JOHN CALVIN

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER?

THE GREAT CONTENTION

Chapter Nineteen in the History of the Battle for the Bible Among
Baptists of Ontario and Quebec

By Dr. T. T. Shields

The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, February 13, 1921

"And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?"—I. Corinthians 8:11.

THE Christian attitude toward amusements is a subject of great importance. While belonging, in some respects, to the category of minor questions, to the "childish things" which we may be expected to "put away" as we attain to some degree of maturity in the Christian life: yet because, as Christians, we can never be unrelated to anything which affects in the slightest degree the spiritual welfare of the least of God's children, we cannot be either indifferent or superior to this matter.

It is a fact, moreover, which even the most liberally and charitably minded find themselves compelled to acknowledge, that vast numbers of professed Christians are now being carried away by an ever-growing love of pleasure, which, like a mighty tide, is sweeping over the world. It cannot be denied that many church members go oftener to the theatre than to church, and pay more for their amusements than for their religion; that there is reason to fear that many such are better versed in rules "according to Hoyle", than in the principles of the gospel according to Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John; and are bolder and more expert in dealing cards than in disseminating the Word of God. Some, too, there are who are most punctilious in their observance of religious decorum; who would be offended by colloquialism from the pulpit, or an inartistic performance by the choir; but who see no impropriety in the presence of professing Christians at the dance.

Nor is this condition of things peculiar to any one denomination, nor to any one country. It is a matter of general observation that vast multitudes of the professed disciples of Christ, by their addiction to these and other forms of amusement, openly advertise themselves to be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God".

Candid minds, I think, will acquit me of the charge of exaggeration, when I say that this has had, and now has a deadening and almost paralyzing effect upon the life of the churches. The public worship of the sanctuary, the preaching of the gospel, the study of Scripture, the exercise of prayer, the spiritual service of the Christian life, and all the pure spiritual joys flowing therefrom, are esteemed dull and uninteresting.

And I venture the assertion that this inordinate love of sensuous pleasure vitiates not only the public taste, but the taste of that part of the public which professes to be Christian. This has resulted in many deplorable reactions upon the life and activity of the churches. Standards have been lowered to suit the popular taste. People who feed on Charlie Chaplin several days a week have but little appetite for anything but Charlie Chaplin on Sunday. Standards may not always, however, be vul-

garized. They may only be reduced to fit the diminishing capacities of the people. The man who becomes addicted to the use of stimulants soon loses his appetite for wholesome food, and what food is forced upon him must be administered in tabloid form. And it seems to be the policy of "the god of this world" to vitiate the appetites of God's children for all healthy spiritual enjoyments, by treating them with stimulants.

Respecting the particular form of amusement provided in the moving picture theatres, it ought frankly to be said that, independently of the character of the pictures, the habitué of the "movies" is certain to find the habit mentally demoralizing. Even now there are many who refrain from reading certain books, preferring to await their production on the screen. Quite apart from the moral quality of the pictures, this aspect of the influence of the craze for the "movies" should give educators, and all interested in the cultivation of the mind, the most serious concern.

The great question, however, which faces us is this: What is the Christian Church to do? What is the truly Christian attitude toward these things? If people will have nothing but pleasure, is the Christian Church to provide it? If the multitudes insist upon being entertained, must those who serve in the church, in the pulpit and elsewhere, learn the entertainer's art? If young people refuse to engage in religious exercises designed to develop both the mind and the spirit, unless such exercises are diluted with some sort of entertaining or pleasurable element, is it the duty of the church to accommodate her ministry to the popular demand? Or is there higher and safer ground which we may take?

I.

LET US EXAMINE THE PRINCIPLE OF THE TEXT FOR OUR answer.

It appears to have been common in pagan Corinth, as in other places, to offer for sale in the market places, meat which was the residue of sacrifices which had been offered to idols in heathen temples. Some of the Corinthian believers seem to have made a practice of using such meat for food. They argued that as an idol was nothing in the world, meat which had been presented to the idol in worship was neither the better nor the worse for having been so used. Therefore they saw no reason why they, as Christians, should not eat it.

But there were others who viewed the matter differently. Lacking the clear intelligence of their more enlightened brethren, they appear to have felt that, since the meat had been used in idol-worship, the eating of

it would involve some recognition of the idol. Therefore when they saw their fellow-Christians eating such meat, notwithstanding their unenlightened consciences felt the practice involved a recognition of the idol, they claimed the liberty their fellow-Christians exercised, and in the doing of it were caused to stumble.

It is probable that this matter had been submitted to the Apostle Paul for judgment, as the first verse of this chapter seems to imply—"Now as touching things offered unto idols" — and this chapter is his answer. Many a pastor in our day is asked similar questions by members of his flock, who are sincerely desirous of knowing and doing the will of God in all things.

The apostle begins by telling them that they are right in the assumption that "an idol is nothing in the world," and that, therefore, meat is unaffected by the fact that it has been used in sacrifice. He tells them that in the eating of such meat in itself there is no wrong. He lays down the principle that *there is a spiritual knowledge which affords liberty*: "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." That is to say, when a man knows God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ, he knows there is no other god; and that God is a Spirit Who requires of His creatures a spiritual service; and that, therefore, we are not to judge ourselves nor others by outward forms, by the mere externals of life, such as eating and drinking. On the contrary, we know that it is spirit, and motive, and intention with which God is concerned. Or, as the same apostle says elsewhere (Rom. 14:17): "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The argument, therefore, is that knowing an idol to be nothing in the world, so far as the act itself was concerned, and by itself considered, a Christian, knowing this, might eat meat which had been used in idol-worship without offence either to God or to his own conscience.

On the other hand, the Corinthians are reminded there are some who lack the spiritual discernment to perceive that the nothingness of the idol leaves the sacrifice unpolluted: "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."

And herein another principle is enunciated to this effect: that while the believer's relationship to God is unaffected by his eating or refraining, and his own conscience, therefore, is also undefiled thereby, *there is still another relationship to be considered, and that is, the believer's relationship to his neighbour.*

And here let me pause to interject a more general observation: in respect to its own desires, the human mind is marvellously resourceful in discriminate judgments. When it suits us, sin and righteousness are defined in terms of our human relationships, and men go so far as to measure a man's fitness for the presence of God by the service he appears to have rendered to his fellows. But how swiftly we can swing to the other extreme: "As long as I have a clear conscience toward God, whose business is it what I eat or drink, or where I find my pleasures or my recreations?" Thus we choose to magnify the

one or the other of the tables of the law as comprehending our whole moral obligation, as the inclination of the moment suits us. One day we are sure that if our consciences be at peace with God, nothing else matters. The next day we are equally certain that so long as we busy ourselves with some particular bit of human service — usually something we rather like to do — it really does not matter whether we pray or otherwise recognize God or not.

The underlying principle of Paul's teaching, however, is this, that the gospel provides a way whereby "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"; and that the principles of the gospel applied to life and conduct will relate the believer in self-denying service to both God and his neighbour.

But now, to return to the specific matter more immediately before us. I have said the Corinthians are here reminded of their further obligation to their neighbour: "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge." "But," someone will object, "am I to be brought into bondage to another man's ignorance? Because he is so ignorantly superstitious as stupidly to suppose that the idol pollutes the meat, or that the idol and the sacrifice are inseparable, am I therefore to be deprived of the liberty which my clearer knowledge gives me?" So secure did they feel themselves to be in their spiritual knowledge, that they felt they could actually "sit at meat in the idols' temple" without violating their own consciences, knowing the idol to be nothing, and God to be all in all.

But our apostle lays down a further principle, *that while there is a liberty in knowledge, there is a still larger liberty in love*. "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse" — which means that, knowing our relationship to God is not affected by such matters, we may do as we like. Thus the truth of God makes us free. "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling block to them that are weak."

"But why should I allow the absurd prejudices of my ignorant brother to deprive me of legitimate enjoyment?" Because, my friend, you may cause your weaker brother to stumble if you insist on the exercise of your liberty. "But why should I be held responsible for his stumbling? If I may legitimately do without injury to myself, that which, to him, becomes an occasion of stumbling only and wholly because of his ignorance, why should not his stumbling be charged to his ignorance, and I be left to the enjoyment of my Christian liberty? Is there any sound reason why my freedom should be restricted, why I should be required continually to deny myself for fear of offending the ignorant, old-fashioned, and superstitious?"

In effect, you really ask, Why should I care if the ignorant and weak stumble?

There is a reason why you should care, and why you should deny yourself for the sake of the most benighted human being. Hear the tremendous answer! *He is a soul "for whom Christ died"*! This man Paul has but one answer for every question: it is always the Cross! Everything is referred to the Cross. He sees everything and everybody through the medium of the Cross. He measures and values everybody by the Cross. Nor is this a solitary note in his teaching. He wrote the same to the Romans: "Destroy not him with thy meat for

whom Christ died." Thus he measures and values all that is in this world and cries: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." And that is no more than our Lord Himself said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Thus our text, and the gospel generally, puts love before knowledge as the guiding principle of life, and as the foundation of the largest liberty. Knowledge afforded liberty conscientiously to eat meat: love gave liberty to refrain from eating for the sake of the interests of a soul for whom Christ died.

II.

LET US CONSIDER SOME MODERN ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS PRINCIPLE.

There are certain forms of amusement which are only evil. There are plays which cannot be defended before the bar of an enlightened conscience; there are uses of playing cards which lead inevitably to ruin; there are kinds of dances which are flagrantly immoral, and which no reputable person will attempt to justify. To these propositions no one in this audience will object. But with these things we have nothing to do in our present discussion. Every true Christian will instantly, and instinctively, recognize that the thing which is evil in itself should have no place in the Christian life. Participation in such amusements as I have just named, I feel sure every one here this morning will readily acknowledge, would be as unworthy of a professed Christian as lying or stealing.

The case before us is that of a matter which is not evil in itself, but which some uneducated people, here called "weak", think to be evil. It is with the Christian attitude toward these we are now concerned.

For the sake of argument let us assume that the theatre is an institution of great educational possibilities. Lest I be misunderstood, I give it as my personal conviction that the theatre, as an institution, is immoral; that its influence, on the whole, is not good but evil. But I speak of the theatre in this way as an institution. I shall not argue the point here, for that is beside my purpose this morning. There may be exceptions, and I am willing to assume the exception, to assume that there may be individual theatres whose management keeps their stage clean and pure and wholesome. And this involves the further assumption that there may be good plays. Doubtless many are not good; but we will assume that some are, and that their teaching is morally sound, and their influence morally uplifting — or at least not degrading.

We may assume further that the conscientious Christian — and who can be a Christian without being conscientious? — will exercise the utmost discrimination, and will go only to the best theatres, and the best plays, in which there can be nothing that is in any degree harmful.

And we may make the same assumption respecting the playing of cards. Surely no one will insist that there is any evil in the cards themselves; they are neither moral nor immoral: but unmoral. That, to the discerning, is self-evident. But I am aware of the strong prejudice conceived by many against the cards themselves, as though the pieces of pasteboard so marked were essen-

tially evil. Personally I know nothing of cards, but I suppose there is something peculiarly fascinating about the various games they are used to play. It is not difficult for me to imagine a game of cards to be a very pleasant diversion, nor indeed to believe that such a game may be mentally refreshing. I am not now speaking of the use of cards for gambling purposes. No one questions that cards are frequently put to evil uses; that even in private drawing-rooms men and women have been inspired by a simple, friendly game with a passion for gambling which has led to their ruin, and even to suicide. No one whose knowledge is at all extensive will deny that cards have been the latchkey to the penitentiary for many — to let them in, however, not to let them out. I say it is not to be wondered at that so many should look upon a pack of cards as having been printed in hell; in view of the terrible havoc they have wrought.

But it must surely be assumed that no true disciple of Christ would permit himself to have part in a game in which any of these things could find a place. He would play cards only in such a way as there could be "no harm" in it.

But what shall we say of the dance? I confess to having had no personal experience. There are those who insist that the modern dance in any and all its forms is always and only evil. I have no doubt it is often so. Indeed, I feel sure that certain dances can work only evil to those who engage in them. But I have no time to-day to discuss that aspect of the question. I would take ground, for the sake of argument at least, that many censors of the dance who are better informed and more experienced than I, would not take, I would assume that there may be perfectly innocent and harmless dances. For I am compelled to assume that no Christian would deliberately and persistently participate in any sort of dance associated with the probability of evil. I assume, therefore, (I say again, for the sake of argument, for the testimony of the more experienced makes me cautious), that under right auspices some pure-minded people may dance without injury to themselves.

Thus I have assumed that it is only with the good play, the innocent card game, the harmless dance — if such there may be — that the Christian will have anything to do.

Can you, however, be sure that others will be equally discriminating? It is admitted that these things are not always good, but sometimes decidedly evil. What if others fail to exercise your carefully discriminating judgment? Perhaps someone will say that their failure to do so is their own responsibility. Beyond question, to great multitudes, the theatre is the theatre, the dance is the dance, and cards are cards. They do not discriminate, and they will not. Some fail for want of capacity to discern between the good and the bad, and some from want of inclination. "But that," I have heard even professed Christians say, "is their concern and not mine."

But remember, *the text lays down a principle for the government of the relationship of a person of a very high degree of religious intelligence to one who is densely ignorant and superstitious.* You must draw the picture for yourself. At one end of the scale you have a religiously enlightened mind, plus education, culture, refinement, wealth; all these co-operating to discern between the precious and the vile. At the other end you have one steeped in prejudice, restricted in capacity, weak in character, and sheep-like in his imitative propensities. Between these two extremes there may be

many varying degrees of intelligence on the one hand or ignorance on the other. But I take the extremes. What principle can possibly bridge that gulf or span that difference of spiritual enlightenment and moral vigor? *Only the principle of the Cross!* And that is the principle by which all truly Christian conduct is determined, and on which all Christian character is founded: "For whom Christ died"!

Let me take the highest possible ground. I anticipate your argument as to your taste for literature and the drama, your love of music and the aesthetic, your passion for cultivated society and mental recreation, and your superiority to the degrading influences to which the less favored are subject. I will take your argument at par—"Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge"! Do you hear it? "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge." Let me thunder it in your ears: "*Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge!*" What then? "*Through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died?*" Oh, my brother, do you care? Do you care for the soul for whom Christ died? What? Does this question of amusements affect the business of soul-saving? Yes, it does. Most emphatically it does! The passion for pleasure, for society, for worldly amusements, has made barren churches as it has made childless homes! *And we shall never accomplish our God-given task, nor glorify Him in the salvation of men, until by the power of the Holy Spirit, we learn to relate ourselves to men everywhere as to souls for whom Christ died.*

III.

MAY I VENTURE NOW TO OFFER A WORD OF EXHORTATION AND APPLICATION?

For the sake of clearness, I repeat, I have nothing now to say about indulgence in that which is known to be sinful. Nor have I any word of denunciation to utter respecting that which is not evil in itself. It would be as wrong to belie your moral intelligence by assuming there is evil where there is none, as it would be to ignore the ignorant conscientiousness of another, who, where there is no evil, thinks there is.

The supreme question is, Can any one of us afford to be indifferent to the fate of one "for whom Christ died"? That is the highest and strongest appeal which even God can make. From eternity He has estimated everything by the Cross! Have we learned to estimate men by the Cross? The man is poor, and ignorant, and obscure, and unattractive, I know; but he is a soul "for whom Christ died". For his own sake he is worth much; and he is one for whom an inestimable price has been paid.

For Christ's sake we cannot afford to be indifferent toward such an one. Can you not remember the thrill of satisfaction you experienced when you first realized that Christ died for you? And in that hour you realized His own satisfaction in some measure. Dare any of us consent to permit anything which might defeat the purpose of the Cross in another's life? Shall we have done once for all with all worldly standards, and henceforth measure all men by the Cross?

Do you realize that *some may be perishing through your act of selfish indulgence?* "It is only an innocent pleasure," you say. But the moment your pleasure becomes an occasion of stumbling it ceases to be innocent: "When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."

Do you see *what estimate they put upon the weak*

brother, who selfishly insist upon doing their own pleasure irrespective of its influence upon others? They put their own passing pleasure before the salvation of the soul. That is the text's teaching. That is the consideration it forces upon us: "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" Is there a professed Christian here who will refuse to forego an evening at the theatre that another soul may have an eternity in glory? On one particular evening the weaker brother saw you there, and he found sanction for his course in yours. I know he is "weak", and "ignorant", and "prejudiced", and "narrow-minded", and all that is contemptible in the eyes of some: but for him *Christ died!* Can it be that any one of us will deliberately sacrifice the interests of a soul for whom Christ died, for a few hours' pleasure? Even to save a soul from death can we refuse to deny ourselves? I must be faithful. The spiritual requirements of the hour are insistent. The testimony of Scripture is most urgent: "Destroy not him with thy theatre-going, or with thy card-playing, or with thy dancing, or with the pursuit of any other kind of pleasure — destroy not him for whom Christ died"!

Does someone contend that such teaching is extravagant and impracticable? That it involves the erection of impossible standards? That such self-denial requires an unreasonable service? I remind you that the difference between the very greatest and the very humblest of earth is infinitesimal in comparison with the gracious and infinite stoop of the Lord of glory when He died for your sinful soul. And for one for whom He died will you do nothing? For one for whom He sacrificed everything, will you sacrifice nothing?

No, my standard is not impossible. It is the simple standard of the New Testament. To be a "living sacrifice", to "be not conformed to this world", is our "reasonable service". It is for this we are here. For this we have been sent. I should be unworthy of my office were I to preach anything less. I must apply the principle to myself; and I say frankly, that if there be any pleasure upon which my heart is so set that it is more to me than the interests of a soul for whom Christ died, I am unworthy of my office, and I ought immediately either to resign that pleasure, or resign my office. And I say the same to the office-bearers in this church. I say it to the deacons: If there be a deacon of this church who thinks more of an evening at the theatre, of the diversion of a game of cards, or of the pleasure of the dance, than of the interests of a soul for whom Christ died, he is unworthy of his office; and he ought immediately to resign either his pleasure or his office. And the same may be said of Sunday school teachers and officers, and also of every member of the church. The teaching of Scripture requires that every interest in life should be subordinated to the purpose of the Cross — which is, that they should be saved for whom Christ died. For any of us who call ourselves disciples of Christ, there is but one course compatible with love and loyalty to Christ, and that is to resolve that by His grace, and by the might of His Spirit in the inner man, we will put Him always and everywhere first; that we will live to realize the purpose of the Cross in our own lives, and in the lives of others; that we will lose our lives for Christ's sake that thus we may find them.

As I thus closed my meditation, a thought occurred to me—it may have been a day-dream—I said to myself: "What if some young man should rise in his pew before all the congregation and say, 'I have here and now re-

solved that henceforth at all costs, I will in all things put Christ first—if such a thing should occur, who knows how many would follow his example, and perhaps the revival we have longed and prayed for would come to-day." Shall we not all resolve to rededicate ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, and from this forward, put Him always first?

(To Be Continued)

TWO TELEGRAMS FROM FORT WORTH

March 22nd, 1953

The following message was received from Dr. Shields in Fort Worth, Texas.

HAVE HAD A DELIGHTFUL WEEK. THE WEATHER HAS BEEN GLORIOUS. QUITE AS WARM AND SUNNY AS FLORIDA. SPOKE HERE WEDNESDAY AND IN DALLAS THURSDAY WITH DR. McINTIRE. AM CONTINUING HERE OVER 29th. I AM WELL AND GREATLY ENJOYING FELLOWSHIP OF FIRST CHURCH PASTOR AND PEOPLE AND MR. FRASER. THIS IS A FITTING CLIMAX TO HOLIDAY. BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN MUCH BLESSING. ANTICIPATE WITH DELIGHT BEING HOME FOR APRIL 5th. LOVE TO EVERYBODY.

T. T. SHIELDS

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March 22nd, 1953

A telegram from Rev. Wm. Fraser, Fort Worth, reads as follows:

DR. SHIELDS PREACHED WITH HEAVEN'S ANOINTING TO CAPACITY CROWD LAST SUNDAY MORNING, AND TO ANOTHER GREAT AUDIENCE AT NIGHT. TWENTY RESPONDED TO INVITATION. BOTH MESSAGES BROADCAST. THE DOCTOR IS ACCLAIMED THE GREATEST LIVING PREACHER. THE WORTH HOTEL IS ONE OF THE FINEST IN THE SOUTHLAND. THE CHURCH ARE ENTERTAINING HIM AS THEIR GUEST IN BEAUTIFUL SUITE OF ROOMS. THE DOCTOR AND I ARE LIVING OVER AGAIN THOSE GREAT DAYS SPENT TOGETHER IN JARVIS ST. CHURCH. WEATHER IS PERFECT AND DOCTOR IS IN TIP TOP PHYSICAL CONDITION. HOMER RITCHIE, SUCCESSOR TO DR. NORRIS, JOINS ME IN WARMEST CHRISTIAN GREETINGS TO EVERYBODY.

WILLIAM FRASER

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER?

DR. P. W. PHILPOTT

in

JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 29

Subject:

"The Fact That Confirms Our Faith and Calms Our Fears"

FREEDOM FOR PRISONERS

A Sermon by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church,
Sunday Morning, March 15th, 1953

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8:32.

I AM going to begin this morning by asking the boys and girls a question. Suppose somebody were to come to you tomorrow and say, "I have something for you." You would say: "What is it? Give it to me." Suppose that person were to say, "This is what I have for you: I am going to make you free!" What would you answer them? I think you would say, "I don't need to be made free; I am not a slave, I am not behind prison bars, I do not owe anybody any money, I am not in debt. You do not need to make me free, I am free already." When the Lord Jesus made that glorious promise to the Jews that was just exactly what they said. They replied, "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" You see the Lord Jesus Christ was really offering something to these people that they didn't know they needed, and therefore they didn't want it.

Have you heard the story of the little girl who was lost at a great convention? Her mother and father looked for her all over, and couldn't see her any place. At last they sent a note up to the chairman and asked him to help find her. So the chairman announced, "If Mary Jones is lost, will she please come to the platform?" But no little girl appeared. Her mother and father went on searching and searching for her, and when, after a long time they found Mary, they said to her, "Mary, didn't you hear the chairman say that you were to go to the front?" "Yes," she said, "of course I did." They said, "Well, Mary, why didn't you go?" She said, "Because, he said, if Mary Jones were lost, and I wasn't lost. I thought it must have been some other Mary Jones."

That reminds me of the story of the Indian who was wandering around in the bush. A white man came upon him and asked, "Are you lost?" The Indian replied, "No, Indian not lost; wigwam lost!"

That is just the way a great many boys and girls think of what the Lord Jesus Christ said. And that is the way a great many grownups think of it. "I am not lost," they say. "I don't understand what the Bible means when it speaks of being lost and saved." I heard of one man who, when he was told that he was lost, said, "I'm not lost, I know my way home." When the Lord Jesus said to these people, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," they answered Him, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

Slavery

The first thing that this text tells us is that we are slaves. What a dreadful thing slavery is! The Old Testament forbade that inhuman institution by which men are bought and sold like beasts. I do not know of any other book in all the ancient world that outlawed slavery. Egypt was founded on it; Assyria, Babylonia, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greeks in their golden age, and the Romans when they conquered the world, based their whole civilization on slavery. But this holy Book condemned it. No Jew was to be deprived of his freedom unless, of his own free will, he chose to be a slave. That was the sole exception. The Jews were intensely proud

of their freedom. Other nations have been oppressed for generations, or in some cases even for centuries, and have then risen up and once more enjoyed their own independent national life. But these people of the Book have been oppressed, not for centuries, but for millennia, and still they long for their freedom. There never has been a people in all the history of the world like the Chosen Race.

The Jews who made this proud answer to Jesus conveniently forgot that they were not free, or perhaps they dared to think of their conquerors as mere temporary intruders. Every time they saw a Roman soldier they were reminded of the hated foreign occupation. The very banners that these odious pagans carried at the head of their legions were heathen deities, and it was an offence and a blasphemy for their feet to tread the sacred soil of the promised land. The children of Abraham were compelled to bow their necks under the Roman yoke and to pay taxes to the hated conqueror. And yet they said, "We have never been in bondage to any man." They forgot that. And they forgot another slavery, a slavery that was even worse than their national servitude. They were blind to it, they didn't realize it. The Lord Jesus turned on them and said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (the slave) of sin." Then He went on to prove to them, as we shall see, that they were the slaves of sin, held in its shackles.

Invisible Bonds

The prisoner's bonds are not always visible. Sometimes he is allowed a large measure of freedom, so that he can go and come, within certain limits, as he pleases. But still he is a slave. He has to obey when his master speaks; he has to do, not his own will, but the will of the one who owns him. You will remember how Harriet Beecher Stowe excited people to horror at the lamentable condition of the slaves in the Southern States almost three generations ago. One vivid episode is written indelibly in the memory of all who have read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Simon Legree had purchased that magnificent man, Uncle Tom, and commanded him to do a deed that the black man was too noble to perform. His white master, more of a monster than a man, stood back with a great bull whip and said, "Do it, do it you black rascal; I paid twelve hundred dollars for you. Do it." He hit him on the face with the whip, and then kicked him and knocked him down. "Now will you do it, you black rascal? I own you body and soul. Twelve hundred dollars I paid for you." When people read that story they were fighting mad, and they said what Abraham Lincoln said when he saw human beings, made in the image of God put up for sale on an auction block: "If I ever get the chance I will hit that thing, and I will hit it so hard that I will smash it." That is why Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote the story. Uncle Tom lay prostrate on the ground and then he rose up to his full height and faced his devilish master. He said, "Master, my body is yours, and I will do what you tell me to do, but my soul doesn't belong to you; it was bought by another One, who paid for it with His precious blood. I am His free man, and you cannot command my soul." Ah, that is the power that breaks the slave's chain. That is why slavery was abolished in the United States, and more than a generation earlier throughout the British Empire. It is still the only thing that will dissolve the prisoner's chain and loose the captive's bond.

These proud people did not know they were slaves. You have seen a dog on a leash going along the road

straining at his collar, perhaps just a young pup that hasn't enough sense to know that he will only succeed in getting his neck scorched. He strains and pulls, and the leash is always taut. He doesn't like it; he rebels against it. Then you see some old dog that has been so well fed that he hasn't enough ambition to strain at the leash, and so he goes trotting along, accommodating his pace to the slower step of his master, and the leash is never tightened. But the dog is still a captive. It doesn't know it, and perhaps doesn't care about it now, but it is still a captive. Tennyson wrote about the linnets born within a cage, that never knew the summer woods. Because it never knew what it was to sing in the treetops, and to fly whither it would in God's free sunshine, it did not mourn its captivity, but it was none the less a prisoner.

These people were prisoners, but they didn't know it. They said, "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man." You know what that means. They were heirs to all the promises of God in the Old Testament. In their veins flowed the blood of Abraham, the friend of God. To their race God had given all the glorious prerogatives: the priesthood, the promises, the oracles. He had set His name upon them, He had guided them down through the centuries of history, and He had promised them still greater things in the days to come. They said, "We be Abraham's seed." In more modern terminology they would have said: "We are in the true apostolic succession. We not only belong to the church, but our fathers belonged to it, our grandfathers belonged to it, and our great grandfathers belonged to it. We don't belong to some despised little sect like the Baptists; we belong to the Church."

The Offense of the Cross

The Saviour's glorious offer became an insult and an offense to such men, and they turned away from Him. They said, "We don't want freedom of that sort; we are already free." The Lord Jesus didn't argue with them. It is impossible to argue with people who say that. When you meet a man who is a down-and-out-sinner, and who knows it, you can soon point him to the Saviour of sinners. But it is difficult to deal with a respectable sinner who belongs to a church, no matter which one it is, and who has never been guilty of any flagrant crime. He may have been baptized, and his father before him, and his mother, and his grandfathers; they were all godly people. You cannot do much with such a man. The Lord Jesus knew how to treat persons of this sort. One young man who didn't know what he was saying dared to boast that he had observed the commandments: "Master all these have I kept from my youth up." If you and I had been there we would have stood back and said, "Now, tell us another one!" We would have argued with him. But the Lord Jesus didn't, He put him to the test. He looked on him and loved him, because He saw something in him, and He said to him, in effect, "All right, I will take you at your own word. Go and sell all that you have, and then come and follow me." The young man went away sorrowful. He was not willing to follow the Lord Jesus on those conditions because he loved his property and put earthly things first. He would not put the Lord Jesus first. That is the test. The Lord Jesus doesn't deal with external deeds; He doesn't judge us by the outward trappings of church membership, and sacraments, and all the rest of it: He goes right down into the depths of the human heart.

A Spiritual X-Ray

What a wonderful invention the X-ray machine is! It can reveal even what is inside the body. I went to a doctor once with a friend of mine. He put him behind a huge apparatus, then turned on the power, pulled down the blinds, and said, "Now do you see?" I could look right into my friend and see his heart beating. Afterwards I said to him, "I did not know if you had a heart before, but I have seen it now and I shall have to believe it." The Lord Jesus uses a spiritual X-ray that pierces even to the "dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

See what our Lord does here. He says to these people: "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you." That is a searching test. Do you say that you believe, that you are a church member, that you have kept the Ten Commandments? I will put you to the Saviour's test. Let me ask you, what place in your life and in your heart has the Word of God? You say, "I believe it's the Bible." You may know a lot about the Word of God but what place has it in your life? There is a picture of the truly blessed man given in the first Psalm: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." "Thy word", said the psalmist, "have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." Have you done that with God's Word?

When I was a youngster we always went to school every day without fail, and we always got there on time. That was no credit to us, for somebody else always saw to it that we did. If at times we had just a slight indisposition and didn't feel like going to school of a morning, there was one infallible test: "All right then, go upstairs and go to bed without your breakfast." "O well, I will eat my breakfast first." "Very well then, you must go to school." I am not much of a doctor, but I have found that if people do not eat there is usually something wrong with them. But when people can sit up and take nourishment, it is a pretty good indication of health. Let us apply that test spiritually. You say that you believe that you belong to a church. What about God's Word? Do you delight in it? Do you feast on it? Do you hide it in your heart? Or would the Master say of you: "My word hath no place in you."

What Are the Works of God?

They said, "Abraham was our father." "Ah," said the Lord Jesus, applying His X-ray to them again, "if Abraham were your father you would do the works of your father Abraham." What did Abraham do? He was called the friend of God; he delighted to walk with God. He "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." He didn't believe about God; he believed God and obeyed the Divine command. The Jews came to the Lord Jesus one day and said to Him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" The Master said to them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent." That is what God asks us to do first, that, and nothing else. People say, "O yes, but what about church membership? What about the Ten Commandments? What about baptism and the Lord's Supper?" The answer is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Put first things first: and then and only then comes baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church membership. By the presence and the power of the Saviour you may then ful-

fill the righteousness of the law. But the first thing is your relationship to the Lord Jesus. You see He is the test, He is the standard. It is not what is your relationship to a church, whether you are a member, or what do you think of so and so. Those things are not the standard, but Christ is. What do you think of Him? Do you love Him? Do you trust Him? Do you give Him the first place in your life? Does His Word abide in you? This is the test. "If God were your Father," He said, "ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God."

I have noticed sometimes that when people discover I am a minister, they are very polite, and very civil, but it seems as if they want to get me out of the way, or they want to get themselves out of my way as soon as possible. They are very much embarrassed. I wonder what they would be like if the Lord Jesus came where they are. Would He embarrass you if He came into your home? Would He embarrass you boys and girls if He were sitting in the seat behind you all day long? Would you be ashamed if the Lord Jesus could look down into your mind and your heart, and see what you are thinking now? But He can. "If God were your Father, ye would love me," said the Lord Jesus. Are you ill at ease in the presence of the Saviour, or do you love to hear His Word, to be where He is and to rejoice in His love for you?

I have met a great many people who profess to be Christians and who read the Bible, but they say, "I don't understand what it means when it speaks about being lost and saved; I don't see the necessity for an atonement. When the Bible says that I must be born again, it is an insult, and when it tells me that I am such a sinner that Christ must take my place and die on Calvary, that is an offence." They don't understand this Word, it is a foreign language to them. The Lord Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice." Ah, you can test yourself again. Do you hear His voice, or do you say, "I can't understand it." Jesus said, "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word." They were not "tuned to the station", they were constitutionally incapable of understanding the Lord's teaching. Their ways were not His ways, and their very failure to grasp what He would have taught them was itself an evidence of their opposition to Him. There are people in our day who approach the Lord Jesus with a slightly supercilious air, they are puzzled by His teaching and resent its application to themselves. He does not speak their language, and they do not understand His. Though they profess admiration for Him, yet they have neither part nor lot with Him.

Where Sin Leads

See what these self-righteous people ended up by doing. They took stones and sought to kill the Lord of Glory. Because His word had no place in them, because they did not love Him, at last their true nature showed itself, perhaps to their own surprise. They were ready to commit murder, to kill a man in cold blood. These were the people that at last nailed Him to the cross of Calvary; these were the men who pressed the crown of thorns upon His head. That is what sin always does at the end of the chapter.

I can still remember some of the things the principal of my public school used to say to us. One of them was this: "Boys, remember, if you tell one lie you will have to tell another one to get out of it. And then you will

have to tell another one to get out of that, and another one to get out of that, and so you will go on lying." That is what sin always does. It gets a chain on a man, and then pulls and tugs him where it will. That is why we try to tell you boys and girls that "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." We read this morning, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I was once in residence at a great university in the United States. Across the hall from my room were some men working on a doctor's degree in chemistry. In the room next to mine lived a professor of a great mining school, the greatest in the world, so he said. You would expect people of such high academic standing to be wise enough to keep themselves respectable and clean, wouldn't you? The night after their final examination, the chemistry students celebrated with some liquid refreshment in their room. I locked my door, but that didn't hinder one of them from trying to come in through the transom window. I have never seen a man so drunk in all my life. They were slaves to alcohol in spite of their high intellectual standing. My other neighbour often came into my room, and asked me into his room. He used to say, "I like to have you around; it gives me freedom from myself for a while." Once he confessed to me, "I am a slave to my own passions. I wish I could take red-hot pincers and tear part of my mind out, but I cannot." Thus spoke a professor who admitted he was a slave and that he couldn't throw off the shackles.

"Sit Down and Die!"

I read just a few minutes ago, before coming into this service, a story in *The War Cry*. It was about a Methodist college of long ago in which the rules stipulated that no student should be allowed to smoke. One of the men, who was older than the others, came into the principal's room and said, "Sir, you will have to relax the rules in my favour. I must have tobacco, I cannot do without it. I have tried and tried, but the craving is so strong I am dying for a smoke." The principal said, "You are dying for a smoke are you? Well then sit down there and die!" The student looked at him in amazement, he continued: "Now look here, if a grown-up man is such a weakling that he is actually dying for a smoke, it is time that he died. Only the Lord Jesus can help you." So they prayed, and the man committed himself to the Lord Jesus. Though he stayed there for a year, never again did he smoke or desire to smoke. Oftentimes the Lord Jesus liberates a believer slowly, but He liberates him. He does for him that which he cannot do for himself.

Our Saviour said, "The truth shall make you free." Now the truth isn't just a scientific proposition, or even a theological formula. The Lord says in this same context, "The Son shall make you free." You will recall Lord Bacon's famous sentence: "What is truth," asked jesting Pilate and would not stay for an answer." The Lord Jesus said, "I am the truth . . . No man cometh unto the Father but by me." It was when truth became incarnate and dwelt in human flesh that it became effective to liberate us. We are slaves, every one of us, and the end of that slavery is death. The Lord Jesus took upon Himself our nature, He was born under the law, born of a woman in order to redeem them that are under the law. He became sin for us, was made a curse for us, that He might free us from the awful load.

Therefore God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, for you are no more slaves, but sons. What a vast difference there is between a slave and a son. The slave goes crouching in fear before his master, loaded with chains. He labours under compulsion. But everything that the Father has is his, belongs to the son. He is the master, he has the nature of the Father within him, he is free.

The Coming of the Liberating Force

One of our boys who was a prisoner of war in Germany told us on his return how some of the prisoners of other nationalities who had been confined in the concentration camp for four, five, and in some cases for six years or more, crouched in their hopeless misery, even when the liberating forces arrived, and could not believe the good news. They had lost all hope, and the conquering soldiers had to drive their tanks and their jeeps into the camp with flags flying and lift them up like infants. It wasn't enough just to break down the hated barbed wire barriers, and cut off the high tension current that held them in, the poor prisoners had to be treated like babes, first released physically and then morally, from the long captivity.

That is exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ came to do. He came to preach release to the captives, just as God went with outstretched arm into Egypt and smote the Egyptians in His might; He opened a way through the Red Sea, fed the people with manna from on High, smote the rock and caused the water to pour out. So God in His Son releases the captive from his sin. He takes our guilt and puts it all away. He comes in His power and releases us from sin. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avails for me."

Just this word in closing. Our text marks a time of crisis. You can see as you read through the story how these disciples, under the teaching of the Master, and on the other hand, those who opposed Him, were working towards a time of decision. At this juncture our Lord recognized that it is now or never, that the die has been cast, that these men must now take their stand with Him or against Him. Either they will stand with Him some day in glory, as His redeemed ones, or they will nail Him to the cross of Calvary. Thus He puts them to the test: "If ye continue in my word . . . ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." You must either love the Lord Jesus or hate Him; you must either trust Him or nail Him to the cross. There is no other way, there is no half-way measure; it is either one or the other. I come back to my starting point, and in the Name of the Lord Jesus I offer you boys and girls, and you men and women, freedom. You are slaves, and the Lord Jesus came to die that your sins might be forgiven. He was raised again for your justification that the bonds might be broken, that you might be no longer slaves but sons.

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S
ANNUAL LETTER?

DEATHBED CHANGE IN WILL CHARGED TO FRIARS

Got \$5,000,000, Says Cardinal

By CAMILLE CIANFARRA

New York Times Service in Toronto Globe and Mail

Madrid, March 15.—In a letter made available today, Pedro Cardinal Segura y Saenz, archbishop of Seville, accused some members of the Roman Catholic order of the Capuchin friars minor in Madrid of having prevailed upon the Countess of Gavia, to draw a will bequeathing them her estate, appraised at about \$5,000,000.

The countess, who died in May of 1949, was the aunt of the present Duchess of Medina de Rioseco, who as one of the next of kin, is contesting the will.

The Dukes of Medina de Rioseco are grandes of Spain and their case is being followed with interest by the Spanish aristocracy because the final verdict must determine whether a "spiritual director"—or the Catholic institution to which he belongs—may inherit all or part of the property of the person to whom he has given moral and religious guidance.

The Duchess of Medina de Rioseco bases her claim on Article 752 of the Spanish Civil Code, which considers null and void any will made during the last illness of its author in favor of the priest who was the "confessor, or his relatives, church, institution, community and chapter."

The purpose of that article is to prevent confessors from using their influence to further what jurists here called "material instead of spiritual interests." These circles said that the law became a necessity after abuses had been brought to the attention of sovereigns in the past.

However, the law makes no mention of "spiritual directors." Therefore, the provincial head of the Capuchin order of Castille, Father Jose Maria Chana, spiritual director of the late countess, and, with a Father Cornelio, also of the Capuchin order, defendant in the case, maintained that Article 752 did not apply to him.

Pedro Martin de Hijas y Munoz, judge of the Madrid civil court who rendered the first verdict on the case March 11, 1952, upheld the thesis of the Capuchin order and ruled that the will in Father Chana's favor was valid because "no concrete proof was submitted that a Capuchin father had confessed the testatrix during her last illness."

He said that even though it was "sufficiently proved that usually a Capuchin accompanied the countess" wherever she went, and that "one of them administered the last sacraments" to her, at the time the countess made her last will on Sept. 10, 1948, she was in full possession of her mental faculties.

He added that Father Chana "never had the position of confessor of the countess."

In her final will the countess left her fortune in trust with the Capuchin Fathers "to build and repair churches of the Catholic religion."

It was brought out at the trial that in several previous wills, made from time to time after the Capuchins became her spiritual guardians, the countess had bequeathed increasingly larger sums to that religious order.

The Dukes of Medina de Rioseco have appealed the verdict and also submitted their case to the Vatican.

Cardinal Segura's letter, dated July 30, 1951, was submitted to the court by Miguel Rubira Carbonell, lawyer for the Dukes of Medina de Rioseco, as part of the evidence against the Capuchin order.

In it, Cardinal Segura said that he had originally been

spiritual director of the countess, that in 1937 she had told him that she wanted to leave all her fortune to a foundation to further religious activities, and that "the foundation will be under the exclusive administration of Your Eminence." He said that the countess had drawn a will in this sense.

He added that later she began to talk of her admiration for the Capuchin Fathers of the Province of Madrid and that a Capuchin Father accompanied her constantly.

He asserted that the Capuchins had "succeeded in becoming complete masters of her will" and that one day she told him she had decided to leave her fortune to the Capuchin Fathers.

AN OLD SPANISH CUSTOM

THE foregoing account of an acrimonious dispute over a \$5,000,000 legacy in Spain is but one illustration among many of the shady methods employed by priests and monks of the Roman Catholic Church. This particular instance has come to the attention of the public because the anxiety of the Spanish friars to lay hold of an immense private fortune betrayed them into crossing the path of a fiery Cardinal who was no less determined to retain the rich prize that he regarded as his own. This case raises a number of interesting points.

In the first place, we find a concrete example of the way in which the fabulous wealth of the Roman Catholic Church is acquired. At the dawn of the Reformation in Europe, the papacy was the largest landowner in the world. In addition to its special privileges and prerogatives as a virtual state within a state, Rome received the income from a large part of the soil. In some countries it was the proprietor of half the land, in others its ownership extended to two thirds of the soil. How much of Quebec it now owns has never been revealed and probably never will be until the books are opened in the day of judgment. It is a vicious thing that one organization should have the control of such a large part of the wealth of any land, but the methods employed by the avaricious agents of Rome rendered their virtual monopoly of the economic life of the nations even more odious.

Purgatory was the most effective weapon in the armoury of the priests with which they bludgeoned wealthy landowners into a generous mood on their death bed. Without a word of support from Scripture they plotted and charted the topography, temperature, and properties of this non-existent place with their eye upon the wealth of Europe. Will faithful Roman Catholics indignantly retort that we speak as a Protestant, without personal knowledge? In reply we have only to point to the text of the law of one of the most strongly Roman Catholic countries in the world, which expressly legislates on priests who exercise their religious offices to further their material interests. Laws of this sort are not enacted *in vacuo*, and least of all in Roman Catholic Spain. They are written to remedy actual abuses that have become so flagrant and so offensive as to cry aloud for redress. If further proof were required, it would be found in the letter of the Cardinal which was used in the Spanish court to support the charge preferred against friars of illegally influencing a dying person.

The cleverness of the Capuchins in evading the letter of the law is a greater testimony to their astuteness than to their zeal for religion pure and undefiled. Roman casuistry can be employed against a Cardinal as well as for him. The plea of the Capuchins is that their agent was not the confessor of the deceased woman but merely her "spiritual director"! It would be interesting to know the exact difference!

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

By DR. T. T. SHIELDS

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"The God of All Comfort"05

The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada

A further lesson which this nice legal question brings home is that in the church which is allegedly one and undivided, there are party jealousies and class warfares. The devotion of the Cardinal to his church is not so great that he can find adequate compensation for the loss of \$5,000,000 in the assurance that his personal loss will be the gain of a great and wealthy order. Despite his high ecclesiastical office he is greatly irritated by having such booty snatched from "his exclusive administration" by the subtle hands of the hooded members of an order that had "succeeded in becoming complete masters" of an aged woman who put her earthly fortune in the same hands into which she had entrusted her soul's eternal welfare. We ask earnest and unsuspecting Roman Catholics to consider the obvious fact that unscrupulous men who trick and cheat in earthly things are incapable of doing anything else in the unseen realm.

Cardinal Segura of Seville has been a bitter opponent of Spanish Protestants, and on more than one occasion his episcopal letters have been the signal for renewed outbreaks of violence and persecution against the helpless minority of inoffensive men and women whose only crime is that they dared read the Bible for themselves and worship God after the dictates of their own conscience. Perhaps this important court case which is now pending will so occupy the attention of His Eminence that he will have less time to harry the Protestants. He might well reflect that if the Capuchins had given the people an open Bible instead of their own vain imaginings with an eye to the material profit, there would be none of these present heartburnings.

We note that the case has already been taken to the Vatican. In such circumstances, what becomes of Spanish pride? Will a people that once ruled a large part of Europe and all the then-known West now humbly permit a case before their courts to be violently snatched from their jurisdiction to be decided upon by a superior judge in Italy? If so, the outcome of the case is already decided: The pope will dispose of the immense sum in litigation for the advantage of his own favourite, making sure that a goodly part, if not the lion's share, falls into his own private coffers in the Vatican.

One might be pardoned for wondering why the simple preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God is so harshly forbidden in a land riven by violent personal feuds and disturbed by the greed of its priests. Surely the salt of the free salvation in Christ is badly needed in such high ecclesiastical circles!—W.S.W.

A SUBSCRIBER'S APPRECIATION

Calgary, March 18, 1953

Dear Brother Shields:

May I take the pleasure of writing a few lines just to say that I have been a reader of THE GOSPEL WITNESS for many years, and I must say that I do enjoy its contents very much, and would miss it very much if it should happen that it were discontinued. That is the reason I am enclosing five dollars for my renewal, and the balance to go to the work of THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

Wishing you all joy in the Lord, and in your great work,

Sincerely yours,

HAVE YOU ANSWERED THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER?

SOME LETTERS FROM OUR SUBSCRIBERS

THE GOSPEL WITNESS
337 Jarvis St.
Toronto, Ont.

March 18, 1953

Dear Brethren:

I am herewith enclosing a Canadian postal money order for \$6.00 payable to THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

This remittance is to cover my 1953 renewal subscription to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, \$3.00; and an additional \$3.00 for a subscription to some needy pastor or missionary in the home field who may need the help of a good paper to bolster up his spirit, and to prime the preacher's pump at times, when he may be a little down in spirit, or his mind may be tired from overwork, or from the heavy burdens which a faithful worker in our Lord's vineyard may be carrying.

I much regret that I overlooked sending my remittance in February, which made it necessary for you to send me a second notice. I know all these things cost extra money.

Wishing the officers and workers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS Family our God's richest blessing for 1953,
Yours in the Master's Service,

London, March 2nd, 1953

Dr. F. T. Shields,
130 Gerrard St. E.
Toronto, Canada

Dear Dr. Shields:

I have so enjoyed the copies of THE GOSPEL WITNESS which I now receive from your editorial office that I am writing to express my gratitude to you for the definite stand you have taken against Modernism and for your clear and convincing marshalling of the facts. It is refreshing to encounter such definite and outspoken advocacy of the fundamentals of the Faith.

May much blessing continue to attend your ministry in the church, and through THE GOSPEL WITNESS itself.

With all kind regards and best wishes. The Lord be with you.

Yours very sincerely

THANK YOU "REGINA ANONYMOUS"

for another good gift of Thirty Dollars to our GOSPEL WITNESS Work. Your continued interest and financial help are deeply appreciated.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 17 Second Quarter Lesson 2 April 12, 1953

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

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Lesson Text: John 11:1-15, 41-44.

Golden Text: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—John 11:25.

I. The Message of Human Sorrow: verses 1-15.

Only to an affectionate friend would the message be sent "Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Christ is the Friend Who sticketh closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24); He sympa-

thizes with us as no other can, for He is all-loving and all-powerful. He loves the world of men with a love of pity, but He loves His own with a love of delight (v. 36; John 13:1). The members of this household in Bethany had enjoyed sweet fellowship with Christ (Luke 10:38-42), and in their affliction they turned to Him for help.

An outsider might interpret as indifference the delay of Christ in answering the call for help. But it was His very love for Mary, Martha and Lazarus which prompted Him to abide still in the place where He was. Christ allowed time to elapse in order that the glory of God might be more fully displayed by the miracle of resurrection, and that their faith might be strengthened (v. 15; 2 Pet. 3:9). The Lord's delays are not denials, and our disappointments are frequently His appointments.

A journey into Judaea suggested danger to the minds of the disciples; they feared for their Master. But He gently reminded them that in the night-time obstacles might hinder a man's progress, obstacles which in the day-time would not turn him aside. For Christ this was the day-time, the time of opportunity to carry out His work (John 9:4). We, too, must labour while it is day. The Jews had no power to prevent Christ from carrying out the Father's destined plan for Him.

Since Christ has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:10), the death of the Christian is as a sleep, "blessed sleep from which we never wake to weep" (1 Cor. 15:6, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13, 14). He has stripped death of its dreadful powers, and vanquished the hosts of darkness. "To be absent from the body" is now "to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

All believers, although they may die physically, are saved from spiritual death (Golden Text): In that sense also, living believers shall never see death; eternal life in Christ is their portion (John 5:24, 25). (Notice the parallelism in thought between verses 26, 27 and 1 Cor. 15:51-53). At the time of the Second Coming of Christ, the bodies of the believing dead will be raised, to be forever incorruptible, and the bodies of living believers will be changed to be forever immortal. All this is because Christ is Himself the Resurrection and the Life. Not merely did He bring resurrection and

life to men (John 6:39, 40), but in His own Person He is the Resurrection (Rev. 1:18) and the Life (John 5:25-29; 14:6; 17:3). Hope for the resurrection of the bodies of the believers must be henceforth associated with Him (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:20-22; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Pet. 1:3).

II. The Voice of Divine Power: verses 41-44.

The tomb of Lazarus would be in the form of a cave hollowed out from the rock, with a stone at the entrance (Matt. 27:60, 66).

God graciously asks men to be labourers together with Him (2 Cor. 6:1). He does for us what we cannot do for ourselves, but He expects us to do what we can. The voice of God alone can raise to life those who are spiritually dead, but He asks us to roll away the stones. Teachers, parents and Christian workers have the privilege of rolling away from the minds of the unsaved the stumbling-blocks of difficulty, ignorance and doubt, which prevent them from hearing the word of life.

The Saviour knew that His prayer had been heard, even before He made the formal request (Isa. 65:24; John 6:11). He bids His disciples pray thankfully and believingly (Phil. 4:6; 1 John 3:22; 5:14, 15).

The voice of Christ is a voice of power to-day, causing those who are dead in trespasses and sins to arise in newness of life (John 5:25, 28; Eph. 2:1). May He speak with quickening and reviving power to all our scholars (Psa. 119:25; 138:7; Hab. 3:2; Matt. 8:8)!

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- April 6—If a man die, shall he live again? Job 14.
 April 7—Patriarchal belief in resurrection Job 19:8-29.
 April 8—Awakening to life or to shame Dan. 12.
 April 9—Christ predicted resurrection John 5:21-35.
 April 10—Importance of Christ's Resurrection 1 Cor. 15:1-19.
 April 11—The Order of the Resurrection 1 Cor. 15:20-34.
 April 12—All believers will not die 1 Cor. 15:51-58.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Revive Thy work, O God! Low in the grave He lay.
 There is life for a look. Jesus knows thy sorrow. Rejoice,
 the Lord is King! The cross that He gave may be heavy.

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