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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

How An Oriental Prince Found a Wife

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, on a Sunday Evening

(Stenographically Reported)

"And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."—Genesis 24:49.

Prayer before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the mercy that permits us to assemble this evening for the hearing of Thy word. We have none of us deserved it at Thy hand; it is because Thy compassions fail not that we are not consumed. We would come boldly unto Thee in the name of Jesus Christ Who died at the place called Calvary. We thank Thee for the salvation that is in Him, for the great truth that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, that Thou hast made adequate provision for every poor sinner to come back to the Father's house.

Hear us in behalf of multitudes of people to-night who shall hear through Thy holy Word the call of Thy gospel to come from the far country back home again. We thank Thee for the promise that the Holy Spirit shall convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and we pray that this hour may be greatly used of the Lord in working conviction in human hearts, and in turning the steps of wayward souls toward the Father's house. We confess, O Lord, that we can do nothing of ourselves. The gift of life is in Thy hand; no one can give life but God Himself. We beseech Thee, O Lord, to grant that this evening the Holy Spirit may quicken dead souls, and bring them to life again.

Help us in our meditation; open our understandings to Thy Word. Bless particularly, we pray Thee, any who are on beds of pain, any who are deprived the privilege of public assembly in the house of God. May every sick-room and hospital and place of suffering become veritable Bethels. Bless, we pray Thee, the wayside hearer wherever he may be, the man who hears apparently by accident; may Thy arrows be sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies whereby the people fall under Thee, and may multitudes be brought to the Saviour to-night. We ask it in His name, Amen.

AND now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

This verse is a part of a very interesting and instructive chapter in the life of Abraham. "Abraham was old, and well stricken in age," and he greatly desired to see

his son Isaac married before he died. Marriages, apparently, were strangely made in that day. Abraham was afraid that Isaac might make a mistake, and he was particularly fearful that he might select a wife from among the people of the land in which he dwelt. And so he summoned Eliezer, the steward of his house, and commissioned him to go to far-off Mesopotamia, and from among his own people to select and bring back a woman who should become the wife of Isaac. And Eliezer, after enquiring further, particularly as to the limits of his responsibility — and in that I think he was very wise — undertook this delicate mission. He went to the far country, praying God to direct his steps, asking for certain evidences of divine direction which in our study will later appear. But he came at length to the family and into the presence of the woman whom he believed God had appointed to be the wife of his master's son. When he had made known his errand, and carefully delivered himself of his master's message, he said, "And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

The Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, tells us that the story of Isaac and Ishmael is an allegory; by which he does not mean that it was not true to historic fact; but he means that, being history, it had a special spiritual significance, and that the events of history were providentially ordered, even as the record of these events was written by divine inspiration. And I think we are justified in taking this Old Testament story to illustrate the methods of grace, and the principles which underlie the operation of the Holy Spirit in bringing out of darkness into light those who are

appointed to be members of that body which is described as the bride of the divine Bridegroom.

I shall speak this evening of *the servant's commission, the master's proposal, and the messenger's urgent appeal.*

I.

First of all, I ask you to examine with me, for it has illustrative value, THE COMMISSION WHICH ELIEZAR RECEIVED, that we may thereby learn something of the commission of those who are sent to preach the everlasting gospel.

To begin with, Elizer was informed that *it was his master's supreme desire and purpose that Isaac should have a wife.* Abraham had many interests. He was a man of affairs; he was a rich man; he passed as a prince among his fellows. But all the interests of life in Abraham's thought were subordinated to this one master purpose: "that the purpose of God according to election might stand"; he desired that Isaac, who was himself a child of promise, who had come to him as a gift of God—he desired to see Isaac married. And I venture to believe that it would help us in the interpretation, not only of history, but of the events of the present, whether we view the world at large, or only our own personal experience — it would help us, I say, if we could clearly understand the teaching of Scripture is that God's great master purpose in this dispensation of grace is to gather to Himself that company of people who shall become the bride of His Son. He is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.

We are quite justified in looking for the hand of God in the affairs of the nations. I do not doubt at all that God's hand is upon the statesmen of the world; that it is still true that "promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another"; "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" God is even now working out His purposes. All the events of our time, and of the times that have preceded us, and the events that shall yet succeed the history of our day—all these are part of God's great purpose that His Son shall have a bride. Do not make light of such a service as this, or the work, perhaps, of some little mission hall. God is supremely interested in all these things. It was for this the Saviour died. That was that which He planned from before the foundation of the world; and He is resolved, He is sovereignly determined, that His Son shall have His bride. That is His purpose to-day; and they, I believe, make the largest contribution to the world's weal who concern themselves, as Eliezer did, with the execution, so far as they may be permitted to be instrumental in its accomplishment, of the Lord's great purpose to bring sinners to Himself.

But the devil would turn us aside to a great many other matters. He seems to have engaged a very large part of the Christian church in some other ministry than that of bringing poor sinners to the feet of Christ. Anything and everything may command attention but the one great matter which is dear to the heart of God. You will find the churches of to-day led aside into all sorts of so-called "social" ministries instead of keeping to the main track. Our Lord Jesus was similarly tempted when He was upon earth. They wanted to turn Him

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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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aside to other activities. "One of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" He refused to interfere in that matter. Somebody who hears me may say, "Was He then unmindful of the ills from which men suffer? Was He indifferent to the conditions under which men live? Did He have no interest in social order, in social justice, in the correction of economic wrongs? And do you mean to say that the church is to go on independently of all these things; that it is not to concern itself with social and moral reform?" No, I do not say that. I do say that we are to do that indirectly: that is a by-product; it is not the main purpose.

Let me give you another illustration. Jesus Christ came to a place called Jericho, and He saw up in a sycamore tree a man who was little of stature, and who had to climb up to see Jesus as He passed by. "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." Some of them might have said, "The first thing the prophet of Nazareth ought to have done was to make this man put certain things right; to have established different laws, compelling men to live honestly. He is gone to be guest with a man who has been robbing people right and left, and He cares nothing at all about it." Ah, didn't He? When He came into the house of Zacchaeus, "Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." And so you see by coming first of all into the heart and home of Zacchaeus, He made him an honest man, made him liberal toward the poor, and made him just toward those whom he had wronged. And that is the programme of the gospel, to bring men

to Christ, to bring them into right relationship to God, to teach them "to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind"; and then they will, as a matter of course, love their neighbor as themselves. Therefore, the great purpose of God is that His Son should have a bride.

Observe, however, that *Eliezer was not charged with the responsibility of selecting a wife for somebody else*. And I think in that he is to be most heartily congratulated! I know there are some people who think they have made such an admirable success of the matter in their own case that they are thereby qualified to be the champion match-makers of their community. But wise people will prefer to let other people make their own choice. And I think, if you read the story at your leisure in the twenty-fourth chapter, you will find that Eliezer was a little bit anxious as to how far he was to be held responsible for the success of his mission. I say, he showed himself to be a very wise man in recognizing that there was a realm into which he could not safely venture; and before he would go forward he wanted it clearly understood that he was not charged with making the choice. "No," said Abraham, "the Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house. The Lord has made the choice, Eliezer. He has appointed a woman to be the wife of Isaac. You have not to bother about it. You will be simply His instrument in finding her. It is none of your business to make the selection."

I am glad that that limitation is placed upon the gospel minister, that I have not to choose who shall be the bride of my Lord; for I do not know where I should find anybody fit to be mated with Him. Where should I go to look for such an one? Where should I find one worthy to be the consort of the King of kings? But the Lord has relieved us of that responsibility, the choice is with Him. He said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

It would be a strange thing, would it not, if every man and woman were permitted to make his or her choice in this special matter, and that the Lord of glory should have a bride chosen for Him? I am not at all surprised that the King of glory should have said, "I will choose My-own bride", because He knows what sort of bride he wants. And I am very glad, I say, as I preach the gospel, that I preach with the conviction that the matter has been settled by Somebody else, and all I can do is to be the Lord's instrument in finding His own elect. Somebody who hears me over the air to-night says, "Why, sir, you are altogether out-of-date. You preach that antiquated and outworn doctrine of election. You do not believe that, do you?" Yes, I do; and I rejoice in it. That listener replies, "Well, I don't." Yes you do, but you do not know it. I wonder why you were not born in the heart of China? I wonder why your skin is white instead of yellow? Who determined to put your soul in a white tabernacle instead of a black one? Go back over your life's history and count the good things and the perfect gifts that have come into your life. Did you choose them? If you look back over your life, you will discover that you have been doing your very best at every turn to spoil it, to ruin it, and if there had not been a hand of grace upon you, you would have been ruined long ago. The very best things that have come to you have come, not by your choice, but by God's determining purpose.

If you recognize that, you will go down before Him in humble gratitude and praise Him for ever that you are what you are, that you are here in this place of worship to-night, or hearing the message over the air, even if you are not a Christian, and have still an opportunity to yield yourself to Christ. It may be argued that that limits the gospel. O no! It makes it just as wide as it can possibly be. I had a friend some years ago to whom some people of rather high doctrine said, "You know, Pastor, we can understand you sometimes when you preach; but at other times when you give your broad invitations to everybody, we do not understand it. Surely you know that when souls are saved they are saved by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that they are really chosen of God. And you ought to preach to them." "Well," he said, "I believe all that, but I do not know who they are. If you will just go around through the congregation and put a ticket on them, I will preach to them. But," he said, "we do not know them; and I give the broad invitations of the gospel and leave it to God to find those whom He would choose."

I am glad that the Lord has appointed somebody to be the bride of the Lord Jesus. I am glad, if I may reverently say so, that I am absolutely assured from the teaching of the Word that Jesus is not going to be left without a bride. I am rejoiced that the marriage of the Lamb will really come some day; and when the marriage of the Lamb is come, it will be said, "His wife hath made herself ready." There is no perhaps or peradventure about it. I would give up the preaching of the gospel at once if I had to make the selection; because I do not know whom I would select, or whom I could persuade to come.

Another point: *Eliezer was not charged with the responsibility of making the woman willing*. I think he is to be congratulated on that, too. I rather think there is a little history between the lines there, for when Abraham told him what he was to do he seemed to be filled with alarm, and the very first thing he said was, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing." What then? Sometimes it is difficult to get her to be willing, although some people say it is not so difficult as it is generally supposed to be! I do not know much about that; but I do know that in the spiritual realm it would be impossible to persuade sinners to be willing to come to Christ. Oh, the difficulty of it! Don't you see, Eliezer came to talk to this woman about a man whom she had never seen, a man living in the distance, and he had to lead her to fall in love with somebody upon whom her eyes had never rested.

And that difficulty inheres in the gospel. How shall we get sinners to fall in love with our Master? How shall we get them to yield themselves to Him? How shall we make them willing to become the bride of the Lord Jesus? Well, we have not to do it. Abraham said, "The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and the Lord will make her willing, Eliezer. Don't you worry about that. The Lord will open her understanding; the Lord will help her to see where her interest lies. Just do as the Lord directs you, and all will be well." I am glad of that element in the gospel: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Some of us can say, "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We have actually fallen in love with a Bridegroom Whom we have

never seen. He is yonder, and the day of the marriage will come. Some day He will be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory to take His bride unto Himself. Then, for the first time, upon the marriage occasion, we shall see Him as He is, and we shall love Him too.

But who taught us to love Him? It was only the Spirit of God Who could open our understanding, enlighten our minds, and help us to see that Jesus was "the chiefest among ten thousand" and the One altogether lovely. Haven't you read the Word? I quote it often, but let me put these two scriptures together: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." He has drawn down the blinds lest the image of Christ should appear to them, and they are blinded and do not know Him. Of us who believe it is said, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We have seen Him by faith, not with these bodily eyes, but we have seen Him, and "we know whom we have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day." Those of us who are Christians are getting ready for that happy marriage day that is certainly coming by and by.

The Spirit has power still to make people willing. When the Apostle Paul went to Corinth and spoke to the women who resorted to the place of prayer, it is said that "a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira which worshipped God, heard them; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." At His girdle swing the keys of all doors, and when He would get into a human heart He has the latchkey; He can quicken the understanding, and enlighten the mind, and engage the affections, and inspire us to fall in love with the absent Bridegroom. Oh, may He do it this evening!

There was one thing, however, for which Eliezer was responsible: *he was responsible for putting himself at the Lord's disposal and allowing himself to be led to Isaac's Rebekah.* And he said, "I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." Eliezer carefully watched and asked for divine direction. I hope everyone who hears me will read this twenty-fourth chapter to-night. Every word of it is full of spiritual suggestion. Eliezer went off at Abraham's direction, and he asked the Lord to lead him. He said, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master."

The women came out to the well, and he approached one of them and made his request. "And she said, Drink, my lord; and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also." As she was letting down her pitcher into

the well, the man stood there wondering, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. He said, "Lord, is it possible that I have been led step by step until I stand at last in the presence of the woman whom Thou hast appointed?" And later when he came into the house of Bethuel and told his story, told about how he prayed, this is what he said, "Before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came." There she was. Ah, you who would be soul-winners, let me commend to you that story if you want to be led to the people whom God will prepare and bring to the feet of Jesus Christ. Speak in your hearts, and He will lead you. And that is the measure of our responsibility, of my responsibility this evening. I trust that God, in His providence, has brought us together here in this place, and has selected those who should hear us from a distance; and that there are many to-night appointed to be members of the bride of Christ. The Holy Spirit is commissioned to take this word and to apply it to your hearts, to break your heart, and to bring you in humble penitence to the feet of the Lord Jesus.

II.

Now, then, WHAT WAS HIS PROPOSAL? First, *it was made to a particular person*, and to one of whom it is said that she "was very fair to look upon". I am not surprised that Eliezer should have gone looking for somebody who "was very fair to look upon", for he was much in love with his master. He must have said, "Where shall I find a woman who is fit to be his bride? I must look for the fairest of all the daughters of the land. And even she will scarcely be worthy to become the consort of so princely a soul as Isaac."

I delight in the contrasts as well as the comparisons of Scripture. I wonder where we should go to look for a bride for Christ? I remember speaking at a certain college in the United States a few years ago where there were between three and four hundred students. After the meeting I saw a number of the young men about, and one man said, "Do you see that man climbing the hill yonder? He is one of the most devoted disciples of Christ I have ever known. He is all on fire for the Lord. He seems to desire nothing in the world but to glorify Him. And do you know where he was converted?" I said, "No," "In Sing Sing prison; while he was serving a long term in prison he was saved." Who would ever have thought of going to Sing Sing prison to look for a bride for Christ? Why, we should have expected to find her among the cultured people of the land; among the people of social position, people of wealth, people of education, people of refinement.

Oh, what blunders we should make if we were left to make our choice! We should never think of finding a bride for Christ in prison, or among the outcasts of the land. Oh yes, going yonder to India, we should have said, "Where can the Lord find His bride in India? It will be among the Brahmans, among the high caste people. Nobody would ever think of finding a bride among the lowly." But that is what the Lord Jesus does. That is the wonder of it all. He sets His love, not upon the fair and the beautiful, but upon the ugliest of all. Those who say, touching the righteousness of the law, I am blameless; those who look in the mirror and say, How beautiful I am!—there is no chance of your being a bride of Christ. No! No! He does not look for the beautiful people: He looks for the people whom sin has

marred, who are disfigured and deformed and broken altogether—He comes to seek for them. But you say, "Is that the sort of bride He will have?" O no! Blessed be God, this Master of mine can make the ugliest beautiful; He makes us over again. He transforms us into His own image and likeness; and some day when the marriage occasion shall come, and while a myriad worlds attend in wonder when He brings His bride into the presence of His Father, He will "present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy"; we shall be "without blemish and without spot"; we shall be "holy and without blame before him in love." And so I come to you this evening to tell you that there is a chance for the worst of sinners, that there is a chance for the ugliest of mortals to become beautiful with the beauty of the Lord; and that He will make us at last fair, as He is fair.

Then she was invited to become *the bride of a very rich man*. Isn't that a fine story? If I could write a book, a real story-book, I think I would make the hero of the tale a poor man, and I think I would leave him moderately poor, and try to show that people could be happy though poor. But that is not how the story-tellers do it. No matter how poor the bride may be, she always marries a rich groom; for that reflects our desire, because that is what we should all like. When Eliezer came to this woman, he said, "And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. All the wealth of Abraham, who is the richest man in all the country, belongs to Isaac. He has made him his heir, and if you come to be the bride of my master's son, you will share in Isaac's wealth."

Oh, that is the gospel story. I do not invite you to be the bride of a poor bridegroom. O no! God hath appointed Him "heir of all things." I read of "the unsearchable riches of Christ", of "the exceeding riches of his grace". I read, also, of "many mansions". You young people, have you not dreamed a dream like that, of having a fine town house where you could live in the winter, and a country estate with servants to wait upon you, and surrounded with all the things which wealth can buy? Yes, that is the kind of life we should all like to live. Well, this Bridegroom has many mansions: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." What is our Lord doing just now? Getting ready for the wedding. He is away preparing a place for His bride. And when everything is in readiness, and His hour shall come, He will come back to receive her unto Himself.

Yet somebody goes around with a long face, and says, "I should like to be a Christian if it did not cost so much. But, you know, being a Christian means giving up everything." A young lady came to me, a reporter of one of the New York papers, and wanted to know my opinion about the question of worldly amusements—you know what they are, don't you? Well, she came to ask me all about it, and rather pitied me because I did not go to these things. But I said, "Do not waste your sympathy on me. I have some better occupation than that." "But," she said, "how do you live? how do you enjoy yourself? how in the world do you get on if you do not do these things?" What a conception of life that is! No: com-

ing to Christ means being married to a royal Bridegroom; it means becoming the consort of a King; it means having the wealth, not of this world, but of all worlds at the command of faith, and being heir with Him of all things. I invite you to a real religion, to accept the wealth of the universe as the gift of the royal Bridegroom. It is not sacrifice, it is not giving up — it is receiving, when we come to Christ.

There was, however, a *condition*. Eliezer said, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land. Maybe she will say, 'Well, it is all right. Your master may be a very fine man; and if he is all you say he is, I do not mind becoming his bride; but, of course, I could not think of leaving my mother. Never ask me to do that. I should have to live at home. I could not get along unless I could see mother every day. And I have some brothers and a father, and this country where I live is very attractive to me. You go back and tell your master if he wants me he will have to come to the same house and live with my mother and take directions from her as I do.' What about that? What do you think he would say? No, she did not say that. But Eliezer was afraid it would be so, and he said to Abraham, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land. What then? Have I any permission to meet her requirements, or shall I tell her that Isaac will live half way so that it will be as near to her house as to his, and they can visit back and forth?" "No," said he, "you tell her she must leave her family, for Isaac is worth everything; and that if she wants to be his bride, then she must come to live with him, and she must recognize him as her lord, as her husband, as the lover of her soul. Under no other conditions can she come. If the woman will not accept those terms, then you shall be clear from this my oath. I will absolve you of all responsibility."

"I should like to be a Christian," someone says, "but you do not expect me to go all the way with Him, do you? You don't expect me to turn my back upon the world, the flesh, and the devil, and divorce myself from my old life and live a new life with Him? You don't expect me to do that?" The terms of the gospel are just that: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." I call upon you to come to the Lord Jesus with an entire abandonment; and for everything you leave behind He will compensate you ten thousand fold. Rebekah may have left some things behind, but she received far more than she left. "And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah" as a love-token from his lord, as the earnest of the great wealth that was to be hers by and by. Nor do we have to wait for the marriage to begin to be rich: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." There are some luxuries in the Christian life which may be enjoyed here and now. He gives us jewels and ornaments, and He makes life worth while here, so that some of us feel if heaven were not any better than what we have here, we could get along very happily, if only we had the presence of the Lord.

And then she was admitted to a *very exalted position*. Did you ever hear of anybody marrying for position? I have; and I have been told of members of the family

who became united with some family of distinction. And you will get position if you come to the Lord Jesus. If you marry the Lord Jesus you will find that He will promote you to great honour. No; it is not all shame; it is not all dishonour. There is position.

There is also good society. I have heard of people marrying to get into society. I remember some years ago having in my study a beautiful plant, a lily, one of the most wonderful plants I have ever seen. It was just a cluster of blooms. One day some ladies called, and my wife brought them up to my study. They came in and sat down, and we had a very enjoyable visit. Incidentally, they walked over to the window to examine the plant, and they said that they had not seen anything like it. I said, "It is very gracious of you to make this call on the pastor. It is not very often that a company of people come to my study like this." "Oh," they said, "you must not be too proud of yourself. We did not come to see you to-day, we came to see the lily!" "Then," I said, "I shall have to be grateful to the lily for bringing me good company." You keep company with the Lily of the Valley and you will have all Heaven come to call on you.

The best part of the story is that *this bridegroom was such a wonderful man*—his name means "Laughter", because at his coming Sarah, his mother, laughed with joy. First of all, she laughed in derision at the promise of his coming, but later she laughed with joy at this gift of a son. And Isaac was one of the outstanding characters of history, a quiet, beautiful, home-loving character. He was a prince: I fancy there is a line there that is not told. Eliezer would say to her, "I have told you all about my master's wealth, I have told you about his position, and that he is a mighty prince; but I cannot tell you about him: you will have to see him yourself to know what he really is; he is one of the noblest men of all the land, and she is a fortunate woman who is chosen to become the wife of such a man."

The best part of the gospel story is just that. Salvation does not consist in the streets of gold. You know up there in His city the gold is where the Lord intended it to be, under our feet; just a cheap thing to walk on, that is where it ought to be; the gates are made of pearl, the walls are of jasper, and the mansions are very wonderful. Of that bridal home, we read, "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Salvation is not the many mansions, nor the streets of gold, nor the walls of jasper, nor the gates of pearl, nor even the robe of righteousness apart from Christ, nor all the ornaments of grace: salvation is Jesus Himself, Oh, that we may fall in love with Him! That is what the gospel offers—the Bridegroom of the soul.

But there is a line in this story I do not like: "In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah . . . there they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife." Thus death terminated this marriage. But, blessed be God, the marriage to which I invite you, death has no power to dissolve. We shall be one with Him for ever. "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Do you not want to be married? Do you not really want to be married? You who hear me, do you not want to come to this Saviour of Whom I speak?

III.

"And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left." Eliezer had told his story, and now he said, "I want a decision, please. I want to know what you are going to do about it. I do not know whether you are the woman appointed for my master's son or not. The only proof of it will be that you come, and then I shall know that the Lord hath appointed you. You have to deal with my master, you cannot evade the issue. You have to make some answer to the proposal I make." You cannot say "Yes" to God unless you mean it. He knows when you deal kindly with Him and return the love that He has lavished upon you. "If ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me."

And what did they say? The family got together, and they said, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord. Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go." But Eliezer said, "I want a decision now. If ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. But I must know about it because I have no time to waste. If you do not come, then I must turn to the right hand or to the left. I cannot wait ten days, I cannot wait ten hours. I will not eat until I perform my errand. It is an urgent business, and I must have an instant decision."

I cannot promise you that the Lord will renew His proposal ten days hence; I cannot promise you that He will offer you all the glories of His house ten hours hence; indeed, I have no authority to offer it to you any time but now. "Now" is the emphatic word of the text.

The Bible is the most commonsense book in the world. They said, at last, "All this is Rebekah's business." And when you are going to get married, it is your business and not somebody else's. You have to make the decision. And so they said, "We will call the damsel, and enquire of her about it. We will let her make the decision." So they brought Rebekah in, and Eliezer renewed his proposal, and they said unto her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" Oh, what a critical hour! What a critical moment! Eliezer waited, wondering still if the Lord had made his way prosperous. It is all over now, the proposal is before her, and Eliezer has done all that he needs to do. The servant has made his appeal; and now the family are all swept aside, and Rebekah stands there. Eliezer says, "What is your answer?" And she said, "I will go." I think in Eliezer's heart there was a great Hallelujah! He must have said, "This has been a good day. It is all done, and my master is to have a bride."

I wish I could perform a marriage ceremony this evening. I have married many people, and could I say to the Bridegroom of our souls, "Wilt Thou have this poor sinner to be Thine for ever, what would He answer? I think He would say, "Why did I wear this crown of thorns? Why these marks of the nails in my hands and feet? Do you not know that the way to my heart was opened by the soldier's spear? I died to pay her debts, to bring her out of prison. Oh yes, I am ready; I am willing any time; I am ready now." What will you say?

In performing a marriage ceremony, when we ask the question: "Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye

both shall live?" and he says, "I will," — is that marriage? No! "Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love him, comfort him, honour and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?" When she answers, "I will," before God, and in the eyes of the law, they are no more twain but one. Jesus has said, "I will." Will you answer?

Let us bow together in prayer, and may every heart respond to the Saviour's call: O Lord, Thou hast promised that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Hear us as we pray for this congregation and for the hundreds and hundreds of others — mayhap many thousands — who are listening. We believe Thou hast spoken to a multitude of people. Oh, may the sweet story of Jesus and His love break their hearts! May they respond to Him, and yield themselves wholly to Him. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I have seen many people come down this aisle to be married — and they were not ashamed. You come, and boldly confess your faith in Christ. If you have never confessed Christ, come now; even if the way is not clear, come if you desire to know Him. If He calls you, respond to His invitation. Some witnessed this ordinance to-night who have never been baptized, but you want to be; will you come? Perhaps there are others who desire to come into the fellowship of the church, come at once. And you Christians, pass on the invitation to those beside you.

Let us sing:

"Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?"

"I have long withstood His grace,
Long provoked Him to His face;
Would not hearken to His calls,
Grieved him by a thousand falls."

Notwithstanding, He calls you. Will you come as we sing it? Who will be the first to come this evening?

"Whence to me this waste of love?
Ask my Advocate above!
See the cause in Jesus' face
Now before the throne of grace."

Who will come? Let many come to Him this evening. Sing the fourth verse:

"There for me the Saviour stands,
Shows His wounds, and spreads His hands;
God is love, I know, I feel;
Jesus weeps, and loves me still."

Two have come, but are there not many more? I believe scores ought to yield to Him to-night. Come as we sing the next verse:

"If I rightly read Thy heart,
If Thou all compassion art,
Bow Thine ear, in mercy bow,
Pardon and accept me now!"

There are so many here whom I feel will come this evening that we dare not close our service at nine o'clock. There are many who are out of fellowship with any particular church in the city. Why do you not join with us if you stand for the things for which we stand? You who are backsliders, will you not come home to-night? Come as we sing.

"HIS NAME WAS MUCH SET BY"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
on a Sunday Evening.

(Stenographically Reported)

"David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by."—1 Samuel 18:30.

Prayer before the Sermon

O Lord our God, we bow in Thy holy presence desiring to feel that thou art near: Thou art always with us,—

"Asleep, awake, at home, abroad,
We are surrounded still with God."

Yea, Thou dost dwell in the hearts of Thy people, for we who sometimes were far off have been made nigh by the blood of Christ. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. We thank Thee that so many of us in Thy presence know something of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Thou hast especially promised to meet with those who gather in Thy name. We thank Thee that Thou hast verified that promise to us again and again. We rejoice to know that Thou art here to-night, and we come to worship Thee.

We remember who Thou art, the Holy One in Whose presence even the sinless angels veil their faces. How shall we come where Thou art? We have no wings with which to veil our faces or to cover our feet, but we hide beneath the wings of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat; and we rejoice to believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin, and that when we make mention of the blood and of the righteousness of Christ, Thou dost meet with us, Thou dost fulfil Thy covenant engagements with the people whom Thou hast chosen.

Therefore do we come acknowledging Thee, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: We would be numbered this evening, by Thy grace, among those who worship Thee in Thy glorious sanctuary, presenting our prayers and our praises through Him Who is the Antitype of the Temple, and the Fulfillment of all that therein was promised and predicted. We thank Thee that through Him we have access to one Father.

Look upon this congregation in its need this evening, we beseech Thee. We thank Thee that before Thee we are never lost in the crowd. We appear before Thee as individuals. Thou great Shepherd of the sheep, Thou dost call Thy sheep by name. One by one dost Thou call them, one by one dost Thou lead them. Help us that we may lay hold, each for himself or herself, upon the righteousness of our Lord Jesus, and claim the full value of His atoning sacrifice in our behalf, that we may enjoy the sense of being clean before Thee, that we may hear our Well-Beloved say, Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.

We thank Thee for the believer's completeness in Christ, for the fact that Thou hast covered us with His righteousness, that Thou hast clothed us with the garments of salvation, even adorning us with the ornaments of grace. We thank Thee that holy as Thou art we may lift up our heads and come to Thee with reverence, but with boldness, because Thou has bidden us to come.

Speak to every member of this congregation this evening out of Thy Word; enrich us every one. May those who are in need of comfort find it in Christ Jesus! May light shine into darkened hearts as He is lifted up! May we find in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and recognize that in Him there is hid all the fulness of the Godhead bodily! What more could we ask for each other than that we should have Christ in fuller measure, that we may know Him better, that we may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means we might attain unto the resurrection of the dead? This is our desire, this is our prayer.

So do Thou bless those who hear Thy Word. May the King's arrows be sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under Thee! May the arrow of conviction pierce the joints of many a harness, and cause men

to cry, I am wounded; for Thou dost wound that Thou mayest heal, and kill that Thou mayest make alive.

Lord, bless us every one. Let salvation come to this house. Give grace to men and women who should confess Christ. May this service contribute much to the glory of Christ, and to the salvation of men, Amen.

AS WE studied our lesson in the morning class today these particular words—though I have read them hundreds of times—leaped out at me, demanding attention. So I have selected them as a text this evening: "His name (David's name) was much set by", that is, was precious.

Not long before this the name of David was unknown in Israel. He was living obscurely, an unknown shepherd-lad, keeping his father's sheep in the wilderness. His name had never been public property. No one had ever looked to him for help in any emergency. He was esteemed the least of all the sons of an inconspicuous father; and when the seer, by divine direction, came to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his sons as successor to King Saul, thus surprising Jesse and all his household, Jesse summoned all his sons by turn with the exception of the shepherd-lad, whom he left out in the wilderness with the sheep. But he was later brought before Samuel, and the anointing oil was poured upon his head. Samuel declared that he had been selected of the Lord to become Israel's king. But apparently his anointing made very little impression either upon Jesse, upon his other sons, or upon the nation as a whole; for David returned to the wilderness, and to his shepherding. There he remained for some time, unthought of by the people, unrecognized as one of the potentially great in Israel.

Then there came a time when his father bade him leave the sheep and go up to the camp of Saul. A crisis had come in Israel's history. It was a time of great national peril, and the sons of Jesse had been called to the colours, and were enrolled in Saul's army. The whole nation trembled before the menace of a Philistine invasion. David went upon this occasion with a basket on his arm, merely to carry provisions to his brothers, and to see how they fared.

You are all familiar with the thrilling history which followed; of how David heard the vainglorious champion of Philistia throwing down the gauntlet to the men of Israel, challenging them to combat, saying, "Give me a man, that we may fight together." But there was no one to respond to the giant's challenge until, after enquiries, the name of David was proposed in the presence of the king. He was sent for, and this lad from the sheepfold declared he was ready to go forth and fight the enemy of his people. And he went!

I should impugn your intelligence were I to take time to recite the details of the fascinating story; let it be enough to say that David in due time returned with the head of Goliath in his hand. He came into the presence of Saul, having amazed his brothers, the whole army, and all Israel, by his marvellous exploit. Saul, addressing him, said, "Whose son art thou, thou young man?" He was still unknown, but he burst into public view, and earned the gratitude of a nation by the marvellous victory he achieved in the valley of Elah against Goliath of Gath.

Then he was brought into the presence of the king. Saul refused to let him return to his own house, seeming to love him at first, and to appreciate what he had done. But when the women of Israel sang, "Saul hath

slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," a spirit of jealousy entered into the soul of Saul, and he "eyed him", he hated him, he became his enemy.

But the David who had won the victory against Goliath proved his true greatness in the fact that he had learned somewhere the mastery of himself. It is again and again remarked that in difficult circumstances, in a situation that would have tried the metal of most men, "David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul". In the court of Saul, and in the presence of all the people, David behaved himself with consummate wisdom. He went in and out among them wisely, giving no occasion for criticism to the people, doing nothing that would tarnish his reputation, or that would diminish the glory he had earned by his great victory over the Philistine.

As the national life became more and more complicated, and the enemy beset them on every hand, when there was trouble within and trouble without, the people turned toward this young man, and "his name was much set by". The name of David became a charming name, a name that dispelled the people's fears, a name that inspired them with hope and new courage, that threw the experience of Israel into a new perspective, and shed a new light upon national and individual life, because suddenly God had laid help upon one that was mighty. He had exalted one, chosen from "among the people".

Surely you cannot hear that story without thinking of a greater Name than that, a Name that is above every name, that is "much set by". So with David for my illustration; and the historical background of this particular portion of Scripture to draw upon, I shall speak to you this evening of the glorious Name of great David's Greater Son, the Name that is "much set by". Oh, what a name it is!

I.

The name of David, even at this time, HAD A CERTAIN HISTORICAL CONTENT.

It was representative of something that was already done, of a victory unparalleled in magnitude that had already been achieved. Whenever the people heard the name of David they thought of one of the darkest hours in Israel's history when suddenly light arose in the darkness, and victory was snatched from what promised to be overwhelming defeat.

May I put it this way, *the name of David was representative of a national deliverance, the deliverance not of one but of many; for David's victory had been wrought for a whole nation, and as Jonathan later said to Saul, Israel". Look at that picture: a nation favoured above the Lord through David had wrought "salvation for all other nations, inspired with fear, terror-stricken by the challenge of the champion of Gath. Of all the brave men of Israel — and there were brave men among them, as later history proved — there was not one who dared accept the challenge of the Philistine giant. Wisely they refrained from doing so, for there was not a man in Israel who was a match for this man of measure in Gath. When Goliath said, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field", it was no vain boast. It was exactly what he would have done had any other man than the man who went to meet him attempted his conquest.*

That scene in Israel presents a picture of the history and prospect of the whole human race, for Goliath is but

typical and illustrative of a greater giant, even the "prince of the power of the air", "the god of this world", the "strong man armed", the victor over every human who had ever tried conclusions with him. They had all gone down before him, and the dismal and tragic story had been written in human history, although not yet written for the Book, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." There was no man who could stand against the power of evil, or hope to be victorious over the adversary of the human race. And just as Israel were threatened with subjection to the power of Philistia, so the whole race was brought under the domination of the evil one. Whatever name you select in history, you will always discover that he was wounded mortally by the "strong man armed"; and that no one was ever able to stand against that prince of the powers of darkness.

What a prospect for the race there would be today if you could eliminate the one Name that is "much set by" from human history, if you could blot out the record of the New Testament, and leave the world as it was before Jesus Christ came! You will not find on any page of history — the history, not of a particular nation, but of the whole human race—the record of a man who was able to stand up against the enemy of men. Until Jesus Christ came the whole race faced the same terrible possibility as threatened Israel in a political sense. The whole race faced morally and spiritually the same tragic prospect until Jesus was "born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king", when darkness everywhere prevailed.

What then did David accomplish? *He vanquished a public foe.* He fought, not his own battle, but the battle of all Israel. He was a representative man as he went forth with sling and stone against Goliath.

You are to estimate that battle, not by the skill of this shepherd-lad, not by the marvellous accuracy of his aim as he put the stone into the sling, and swinging it about his head, let it fly, to bring Goliath down. There was something more than that in the valley of Elah: there was the mighty power of God superintending. It was the directing, the unerring aim of the Captain of the Lord's hosts Who went forth against the spiritual powers that threatened the liberty and integrity of Israel on that occasion.

I do not think it is possible for us to over-emphasize the judicial aspect of the event which occurred at the place called Calvary. The death of Jesus Christ was the offering of a sacrifice once for all as an atonement for our sins. He was at once the High Priest, the Sacrifice, the Altar, and the Temple—all that the temple typified was realized in His own person as the Incarnate God. He did die in our room and stead. While I say we cannot over-estimate that aspect of the Cross, there is a possibility of our under-estimating another aspect of it. The preaching of Christ is said to be to the believer "both the wisdom of God, and the power of God":

"God, in the person of His Son,
Hath all His mightiest works outdone."

The Cross of Calvary was historically the supreme manifestation of the power of God. He called the worlds from naught; He called the universe into being by His almighty fiat; He said, "Let be", and it was so, for He

was God. He commands, and it is done. And that which He does is done forever. But a greater power was exerted in the redemption of men, and in providing for our regeneration, and for the creation of a new race, than in the original creation. There were qualities of Deity called into exercise in redemption that were not manifested in the first creation. Calvary, properly understood, with its corollary and complement, the resurrection, stands out as the mightiest manifestation of divine power the world has ever seen.

In the one instance all that men saw was the champion of Gath on the one side, with the hosts of Philistia behind him; and the courageous son of Jesse going forth unarmed, and without brasen panoply, but only a sling and stone, against this great champion of Philistia, and behind him the hosts of Israel. That was the material, the physical, aspect of it. But there were spiritual powers wrestling for the mastery there.

When you think of the trial of Jesus Christ, and His ultimate crucifixion, you think of Annas, of Caiaphas, of Judas, of Peter who denied Him, of the disciples who forsook Him, of the multitude who clamoured for His death, of Pilate who gave consent, and of the soldiers who nailed Him to the cross, and you say, "That is Calvary." No, it is not! Back of that there was a great battle fought. These were but physical elements in the conflict. In the chapter I read to you this evening we were told that Jesus Christ triumphed over principalities and powers; and at the place called Calvary, as at the valley of Elah, spiritual Philistia assembled her hosts, and championed by the prince of the power of the air, they set the battle in array against heaven's glorious Champion. All down through the ages that spiritual giant had been saying, "Give me a man, that we may fight together." And God gave him a man in the Man Christ Jesus! When He went forth all hell was mustered for His undoing. He saw what others did not see, and as He approached the cross, and the darkness gathered about Him, He said, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." And He promised that when the Spirit should come He would "convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" — not of judgment to come, as it is so often quoted or misquoted. In amplification of that threefold truth he said, "Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Goliath was not only judged at the cross—he was dealt a mortal blow at the cross. There was fulfilled the word that was written, "Thou shalt bruise his heel", but the great Representative, the second Adam, bruised his head. As the stone from David's sling lodged in the forehead of the vainglorious champion of Gath, so, by His death at the place called Calvary, and in His triumphant resurrection, our Lord Jesus dealt the deathblow to the powers of evil, and accomplished there a victory for the whole race as surely as David accomplished a victory for Israel. He triumphed over principalities and powers, and "made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it". To the spiritually instructed soul the name of Jesus Christ is significant of the greatest victory ever accomplished in this theatre of human history and experience. Jesus Christ is the name of the greatest of all heroes, and, blessed be God, to countless millions, here and yonder, His name is "much set by".

II.

He not only accomplished a victory thus for the race, making possible the freedom for the race, but HE MADE PRESENT VICTORY POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE. Israel were freed from the menace of Philistia. Somebody had accepted the giant's challenge; somebody had won a victory over him, and, in effecting that victory, he made victory possible for everyone. Oh, the power that is treasured up for the race—for the race—in the Name that is "much set by"! A new race is now possible, for the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, is the Lord from heaven:

"He, hell in hell laid low,
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
Bowed to the grave, destroyed its soul,
And Death, by dying, slew."

As you think of the historical content of the name of Jesus Christ, meditate upon it as representative of the mightiest exploit—may I reverently say it—that can at any time be credited to God Himself.

But we must not write our blessings in the past tense. There are men who have died in the hour of victory, and have left a legacy of worth to those who followed after them, but who have not lived to repeat their victory, or to perpetuate their power. Jesus Christ died, but He rose again! David went out to meet the giant, and he came back from the conflict with the head of his victim in his hand. Our Lord Jesus still lives. His name is not only representative of great accomplishments in the past, but His name is "much set by" as our only "hope for years to come". We do not write His achievements in the past tense only, for He still lives to carry on His glorious work.

Could we go into the details of this story I think we could find an illustration every step of the way: David's wisdom, his wise behaviour, his acceptance of the further challenge of Saul, his circumvention of all Saul's attempts to destroy him, his going out and returning again the victor over two hundred Philistines. Again and again he wrought victory for Israel, and with every victory his fame increased; with every proof of his power the confidence of the people was more firmly established, until by and by they began to feel that as long as David lived the kingdom was secure. "His name was much set by".

Individual victory was possible after national victory had been achieved. Every man was menaced by Goliath's threat. Every man was humiliated by not being able to accept his challenge. The greatest of all warriors in Saul's army must have bowed his head in shame as he acknowledged to himself, "I have not it in me to do battle with such a warrior as he." Every man was defeated in advance until David had laid the champion low. And in that victory every individual Israelite was potentially victorious. He had but to take full advantage of the opportunity afforded him, and live as a free man in Israel.

Everything we need, dear friends, is in Christ. Every battle that you can possibly have to face has already been fought for you. Every temptation that can possibly beset you has been met in the person of your great Substitute; every difficulty that can confront you, every hill you must climb, every mountain you must explore, every sea you must cross, every flood against which you must contend. He is the typical, representative, Man Who has won a victory for us. I bid such of you as

know Him to take advantage of the storehouse of power available to every believer. Forgiveness of sin is fundamental to all else, but being thus forgiven, you may live a life of liberty and perpetual victory in Christ Jesus. It is possible for the believer to say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a repository of power, there is a treasury of wisdom, there is a reservoir of grace, in the person of our Lord, upon which all believers may draw for all of time and all of eternity, and never exhaust the infinitude of His wealth. Everything is in Christ for you. His name is representative of everything you can possibly need, and is "much set by". "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." Is He not? Why do you not say, Amen (Chorus of "Amen!") Why do you not say, Hallelujah? (Chorus of "Hallelujah!") Some of you need dynamite to wake you up.

But if the name of Jesus Christ be anything like what I have tried to describe — His character, His person, His works, His programme, His purpose, His promise — the prospect for the future transcends the utmost possibility of expression or definition by human speech. Imagination's utmost stretch in wonder dies away when we contemplate the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a name His is! How much we ought to "set by" it!

"Jesus, the name high over all,
In earth, on sea, or sky
Angels and men before Him fall,
And devils fear and fly."

The devils knew His name, did they not? — "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Well did the evil spirits know that judgment was past upon the domain of evil, and that in due time Christ would take to Himself His great power and reign.

III.

I should like to speak to you about the name of David as an example to all Israel. I feel I must always be cautious when I speak of the Lord Jesus as an Example. He is that. But there are so many who content themselves with citing the name of Jesus as the name of the great Exemplar, and forget that He was first the great Sacrifice and Priest. Unless He first of all accomplishes a victory for us, and releases a power whereby it is possible to live unto God, it is useless to have an example. But He did all that; even as David slew the giant and set an example to all Israel, so did Jesus Christ. I commend to you the story of David as one of the richest passages in all history. If you would see Christ, study David. The Messianic Psalms, prophetically looking toward the future, are nearly all historically based in the experiences of David the son of Jesse. So closely did his life parallel that of the greater David that his history is really prophetic of the great Champion Who was to come.

But what an example he was to Israel! And what an example the Lord Jesus is to us! I hear people talking about the "meek and lowly Jesus". They speak of "Jesus": they do not say, the Lord Jesus Christ. They speak of "Jesus" as though He were effeminate, as though He never uttered anything but soft words. A certain paper paid me a compliment recently, but as most people compliment us here in Jarvis Street. They have a way of stroking one, as I heard my father say, with a sponge seeing to it that it has a needle in it. This

paper which I appreciate very much said, "Even Dr. Shields' sympathizers say he is too severe."

It is not possible to be too severe with that which God estimates as deserving of hell itself. It is not possible to be too severe with sin and error. It is impossible, by human speech, too severely to condemn the present-day apostasy on the part of ministers and churches when and where they turn away from the only oracle, the Word of God. I make no apology for my severity. Jesus Christ was the most severe of all. He said to the religious leaders and teachers of His day, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" That is "severe", is it not? That fell from the gracious lips of Jesus Christ. When He went to the cross we behold in that, not only the goodness, but the severity of God. When Peter and John went before the council, they beheld in those disciples, not the "niceness", nor—it is not in the dictionary, but I will use the phrase, the mushiness—of Peter and John: "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John . . . they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." How I loathe this "dearly beloved brother" stuff! How I abominate honey-eyed words that have in them the sting of the bee!

Never did the world see a bolder or more courageous spirit than that which was exemplified in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. If we would follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus we must meet many a Philistine, we must do battle with the powers of evil. We need courage and boldness and true heroism in the cause of Christ. These were exemplified in David, and in the person of Christ.

That does not mean that you are to go around with a chip on your shoulder. You do not need to! You will get in fights enough, if you are faithful, without that. David behaved himself wisely. Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"—always remembering that it is not possible to live peaceably with evil, with that which is contrary to God.

We hear much about the "four absolutes". I saw an article in a paper the other day, and I was amazed that a man of the intelligence of that writer should have been guilty of such a slip. He said a certain movement has emphasized the absolute in honesty and purity more than in unselfishness and love. You cannot emphasize the absolute. The absolute needs no emphasis. If there be absolute honesty anywhere you cannot add strength to that, or to absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, or absolute love.

I would direct your attention away from examples of that sort, to the one and only Person Who, in all the world's history, has exemplified these four and many other qualities in the absolute. All virtues are in Christ in the absolute degree, the utmost, the infinite. Follow after Him. Make Him your Example. David is a fine study for young men, but a still better study is the Lord Jesus Christ, always remembering that we must first see Him as our Champion, after that as our Leader and Example.

IV.

This word and I must conclude. David's name was "much set by" because IN HIS NAME RESIDED ALL ISRAEL'S HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. Saul was declining in influence and power every day. The people were looking for someone upon whom they could depend, to whom they could flee from the terror of any other enemy that might

confront them; and as they saw David ever manifest more clearly his wisdom, his matchless heroism, his kingly qualities, I think the sagacious and spiritually enlightened among them said, "Thank God for David. While he lives there is hope for the future." Therefore "His name was much set by".

I should be the last to diminish the honour conferred upon men who have worthily won the esteem of their fellows. I am not among the number who lament the past, and who say that the nations have no great statesmen to-day. We must learn to see things perspective, and I venture the opinion that no statesman of any age of the world's history did ever face greater difficulties than confront the statesmanship of the world to-day. It is not altogether to a man's dishonour if he fails in accomplishing the deliverance of his people from such circumstances as now wrap us about. There are great men to-day. There are great names.

And there is a name! Oh, there is a name! The Name that is above every name. My Socialistic friends, you are going to start new political parties? You are going to evolve new economic theories, by the application of which you will establish new economic systems? You are going to bring in a new paradise on earth? Do not believe it! You still have human nature to reckon with. You may go off the bold standard — or on it, substitute silver for gold, or paper for silver; but there is one determining element in all human experience, whether considered narrowly as the experience of an individual; or broadly; of a nation; or still more broadly, internationally, the determining factor in all these matters is human nature. "Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" No President of the United States, no Premier of Britain, no President of France (they change so often I cannot keep track of them), no Hitler—there is not one of them who has power to alter one whit that factor which has brought death into the world, and all our woes. Nobody can help us but One Whose name is representative of a power that can make human nature over again.

I remember strolling in Hyde Park, London, one Saturday afternoon. I like to observe the British safety valves in operation, blowing off their steam. I stopped at one place where a Socialist was preaching blue ruin — it was not blue, it was indigo — to all the world, because of the defective economic systems. You know it all, and I will not weary you by rehearsing it. He propounded his own theories, how all these troubles could be corrected, how everyone was going to have a good house to live in, plenty of food and clothes, how paradise was to be established on earth.

As he was at the height of his argument a little lady on the outskirts of the crowd said, "Mr. Speaker, would you allow me to say a word?" For the first time that afternoon he commanded my respect because he showed he was a man of experience! He replied, as I suppose every man ought to reply in such circumstances, "Certainly." What else could he say? He stepped down from his rostrum and invited the lady to stand in his place. She spoke something after this fashion: "I agree with my friend in all that he has said in describing the present conditions of human life. It is deplorable to the last degree. I do deplore it. I wish that something could be done to better the conditions of living, and to elevate both the individual and the masses. I agree with him in much that he has said about the defects of our present system.

I recognize it has many faults, and even its defenders will admit that it is far from perfection. I agree with my friend further in the expression of the hope that we may have better homes, better cities; but I go farther than he, and say that I look for a time when we shall have ideal conditions of life. I dissent from my friend at one point, and that is that he is entirely in error in his expectation as to the source of these reforms. There is a Book in which is a picture of a beautiful city where the streets are paved with gold, where the gates are of pearl, and the walls of jasper. Of those who live in that ideal city it is said, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." For that city I look. The one failure of my friend's argument is this: he forgot to tell us that that comes down from God out of heaven."

"Ah, yes! That is the Source whence the power comes to better our earthly conditions, and for that the name of Jesus Christ stands, a name that is "much set by".

I think I can say I love our German friends, notwithstanding they were so recently our enemies, and the French people, and even the Russians. I believe in a kind of internationalism. Not the internationalism of Sovietism, but a spiritual internationality, and a world metropolis where all tribes and tongues and peoples may gather together, and the kings of earth may bring their glory and honour into it; but when they have done so, they will lay it all at the feet of Him Whose name is "much set by".

Jesus Christ is the Hope of the world—of the world now, of all relationships of life. He is the Hope of the world for the future. "The kingdoms of this world (shall) become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." And only when, and in the measure in which, He is exalted, and His name is "much set by", shall any of us, as individuals or as nations, realize the goal toward which our hearts are set. Still my Lord Jesus is the Desire of all nations, the One in Whom all good consists.

"Have you trusted Him? Have you come to Him? Is His name to you a name which is "much set by"? Is His the name of the One Who paid your debts, Who set you free, Who pardoned all your sins, Who washed your sins away, Who made you a member of the royal family. Who made you an heir of glory, a joint-heir with Himself? Is that what He is? Then praise the Lord for it. If you have not trusted Him, my friends, trust Him tonight. You business men who would not be seen coming to Jarvis Street Church, do you know anything about this Name that is "much set by"? It is far greater than any other name you can find. Will you trust Him too? And will you be bold enough to say in your place of business, in your professional sphere, in the workshop, in the home, in the office — will you say to everybody, "Jesus Christ is the solution of all problems"? Let us turn whole-heartedly to Him.

Let us pray: We thank Thee, O Lord, for the name of Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for all that He is, for all that He has done, for all that He is now doing, and for all that He is yet to accomplish in the fulfilment of His promise of grace. Oh help us to set much by His name. Bless our meditation this evening, and glorify Thyself in the deeper consecration of many of Thy believing children, in the restoration to favour and fellowship of many backsliders, and in the quickening into newness of life of such as are dead in trespasses and in sins. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

R.C. LOSSES AMONG FRENCH CANADIANS

The following article, translated below, was not written by a Protestant but by a Roman Catholic newspaperman for publication in a daily paper that is controlled by an order of priests. Such statistics as are given here ought to be taken into account when estimating the true meaning of the swelling boasts of huge gains that are repeatedly made by some Roman priests. Apparently not all the gains on are the one side. We do not mean to suggest that all the 60,000 French Canadians in Ontario who have given up the Church of Rome are active members of Protestant Churches or that they are truly converted. Nor do we suppose that all the converts from Protestantism to Rome are moved by spiritual motives. Alas, alas, there are many Roman Catholics who have wearied of the iniquities of Rome but who have never come to a personal knowledge of Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Notwithstanding, these 60,000 Canadians of French origin have turned against the church of their fathers far enough to describe themselves to the census as "non-Catholics". This fact serves to give pause to the official propagandists of Rome and it ought to give us cause to think also.

We translate the following from *Le Droit* of Ottawa:

60,000 French Canadian Protestants

According to the census of 1951 there are 477,677 persons in Ontario of French origin and it is interesting to note that out of this number 417,470 declared themselves Catholics, that is to say a proportion of 87.4. It is far from comforting, however, to observe that 60,170 French-Canadians in Ontario described themselves as non-Catholics.

Commenting on these statistics, Father R. Ares, S.J. writes in *Action Nationale* of July-August: "We cannot help being struck with the great number of French-Canadians in Ontario who declare themselves non-Catholics, and by the ravages made by Protestantism among them. Nearly 45,000 French-Canadians in Ontario belong to Protestant Churches and 60,170 even label themselves non-Catholics. We cannot but remind ourselves that out of 3,237,128 French-Canadians in the Province of Quebec, there is only twenty-thousand Protestants and 23,134 non-Catholics? Do all the Protestants of French-Canadian origin emigrate to Ontario, or are conditions in Quebec more favourable for the protection of the Catholic faith?"

Have we not reason in bemoaning such a Catholic loss, a loss that is explained in large part by the loss of the (French) language, for the statistics also reveal that out of two persons who lose their mother tongue, one loses his faith.

When Father Charlebois was accused of being too fanatical, he replied, "Do you think that as a priest I should be as fanatical as I am if I did not know that by guarding their language, our compatriots also guard their faith and their traditions?"

On the occasion of the thirteenth general congress of the *Association d'Education*, we renew our resolution to work still more ardently to keep for our French compatriots in Ontario the treasure of their language in order better to conserve the treasure of their faith.

A Wall of Separation

In Europe people laughed incredulously when we told them that the French priests in Canada teach and preach that the "French language is the guardian of the Roman Catholic faith". We intend to send some of our French-speaking friends in Belgium, France and Switzerland a copy of the above article for their amusement. One of the pastors in Belgium told me that in the great city of Brussels, to be known as anti-Romanist is a badge of honour among great masses of people. In France, the Roman priests lament the inroads of Communism, and at the most claim as adherents of their church not more

than one Frenchman in ten. Yet in Quebec, the Roman Hierarchy has managed to make the province into a huge monastery around which they have built a high wall of separation, over which few ever manage to escape and through which still fewer penetrate from the outside. The name of that barrier is the French language and it is reenforced by nationalistic pride and race prejudices subtly inculcated through the years in priest-controlled schools and in the clerical press and now, lately, by means of carefully censored radio programmes. Few Protestants take the trouble to learn French in order to present to their French-speaking fellow citizens the truth of the Gospel, and thus they unconsciously aid and abet the designs of the priests. French-Canadians often know enough English to do business in that language but comparatively few of them learn it sufficiently to grasp the message of Protestantism. And if they should be inclined to turn from the church of their fathers, they are threatened with the subtlest and yet the severest form of persecution: loss of family and social bonds, in some case dismissal from their position or the loss of business; they are told that they cannot be married properly or buried in a Christian manner nor can their children be baptized apart from the ministrations of the church of Rome and its priests. It takes a very courageous soul indeed, to face the threat of future punishment joined to the more tangible sufferings of this life that are made against all who seek to leap over the wall of separation the priests have erected in three centuries of religious, educational, social and political rule in the province of Quebec.

In spite of all such threats of punishment here and hereafter even a Jesuit priest has to admit that there are tens of thousands of French Canadians both in Quebec and in Ontario who dare defy the worst the church can do to them. In relation to the great mass of French Canadians who remain under the domination of the priests, the Protestant minority is small, but they are representative of many more thousands who, if they dared, would follow their example and be done with the incubus that has fed on them and their fathers while it crushed them to the ground in every realm of human endeavour. We have already said that we are not so ingenuous as to suppose that all these French Canadians who have quit the Church of Rome have done so as a matter of religious conviction, or, much less, because they have enjoyed an experience of the saving grace of Him who is greater than any church or institution. And likewise we do not believe for an instant that every individual of the entire mass of Roman Catholics is moved by deep religious feeling. No doubt many of them are, but many others are Roman Catholics simply because they were born such and know nothing else. Still others have as little love for the church and its priest as their brethren who have boldly quit the narrow walls of their monastery of prejudice and fear. Romanism presents an imposing facade but the reality behind it is very much less imposing. While we take warning at the aggressions of Romanism let us remember the reverse side of the picture that exhibits the inherent weakness of Rome which even its leaders are compelled to recognize.

—W.S.W.

"How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."—Psalm 36:7.

PRIEST BUYS CONTROL OF DAILY PRESS

Translated from *Le Petit Journal*

It is already well known that the *Progrès du Saguenay*, a regional weekly of the Lake St. John District, will become a daily in the month of September. This paper will be the property of the Bishop of Chicoutimi. Moreover, a few months ago, *Le Droit* of Ottawa, purchased *La Frontière* of Rouyn, another weekly that will become a daily. Hence within a year four dailies in Quebec and one in New Brunswick, *L'Évangéline*, will become the property of religious organizations in our province. Already there is to be counted in that category *L'Action Catholique* of Quebec and *Le Droit* of Ottawa. Each diocese will thus be endowed with a newspaper controlled by the bishop or by a religious community within a few years. It is in the purview of the bishops of Quebec to gain possession of several dailies and weeklies (new and old). At Montreal, it is said to be likely that the Archbishop of Montreal will one day become the proprietor of a great city daily and of a radio station there. It is reported that the present owners have already bequeathed to the Catholic Hierarchy the option of acquiring this newspaper and this radio station. Thus Quebec will eventually be endowed with a network of newspaper and official organs of Catholic thought in the province.

A FOREIGN STRANGLEHOLD ON CANADA

A week or so ago the daily press reported the appointment of two new Canadian ambassadors, one to Mexico the other to Spain. Both are Roman Catholics. Jules Léger is described as a former editorialist on the staff of *Le Droit*, French-language newspaper of Ottawa-Hull. *Le Droit* is controlled by a Roman Catholic religious organization that is a creature of the Oblate Fathers. Is it not ironical that a former propagandist of priests, trained in a Roman Catholic University should be the Ambassador of Canada to Mexico, where the battle between clericals and anti-clericals has long embittered politics and played a large part in bloody riots and revolutions? General Pope, a professional soldier, has been appointed to Ambassador to Spain. Both these countries have gained undesirable publicity in connection with shocking persecution of Protestants. If other such instances arise in the future, how effective a protest will be transmitted through Canadian Ambassadors who might incur the risk of being denied the sacraments of their church if they dared, even in their official capacities, to run counter to the declared policies of the papacy? As faithful Roman Catholics they are required, under pain of mortal sin, to give first place to the orders of their church through its official agents the priests. No democratic government would think of employing a man in a responsible position who was known to be a devotee of Communism, lest he should betray his own country to his real masters in the Kremlin. Why should any truly democratic country employ as its servant a man whose first loyalty is to a foreign prince, even though he be called pope?

Not all Roman Catholics would turn traitor to the country they love merely because the orders of their priests required them to do so. There are Roman Catholics and Roman Catholics, and as we have said in another article, many of them have no real love for the church in which they find themselves. They are not slavish, blind devotees who give implicit, obedience to every priest

simply because he has had consecrated hands laid on his head. Yet who is to discern and distinguish between the various shades of devotion that different Roman Catholics yield to their spiritual directors? All we can be sure of is that the laws of their church demand and require that the church of Rome and its interests have the first place in the thoughts of every truly loyal member. France, we remember was not defeated in battle, it was betrayed from within, not by communists, but by loyal Roman Catholics who to further the interests of their Church did not hesitate to desert the cause of their fatherland. Are Canadians blindly preparing another such dreadful catastrophe for ourselves by putting Roman Catholic agents into key positions in our government services?

Priests Control and Censor the Newspapers.

A brief news report from a Quebec paper reminds us of another side of Rome's long plan to lay hold upon the life of this Dominion and mould and shape it for its own ends. We refer to the translation printed elsewhere, (page 13) entitled "Priests Buy Control of Daily Press". It speaks of a plan by which the Roman Hierarchy will actually own outright a newspaper in each diocese of Quebec, though the fact of the matter is that they already control, either directly or indirectly, the entire French-language press of Canada, while they impose a muzzle of silence on almost all the English-language papers also. The Roman Church gets its lion's share of favourable publicity but exceedingly little unfavourable news or comment throughout the so-called secular press of the English-speaking provinces.

Several radio posts in the Western provinces and in Ontario are owned outright by the Hierarchy or by their agents while in Quebec itself it is impossible for Protestants to buy radio time for preaching in French. Some Protestant broadcasts in French in Quebec have been cut off. Rev. John Boyd has repeatedly attempted to purchase time for French broadcasting in Quebec, but when the purpose of his programme was known to be a Gospel service, he was curtly refused. It is possible to purchase time to sell anything from toothpicks to pianos to French Canadians, but in this land where freedom of speech and of religious worship is supposed to be a corner stone of the state, it is impossible to buy time for preaching in French even at commercial rates — no small price.

Priests Direct Secret Societies

Secret societies such as the masons, and service clubs such as the Kiwanis and the Lions, and their numerous kindred, are all taboo in Quebec according to the provisions of Canon Law, which in effect forbids Roman Catholics to enter any society or association which is not directly or indirectly under the control of the church and for its advancement. These provisions of Canon Law, are not, of course strictly applied in Protestant lands. In Quebec, however, where they are more rigorously enforced, there are associations that roughly correspond to the popular service clubs of the English-speaking world. Speaking before a conference of one such group known as the Richelieu Clubs, Cardinal Léger warned its members against refusing to take orders from the priests. He is reported in *La Presse* of October 8 as follows:

"Gentlemen, you wish to be among those who deserve to be chosen by God to make the world better. To succeed in this, you must be loving sons of the Church. The word of the Sovereign Pontiff must be our light; the

directives of our bishops must be accepted with humble submission. This presence of the Church is made concrete among you by the presence of a chaplain (a priest) who will transmit faithfully the desires of the Hierarchy. A group which fears the presence of a priest in its executive committee shows a dangerous state of mind."

The Cardinal-Archbishop of Quebec received his initiation into the priesthood as a missionary in a foreign land, and he does not impress us as having the usual measure of suavity we generally associate with the higher ranks of the priesthood of Rome. Yet his words, though somewhat blunt, are simply a direct way of stating the enactments of Canon Law as to the final authority of the Pope in all realms of life, and the absolute necessity of all his subjects, that is every baptized person, of yielding him implicit obedience. Apply the Cardinal-Archbishop's statement to the working of labour unions, to school boards, to learned societies, to any and all organizations for any purpose, and one obtains some idea of the immense control that the Hierarchy in Quebec wields over the life of its people.

Population Gains of Roman Catholics

Still another example of the stranglehold that the Church of Rome has laid upon Canada is brought to light in the words spoken by a New Brunswick Cabinet minister before the same congress of clubs. The Hon. Roger Pichette, Minister of Industry and Commerce in the province of New Brunswick is reported to have said that the Province of New Brunswick now counts more than 200,000 French Canadians out of a total population of 515,000 souls and that they will probably be a majority in twenty-five years.

The rapid gains in New Brunswick, of course, are almost entirely due to the large birthrate of French Canadians, encouraged by the teaching of their church and rewarded financially by the so-called "Baby-Bonus", largely contributed by English-speaking taxpayers in other provinces.

A Long-range Plan

We record these alarming gains of Rome, to waken somnolent Protestants. These advances are particularly alarming when seen in the light of their plan to control Canada as they now control Spain or Argentine or Columbia. It is to be noted, however, that the successes of Rome are in the realm of politics, economics and statistics. They are brought about not by spiritual forces, as in a true Church of God, but by political astuteness, by clever planning, by appealing to carnal instincts of the natural man and by physical generation rather than spiritual regeneration. This is characteristic of Rome, for it is the religion *par excellence* of the natural man. It deals with things of time and sense that can be touched and seen and tasted. Its methods and its message, is of this earth, earthy, it is rather a political system than a genuinely religious system, and the world heareth it when it speaks, for it speaks the language of the worldly man.

That which render Rome strong is also its greatest source of weakness. Because it ministers to the natural man and his appetites and speaks the language that he understands, it cannot bring a message of eternal salvation and inner peace to the spiritually hungry. For bread it offers them a stone, for a fish it gives its children a scorpion. Hence, while it makes impressive gains in one domain, it is forced to record serious losses in the other.

We write thus because it is our conviction that there are in all Roman Catholic countries, Quebec not excepted, many Roman Catholics who are seeking some sure word of spiritual comfort. It is our duty and our privilege, who have an open Bible, to give to our fellow-citizens of another tongue, who profess another religion. This is the only real answer to the problem of Quebec.

—W.S.W.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 17 Fourth Quarter Lesson 6 November 8, 1953

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

THE ARK OF THE LORD

Lesson Text: 1 Samuel 5:1-12.

Golden Text: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."—Hebrews 10:31.

I. The Ark in the House of Dagon: verses 1-7.

The ark, constructed of shittim wood, with its cover of pure gold which formed the mercy-seat, was the most significant piece of furniture in the ancient tabernacle (Exod. 25:10-22; 37:1-9). As such, it occupied a position of unique honour in the "holy of holies", the inner compartment of the temple, which was separated from the "holy place" by a veil. Although every part of the tabernacle illustrated some aspect of the Saviour's person and ministry, the ark was especially important as being typical of the Divine presence. There God communed with His people (Exod. 25:22). To enter into the holy of holies would mean death for anyone except the High Priest, and for him, too, except on the yearly Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:2). When sprinkled with the blood of the sacrificial animal, the ark with its overshadowing cherubim became a place of mercy, rather than of judgment (Lev. 16:29-34). The shekinah glory hovered over the ark as it was carried at the head of the procession when the tabernacle was moved from place to place, that the people might be reminded of the leading of the Lord (Numb. 10:33; Josh. 3:3-15; 6:11; Judg. 2:0-27).

In the early days of Samuel's ministry the ark was resting in the tabernacle of God at Shiloh (1 Sam. 3:3) in the keeping of the two priests, the sons of Eli (1 Sam. 4:4). Against these unworthy and wicked men the Lord had pronounced stern judgment (1 Sam. 2:27-33; 3:11-14), but in spite of frequent warnings they had persisted in their evil ways, storing up wrath for themselves (Rom. 2:5-9), and weakening the hands of the children of Israel, so that they were unable to stand against their enemies, the Philistines (Deut. 28:25; Josh. 7:11-13). Instead of dealing with the sin which had deprived them of the Lord's presence and power, the elders of Israel in their extremity gave command that the ark of God should be brought into the battlefield (Numb. 10:35; 14:44). They were mistaken in supposing that the symbolical representation of the presence of the Lord could ensure the spiritual reality of His blessing and favour. Likewise, many in our day substitute religious ceremonies for heart worship. In spite of their supreme efforts to produce victory by mechanical means, the children of Israel were defeated, the sons of Eli were slain, and the ark of God was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:10, 11). The memory of this great calamity was perpetuated in the name given to Eli's grandson, the infant son of the dead Phinehas, "Icha-bod", meaning "The glory is departed": "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken" (1 Sam. 4:21, 22).

Jubilantly the Philistines carried the ark to their city of Ashdod and placed it in a special shrine, the great temple which had been erected in honour of the heathen god Dagon, worshipped not only in Philistia (Judg. 16:23), but also in Syria, Mesopotamia and Chaldea. The ark was placed beside the statue of the heathen god, represented as a strange being with human head, breast and arms, but with the body and tail of a fish.

Early the next morning the priests of Dagon found the statue of Dagon prostrate before the ark of God, for our God is God alone, and no false god can stand before Him (Isa. 45:5, 21-23). The priests secretly replaced the statue, but

on the following morning they found it broken and mutilated. Thus, their god Dagon was publicly displayed as helpless to defend himself, and that threshold of the temple was not to be used again, a prohibition which would be a constant testimony to the power of Jehovah.

The anger of the Lord against the Philistines themselves was revealed in the pestilence of hemorrhoids which attacked the people. The near presence of the Lord is a source of comfort to His own, but a holy God cannot abide where there is sin, unless it be to speak in judgment. The Philistines thought that the ark of Israel would bring to them victories such as the Israelites had experienced (1 Sam. 5:6-8), but the pillar of cloud which meant light to Israel was darkness to their enemies (Exod. 14:19, 20). The Philistines had no part in the holy law of God, a copy of which was enshrined within the ark (Exod. 25:16; 40:20), along with a pot of manna (Exod. 16:33, 34) and Aaron's rod that budded (Numb. 17:10).

II. The Ark in Gath and Ekron: verses 8-12.

The distress of the people of Ashdod was so great that they urged the Philistine leaders to send the ark away from their city. This action illustrates the modern method of dealing with sin and with those who represent God and proclaim His message of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather than accept the rebuke, those who sin attempt to rid themselves of the restraining influence. They wish those who stand for purity of life and the holy word of God to depart. When confronted with the law which they have broken, instead of repenting and turning from sin, they strive, as it were, to dismiss the policeman who would enforce the law's demands. The wicked always hate the righteous (Psa. 34:21; 37:12).

The ark was then carried to Gath. But once more, destruction, distress and disease were visited upon the people. This chastening was God's method of displaying His holiness, which they were violating (Numb. 16:46). The Philistines must return the ark to its own place. But they would not heed the Lord's command. He must speak in judgment, when people will not listen to His word of mercy (Rom. 2:3, 4).

The people of Gath sent the ark to Ekron, but it received no welcome there. Deadly destruction from the Lord fell upon that city also. Taught by the judgments which had fallen upon the inhabitants of Ashdod and Gath, the Ekronites wisely decided to send the ark of God back to its own place in Israel's land. The hand of the Lord had been heavy upon them, showing that it is a fearful thing for sinners to fall into the hands of the living God, while still in their sinful condition (Heb. 10:31). His presence, in this instance, was symbolized by the ark of the covenant. Only those whose sins have been laid upon Christ dare approach unto the Lord (Heb. 10:19, 20). They alone have freedom of access into His presence through the atoning work of Christ (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Nov. 2—The Ark Constructed Exod. 37:1-9
 Nov. 3—The Ark Set in Place Exod. 40:20-38
 Nov. 4—The Ark in the Wilderness Numb. 10:29-36
 Nov. 5—The Ark at Jordan Josh. 4:1-13
 Nov. 6—The Ark at Jericho Josh. 6:1-16
 Nov. 7—The Ark in the Camp of Israel 1 Sam. 5:1-9
 Nov. 8—The Ark Captured by the Philistines 1 Sam. 5:10-22

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Nearer my God to Thee. The love that Jesus had for me. When the heart made pure. Anywhere with Jesus. Abide with me.

COURAGE ON BEHALF OF PRINCIPLE

Do not be afraid to spend yourself. Do not hesitate to risk yourself. Do not shrink from treading on principle. It will carry you, as a bridge, over the deepest and darkest chasm that exists. Trust truth, and purity, and integrity, and benevolence. Give yourself to them. Throw yourself impetuously, enthusiastically, into them. And do not wait to see if anybody sees you. Do not care what anybody says. Be unconscious as far as men are concerned. Be boldly true and truly bold.

—BEECHER

ANNUAL CONVENTION IN PROGRESS

The Annual Convention of the Conservative Regular Baptist Association is in progress as we write these lines just before going to press. The first morning session was devoted to prayer, and in the afternoon visiting brethren from Texas told us some of the methods they have tried and proved in building and maintaining a Sunday School with an average attendance of more than three thousand persons. Last evening Dr. Shields delivered a great message on the conditions of revival from the Prophet Elijah's challenge to the priest of Baal on Mount Carmel: "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." It was a time of heart-searching that set a note which we trust will be continued throughout all the sessions. This morning a good company of delegates and friends spent the entire time in prayer. There were no addresses on prayer, the whole time was passed in praying, not talking about it. We rejoice in this goodly fellowship and what has been accomplished in our churches since we last met. Next week's issue will carry a full report, but we mention the Convention here for the information of interested readers outside Toronto.

—W.S.W.

A MID-WEEK MESSAGE

Let us interrupt the flow of the week, and rear up another Sabbath in the middle of it. And, so those who swim mighty streams do stop, panting, to rest upon some midway rock ere they plunge into the tide, so let us rest here, lifted up above the tumult of earthly care, and gain strength, before we go down into the dark ford, for the farther shore - the Sabbath.

—BEECHER

COMING TO THE KING AS A BEGGAR

A great monarch was accustomed on certain set occasions to entertain all the beggars of the city. Around him were placed his courtiers, all clothed in rich apparel; the beggars sat at the same table in their rags of poverty. Now it came to pass that on a certain day, one of the courtiers had spoiled his silken apparel, so that he dared not put it on, and he felt, "I can not go to the King's feast to-day, for my robe is foul." He sat weeping till the thought struck him, "To-morrow when the King holds his feast, some will come as courtiers happily decked in their beautiful array, but others will come and be made quite as welcome who will be dressed in rags. Well, well," said he "so long as I may see the King's face, and sit at the royal table, I will enter among the beggars." So without mourning because he had lost his silken habit, he put on the rags of a beggar and saw the King's face as well as if he had worn the scarlet and fine linen. My soul has done this full many a time, when her evidence of salvation have been dim; and I bid you do the same when you are in like case. If you cannot come to Jesus as a saint, come as a sinner; only do come with simple faith to Him, and you shall receive joy and peace.

—SPURGEON

Let our prayers to heaven ascending,
Earnest, patient, never ending,
Cleave the air of earth, and sky,
Reach the ear of Him on high,
For the gift of holy power,
For the vitalizing shower
Of the blessed Spirit's presence
Every moment, every hour.

—CHAS. MANLY

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