

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail. Post Office Department, Ottawa.

Vol. 33, No. 50

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, MARCH 31, 1955

Whole Number 1714

A DISTURBING THOUGHT

I remembered God and was troubled.—Psalm 77:3

THE plaintive cry of the psalmist strikes a discordant note in some modern ears. Let us have no mention of a believer being troubled! We desire to hear nothing of such a disturbing nature — prophesy soft things to us! Yet if we would be faithful to the Word of God and to the souls of men, we must readily concede that it is possible for even the most devout believer to become troubled at the remembrance of God.

In saying this, we are aware of the fact that a sense of permanent peace with God is a glorious reality in the believer's heart. Let none endeavour to steal this from us for it is of divine planting. Still, despite this permanent work of grace, there come those moments in which the thought of God has a troubling effect. We wonder very seriously whether the modern emphasis upon "joy", "feeling" and generally frothy religion is not merely an endeavour to escape serious self-examination that could conceivably give rise to troubling thoughts in the soul.

The believer may even come to the place where he feels a virtual divine desertion and the thought of God is no comforting one. He then is prompted to ask himself the question which Paul addressed to the Galatian believers— "Where is the blessedness ye spake of?" In such an hour the contemplation of God may be a fearful one that leads to depression of soul; the only refuge is to lean upon the promises of His Word and, like Paul, "hope for the day".

Or again, as we contemplate our own slow growth in grace and in the things of God, surely we are often troubled and long for better days. Can anyone who reads these words look back upon his or her progress in the things of God and declare, "I am satisfied with my growth." On the contrary, are we not led to wonder how God can ever use such unprofitable servants? Are we not troubled at the remembrance of His abounding mercy to us and our own ingratitude to Him?

We wonder seriously how often we really do pause to consider God. Is not much of our devotion at best merely the repetition of words? Even in our singing do we not glibly express words and thoughts that are not applicable in our own souls? The writer well remembers announcing

once the hymn "I Am Thine, O Lord." How often he had heard it sung! Yet, that third verse came home with new emphasis—

Oh, the pure delight of a single hour
That before Thy throne I spend,
When I kneel in prayer; and with Thee, my God,
I commune as friend with friend.

How often have we spent a single hour in prayer before God? Is the exercise of prayer a "pure delight"? The consideration of such questions must indeed cause the believer to be troubled at the remembrance of God.

Then our poverty in the work of God must smite the soul and arouse troubling thoughts. The Lord Jesus Christ, who was very God, came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. The one who has been saved by grace must have this as his own soul's desire — reaching the lost. Again we must confess neglect and failure. The toys of time exercise our attention more than the realities of eternity. When in such a frame of mind, we cannot be comforted by the thought of God but must be thoroughly troubled.

One concrete example of this in the New Testament is the apostle Peter. In the hour of the Lord's betrayal, he was so engrossed with himself and his own safety that he did not hesitate to deny the Lord Jesus. The things, events and persons of time prevented his thinking of the eternal repercussions of such treachery. The gospel, however, tells us how he was brought to his senses. Luke very simply describes the scene — "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:61, 62). The Lord looked on his erring disciple and Peter remembered the word of the Lord. This remembrance of his Saviour brought no joy to Peter's heart; rather, terrible remorse came upon him and he wept bitter tears of repentance.

It is also true that the backslider cannot rejoice at the remembrance of God. The one who has walked with God but now is afar off does not relish the thought of the

mercies of God in the days that are past. How sharply they stand in contrast with his own base ingratitude! What has God ever done to merit such treatment from one who received nothing but favours from His gracious hand? Should these words come to the attention of someone who is in such a condition, we tell you that you do well to be exceedingly troubled when you remember your God. You might well tremble if you are now determined to persevere in your wickedness, for rest assured that God shall yet deal with you.

Finally these words of the psalmist are applicable in the case of the unsaved. Anyone out of Christ should be troubled at every single remembrance of God. The thought of a sovereign, sin-hating, holy God is no comfort if you are not now trusting in the finished work of Christ on Calvary. No number of meditations upon the love and mercy of God should be allowed to soothe your soul into a lifeless slumber. While anyone is an enemy of God, he is foolish to comfort himself in vain thoughts about his Maker. On the contrary his soul should be restless until finally it finds rest in Christ. If someone reads these words and is prompted to say in his or her own soul, "I know that I am not a Christian and the thought troubles me," know that God is speaking to you and longing that you should come to Him by putting your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Your troubles will not all disappear but your one great problem will be settled and your life shall be "hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

—L.K.T.

From Our Files

Thirty Years Ago, THE GOSPEL WITNESS, April 2, 1925—Because March 31 marked the end of the church year, the Pastor reviewed the blessings received during these twelve months of 1924-25. He reported that 474 new members had been received during the year—73 by letter, 58 by experience, 343 by baptism. Only three years before an open attack had been made on the Biblical ministry of the church; the manifest blessing of the year 1924-25 was more than sufficient to indicate that the Lord was determined to honour His servant's stand for the truth of the gospel.

In reporting on the services of the previous Lord's Day Dr. Shields revealed that 23 had come forward in the morning and nearly that number had responded in the evening. May we see similar blessings in our midst once more!

—L.K.T.

NEWS OF THE EDITOR

The kindly inquiries and good wishes which come to the Editor's desk further indicate that Dr. Shields has a host of praying friends all over the world. In his hour of illness, this is a consolation to him as he hears testimony of the blessing of his ministry of past days. We can report no change for the better in his physical condition and again request that the readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS continue to remember him before the Lord.

—H. C. SLADE, Associate Pastor.

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Published every Thursday for the propagation of the Evangelical principles of the Protestant Reformation and in defence of the faith once delivered to the Saints.
\$3.00 Per Year. Postpaid to any address. 10c Per Single Copy.

Editor

T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editors

MR. LESLIE K. TARR, B.A. (Man.)

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

S.S. Lesson and Exchanges

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

Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 Canada

Telephone WALnut 1-7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

A PREACHER'S TONIC

The minister of the gospel must serve as a dispenser of divine medicine to others but often he himself feels in need of a heavenly potion. There are certain great classics which could be well read every year by the man of God. The writer has found at the least three such works. Two are fairly large books—the first is *The Memoirs of McCheyne*; the second is John Wesley's *Journal*. The third is a small sixty-four page booklet containing a conference address by the "Prince of the Preachers", C. H. Spurgeon. It is entitled, "The Greatest Fight in the World" and for the small sum of twenty-five cents can be obtained from THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

Here is a booklet that will put iron in the blood and cause the downcast warrior to rejoice in the greatest work ever entrusted to mortal man. Its every page is full of weighty matter and inspirational material. In fact, it is with considerable restraint that we refrain from quoting extensive passages from it now. We urge all pastors to order it and read it on some "blue Monday" morning. We guarantee that you will not be disappointed.

—L.K.T.

HIS CROWN

There are crowns worn by living monarchs, of which it would be difficult to estimate the value. The price paid for their jewels is the least part of it. They cost thousands of lives and rivers of human blood; yet in His esteem, and surely in ours also, Christ's crown outweighs them all. He gave His life for it; and alone, of all monarchs, He was crowned at His coronation by the hands of Death. Others cease to be kings when they die. By dying He became a king. He laid His head in the dust that He might become "head over all." He entered His kingdom through the gates of the grave, and ascended the universe by the steps of a cross.

—GUTHRIE

"BIBLIOLATRY"

SOME modern prophets are very bold in their declarations against evils that are non-existent but in the face of real sin against God and His Word they are strangely silent. Oh, how brave they appear as they continually do the exploits of a Don Quixote against imaginary theological windmills! One of the favourite scare-crows which these courageous warriors attack is one which they have designated as "bibliolatry".

What is this terrible evil of our day called "bibliolatry"? The large *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word as follows—"Bibliolatry—(a) Extravagant admiration of a book; (b) Excessive reverence for the mere letter of the Bible." Hence we assume that these ministers are warning Christians against an "excessive reverence for the mere letter of the Bible." Yet, we ask, is this such a prominent error of the professing churches and religious people in this age? Definitely not! In fact, the error is in quite the opposite direction for there is a definite trend toward neglect of God's Word and indeed in many religious quarters there is a contempt for this infallible revelation from heaven. If those who attacked so-called "bibliolatry" were as bold in attacking infidels who masquerade as teachers of God, denying His Word, we would be more apt to listen to them.

Twice recently we have noticed the declarations of Dr. Emlyn Davies against this sin of "bibliolatry". First we read his contribution to the adult lessons of the Canadian Bible Lesson Series (used by the Baptist Convention and the United Church). In the lesson for April 24, 1955, entitled "What God Do We Worship?", we read—"Idolatry is far nearer to us than we realize. We set up all kinds of things as objects for reverence; and it is a modern as well as an ancient sin to bow down to our images. *The Bible*, the Church, Creeds, the Virgin Mother—all these, and other objects (each and every one of them having a true significance and value in its own place), have been set up in the place of God. We are only too familiar with the painful and sinful consequences of elevating *the Book of the Lord above the Lord of the Book . . .*" Now if this is a predominant sin, it should be condemned for Jesus Christ is above all but we are not so sure that it is really a pressing evil in the quarters in which Dr. Davies moves. The Introduction to this series of lessons tells us that the author "speaks fearlessly to all, as did the prophets in Israel." We think that he has spoken fearlessly about something that is a non-existent peril and has remained silent about the infidelity which heaps dishonour on the Book of the Lord and Lord of the Book.

Shortly after we had read these Bible Lessons by Dr. Davies, we received an interesting newspaper clipping from a friend in Hamilton. *The Hamilton Spectator* of Thursday, March 24, carried the following news:

MINISTER WARNS BIBLE MOVEMENT ON EMPHASIS

Toronto, March 24, (CP)—Dr. Emlyn Davies, minister of Yorkminster Baptist Church, yesterday warned of inherent perils in the back-to-the-Bible movement.

He told the annual executive meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Canada that if people gain a wrong conception of the Bible and its teaching, "it becomes a serious matter for the Church.

"The movement in all countries to go back to the Bible is commendable," Dr. Davies said. But he added that the

emphasis of the Bible has not been upon itself but upon Christ—"the saviour to whom the Bible witnesses."

He said the world needs the Gospel and not blind "Bibliolatry."

Again, we repeat, the really serious matter of concern for the churches with regard to the Bible is not one of exaggerated reverence for it, but rather increasing contempt for it. No one need be "fearless" to yield to the current of the age and denounce something which presents no peril at the moment or in the foreseeable future to the churches.

We should like to have Dr. Davies produce some concrete instances of this terrible sin of "bibliolatry" from among the major denominations to whom he seeks to speak. For that matter we would appreciate hearing of any instance of this great "sin" which he so fearlessly denounces.

Since he, like the writer of this article, is a Baptist, both of us would be interested in hearing C. H. Spurgeon, a great Baptist of the last century, speak of the Word of God. Spurgeon lived in better days for the Word of God than do we but apparently he had little fear of this sin. In his magnificent address, "The Greatest Fight in the World", we quickly found four portions which some today might term "bibliolatry". Spurgeon said:

"The Scriptures in their own sphere are like God in the universe—All-sufficient."

"The Word is like its Author, infinite, immeasurable, without end."

"Our reverence for the great Author of Scripture should forbid all mauling of his words."

"You will notice that attacks are frequently made as against verbal inspiration. The form chosen is a mere pretext. Verbal inspiration is the verbal form of the assault, but the attack is really aimed at inspiration itself. You will not read far in the essay before you will find that the gentleman who started with contesting a theory of inspiration which none of us ever held, winds up by showing his hand, and that hand wages war with inspiration itself. There is the true point. We care little for any theory of inspiration; in fact, we have none. To us the plenary verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture is fact, and not hypothesis. It is a pity to theorize upon a subject which is deeply mysterious, and makes a demand upon faith rather than fancy. Believe in the inspiration of Scripture, and believe it in the most intense sense. You will not believe in a truer and fuller inspiration than really exists.

If the results of Spurgeon's ministry can be traced to his "bibliolatry", then this writer for one can only say, "Lord, give us more bibliolaters!" The plain fact is that those who attack bibliolatry or verbal inspiration are attacking not these but the Bible as an infallible revelation of a sovereign God. We do not say this of Dr. Davies necessarily for we know too little of his theological views.

Since he is so bold to attack the sin of bibliolatry (or "the excessive reverence for the letter of the Bible") we wondered if he had ever specifically attacked the other extreme. Perhaps he has heard of McMaster University in Hamilton, which is the official school of his denomination. Has he ever inquired concerning the Biblical views of the faculty of the Divinity School there. We doubt if it could be accused of "bibliolatry"! Perhaps another sin might be uncovered—that of contempt for the Word

of the living God. Should we be wrong in supposing that Dr. Davies has not ever denounced *specifically* this terrible sin, we would be only too pleased to inform our readers through the pages of THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

For us, we do not intend to lessen our emphasis upon the Bible or its great Personage, the Lord Jesus Christ. The one the written Word, the Other, the Living Word—both infallible! May we have more raised up who are determined to preach Christ and honour His Word. May the Lord be pleased to send us men of the convictions of a John Wesley who lived in a day of decadent religion similar to the hour in which we find ourselves. In that dark hour he declared—"I want to know one thing—the way to heaven; how to land on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that Book! At any price, give me that book of God! I have it; here is knowledge enough for me. *Let me be a man of one book.*" If such sentiments constitute "bibliolatry", then again we plead for more "bibliolaters".

—L.K.T.

OUR FRUIT WILL BE WHAT WE ARE

By Rev. A. W. TOZER

WATER cannot rise above its own level. Neither can a Christian by any sudden spasmodic effort rise above the level of his own spiritual life.

I have seen under the sun how a man of God will let his tongue go all day in light and frivolous conversation, let his interests roam abroad among the idle pleasures of this world, and then, under the necessity of preaching at night, seek a last minute reprieve just before service by cramming desperately in prayer try to put himself in a position where the spirit of the prophet will descend upon him as he enters the pulpit. By working himself up to an emotional white heat he may afterward congratulate himself that he had much liberty in preaching the Word. But he deceiveth himself and there is no wisdom in him. What he has been all day and all week is what he is when he opens his Bible to expound unto the people. Water cannot rise above its own level.

Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. The fruit of a tree is determined by the tree; and the fruit of life by the kind of life it is. What a man is interested in to the point of absorption both decides and reveals what kind of man he is; and the kind of man he is by a secret law of the soul decides the kind of fruit he will bear. The catch is that we often are unable to discover the true quality of our fruit until it is too late.

If we would be realistic in our Christian lives we must not overlook the tremendous power of affinity. By *affinity* I mean the sympathetic attraction which certain things and persons have for us. The human heart is extremely sensitive and altogether capable of setting up an inward relationship with objects far removed and forbidden. As the needle has an affinity for the north magnetic pole, so the heart can keep true to its secret love, though separated from it by miles and years. What that loved object is may be discovered by observing which direction our thoughts turn when they are released from the hard restraints of work or study. Of what do we think when we are free to think of what we will? What object gives us inward pleasure as we brood over it? Over what do we muse in our free moments? To what does our imagination return again and again?

When we have answered these questions honestly we will know what kind of persons we are; and when we have discovered what kind of persons we are we may deduce the kind of fruit we will bear.

It is one of the cliches of the evangelist that the true worth of a church member is revealed by his life on Monday rather than on Sunday. There is a world of sober truth in the statement, and it is devoutly to be hoped that we who thus admonish others may ourselves remember to live the week through in the same atmosphere of sanctity that we desire so earnestly to inhabit on the Lord's Day.

It is written of Moses that he "went in before the Lord to speak with him . . . and he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel." This is the Biblical norm from which we depart to our own undoing and to the everlasting injury of the souls of men. No man has any moral right to go before the people who has not first been long before the Lord. No man has any right to speak to men about God who has not first spoken to God about men. And all else being equal, he should spend more time in the secret place praying than he spends in the public place preaching.

As we dare not overlook the power of the human heart to establish affinities, so we dare not ignore the importance of the spiritual mood. Mood, as I have said elsewhere, is mental weather. It is internal climate and it must be favourable to the growth of spiritual graces or they will not appear in the soul. The Christian who allows day after day a chilly climate to prevail in his heart need expect no grapes of Eshcol to hang over the wall when he goes before his Sunday school class, his choir, or his Sunday morning congregation.

One swallow does not make a spring nor one hot day a summer; nor will a few minutes of frantic praying before service bring out the tender buds or make the flowers to appear on the earth. The field must be soaked in sunshine over long periods before it will give forth its treasures. The Christian's heart must be soaked in prayer before the true spiritual fruits begin to grow. As the field has learned to live intimately and sympathetically with the rain and the sunshine, so must the Christian learn to live with God. We cannot in a brief time make up for the long neglect of God and things spiritual.

God's children live by laws as kind and as severe as those that govern nature. Grace operates within those laws but never contrary to them. Our fruit will follow its native tree and not all our frightened prayers can prevent it. If we would do holy deeds we must be holy men. And that every day and all the days that God grants us here below.

—Alliance Weekly

THE CHILD OF KNOWLEDGE

Wise men ever know their own ignorance and are ready to learn. Humility is the child of knowledge. Michael Angelo was found by the Cardinal Farnese walking in solitude amid the ruins of the Coliseum, and when he expressed his surprise, the great artist answered, "I go yet to school that I may continue to learn." Who among us can after this, talk of finishing our education? We have need to learn of all around us. He must be very foolish who cannot tell us something; or more likely, we must be very foolish not to be able to learn of him.

—SPURGEON

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

FREE INDEED!

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, March 10th, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

(This sermon is taken from our files of hitherto unprinted sermons, and is printed verbatim as delivered. Dr. Shields has had no opportunity either to see or revise it since delivery.)

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—Gal. 5:1.

I REMEMBER to have read in one of Mr. Spurgeon's addresses on one occasion, a remark to this effect: There are certain people who should be good at beginnings, for they have been at it ever since we have known them.

It is very easy to begin a thing; it is much more difficult to continue. Some of these Galatian Christians had begun well: Paul says, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you? You began in the Spirit, now you are trying to become perfect through the flesh." The epistle to the Galatians is written for the express purpose of bidding those who had received the gospel to stand fast, as believers, in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.

I.

And I think we all need this exhortation to-day, to remind ourselves, first of all, that CHRIST JESUS DOES MAKE THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM, FREE, that the life of faith is a life of freedom: the life of love in the Spirit, a life of the largest liberty.

That is the very opposite of the common conception of the Christian life. I doubt not there are some young people here this morning who imagine that the acceptance of Christ means the surrender of all their freedom, the submission to an irksome yoke, the deprivation of all pleasure, and a life that is devoted to stern duty. But nothing of the sort is true. To be a Christian is to be a free man, that is, in the New Testament sense. The Lord Jesus came to make us free. He was anointed to preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. There are many forms of religion which bear the Christian name, which are forms really of slavery, of bondage. There are people who are in bondage to their church; in bondage to the ordinances of the church. They labour from night till morning, and from morning till night to obtain salvation. I think there is nothing more difficult than to explain the principle of grace, unless it be to understand it. And the grace of God makes all who are partakers thereof free in Christ Jesus. And who of us does not want freedom? I think that none of us could enjoy living in a palace surrounded with every luxury, provided with every kind of dainty, if the doors were locked, and we were forced even amid plenty to live a life that was "cribbed, cabined, and confined."

Have you ever noticed how children come out of school? The next time you are passing a school at the time of recess, or when school is dismissed, observe how they

come out. Did you ever see boys and girls just walk out slowly? Never! They always burst out, just like a shot out of a gun. Why? Because they have been under discipline, under restraint, under the domination of someone else's will. They have been told to do this, and not to do this, and not to do the other thing, until the bell rings, and the moment dismissal comes and they are suddenly free, one might suppose they had been confined for years the way they burst out. I think I did when I was a boy. You find that, too, with people as they are getting home in the evening. You see them running for street cars, jostling one another. One wonders if there is some urgent matter at home that would be seriously affected by the loss of a few moments. But the fact is, they have been in a certain kind of bondage, and when they are free they want to exercise that freedom. I believe The Great War, fundamentally, was fought on that principle. It was for the maintenance of the world's liberty in a civil sense.

What does it mean to be free in Jesus Christ? We sometimes sing:

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

When Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States, at a certain stage of the progress of the Civil War, he issued a proclamation declaring all slaves to be free. Up till that time they had been the property, the chattels, of their masters, and if one escaped from his service he could legally be brought back again and compelled to serve. He had no individual rights at all. He was like an animal; he was owned by the man who was called his master. But the proclamation of the President declared the slaves to be free, as free as any white man of the North. The gospel is a proclamation of emancipation. It undertakes to set the prisoner free, to open the prison to him; and those who are truly Christians ought to be the freest men in the world. We are free in the sense that we are under no condemnation, the penalty of the law has been paid, the penalty which the law required by reason of our transgression has been paid, and our obligation in that respect has been cancelled. The law cannot lay its hand upon us and bring us into bondage in order to exact from us again the penalty our sins have incurred, because it has been paid in our behalf: we are free from the law's demands.

A man spoke to me last Sunday. He had just come from Kingston, and he was in our service. For years he had been behind prison walls, and then at last the iron gates had swung open, and having served his term of imprisonment, the law had no longer any claim upon him: he was free.

In that sense we are free. But there is another sense in which He makes us free. I quote again: "He breaks the power of cancelled sin". A man said to me last week, "You do not know me, but I have met you. I heard you preach in New York, I heard you preach in England; I have heard you preach in several other places." He told me who he was. He said, "I have been a prosperous man, but I have fallen through drink. It is the worst curse of all. It follows me from land to land, from city to city." I judged from his conversation that he was even then under the influence of liquor, and yet smarting under it, feeling that he was a slave, in bondage, there was a power within that was greater than any power of his own will, and he was unable to break it; he was bound in fetters, a slave to his appetite.

Sin is a cruel monster. In many ways it masters us; it may not be in the grossest sense of yielding to appetite; it may be a more respectable sin, I do not know. Why should it be considered more respectable to have a very bad temper? I have known some very respectable people, supposedly, who had very violent tempers. Well that is a kind of bondage, or it brings you into bondage; and you need grace to break that shackle.

II.

HOW DOES CHRIST SET US FREE? I do not know how that man can be set free unless there be a power to correct that inner impulse, something that will make him a new creature, change his nature, and make him desire to do what he wants to do. Perhaps some of you may be amused sometimes when I speak of my dog. He is my teacher, my professor. He teaches me a great many things, and sometimes I wish I could teach him something! The other night I took him out walking with me. I said, It is late and there are not many cars about, so I can set him free, and let him have the road. He ran roundabout me until we came to a certain junction point, and there was a convention of dogs having a night session, and in a moment he was in the midst of them. I whistled — I do not know whether he heard me or not, but he made no response. — I could not find him and walked about looking for him. After a while he came running back as fast as he had gone away. I took his chain from my pocket and I hooked it to him, and said, "You did not know how to use your freedom, and now you have lost it." So I held him on the leash. One day at the junction of Avenue Road and Davenport Road I was passing at a very busy time. There was a perfect torrent of traffic. I saw a woman walk along quite leisurely with a handsome dog at her side, no leash. I said, "I wonder she is not afraid for her dog." But she came to the intersection, and waited until the light turned to allow her to cross. She put up her hand for the dog to stop, then lifted her hand again, and on they went. She did not need any leash, her dog was trained. She had only to whisper to him, or to lift her hand, and its perfect obedience taught it liberty.

There is a scripture which says, "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." And in that connection the

Lord said: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." In other words, the Lord said, "Do not compel me to put you on a leash; do not compel Me to throw a bridle over your head and hold you in with bit and bridle. By obedience let your eyes be unto Me, and I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go: I will guide you with Mine eye."

The perfection of liberty, after all, consists in obedience to law. Liberty is never license at any time; it is never lawlessness: but it is an automatic obedience to law, and it is not until we do things automatically that we do anything well. Try driving a nail if you are not used to it. It looks easy when the man who is accustomed to it places the nail, and with one or two taps it is home, with no mark of the hammer. But you try it. After a while you are complaining that you hit the wrong nail. That man had to learn how to do it, and it was not until the principle of it became a part of himself that he learned how to do it easily. So in every department of life, it is not until the objective becomes subjective that we do things automatically, unconsciously. That is how we walk. You do not stop to think of where you should put your feet. There was a time when you did, but you cannot remember that. You took just a step at a time until you learned how to walk easily. That is how our organists play. We have to have books, but they have the music in their heads. They can play without any objective score at all. And we never have perfect liberty in the Lord Jesus until His law is written in our hearts. And so as we take the principles of this gospel, and not only commit them to memory, but reduce them to practice and incorporate them in the very moral fibre of our beings until it becomes part of us, not until then have we liberty.

There are people here this morning who find no difficulty at all in being honest; you never think of being anything else; it is not difficult to be straightforward in your business undertakings, to be always frank and open. That is, I trust, by grace, your nature. And these things are effortless on our part. That is what liberty really means, and Christ has come to give us liberty, to set us free.

Perhaps I ought to speak on this matter oftener: you young people are sometimes troubled by the allurements of the world, by invitations to go here and there. Now I do not dance. Do you know why? Because I do not want to. There are a great many things we do not do and people wonder why. Well, we do not want to do them. Put a man in a strong room in the Bank of England where there are millions in gold — if there be such a place — and put handcuffs on him, bind him hand and foot. Would you call him an honest man because he did not touch the gold? Anyone could be honest in circumstances like that. No; you must put within him that principle of honesty, and only then has he perfect liberty in the presence of temptation.

III.

That is a commonplace, I know; but SPECIALLY WE ARE TO STAND FAST IN THAT LIBERTY. And we need that exhortation. These people had received the gospel, they had been clearly taught that they were saved by grace alone, then certain other people came and they said: "If is well-enough for you to believe in Christ, but you ought to observe the ceremonies of the law, too." Therefore,

Paul writes to admonish them not to allow anyone to bring them back into that stage of bondage, but having once been made free, to stand fast in that liberty. So then, let us stand fast in the truth of the gospel, understanding the doctrines of grace, learning what it is to be free in Christ.

How many of you young people are diligent students of the Word of God? You know that in this country ignorance of the law is no excuse. If you violate some traffic law, and you are summoned and you go to court and say, "I am sorry, but I did not know that I was violating the law." The court would say, "Then you ought to know, and we will fine you ten dollars, and perhaps you will learn." It would do you no good whatever to plead ignorance of the law. As citizens of this country it is our duty to know what the law is, and to live within it. And so as Christian people it is our duty to know the principles of the gospel. God has given us His Holy Word that we may be instructed thereby, and we are to stand fast in it.

There are some people who are always looking for some new thing. I used to know a man a few years ago who was boarding, and who was always finding some new place to eat. He would report to me that he had found a good place to eat. He had had a good dinner there. A few weeks later he had found another place. I said to him, "I wonder you do not kill yourself. Why don't you find some place and stay there, and get used to the cooking there." There are some people like that, religiously. They are always finding some new religious food, and the latest religious charlatan who comes to town will be sure to get their ear. Any sort of religious statement will take their fancy. Any sort of religious "show" will appeal to them. Some of these things are nothing but the Devil's trick to substitute for the plain truth of the gospel all sorts of stimulants. People are tempted to run after these new fads and fancies, and get into trouble.

Let us stand fast in the things of God. Have you received the gospel? If you know that you are saved by grace, then stand firm in that truth, and be not "carried away with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive"; and "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage". How many are tempted to turn away from the principle of pure grace! I think the greatest of all heresies is to teach men that they can save themselves. Never allow that to find any place in your mind. Whenever you meet the suggestion that salvation depends upon your own effort, that the finished work of the Lord Jesus is not sufficient, turn away from it; "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"; having been saved without the ceremonies of the law, do not allow anyone to persuade you that these things are necessary to your salvation. Let it be clearly understood that salvation is in Christ, and in Christ alone; that it is of grace without any admixture of works whatsoever; stand fast in that liberty, in the confidence that God by His sovereign grace has saved you, and "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage".

I have known some people to be in bondage to baptism, to be in bondage to the Lord's Supper, to persuade themselves that there is some merit in observing the Lord's Supper, some merit in being baptized. These are but outward evidences of an inward grace. If you are really saved, you ought to be baptized. If you are really relying upon Christ, then you ought to indicate that fact, by

remembering His death; but let it never be as a yoke of bondage entering into the ground of your hope.

So then, that is what salvation is: to be in Christ, and to be absolutely free in Him. How many are there here this morning who are conscious of some shackle? I do not exhort you to give up smoking, — if you are in the habit of smoking — because it is no use. I think we are all a great deal better without it. I do not denounce these things as being in themselves sins — I have no doubt they are; it would be a sin to me—I can see no value in perpetually, or even occasionally, admonishing people not to do this, not to do that, or the other thing: our only freedom is to know Christ, and to know His word so thoroughly that we shall have no interest in these things at all. We shall be able to say:

"My heart refuseth joys like these,
Since I have known the Lord".

When I was in London there was a young lady came to see me. I had baptized her some time before, perhaps a year. She had been apparently a devoted Christian girl during that time. But she came to see me saying, "Pastor, I am in great difficulty." I said, "What is the matter?" She said, "I am afraid I am not a Christian at all." So I said, "Well, what has happened to effect that frame of mind?" "Well," she said, "I have been doing things that a Christian ought not to do, and I feel that there must be something wrong. I am afraid that I never have been saved, or I should not have done what I have done." I said to her, "I am not going to invite your confidence, unless you volunteer it, but if you feel free to tell me the situation, you may do so." She said, "It is a simple matter, perhaps, from some points of view; but before I was converted I spent two or three nights a week in places of entertainment with a certain circle of girls with whom I associated. After I was converted I gave up these things; had no interest in them at all, and never went. But the other day some of my friends met me, and we had a good time together, and then they suggested that we should go to see some show, and I went." I said, "Is that the trouble?" She said, "Yes; I feel I have dishonoured the Lord by being there, and I am afraid I am all wrong; I am afraid I never was really saved, and perhaps I ought to have my name taken off the church roll." I said, "Well now, let us think this matter through, and find out just where you stand. You say that before you were a Christian you were repeatedly in these places. Why did you go?" "Because I liked to go." "Well, why did you stop going?" "I had other interests; I did not feel that I wanted to go. I enjoyed going to the House of the Lord more than to the theatre. I just stopped going to one place and went to the other." I said, "You were at the theatre the other night?" "Yes." "Well, outwardly, circumstantially, there was not a bit of change was there, so far as that particular night was concerned, from the situation which obtained many a time before you were converted?" She said, "No." "Anyone on the outside would say, 'There is no difference. She went before. I see her here now'. Now was there any difference?" She thought a moment and then said, "I rather think there was." "Did you have a good time the other night?" "No; I felt condemned the moment I got inside the place. I have not slept since; I have not had a moment's peace since that night." "Well now," I said, "Will you just think a moment and do not let me tell you anything, save this: Outwardly there was no

change at all. There was the theatre before you were converted, and the theatre after. But there was a change was there?" "Yes." "Where?" "Why, inside." "What was the change." "Well, in the first place I enjoyed it, and in the second place—" — "What?" "I did not enjoy it." "In the first place you felt free amid the ungodly; in the second place you were in bondage. Do you want to go again?" "No." I said, "My dear girl, I do not think you could possibly have given me more certain proof that you are converted than by what you have told me just now. If the change were merely in your outward circumstances, then I should be seriously concerned for you. I should say, 'That girl has had no change of heart at all.'" She said, "O Pastor, I see it." "Well then, I said, 'will you stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and when next the girls ask you to go with them to their places of amusement, will you say, 'Thank you, I have no doubt you intend well, but I prefer not to go?' And if they say to you, 'Well, you are not in bondage, are you?' say to them, 'No, but I do not want to go; I have something within that is much better.'"

That is the genius of the Christian religion. That is God's way of doing things. He puts His love into our hearts, and changes us within so that we have no desire after these things, and so we have liberty in Christ Jesus. Do you see that? Well, then, if you have been tripped up, as my young friend, Beatrice, was so many years ago, what ought you to do? Just tell the Lord you are sorry, and ask for forgiveness: "I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." And so, in respect to other things, if you have been overcome by temptation, yet you feel within that protest against it, thank God that He has put His witness in your heart, and rejoice that He has made you a new creature.

Let us pray:

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to bless this simple word this morning. So often we need plain words of guidance and direction. And we pray Thee to bless the principles of Thy word to every heart and conscience. Help us to be free in Christ Jesus, and to rejoice in the liberty which He has given us. We ask it in His name, Amen.

A.C.C.C. SPRING CONVENTION

IT HAS been announced that the American Council of Christian Churches will hold its spring convention in Memphis, Tennessee, from April 27 to April 29. The theme for this year's meeting is "The Christ of the Scriptures". All of the business sessions and afternoon meetings will be held in the Gayoso Hotel, 139 South Main Street, and the evening meetings will be held in Ellis Auditorium, 74 Poplar Avenue. In addition to these meetings a youth rally for Christian Education will be held on Tuesday, April 26, at 7.30 P.M. in Barton — First Southern Methodist Church, 2999 Barron Road. In this meeting on the evening prior to the opening of the convention, young people will have the opportunity of hearing of the good work and the future aims of Christian educational institutions associated with the twentieth century reformation movement.

An imposing array of speakers will deliver reports and addresses which should concern every Bible believing Christian. The various morning sessions will be devoted to worship and business. The afternoon session extends

from 2 o'clock to 4 o'clock with speakers on Wednesday and Friday and two panel discussions on Thursday.

The evening sessions will commence at 7.30. The speakers and the topics for the three evenings should command the attention of all who can possibly attend. On Wednesday evening, Dr. K. R. Kinney, the president of the Council and the pastor of First Baptist Church in Johnson City, New York, will speak on "The Intra-Protestant Conflict". On Thursday evening Dr. R. T. Ketcham, the national representative of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches will speak on the subject "Jesus Christ—Deity or Demoniac?" At the closing evening session on Friday, April 29, Dr. Carl McIntire, president of the International Council of Christian Churches, will speak on "The Communist Line of Peaceful Co-existence and How the World Council of Churches Endorses and Promotes It." All of these evening sessions will be held in the great Ellis-Auditorium.

We are sure that as many Christians as possible will attend these sessions and learn more of this great movement which seeks to call believers to protest against error and to stand for the truth of the gospel. A full Conference program may be obtained by writing American Council of Christian Churches, 15 Park Row, New York 38, New York. —L.K.T.

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

Again at the Sunday morning service one of the senior students at the Seminary brought he message. Mr. Ken Kimbley, who will graduate this year from the Seminary, preached on "Behold the Lamb of God!" The people of Jarvis Street were especially thankful to the Lord for his ministry because he was brought up in the church's Bible School, converted in the church and trained in the Seminary which is so closely associated with the church.

In the evening Mr. Slade preached; his subject was "The Traitor Unmasked". The presence of the Lord was definitely felt as this solemn pre-Easter subject was considered.

We are pleased to learn of the progress of our beloved choir leader, Mr. Hutchinson, who has been laid aside in the hospital for a few weeks. Although he was not present this past Sunday, it is hoped that he will soon be in his place at the head of the two choirs. —L.K.T.

WE MUST DIE!

"We must needs all die." We may die in Christ, and if we die in Christ we do not die in any humiliating and pitiful sense; we "languish into life." We go through the river with the Saviour; or if it be through a furnace that we pass, there will be in it one like unto the Son of Man. He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Christ hath abolished death. It is to the Christian no more a weird and gruesome thing, a spectre "making night hideous", it is the inbringing of light and liberty, with all the results of the redeeming Cross. You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Beware of the death of the soul; you can make your soul as a thing of days by starving it, neglecting it, insulting it. You can make your soul the best part of yourself by bringing it into vital relation to the Cross of Jesus Christ; then "we must needs die" becomes we must needs pass from earth and time and cloud, into heaven, eternity, and light! —JOSEPH PARKER

AMONG THE CHURCHES

with **H. C. SLADE**

New Pastor for Fort William

FOR a period of fourteen years Fundamental Baptist Church in Fort William was blessed with the ministry of Rev. W. C. Tompkins. Last year feeling called to take over a pioneer work in the city of Calgary, Mr. Tompkins promptly obeyed what he felt to be the Lord's leading and brought to an end fourteen years of fruitful ministry and a mutually happy association between himself and the members of the church.

This church in the Lakehead city recently welcomed its new pastor, Rev. A. Norman Day. Born in England, Mr. Day later came to Canada and was converted in Vancouver, B.C. While in Vancouver he was a member of Mount Pleasant Regular Baptist Church. After taking five years' training at the Vancouver Bible School and Prairie Bible Institute, he returned to his homeland where he served pastorates in the southern counties of Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. In 1950 he again came to Canada to be pastor of some charges in Nova Scotia. With him he brings to Fort William, his wife and their four daughters.

Mr. Day was very favourably impressed with the spiritual temperature in his new pastorate and writes — "The splendid work of Rev. W. C. Tompkins ensured a goodly heritage of spiritual blessing and a fine company



Rev. A. Norman Day

of earnest Christians, dedicated to the service of their Saviour in the church and Sunday School, in the community and over the radio. To date there has been plenty of evidence of a keen appreciation of things spiritual. On Wednesdays the prayer room is well filled for prayer, testimony and the teaching of God's truth. On Sunday mornings there are congregations little short of capacity and, while the evening service is not so large, a good spirit prevails.

"The Sunday School is being well maintained and a new infants and nursery department has been inaugurated. The children's week night activity, 'The Happy Hour', is being continued. The emphasis here as elsewhere in the work is on the Word of God, and a number of children are memorizing Scripture.

"In addition to the branch Sunday School on Arthur Street, the tri-weekly visit to the Ontario Hospital, the fortnightly meeting of the Women's Missionary Society and the Pastor's Sunday morning Bible class, there is the weekly radio broadcast, 'Mid-week Meditations', over CKPR Fort William. This is aired on Tuesdays at 8.00 p.m., and there is evidence of a wide interest in the letters which are received."

ATTENTION: READERS IN WINDSOR AREA

ON "GOOD FRIDAY", April 8, a rally will be held in the recently erected Roseland Baptist Church whose pastor is Mr. Russel Cherry, a 1953 graduate of Toronto Baptist Seminary. The services will be held at 2.30 in the afternoon and 7.30 in the evening with Pastor Samuel Dempster of Kingston as the special speaker. We urge all of our readers who are within a reasonable distance of Windsor to support the services of this great opening day for the Roseland building. You will be blessed in your own soul by the fellowship and the fervent, Biblical preaching of Mr. Dempster. The church is located right in Roseland, a suburb of Windsor, at Cavana Rd. and Howard Ave.

Mr. Cherry further tells us that the week following will be devoted to gospel meetings with Mr. Dempster as the evangelist. These meetings will commence on Easter Sunday at the regular hours of 11 in the morning and 7.30 in the evening and will be carried on during the week, Monday to Friday at 8 p.m.

—L.K.T.

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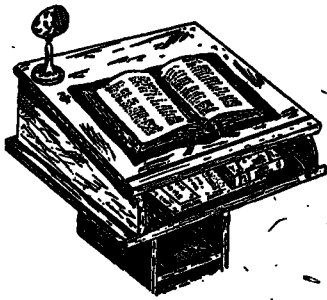
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TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

By Rev. C. D. Cole

Thursday, March 24th, 1955

CHRIST SUPERIOR TO MOSES

Hebrews 3:1 — 4:13

AS WE proceed in the study of the Hebrew epistle it will become increasingly evident that the purpose of the letter is to set forth the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. The writer is addressing Hebrews who had professed faith in Jesus Christ, and who had united with the Christian group, but who were being urged by the unbelieving Jews to give up their profession and return to Judaism. Moreover, the writer is alarmed at some indication of a desire on the part of these Hebrews to return to the Mosaic economy.

His method in setting forth the superiority of Christianity to Judaism is the method of comparison. He compares Jesus Christ with everybody connected with the old economy, and by every point of comparison proves that Jesus Christ is better than anyone connected with the old economy. Christianity is Jesus Christ; Judaism was the religion of the Mosaic order. Christianity is permanent; Judaism was temporary, and typical of the things under Jesus Christ.

Now the writer has proven from the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets, and to the angels, through whom and by whom the law had been given. He will next prove the superiority of Christ to Moses, and he will do this in the most tactful and skilful manner. He will give Moses all the credit, and all the honour and glory, that any Jew would claim for him, but he will give Jesus Christ a higher place, and a greater honour, than that given to Moses.

The Man Moses

Let us consider for a moment this man Moses. What a man! Moses — the child of destiny. Moses was born in the days of the cruel edict that all the Hebrew boy babies should be destroyed. What chance did Moses have to live, and to grow up, and become the deliverer of Israel? Humanly speaking, none whatever. How helpless the Jewish parents were in the face of the mighty monarch of Egypt! But the parents of Moses were not afraid of the king's commandments. They saw in their baby a sign that he was the future deliverer of Israel, and hid him three months. And in the Providence of God Moses was nursed and educated at the expense of the very man who decreed his death. Brought up in a palace, educated in all the wisdom and learning of the Egyptians, enjoying all the luxuries of royalty, Moses never forgot his people. He was first and last and always a Hebrew patriot. Josephus tells us that when a child he threw on the ground a diadem that was put on him in jest, a

portent of his subsequent rejection of adoption by Pharaoh's daughter. And Paul says that "by faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Moses' wise choice was made by faith. He had a revelation from God concerning the future, and he took the long look and made the wise choice.

It was no wonder that Moses was the hero of his people, no wonder that the Jews were so jealous for his honour. They would countenance nothing that seemed to be against Moses and his law, and they put the Lord Jesus Christ to death because they thought he was against Moses.

I.

Christ Superior to Moses (3:1-6)

The chapter before us begins with an appeal to consider One greater than Moses: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." He calls them brethren, not because of their relation to him, but because of their common relation to Jesus Christ, Who was not ashamed to call them brethren. He addresses them as "holy brethren" because they were made holy by their relationship to Jesus Christ, for the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. May I remind you again that the doctrine of sanctification throughout the Hebrew epistle is objective, based upon relationship to Christ, rather than subjective, concerning the work of the Holy Spirit wrought in us.

The Appeal

They are also addressed as "partakers of the heavenly calling". This was a calling from Heaven and to Heaven; it was a calling to receive spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. The appeal is to consider Christ Jesus as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. These Hebrews had confessed that Jesus Christ was God's Apostle, one sent to them by God, and that He was High Priest to look after their religious interests before God. But they need to consider Him. It is not enough to confess Jesus Christ; He must be considered. And the more we consider Him the more precious and wonderful and indispensable will He become. The more we consider Jesus Christ the better we will know Him, and the better we know Him the more we will love Him, and the more we love Him the better will be obey Him. To consider Jesus Christ in His Person, and in His office, and in His claim, will reveal to us what a marvellous Redeemer and Lord we have. To consider Jesus Christ will strengthen our faith, and make brighter our hope.

The writer will next give facts for consideration. When we consider a person we must have some facts about him to consider, to ponder, to think about. These facts are submitted by comparing Jesus Christ to Moses. Paul does not deny the greatness of Moses. He acknowledges all the truth about Moses; he will take no star from the crown of Moses. But Christ Jesus is better than Moses. Jesus is not against Moses, but above Moses. He first points to the resemblance between Christ and Moses. Christ was faithful to God, as was also Moses. What a tribute to Moses! He was faithful to God in all his house. Here the apostle quotes from Numbers 12:7, on the occa-

sion of the sedition against Moses by Aaron and Miriam, who insisted that God had not spoken exclusively through Moses. And God, in rebuking them, says, "Moses . . . is faithful in all mine house." It is hardly necessary to remind this audience that the word "house" in the passage before us does not mean an edifice; it is not a building, but a family, a household. Just as we speak of the house of Stuart, the house of Hanover, the house of David, and the house of Aaron, so we speak of the family of God, the household of Jesus Christ. Moses was faithful in the family of God, faithful as a leader and as a lawgiver and as a prophet. Israel were baptized unto Moses, that is, he was made their leader and their captain.

The Builder of the House Superior to the House

Now Christ Jesus, like Moses, was appointed over a family of God. The family of Moses was Israel; the family of Christ is God's family today. His household in this Christian era, the people who follow Him as Leader and Saviour and Lord. Both Moses and Jesus Christ were faithful to God in things pertaining to their families. The superiority of Jesus Christ over Moses is set forth in two particulars. First, it is the superiority of the Builder of the house over the house itself. God founded the house, or family, of Moses, and Moses was a member of the family, a part of the house. But Christ was the Founder of His house, or family. Moses did not make the Israelites the people of God, but Christ makes people Christians; He is the Author of our salvation. "He that built all things is God," and God built all things by Christ Jesus. The new, as well as the old creation, is the work of God by Jesus Christ. So the superiority of Christ to Moses is likened to that of the superiority of the builder of the house over the house.

The Son Superior to the Servant

In the next place, the superiority of Christ over Moses was the superiority of the Son over the servant. Christ was faithful as a Son; Moses was faithful as a servant. The son is superior to the servant, so Christ is superior to Moses — "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Here we have a very solemn reminder. We are members of the family of God if we remain steadfast in the faith. The reality of faith is proved by steadfastness in faith. Saving faith is a permanent reality. The writer had addressed these Hebrews as "holy brethren," and "partakers of the heavenly calling," but here he reminds them that his words were not unconditional; he reminds them that only those who are steadfast in faith are members of the house of God. To turn away from Jesus Christ Whom they had confessed would be proof that they were not the family of God. To hold fast the confidence of hope firm unto the end means a positive and fearless profession of faith in Jesus Christ in the face of every foe and every danger. This is illustrated in the case of the martyrs, who chose death rather than to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. When the Emperor Julian, the apostate Julian, offered Basil the Great time to consider whether he would renounce Christianity, Basil said: "Do what you intend, for I will be the same tomorrow that I am today." That is what it means to hold fast the confidence of our hope steadfast unto the end.

Apostasy and Perseverance

There is a doctrine of apostasy as well as a doctrine of perseverance. An apostate is one who makes a profession of faith in Christ, and then for some reason or other

turns away from Jesus Christ, and renounces his faith. The apostle John is speaking of apostates when he writes in First John 2:19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." There were apostates among the Jews, for in Hebrews 10:39, the writer says: "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Perseverance is the grand mark of a child of God. No born again person will give up his faith in Christ. The one proof of being born again is perseverance in faith, persevering attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ. He only is a member of the house of God who is kept by the power of God through faith. The Lord Jesus Christ said to some Jews who had professed faith in Him: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."

II.

An Interjected Warning (3:7-19)

Verse seven commences the second interjected warning, which extends to chapter four, verse thirteen. In this extended warning there is repeated reference to a rest, which is called God's rest. And the Hebrews are urged to be sure to enter into that rest. An example of failure to enter into rest is given them, and they are urged not to make the same mistake that was made by their fathers. Their fathers had a rest, the rest of Canaan, promised them, but they did not enter that rest because of unbelief. The Israelites were the professing people of God, but many of them never reached Canaan; because of unbelief their carcasses fell in the wilderness. They provoked God for forty years until He swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest. God gave the Israelites every reason to trust Him. They saw the mighty hand of God at work for forty years, but they would not believe Him and would not trust Him. At Rephidim they murmured for want of water, and questioned whether God was with them, and He gave them water from the rock. In the wilderness of Sin they murmured for want of bread, and God gave them manna. At Sinai they provoked Him with the worship of the golden calf, and a little later they loathed the light bread and cried for flesh to eat, and God gave them quail for a whole month, followed by a plague. But this was not all. At Kadesh-barnea they refused to go over and possess the land, and God sentenced them to wander in the wilderness for thirty-eight years. And this was not all. At Shittim we find them mixing in the impure idolatry of the Moabites. And for forty years Israel provoked God, until He swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest. Our author quotes the ninety-fifth Psalm, where God swears in His wrath that they shall not enter into His rest.

And so he says to the children of these Israelites: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." He is saying to them that to turn away from Jesus Christ would be a departure from the living God.

Exhortation

In verse thirteen the writer urges them to "exhort one another daily, while it is called Today." Today is the present time of grace and opportunity, whatever the day is. One of the best ways of keeping ourselves in the faith is by helping others to maintain faith. If you want

an increase of faith be busy recommending Jesus Christ to other people. We help ourselves by helping others. And so the author exhorts them to "exhort one another daily", lest there be in any of them an evil heart of unbelief.

"Is thy cruse of comfort failing?
Rise and share it with a friend,
And thro' all the years of famine
It shall serve thee to the end.

"Love Divine will fill thy storehouse,
Or thy handful still renew;
Scanty fare for one will often
Make a royal feast for two.

"Lost and weary on the mountains,
Wouldst thou sleep amidst the snow?
Chafe that frozen form beside thee,
And together both shall glow.

"Art thou wounded in life's battle?
Many stricken round thee moan;
Give to them thy precious ointment,
And that balm shall heal thine own."

How we ought to redeem the time in this regard — exhorting one another daily.

The reason for this exhortation is, "lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. One of the most terrible things about sin is its power to deceive. When sin is denied, or ignored, or justified, we are deceived by it. If any of these Jews should think that they would be showing wisdom in turning away from Jesus Christ and returning to Judaism Paul would have them know that they are deceived by sin, for departing from Jesus Christ is certainly departure from the living God. Someone has said that sin is like Jael, who, when Sisera asked for water brought forth milk, but she had the hammer and nail in reserve. Sin is deceitful; it promises profit, and pays off in death.

The need of perseverance is again emphasized in verse fourteen: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." We have the perfect tense here. We have been made partakers of Christ if we persevere unto the end. And the apostle goes back to Psalm 95:7, to make his application. David's "today" was the present time of grace. David's exhortation was meant for the Jews of Paul's day, and for Jews and Gentiles in this twentieth century, if you please. And so he says, "While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." Let not your conduct, the writer says, be like that of your fathers, with whom God was so provoked that He swore that they should not enter into His rest.

A Good Beginning Not Enough

These Jews had made a good beginning, but a good beginning is not everything; it is enduring to the end that proves the reality of faith. The stony ground hearer made a good beginning; he received the word with joy, but did not have the root of the matter in him, and when the time of testing came, when holding on to the Word cost something, he gave it up as quickly as he had received it. The Galatians ran well for a while, but they got so mixed up with a false gospel that Paul doubted their salvation. He said: "I stand in doubt of you," or, as the margin has it: "I am perplexed about you." And

again he says to the Galatians, "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." And again he warns, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." And our Lord said, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." "Once saved always saved" is a grand and a glorious truth, but persevering attachment to Jesus Christ is the grand mark of a saved person. No born again person will renounce faith in Christ Jesus. The good work God begins in us will certainly be performed until the day of Jesus Christ, but it is a good thing to check and double check. All is not gold that glitters, all is not silver that shines, all is not diamond that sparkles. Every cow that moos does not fill the pail, every bee that buzzes does not make honey, and every man who professes faith in Christ, and love for Him, is not a Christian. Persevering attachment to Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the grand mark of a born again person. Paul called upon the Corinthians to examine themselves whether they were in the faith, and Peter exhorts his readers to give diligence to make their calling and election sure — sure to themselves, sure in their experience.

III.

The Warning Continued (4:1-13)

The fourth chapter continues and completes the warning: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." The pronoun "us" is not in the original, and the thought is that there is a rest of God over and beyond and this side of the Canaan rest. David's "today" was a long time after the Canaan rest. It is our day — thus proving that the rest of Canaan did not exhaust the meaning of God's rest. The ultimate meaning of God's rest is his rest in Christ, which issues in the rest of Heaven for His people.

The Two Gospels

We have here in this fourth chapter two gospels, two rests, and two memorials. First we will notice the two gospels. The Israelites of Moses' day had good news preached to them, but it did not profit them because they would not believe. It was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. And so they missed Canaan, and died in the wilderness. If they had believed God's promise they would have entered Canaan when they reached Kadesh-barnea. Now the Jews and Gentiles of Paul's day, and of our day, have good news preached to us. It promises salvation and a home in Heaven, on the terms of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is about a Person, and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. And those who believe in and trust the Lord Jesus Christ enter into the rest of salvation both here and in Heaven. To turn away from Christ is to miss God's rest, for "he that believeth not shall be damned."

The Two Rests

Next, we shall look a little closer at the two rests. Both of them are called God's rest. One is the rest of Canaan, the other is the rest of salvation now and in Heaven. It is called God's rest because God has provided it through the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses did not give that rest, and Joshua did not give that rest, for in verse eight we read: "For if Jesus (that is, Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day." The word for Jesus in the Greek is the same as the word for Joshua in the Hebrew, and in this instance it should not have been translated, but should have been brought

over as Joshua. If Joshua had given Israel rest in the ultimate and final sense, David would not have many years later still talked about the rest of God; he would not have spoken of another day. When the Bible speaks of God resting it means that God is satisfied with what has been done. God's true rest of satisfaction is in His Son; it is in the work of the new creation that has been wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ. And we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ enter into God's rest, and rest along with God in the satisfaction of His Son.

We are exhorted to labour to enter into that rest, the rest Christ has provided. We enter by faith, and faith, like labour, is a difficult thing. Everything in our old self-centred nature is against the principle of salvation by faith. Men naturally believe in salvation by keeping the law, or by works. From the human side it is not easy to believe, but to the soul quickened by the Holy Spirit faith is easy, and is a delight. Paul is here emphasizing human responsibility rather than the grace of God in the matter of faith. Mr. Moody was once seeking to win a man to faith in Christ, and when he had presented the gospel of Christ the man said, "I cannot believe." And Mr. Moody replied, "Cannot believe whom?" The man said, "I just cannot believe." And Mr. Moody replied, "Cannot believe whom?" The man said, "I tell you I cannot believe." And Mr. Moody replied: "Cannot believe whom?" Finally the man said, "I cannot believe myself." And Mr. Moody said, "Thank God that you have got that far, for as long as you believe in self you will not believe in Jesus Christ."

The Two Sabbaths

Let us now call attention to the two memorials in this fourth chapter, the two Sabbaths. In verse nine there is a different word for "rest" to the word that he has been using in the preceding and in the following context. In verse nine it is the Greek word "sabbatismos" which literally means the keeping of a Sabbath. There must be some reason for this change in the Greek text. It is not the rest we have been urged to enter into that he is talking about in verse nine, but the memorial of that rest. It is the Christian Sabbath that remains to the people of God. Just as there remaineth a rest for the people of God, there remains a Sabbath day to commemorate that rest. Creation rest was commemorated by God resting on the seventh day, and the seventh day Sabbath was also to commemorate God's rest from the work of the old creation. But now the first day of the week is a memorial of Christ's rest from His work of the second creation. Christ rested on the first day of the week, and Christians keep the first day of the week in commemoration of His rest from His work. No doubt the unbelieving Jews were saying to the Christians of that day that in leaving Judaism they were leaving everything that was worthwhile, that they were giving up Moses, that they were giving up the prophets, that they had no priesthood, that they had no Sabbath, and so on. But the writer of Hebrews meets this by saying that there remaineth a Sabbath keeping to the people of God.

Verse ten tells us, "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." We believe this speaks of Christ resting from His works of the new creation, just as God rested from the works of the old creation. The particle "for" gives us the reason why we Christians have a Sabbath to keep. We have a Sabbath to keep because Christ rested from

His works on the first day of the week. We keep Sunday rather than Saturday because we are Christians, and not unbelieving Jews. Yes, I know that the claim is made that the Roman Catholics changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. But when do the Roman Catholics claim to have changed the Sabbath? Why in the days of the apostles, because they claim that all the apostles were Roman Catholics, Peter being the first pope. And their claim of having changed the Sabbath is no better than their claim that Peter was the first pope, for both claims are false. Nor did Constantine change the Sabbath; he merely made the day the Christians were already observing the legal Sabbath of his realm.

May I quote from Justin Martyr, one of the church fathers of 150 A.D.: "On the day which is called Sunday all, whether dwelling in the towns or in the villages, hold meetings, and the memoirs of the apostles, and the writings of the prophets, are read, as much as time will permit. Then the reader closing, the president in a speech exhorts and incites to an imitation of these excellent examples. Then we all rise and pour forth united prayers."

One thing more in closing. We have here in verses twelve and thirteen the reason for the warning against unbelief. The word of God threatens the unbeliever. God's word is a dangerous weapon; it is a living and powerful word, "sharper than any two-edged sword." When God's word threatens punishment it is not a dead letter, it is living and powerful. Many human laws are dead letters, that is, they are never enforced. Many threats of parents toward their disobedient children are just dead letters; they are never carried out. But when God's word threatens punishment it is enforced, for God's word is a living word, and it is powerful to punish. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." God's word has power to distinguish between what is spiritual and what is carnal. It discerns the thoughts and intents of the human heart. God's word is a critic of motives as well as of deeds. It has been well said that the word of God wounds the sinner, condemns the hypocrite, and rebukes the saint. God's word is too perilous to be trifled with. There is no escape from its penetrating gaze, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

CANADIAN BAPTIST LITERATURE WANTED

Toronto Baptist Seminary is determined to amass the most complete collection of Baptist literature to be found anywhere. Emphasized especially will be an initial collection of *Canadian* Baptist historical data. Unfortunately much of this valuable material is not readily accessible but we are nevertheless convinced that it is extant in the homes of many of our readers or of friends known to them. Your material can be of real use in the Lord's service if you send it to the Seminary.

What type of Baptist literature is needed? In brief, all types. Specifically books, booklets, pamphlets, brochures, documents, historic bulletins or pictures could all be used toward this collection. Even if your contribution toward this project seems small in your eyes, send it along for it may be of real value and shed light on some aspect of Baptist work of which little has hitherto been known.

Send your parcel of material to Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Ontario.

—L.K.T.

The Problem of Evening Services

DURING the past few weeks considerable interest has been aroused on the subject of Sunday evening church services. Lest our readers should be under the impression that the churches are experiencing difficulty in accommodating the vast throngs that descend upon the houses of worship, we hasten to add that the "problem" is not one of "overcrowding" but rather one of empty churches. The whole discussion was brought to the fore by the comment of a United Church clergyman who suggested that Sunday evening services should be discontinued because there was such a poor response; in place of these services, he urged the ministers to concentrate on home visitation. These remarks were prominently displayed in the papers and immediately various Protestant clergymen expressed their approval or their disapproval of the proposal that Protestants encourage "once a Sunday" attendance.

In all the discussion, however, we have not heard the real issue aired, for the core of the matter is not really simply a question of one or two services on Sunday, although in the days of our fathers such a suggestion would have been branded correctly as a retreat in the work of the Lord. The Methodist, Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian churches of a better day had great evening services *with the preaching of the gospel*. Their spiritual descendants, in their supposed wisdom have chosen to discard the "old theology" and hence have forfeited, too, power with men and with God. One cannot long despise the Word of God and at the same time enjoy His favour.

Real Reason for Non-Attendance

We have stated that this so-called problem of the evening service is merely the symptom of something deeper. The basic reason for the drop in attendance is the simple fact that the ministers of our day, to a large extent, have abandoned the gospel and God in turn has left their temples desolate. "Oh no," says the modern cleric, "the churches cannot attract people because of the counter attractions of radio, television, the auto and recreation of various sorts." Doubtless this is partly true but every age has presented what it deemed "peculiar" endurances and enticements to cause men to forsake the Lord. The basic reason for non-attendance at Modernist churches is that people have no desire to attend a place where they are offered the husks of modern infidelity. In fact, we will further state that we blame no one who stays away from many of our modern churches for if God has forsaken the house, no believer will profit in frequenting its courts. If no true evangelical church is to be found in the area, one would be more profited in remaining at home or gathering with friends to spend the time in prayer, reading God's Word and the sermons of those who have been faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Modern Substitutes for Preaching

Various churches have adopted novel solutions to this "Sunday evening problem". One of these is Bathurst Street United Church in Toronto which features a panel discussion each Sunday evening. The "experts" discuss the subject and following the discussion, the audience is free to ask questions. Fluoridation of water, racial tolerance and other equally innocuous subjects have been

discussed in the past weeks but on Sunday last the panel attacked this weighty question — "*Can Toronto Churches Be Roused Out of Sunday Evening Ruts?*" Since this church had found a substitute for the proclamation of the gospel of grace one would think that a capacity crowd would wait with bated breath for their oracular conclusions. Yet how many attended this service in an auditorium which should seat 1,200 and which in better days was probably packed? The Monday morning paper tells us that "*fewer than 50 persons*" attended. *The Globe and Mail* further aptly observed that "an audience of fewer than fifty persons in Bathurst Street United Church served to accentuate the problem posed by the subject of discussion."

All the modern substitutes for the preaching of the everlasting gospel are doomed to failure for none can replace the good news that "Jesus saves" and the clear exposition of the Word of the living God. C. H. Spurgeon watched this downward trend in his day and in a sermon preached in 1891 he declared—"One might have thought, from what we have seen of late, that orders had come from headquarters that the soldiers were to lay down the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and take to lighter weapons. Entertainments, amusements, farces, and singing are now used to do what the gospel has failed to achieve. It is not sadly so? Well, if any will try these silly toys, I can only say that they have no command from their Lord to warrant them in their proceedings. Take all these things and see what they will do; but you make the trial at your own risk, and on your own heads the result of the failure will fall!"

Rome's Reaction

While Protestant clergymen thus experiment and play with their earthly toys and hold their never-ending "Committee" meetings, the Church of Rome smiles benignly and invites men and women to come back to the "Mother Church" with the unchanging attraction of the Mass. The Roman Catholic weekly, *The Canadian Register*, in a leading editorial on March 26 deals with this question. The editorial is entitled "No Need To Close Our Churches."

In part it reads as follows—"Some of our contemporaries of other faiths are becoming alarmed at the falling off of attendance at Sunday devotions in their churches. The suggestion has been made that they discontinue church services on Sunday and go out among the people to bring the message of the gospel to them.

"Fortunately Catholic parishes in Canada do not feel any such dilemma. But we do well to take to heart the warning which our Holy Father gave the pastors of Rome recently, not to be complacent at the sight of full churches on Sunday . . . Here is a glorious opportunity for our faithful Catholics to exercise the apostolate; they can support the efforts of their pastors to bring the message of the Mass to those who still do not know it."

It is not difficult to see why the Roman Church smugly rejoices at this hopeless and apathetic attitude of so-called Protestant leaders. Rome has nothing to fear from those who have deserted the Word of God and have ceased to endeavour to rescue souls from the grip of the world and error in all its manifestations (including Romanism). Whenever men are deprived of a source of true

authority they must turn to anything that even gives the appearance of authority. If the adherents of modern, bankrupt Protestantism are denied the Word of God in their own places of worship and if they are not rescued by those who truly preach Christ, then the false and assumed authority of Rome appears very attractive.

Not only will Rome profit by this betrayal of trust but so too will that sect known as Jehovah Witnesses as well as every other error of depraved man. Satan and his agents are sure to have a field day in the hour in which the gospel is not preached in power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost.

Retreat! Retreat! — the Battle Cry of the New Theology

When men first presumed to foist modernism or liberalism upon the churches, believers were told that a better day was just around the corner and this new teaching would score stunning victories. In vain do we look for these boasted conquests. Instead the churches have become powerless and have retreated in an ignominious fashion. Now we are told that a "once a Sunday" religion is sufficient for our day. In short the message of the majority of modern pulpits has not brought the promised fruits but rather has emptied great churches where once the glad sound was heard. Let those who will rally behind our new leaders who cry "Retreat!"; as for us, we choose rather to have as our war cry — "Victory! Victory!"

A Challenge to Evangelicals

This whole situation surely represents a distinct challenge to those churches which preach Christ and Him crucified. Let decadent religion perish as perish it must, either here or in the hereafter; but the gospel must run and have free course. Evangelical testimonies, large and small, urban and rural, may take courage and, by the grace of God, turn what appears as a downward trend into victory for the Lord. Those who are truly zealous for souls will see in this present complacency a God-given challenge to reach men with the gospel. The keynote will not be "No Evening Services" but rather "More Services; More Prayer; More Preaching; More Victory; and More Godly Living." The end result will be visitation from God and the salvation of immortal souls.

—L.K.T.

For Younger Readers

DELMAR'S INVESTMENT

By BLANCHE KOON

Delmar did not see the little newsboy fall into the dirty puddle of water, but he heard the oath that rent the air—and shuddered.

"Having trouble, Fellow?" Delmar stopped to ask sympathetically.

"He pushed me—the pig! I'll get him tomorrow—I will!" the child swore by the name that Delmar held sacred. "Look!" the boy held up his ruined papers, "I'll have to pay for 'em anyhow, and collections is bad—six guys went on vacation and never paid! Maybe I wouldn't like to go fishin' and swimmin' and—" his voice broke in a sob.

"Let's see how many papers you have here," said Delmar, "maybe I can keep you out of bankruptcy . . . Eighteen papers at five cents each. . . . Tell you what, Fellow, I'll pay you ninety cents for your stock if you'll promise me not to swear any more."

"Why?" demanded the boy. "what's it to you if I

swear? Ninety cents is a lot of money!"

"Do you love somebody, Fellow, Is there somebody whose name you would not want to hear spoken in an ugly way?"

"Yes sir! My brother. A guy tried that once and his nose was a sight when I got through with it!"

"Well, Fellow, the name you used is the name of my heavenly Father whom I love. It hurts me to hear His name spoken that way."

"Oh, I didn't know anybody loved Him! Hm-m. You seem like an awful kind guy. I won't swear no more if that's how you feel about Him. But I don't want no money for that. I've got some money in the bank." He looked at his soaked papers and sighed.

"You have been wronged," said Delmar. "Of course, the fellow who wronged you ought to pay for the papers."

"Huh! he won't pay nothin'. He's a rat!"

"Well, his debt ought to be paid by somebody, oughtn't it?"

"Yeah, but his brother is a rat, too."

"Once I owed a debt *I couldn't pay*," said Delmar, "and somebody paid it for me. If I could pay you this defaulter's debt, it would make me feel better."

"Would it—honest? Well, then—" he hesitated, considered. That put things in a different light. It looked as if he would be doing Delmar a favor by taking the money. "Well, then," he repeated, "I could buy me some overalls Saturday—if them vacation guys did leave me in a hole!"

As Delmar counted out the ninety cents, he asked, "Do you go to Sunday school, Fellow?"

"No."

I'm sorry. I've had such good times in Sunday school. May I give you this Book? It tells about the wonderful Person who paid my debt for me."

"Honest? Thank ye a lot for—everything!"

"You're welcome. Goodbye."

Delmar went his way with a prayer in his heart. "I'll have to cut down on cokes," he mused, "but if ninety cents will help a boy to reverence God's name, it will be a great investment."

* * *

"Why, hello, Parker! Glad to see you."

"Hello, Delmar. I was sort of waiting out here for you because I didn't know where to go."

"Mighty glad you did. Our class meets in the east wing. This way, Parker."

As he piloted his high school classmate to his Sunday school class, Delmar's heart sang, "Thank you, Lord, for answering prayer—at last!"

Parker was a good student, but he was a "lone wolf". He held everybody at a distance. Obviously he was poor—and proud. He worked long hours after school and on Saturdays, but his grades didn't suffer. Few knew where he lived, or anything about his family—if there was a family. It took a lot of nerve to ask Parker questions. Delmar had tried to be friendly, had once ventured to invite the boy to his Sunday school. Parker had replied curtly, "Thanks—I'm not interested." But, suddenly, here he was!

Parker listened attentively. Nothing escaped his attention. He accepted a quarterly. He stayed for the morning service. He declined with thanks an invitation to lunch with Delmar, but his sober face brightened a bit as he shook hands and remarked, "It was interesting. I'll see you later, Delmar."

Parker continued to attend Sunday school and church. One Sunday when an invitation was given, and a tear betrayed Parker's controlled emotion, Delmar said, "I'll go with you to the prayer room, Parker, if you want to pray." The boy nodded and Delmar led the way. Parker came out of the prayer room an earnest Christian.

The next Sunday Parker came to Sunday school with a small boy holding tightly to his hand.

"Delmar," said Parker, "this is my brother, Lynn. He's been going with a neighbor boy to Sunday school but he wants to come here now because we have a prayer room. Can you tell me where to take him?"

"Hello, Lynn—why, hello, Fellow! I didn't recognize you at first. You're so dressed up! How are you?"

"All right," the boy grinned. "I ain't—I mean, I haven't swore'd once!"

"Good! I knew you'd keep your word," said Delmar, leading the way to the Junior department.

"It was kind of you to help the boy out that time," remarked Parker.

"How in the world did you know it was I?" stammered Delmar, beginning to understand why Parker had suddenly appeared at Sunday school.

"Your name was in the Testament you gave him," smiled Parker.

"Oh, I forgot that," said Delmar. "Of course I never dreamed he was your brother!"

"I know," said Parker. "He told me you didn't ask him his name, or anything except if he loved anybody, and if he went to Sunday school. I liked the way you did it," said Parker, simply.—*Selected.*

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 19 Second Quarter Lesson 2 April 10, 1955

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

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (Easter Lesson)

Lesson Text: Luke 24:1-12.

Golden Text: "He is not here, but is risen."—Luke 24:6a.

I. The Message of the Angelic Guard: verses 1-10.

Our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead very early in the morning (John 20:1). The night of sorrow had ended, and now a new day had dawned upon the world. It was a day of light and victory, a foregleam of that glorious day when all shadows shall be forever dispelled; when there shall be no more night, and no more death (Song of Sol. 2:17; 2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 21:4, 25).

The resurrection of Christ marked the beginning of a new week. This was to be the first of the new sabbaths. The sabbath commemorated the rest of creation (Gen. 2:2; Exod. 20:10), but the first day was hereafter to be the sign of the rest of redemption (Heb. 4:3-10). As the Passover marked the beginning of months for the children of Israel, so did the resurrection of Christ usher in the new era for the saints.

Faithful women who had ministered to the Lord of their substance and service while He was in Galilee had witnessed the crucifixion (Matt. 27:56; Luke 8:2). Among them were Mary Magdalene who had been delivered from demon possession (Mark 16:9), Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward (Luke. 8:3), and Mary, the mother of James and Joses (verse 10). They had watched the tender burial of their beloved Lord, had noticed the place where He was laid, and had prepared spices and ointments for the embalming of the precious body (Luke 23:55, 56). Very early in the morning of the first day of the week they hastened with eager love to the tomb, disregarding all obstacles. Happily, their love gift was no longer necessary, for their devotion was to be offered to a living Saviour.

The stone, which had been securely placed at the entrance to the tomb and sealed by the order of Pilate (Matt. 27:65, 66), was removed by the power of God, manifested through the touch of an angel at the time of the earthquake (Matt. 28:2). The Roman guards were overpowered at the sight of the heavenly visitor, and two men in shining apparel succeeded them as watchmen.

The Lord comforts His loving servants in the time of perplexity and fear; they who trust in Him are not left desolate. The angelic hosts were ready to do the Lord's bidding. They acted as emissaries to announce the Saviour's birth (Luke 2:9, 13) and to announce His resurrection. They remained on guard at the empty tomb, standing majestically at the entrance, or sitting on the stone, or filling the gloomy sepulchre within with heavenly radiance (Matt. 28:2; Mark 16:5 John 20:12). They delight to minister to the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14).

The angels made a three-fold pronouncement concerning the resurrection of Christ; the glorious truth was emphasized in the form of a question, a statement and an exhortation. Christ was now the Living One (Rev. 1:18). Why did they seek Him in the tomb of the dead? He had been numbered with the transgressors in His death, but now He would be found among the living and glorified ones. He was the first-born among many brethren, and hence, the God of all living, for all live unto Him (Luke 20:38; Acts 26:23; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; Rev. 1:5). This was the explanation of the empty grave. Let us identify ourselves with Christ in His death, that we may share also in His eternal life (Rom. 6:8-11). Because He lives, we, too, shall live (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Thess. 4:14).

The angels bade the women call to mind the promise of their Lord that He would rise again (Matt. 17:22, 23; Mark 9:30, 31). How comforting to be reminded of the words of Christ! The women listened to the testimony of the heavenly visitors that all these events had taken place according to the eternal plan of God for His Son (Acts 13:30-37; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4). The women remembered and believed, receiving the assurance which they needed.

When these women were fully assured that Christ had actually risen from the dead, they hastened to spread the good news. We, too, shall be eager to tell the glad tidings of a Saviour crucified, risen and glorified, when we have received a heart knowledge of the resurrection life and power of Christ, making us humble, holy and happy (Matt. 28:8; Eph. 1:19, 20; Phil. 3:10).

II. The Miracle of the Empty Tomb: verses 11, 12.

The eleven disciples could not believe the joyful testimony of the women that Christ had risen, but Peter and John were sufficiently interested to investigate for themselves (John 20:24-29).

The two disciples perceived that the tomb was empty. In those days, after a body was embalmed, it was wrapped round and round with narrow linen bands. The body of Christ could not have been stolen, for those linen bands were lying on the floor of the tomb, undisturbed. The burial clothes probably still marked the contour of the precious body of the Saviour, as the chrysalis indicates the form of the newly-escaped butterfly. The position of the graveclothes, the fact of the empty tomb and the witness of those to whom Christ appeared after His passion, are among the "many infallible proofs" of His resurrection (Acts 1:3).

Peter departed, "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass," but it is said that John "saw and believed".

The empty grave which the women and the two disciples beheld is a fact of deep significance for the world, and especially for the Christian. Here was tangible evidence that Christ had been victorious over the powers of evil, death and Hades (Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18). God had accepted the sacrifice of Christ and had raised Him from the dead, that all might know that their redemption had been made sure (Rom. 4:23-25).

Daily Bible Readings

April 4—Christ Appears to the Women Mark 16:1-8
 April 5—Christ Appears to Mary Magdalene John 20:11-18
 April 6—Christ Appears to the Two Marys Matt. 28:1-8
 April 7—Christ Appears to the Emmaus Disciples Luke 24:13-35
 April 8—Christ Appears to the Ten Disciples John 20:19-25
 April 9—Christ Appears to the Ten and Thomas John 20:26-31
 April 10—Christ Appears to Peter and Others John 21:1-22