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IS THE RIGHT TO DISSENT TO BECOME A RARE LUXURY?

IS IT a *sin* to raise the voice against what one believes to be contrary to the Word of God? We think not! To be more specific — is it a sin to point out what appears to be a dangerous trend in evangelical circles? Again we say — No! Yet increasingly in the evangelical world there are being raised certain idols which believers are to blindly worship and never criticize. In other words, an evangelical conformity is being established and all who dare to dissent are anathema.

We have watched this trend for some time and hoped that it was a passing fad but apparently our hopes were ill-founded. Let it be clearly understood that we are not now dealing with modernism but with evangelicalism. We are evangelicals and make no apology for the fact but we do demand for ourselves and for all fellow-evangelicals the right to dissent from any action or trend of evangelicalism which appears to be contrary to the Gospel.

Dissent Against Methods

What leads us to write in this vein? Several considerations prompt us. For instance, the reaction of one prominent evangelical to a recent article in THE GOSPEL WITNESS led us to think that this matter of dissent should be aired. The article to which he objected appeared in the issue of April 7 and since it was a short one, we print it in full:

"BLOODSHED, SHIPWRECK, INTRIGUE, MURDER . . ."

"What a shocking title for an article in a Christian publication," declares some indignant reader. Yes, we agree that these are indeed shocking words but they are copied from the publicity of a certain "Christian" film. We can hardly believe that the churches have come upon a day in which they ape Hollywood but certainly it is true.

"The Toronto Telegram" of April 4 carried this story:

CHURCH PREMIERE FOR FEATURE FILM

It's a full-color epic film featuring "bloodshed, shipwreck, intrigue, murder, love and redemption" — that's what the publicity release says.

The film: "Wine of Morning", having its premiere in Toronto on Thursday and Friday.

Where? At Trinity United Church.

Why?

"Well, it's an Easter film," explained Gus Ambrose, director of the Toronto Youth for Christ movement. "It's a love story, but it also ties in with Holy Week — there are scenes in Nazareth, Galilee and Jerusalem."

Those who love the gospel and are determined to hold to the distinctive evangelical position must read with saddened hearts such carnal attempts at propagating a spiritual message. When these films were first used, they appeared to be relatively harmless and only the occasional prophet foresaw the direction in which they led. Now they have become bolder and bolder and can hardly be distinguished from the product of Hollywood in their publicity. It is a sad day for evangelicals when they must rely upon such devices to attract crowds.

In the above article we merely sought to express what was our own estimate in the light of the Word of God. We asked no one else to agree with us and I trust that we wrote the article in love toward fellow believers. Several people spoke to us and declared that this too was their own feeling about "gospel" films. Probably others sincerely disagreed and this right to dissent from THE GOSPEL WITNESS or anyone else is one that we cherish. One man, however, thought it his duty to send us a letter in which he viciously attacked the writer of the article and "The Gospel Witness". As you read his letter, keep our article in mind for if you judge it by his description you might think that the article was malicious whereas it was nothing of the sort. Here is the letter from our brother:

Gentlemen:

Some Christian friends in Toronto have sent me a copy of your paper dated April 7, and they are disgusted with your attack upon our film which was produced for the purpose of reaching the unsaved with the Gospel that they may be won to Christ.

It seems to me that if you had as much passion for the souls of men as you have desire to flaunt a pharisaical self-righteousness, you would not attack a ministry which seeks to get out the Gospel; and I know if you got half as much Gospel in one issue of your paper as we got in WINE OF MORNING, you would not have room in your columns for such an attack.

The purpose of our advertising is to attract the un-saved — it is not aimed primarily at reaching Christians. However, no spiritual Christian man can find any legitimate basis for criticizing our advertising approach. The words "shipwreck, murder, love and redemption" are all good scriptural words. They might be used to advertise the Bible for sale as much as to advertise our film. The Bible recounts the story of Paul's shipwreck in a very dramatic fashion. It tells us that Barabbas was a murderer. The book of Ruth is a wonderful love story, and the Word of God reveals the divine plan of redemption.

Unfortunately for your paper, your long habit of setting up straw men to knock down is as well known as is your habit of attacking without justification the ministry of those of like precious faith. This, of course, very largely nullifies the influence of your paper. It is too bad that your ministry has been thus weakened. With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,

As we said, this letter comes from a prominent evangelical. Because we disagreed with a pet project he informs us that we have a desire "to flaunt a *pharisaical self-righteousness*". Our crime is that we dared to dissent from what he and other evangelicals judge to be infallible methods. In haste, we replied to his letter as follows:

Dear

Your letter of April 18 arrived at the office today and its contents were noted with amazement! I have overlooked its general tone and excused it on the grounds that you did not reread the letter after dictating it.

Strangely enough, the very thing which you attack in "The Gospel Witness" characterizes your whole letter to me. Apparently you consider it a crime for someone to differ vigorously with your own preconceived notions as to how the Gospel should be propagated. As the article to which you refer states, we do profoundly disagree with the carnal advertising which is typical of so many "Christian" films. Before God we judge it imperative to speak against this modern trend, but at the same time we have nothing but love towards those who are fellow believers.

Your reference to the nullification of the influence of "The Gospel Witness" was obviously written in haste without any meditation, for you will be pleased to know that "The Gospel Witness" continues to abide in strength and that its influence is being more and more appreciated.

Please accept my best wishes.

Yours in Christ,

(Signed) LESLIE K. TARR,
Editor-in-Chief.

All of this brings up the question of the believer's right to differ from the great body of evangelicals on the question of method. Because we object to the use of carnal weapons, it is not true that we have no passion for the souls of men. Because we refuse to yield to the modern emphasis upon entertaining sinners, it is not to be inferred that we are not interested in their salvation. We again claim for ourselves and others the right to dissent and the right to proceed upon Scriptural lines in the glorious work of evangelization. Further, if we are persuaded that other methods are unscriptural we shall not hesitate to say so!

Dissent From Evangelical Idols

Certain men have been raised up as virtual idols in the evangelical world and it is thought to be a terrible sin if some timid prophet dare to suggest that there is something wrong in the idol's associations or temporizing. If a believer dare object, immediately there is raised the hue and cry — "Pharisee! Hypocrite!" Finally it comes to the place where the word or action of the idol is equivalent to a "Thus saith the Lord". We demand the right

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to dissent! If these eminent persons are being used of the Lord, it does not follow that everything they do or say is beyond reproach and never to be questioned.

Dissent From Pet Theories

A particular school of prophecy is popular among many evangelicals today and, although in the past eschatology has not been a basis of fellowship, increasingly this prophetic system is flaunted as the *only* Christian school of thought. Any who dissent are either scripturally deficient or modernists. Again we ask, can there be no dissent in such matters?

Let other evangelicals do as they like. As for us, we will not be intimidated by any threats or the displeasure of fellow believers. We shall continue to dissent where necessary and at the while love all believers.

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

A large number of people gathered for the morning service in Jarvis Street Baptist Church. The pastor brought the message which challenged the church workers to renewed effort and consecration in their labour of love. At the conclusion of the message two responded to profess Christ publicly.

In the evening Dr. Robert Dubarry preached. This was the final message to be delivered by this man of God before he returns to his native France. The presence of the Lord was manifested again.

Two Articles on Bible Balloon Campaign

PIERCING THE IRON CURTAIN WITH THE GOSPEL

"BIBLES BY BALLOON"

By the Rev. B. J. Hargis

IN 1952, delegates to the Regional Conference of the International Council of Christian Churches, meeting in Edinburgh, decided to send portions of Scripture to dwellers behind the Iron Curtain by means of hydrogen-filled balloons. I have just returned from Europe where I served as Chairman of the "Bibles by Balloon" project for the second time. This year our efforts resulted in our sending 113,000 pieces of sacred literature, including portions of the Bible, into Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet zone of Austria. On Friday, May 7th, we began the second annual launching on the Czechoslovakian border, near the little German town of Cham. About fifty refugees from the former German section of Czechoslovakia and Silesia, which are now part of Poland, assisted in our task. After being filled with hydrogen gas and released, the balloons ascended to 10,000 feet before they began the long trip to the intended Communist nations. The conditions were very favourable in that a blanket of clouds, above and below the prevailing air current, shielded the balloons from such prying eyes as those which on the previous occasion had spied some of them and shot them down. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the preparations were completed, and the band of refugees, who had worked faithfully, paused in the rain-soaked field to offer fervent prayers that these balloons might reach their loved ones, and reassure them of the affection and friendship of Christians in the free world. The balloons intended for Russia and Poland were launched later from Munich, Germany. The literature was printed in Czech, Slovak, Polish and Russian.

The Czechoslovakian government protested against our action; their protests, however, did not greatly trouble our loyal Christian workers. The decision to shoot down the balloons and deal with those who assisted in the launching of them was publicly revealed by radio broadcasts and news from Prague. The Communists are determined that the message of Christ and the free world must be withheld from those oppressed souls in the shackled countries. Their leaders know full well that a good Christian can never be a good Communist. Christ's message gives burdened hearts an undying determination for freedom. Therefore, the Communist fears the prayers of the Christians and the activities of the free church more than all the armies of the world. In spite of these threats, however, we shall continue our project each year, God willing, until the intended half million balloons have been despatched on their errand.

Any doubt that might exist as to the effectiveness of the means we have adopted was entirely dissolved by news we received from Frankfurt, Germany. A group of refugees, who were interviewed by American press representatives, told them that a religious revival had

been set alight in their districts by the thousands of Christian tracts and Scripture portions which had been floated into their midst. The refugees interviewed were from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and even the western fringes of Russia, and had witnessed the amazing results of our first efforts.

Recently we met a German lady visiting the States, who said that her nephew, in one of the Communist countries, had written to say that one of our balloons had "floated from heaven into his arms" early one morning. He was thrilled to have a portion of the Bible for his own. Each day he and his friends read and re-read this sacred Gospel, and at least one teen-age boy embraced Christianity. Indeed, the Word of God can not only change persons but nations. No book on earth possesses a similar power.

—From *Bible League Quarterly*

"BIBLE BY BALLOONS REVIVAL"!

A SHORT despatch in the daily paper was probably overlooked by many readers but it told in a few words of a project which should commend itself to all Christians. The article read:

Stuttgart, Germany, April 25, (AP)—The first of 100,000 hydrogen-filled balloons to carry Bible pamphlets to Iron Curtain countries will be launched today. The project, sponsored by the International Council of Christian Churches with headquarters in Amsterdam, will take four or five months.

Behind these two brief paragraphs is a story which is a thrilling one. It is the story of an endeavour to reach people behind the Iron Curtain with the gospel. In this generation there has arisen in Central Europe a heartless dictatorship which denies basic freedoms and employs propaganda and repressive measures in order to stamp out Christianity. The Bible has consequently become an unknown Book to countless millions of souls and Jesus Christ is not known as Saviour. How are they to be reached? Missionaries are denied admittance; the mails are rigorously censored; radio broadcasts are interfered with. To all appearances, the situation might be regarded as hopeless.

A plan has been conceived to overcome these obstacles. It has been termed "The Bible by Balloons Revival". Under the auspices of The International Council of Christian Churches, thousands of balloons with attached Scripture portions have been sent into the conquered areas. Reports from refugees slipping into West Germany indicate that the campaign is having a spiritual impact upon people in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and even the western fringes of Russia.

During 1955 one hundred thousand balloons, containing a half million portions of the Bible, will be sent behind the Iron Curtain. Think of the effect that so many

Bibles could have! Imagine the sentiments of one who received a balloon and picked up for the first time a portion of the Word of the living God in his own language! Frankly we know of no better method of fighting godless communism and at the same time of reaching lost souls.

Picture the labour involved in sending these balloons. Christians in West Germany work long hours each day preparing the balloons and attaching Scriptures. When the winds are favourable the balloons are launched from a hillside. Their journey might be as far as six hundred miles with a travelling time of eighteen hours. Yet the labourers are well repaid with the knowledge that the gospel is penetrating even the Iron Curtain!

Think of the cost! Each Bible balloon costs approximately two dollars. Thus tens of thousands of dollars will be required for the work of this year. Every dollar sent will be used for this work of reaching souls with the Word of God. If our readers desire to contribute to this great ministry we would be pleased to forward their contributions to the office of the International Council of Christian Churches.

ONE BY ONE

THE Gospel is the one-man religion. When Christianity takes the census it counts every man one, and says to despairing preachers, teachers, and evangelists, "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." Christianity despises no one; Christianity is the shepherd that will not rest until the hundredth sheep be found. "Ninety-and-nine"—there is no music in these chiming syllables, because one of the flock has gone astray. This is another aspect of the Gospel, equal in pathos to the aspect which has just passed before us clothed with moral grandeur. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Other religions go by numbers, by empires; they count multitudinously: they count a nation one. The individual life is a fleck, a drop in a bucket, a very little thing not to be named. But the religion of Jesus Christ, having found that one of the ten pieces is lost, instantly lights a candle and sweeps the house diligently until it be found. Christianity, having found that one of the lambs has gone astray, will neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, nor hold the customary feast until the wanderer is back again. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." So, every man is a congregation. Our ministers must be rebuked if they count more than one man in the house. There is only one man in all the populations of the earth, and he is lost and must be found. Oh, preacher! every man is a congregation; the meanest, poorest creature that crouches within hearing distance is a nation—the world; know thy duty, and in Christ's great strength win the fight. Earnestness can always speak to the individual. There is no affront that can be offered to the spirit of the Gospel more deadly than to withhold because the numbers are not overwhelming. If one soul is within ear-shot, he constitutes the supreme occasion of any ministry. The Gospel has thunder for the crowd and whispers for the one listener. That is the truth. Jesus Christ often spoke to the one hearer; Jesus made revelations to individual hearers greater than any he ever made to the crowd. If we might compare the discourses of the perfect Speaker, we might

say, by the accommodation of human language, that the most splendid discourses of the Messiah were delivered to solitary listeners. What said he to the woman of sin from the strange city? When she spoke of Messiah, he said, "I that speak unto thee am he." When did he say that to a crowd? What said he to the woman all grief, because she had buried all her heart? "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And so trace his history, and you will find that to individual hearers he communicated his greatest messages. What said he in the hush of night to Nicodemus? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Produce the match of these discourses from all the public deliverances of the Divine Speaker. When he spoke in public he spoke in another tone: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Even there the same sublime doctrine is conveyed: mark, the invitation is to the one thirsting man. But, whilst the preacher may find some difficulty here, the listener himself may imagine that he is too small to be addressed in his individuality. Whilst he is in the congregation, he may imagine himself lost in the crowd—he is only part of the urgent occasion. We must have individuality of hearing as well as individuality of preaching. The true hearer is the man who supposes himself to be the only listener in all the sanctuary—who is so absorbed in spiritual earnestness and attention that he hears every word as if spoken to himself alone—a message just delivered from the great Father to the one wandering child. Such preaching, equalled by such hearing, and the next step is a converted world. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

—JOSEPH PARKER.

THANK YOU, DR. SMITH

It was my great privilege to be doctor-in-charge of the late Pastor during his long months of illness and confinement. In the last few months, however, an able associate was Dr. George Smith, a specialist in the field of internal medicine. Indeed it could be said that he carried the major burden because Dr. Shields for some time had required medical care rather than surgical. Since Dr. Smith excelled in this field, he assumed the major responsibility.

Repeatedly in the presence of the writer, Dr. Shields spoke of Dr. Smith in terms of highest appreciation, commenting on his ability, interest and gracious manner. Undoubtedly from the human standpoint, it was due largely to the efforts of Dr. Smith that Dr. Shields' life was prolonged and in view of the critical nature of these last few months in the life of the church, we can thank God for Dr. Smith's magnificent contribution.

—DR. REMOND PORCHERON

RESERVE THIS DATE — MAY 23. THE NEW BAPTIST CHURCH BUILDING IN OWEN SOUND WILL BE OFFICIALLY OPENED ON MONDAY, MAY 23. PASTOR BROWN AND THE PEOPLE EXTEND A HEARTY INVITATION TO ALL TO ATTEND AND ENJOY THE INSPIRATION AND FELLOWSHIP OF THE DAY.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

The Essence of the Gospel

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, December 2nd, 1928

(Stenographically Reported)

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John 1:8, 9.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord our God, for the mercy seat. We thank Thee that though we have sinned, we are not excluded from Thy holy presence. We have read from Thy Word this morning that all have sinned, and that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. We have sinned; notwithstanding, the door is open to us, and we may come into the presence of a holy God. We thank Thee for the precious love of Christ by which atonement has been made, and in His name we come where Thou art this morning. We rejoice that we may come with our burden of sin, and cast it upon Him Who is our Sin-Bearer, and be delivered entirely therefrom. Help us all to do it.

We rejoice too that we may cast our cares upon Thee, We have many cares. There are fathers and mothers here this morning who are often filled with anxiety. Their greatest joys have become their greatest responsibilities and the occasion of their greatest care, and sometimes the occasion of their greatest anxiety. But Thou art ready to receive and they may come with their burdens, and cast them at Thy feet. We thank Thee that whatever our need it is already abundantly provided for in Christ Jesus, and we have but to come to the storehouse of Christ and receive, by faith, grace to help in time of need. Grant, we beseech Thee, that every needy man and woman, and boy and girl, in Thy presence this morning may thus obtain divine help.

There are young people who need Thee as they look out upon life, and seek to know how most profitably they may spend it. Be Thou their Shepherd, O Lord, we beseech Thee, and guide their feet into the way of peace. It may be there are men of business here this morning who are troubled at the prospect of the week. There are difficulties ahead of them to which they do not feel equal; yet Thou canst be their Helper. We pray that all anxiety may be taken from their minds, that they may be enabled to rest in the Lord this morning. Some have great sorrow, but Thou canst relieve them of that. Some have been plunged into darkness because of some secret sorrow of heart; Thou art able to lighten even this gloom. We come with all our peculiar conditions, and ask that of Thy fullness every one of us may receive help to-day.

We come to worship Thee. We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou art, and that we know that Thou art; and that Thou art the rewarder of them that diligently seek Thee. We have ten thousand reasons to praise Thy name. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Thou hast daily loaded us with benefits; Thou hast enriched us in the fellowships and friendships of life beyond all our deserving. Thou hast done great things for us all; and many of us, we trust most of us, are glad therefore. We offer Thee, O Lord, the adoration of our hearts this morning. Thou Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we praise Thee for what Thou art.

And now we would bring to Thee a petition for those who are sick. Many whom Thou lovest are sick. We beseech Thee to be their Physician to-day, and touch them with Thy healing hand. O Lord, we remember, especially before Thee this morning our gracious sovereign the king. We thank Thee for a worthy example, for a life well lived; we trust that in his heart he knows Thee as his Saviour. We pray that Thou wilt minister to him the gracious comfort of Thy Spirit; and oh, if it be Thy will, we pray Thee to spare his life, and fully restore him to health and strength again. Give wisdom, and

direction to those who wait upon him. Let Thy blessing be upon all those who are especially near and dear to him to-day. Send us, we pray Thee, good news if it be Thy will that he is out of danger and well on the way to recovery. Unitedly we petition Thy help in his behalf.

And now, O Lord, as we come to Thy holy Word, may it be very sweet to us to-day, and very simple. We pray for all these dear children. We thank Thee that they are here; we covet them for Thee. We pray that early in their hearts and in their lives Christ may be formed in them the hope of glory. It may be there are some here this morning, men and women, for whom prayer has long been offered, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters. If there be any such who have come into this place without the certainty of salvation, we pray that this may be a day of grace. Grant us now the ministry of Thy Holy Spirit we beseech Thee, as we come to Thy holy Word, that our hearts may be prepared for its understanding and reception, and that this hour may be one of great spiritual profit to us all. We ask it for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

"IF WE say that have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It would perhaps be difficult to find in all the Bible a simpler text than that which I have announced, and I have selected it designedly because of its simplicity. When I was a boy, before I came to the state of manhood, I was foolish enough to think that if ever I was saved it would have to be in rather an extraordinary fashion. How conceited young boys can be! I have to confess that I was one of them! I was foolish enough to imagine that it would require rather an unusual sermon to bring me to the feet of Christ.

I have told it before, but just as introductory to the simple words I have to say this morning, I repeat the story of my conversion. A man came to preach for my father, who was a bit of a professor. He had been a good part of his life a teacher, and I thought he could not preach at all. I was rather bored by his preaching, but being the minister's son, as a matter of duty I went to church. I wondered why in the world so dull and uninteresting a preacher had been invited into my father's pulpit. On a certain evening he preached, but what he said I do not remember; nor do I remember what the text was. I fear I was not particularly interested, but when the sermon was really over, and quite apart from the sermon, he quoted a text. He put it very bluntly, but very simply; "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Now", said he, "that means that if you do sincerely confess your sins with all that that means, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are here and now forgiven, and saved for ever; or else God is a liar." The truth of that flashed into my heart, and I saw how to be saved, and there and then I

sent up a prayer to heaven—confessing my sins. The answer came back, and I knew that right there in my pew the great transaction had been done, and that I had become a child of God.

Nothing could be simpler than that. It was very humiliating to me, I suppose. But that is God's way of doing things. So I want to speak this morning in a very simple fashion so that the boys and girls may understand how to be saved; that the young people, such as I was, may learn the way of salvation; and that older people may also see what it is to trust in Christ. And after all, the wisest of us is only a grown-up child—and some of us have not grown up very much. We all need to be treated as children, and I would far rather speak in such a way this morning that you would have to say sometime in the future, as I have testified this morning, "I went into Jarvis Street Church one Sunday morning and heard a man preach. I thought it was not much of a sermon, but there was a text anyhow that God, by the power of His Holy Spirit, laid to my heart; and that morning I was saved." It is a big business, is it not? That is the great thing for which we have come together this morning.

I

THIS TEXT TELLS US, FIRST OF ALL, THAT WE ARE ALL SINNERS, AND IF WE SAY WE HAVE NO SIN WE DECEIVE OURSELVES AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US. It is very easy for people to be self-deceived, and to imagine they are perfectly well when they are really very seriously ill. I remember some years ago being in a place, I think it was in a barber shop, when a man asked another, "How are you this morning?" "Oh," he said, "I am fine. I feel better, and am more cheerful. I have changed doctors." "Oh, you have," said his friend. "Yes, the doctor who had been attending me told me I had a bad heart and that I needed to be very very careful; and," he said, "I did feel rather ill. But I went to another doctor, and he told me there was nothing wrong with my heart." Slapping himself on his chest he said, "I am feeling quite well." I ventured to say to him, "I hope, sir, your second doctor is right; but if I were you I would not be so contemptuous of the first doctor, because he may be right, and it won't hurt you to be a little careful anyhow."

There are a good many people who change doctors in respect to spiritual matters, and they want to find a preacher somewhere who will tell them that their hearts are all right, and that they do not need any change at all. Here is what the Great Physician says of every one of us: "Having examined you very carefully, I find that in you there is sin, and if you say that you have no sin then you deceive yourself, and the truth is not in you."

What is sin? Sometimes in the Scripture it is likened to fire, a destructive element, something that is very very small in the beginning and that may burn away for a long time in secret, but that at last burns itself out into the open. During these last few years Toronto has been removing that scar roundabout the station. A few years ago a great fire swept through the wholesale district. There were a good many fireproof buildings that were fireproof until the fire came! Then they melted and went down in ruins, and in one night something like ten million dollars' worth of property,—I think I am right in the figure — was destroyed. I do not know where that fire started, but it started somewhere as a little flame, as something I suppose that could have been extinguished with a glass of water in the beginning. But because

no one was there that little spark spread and spread and spread until it resulted in a great conflagration destroying blocks of property, and millions of dollars' worth of goods.

Sin is like that, — an evil thought, a wrong desire, an unholy ambition. It does not always register itself in the face. It may not be expressed by the lips; it may not show itself by anything the hands can do, nor may it in the beginning direct the course of the feet; looking upon that young man or young woman, that boy or girl, nobody would imagine that within a fire was burning. But if it is left alone it will burn and burn until it will utterly destroy even the strongest. The fire is kindled, it is there; and if we say that we have no sin then we deceive ourselves.

Sin is sometimes likened to a disease. And it is a disease. A disease fastens first of all upon some part of the body and spreads through the body until at last every organ is involved, until every vital organ refuses to function, and at last the body is destroyed. Yet it began first of all by a tiny microbe, so small a thing that the most powerful microscope will scarcely disclose it. There are some diseases, you know, whose germs have not yet been isolated. The doctors know the result of some germs, but what that germ is they have never been able to find out. What a public benefactor the man would be who could discover what causes cancer! Millions of people have been carried away by that dreadful disease, and yet medical science up to this day does not know what is the cause of it. But it is there. Very often it works gradually and lays hold of the body before its presence is known, and it is discovered too late for any effective treatment.

That is what sin is, it is a disease.

I could go on multiplying illustrations. I wonder if you ever read of that horrible serpent, the Python? In the beginning, when it is very small, a little boy, perhaps the youngest child here, could put his tiny foot upon the head of that infant serpent and crush the life out of it. But when it grows it wraps its coils about the human body, twines itself about, and then with mighty power it crushes until the life is squeezed out of the man. Sin is like that, small in the beginning, but if it is let alone it grows bigger and bigger and bigger, and stronger and stronger, until at last the strongest man is mastered by it.

What a terrible thing sin is! It upsets everything. It upsets the individual life. I could find you, if I had time, thousands of men in this city, who, if they would be honest and tell us what is in their hearts, would say something like this: "Sir, I would give all the wealth of the world if I had it to be a little boy again, to begin life over again. I have been disappointed, I have been ruined, I have missed the mark everywhere, because of that something within me! When I have tried to climb it has kept me down, when I have tried to go on it has pulled me back. I have tried to do good, but I have found the evil power within me was stronger than the power to do good. Here I am at the evening time passing among men as a perfectly respectable citizen, and yet I know this evil thing which the Bible calls sin has just wrecked and ruined me, and I feel that I have lived my life in vain."

The Pastor sometimes sees a great deal of it. It not only gets into the individual life, but it gets into the family, it breaks up the family. A mother came to me last night to tell me about two daughters. What a terrible tale! Some other mother might have come to tell

me about her son. Some wife might have come to tell about her husband. Sin is a fearful scourge in family life, and everywhere. Do you know that in the United States it costs many times as much money to control crime, to deal with criminals, to stop them in their career, to support the jails and the police courts and all the rest of it, as to support all the schools in the country? You know very well one bad boy in the family upsets the whole household and gives father and mother far more concern than all the rest of the children; he takes up everyone's time and throws everything into confusion. It is sin that has upset this old world. If it were not for sin we should not need any policemen; or if we had policemen we should have to convert them all into traffic cops to see that we did not run into each other. If it were not for sin we should not need any jails. If it were not for sin we should not need any asylums. If it were not for sin we should not need any hospitals, for it was sin that first introduced sickness into the world. If it were not for sin this earth would be a veritable paradise, a beautiful place, if we had not spoiled it. But we have all sinned, have we not? There is not a man or woman here of whom that is not true, and if you say you have no sin then the next verse says we make God a liar, and the truth is not in us, because God says we have all sinned.

II

THE QUESTION IS, HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET RID OF IT? It is very, very simple: "If we confess our sins". We shall never be forgiven our sins until we confess them; and we shall never confess them until we repent of them. When we come to see what sin is, we shall be sorry for it. Every man and woman, boy and girl, here this morning ought to be filled with repentance, every one of us. Why did we ever offend against God? Why did we ever lift our hands against His rule? Why did we ever trample His commandments under our feet? Why did we take up an attitude of antagonism toward God when every thing we have He gave us? He is the best friend we ever had, and yet in our folly we have always treated Him as an enemy. That is what sin does. It is the thing that at last drives the spear, as the soldier did, into the heart of the Son of God.

I wonder if it is true that we do really repent? Let me be very personal, every boy and girl in the gallery, and every man and woman. I wish I could sit down beside you and say, "Now, my friend, are you really in your heart sorry that you have offended God? Do you wish you had not? Would you like to be on good terms with Him? Would you like to get rid of this thing that cripples and disfigures you? Would you like to be delivered from sin?"—Oh, surely, surely we should say, "Yes." Are there not many here who would say, "Sir, I wish you would tell me how to get rid of my sin. If you can tell me that, you will be the best friend I have in Toronto; because I would rather know how to be freed from sin than to know how to become a millionaire." I can tell you, not because I know, but on the authority of God's Word. God's Word tells us what we may do with our sins: we can confess them, just confess them, that is all. Tell Him, "Lord, I am a sinner; I acknowledge the truth of Thy Word, that I have sinned against Thee, and I come asking for forgiveness".

Let me apply it to some of you who are professing Christians, I think the text applies to Christian people as well as to those who are not Christians. We have to

confess our sins if we are going to be forgiven. Even Christian people fall into wrong-doing, and we need to pray every day we live, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." Have you prayed that this morning?

Some years ago I was in the home of a friend who had two little children. One was called Helen, who was about seven or eight years of age, and a little boy named Neil who was about four and a half or five years old. I was sitting with my friend in his den waiting for the evening meal to be called, and Neil was playing on the floor. I do not now what he was doing, but he was just having a good time as a little boy will. Presently he did something which his father told him he must not do. I do not know what it was, but he did something, and his father said sternly, "Neil, I told you that you were not to do that. Go into that room yonder, and stand with your face in the corner until you are ready to tell Daddy you are sorry." Off the room there was a little anteroom in which was no light. This little chap gathered himself up, opened his big eyes, and looked to see if his father meant it. His father said, "Go!". There were tears on his cheeks, but he turned around, and like a shot he ran into that room as fast as he could go, stuck his head into the corner, and then turned around, and as fast as he went, he came back and jumped into his father's arms. His father said, "Neil, are you sorry?" And the boy said, "Yes, Daddy, I am sorry". All right, go back to your play." He was happy in a minute or two.

Then the father said, "Those two children are so unlike each other, so unlike one would never believe they were in the same family. Helen sometimes does wrong, and when I tell her to go into that room, she goes an inch at a time as though it would kill her. At last she gets there, and sometimes she will stand without moving for an hour. Then she will turn her head a little, and then she will get herself half turned as though it meant crucifixion. She will move as slowly as she possibly can, returning as slowly as she went. She will come and stand beside my chair and never say a word. I will say, 'Well, Helen, what have you to say?' She will stand sometimes for several minutes, and with great difficulty at last she says, 'I am sorry,' then she too is forgiven." Yes, that is true of girls as well as of boys, for girls can be as stubborn as boys—and sometimes a little more so.

I said to my friend afterward, "Is that not very much like the Lord's children? He is always ready to forgive us, and most of us are like Helen; we go and stand in the dark a long time, and come out of it and return to Him so reluctantly." Would it not be better if we were like Neil, and the moment we have sinned, and know we have sinned, run to Him and say, "I am sorry." Why lose the joy of His presence? There is always a cloud when something has come between us and our Beloved.

I wonder if there are any of the Lord's children standing in a corner in a dark room this morning? Something has upset your fellowship with God, and you are reluctant to come back and confess it. Here is the truth, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". No matter what it is, you can have it all cleared up this morning, and go home from this place this morning happy in the knowledge of sins forgiven.

It is just the same for those who are not Christians. That is the way to receive salvation. You remember the story our Lord told of two men who went up to the temple

to pray? The one said, "I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." And the other man, the publican, was so conscious of his sin that Jesus said he was afraid to lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner". He went down to his house justified. Why? Because he confessed his sin. That is the way to get rid of sin, my friends. Take your place as a sinner, and Jesus Christ will take His place as Saviour the moment you do it.

III.

THEN THIS SIMPLE WORD. HOW DO WE KNOW IT? How can I be sure that if I confess my sin He will forgive? "He is faithful and just." It means, when it says He is faithful, that He will keep His promise. He has promised to do so, and if God has promised to do a thing He will certainly do what He has promised to do. You have a bill in your pocket. Whatever it is, a dollar bill, a ten-dollar bill, you have the Government of Canada behind it. It is a promise, on the part of the Dominion of Canada, that it will pay anyone presenting that piece of paper one dollar. Or it is the promise of a bank that it will pay anyone presenting that paper five or ten dollars, whatever it may be. If it is a good solid bank, it will keep its promise. Do you know what would happen to any bank in this country, I don't care what bank it is, if it failed to keep its promise written on that bank note? It would be ruined at once, would it not? If I presented a ten dollar bill to a bank with the signature of its president, or whoever may be authorized to honour it, and asked for ten dollars, and that bank did not redeem its promise, confidence in it would be destroyed, and there would be a panic immediately.

But that is nothing to what would happen if God failed to keep His promise. How did you know the sun would get up this morning? How did you know? Astronomers tell us that they can predict the eclipse of the sun or of the moon to the fraction of a second one hundred years or more in advance of the event. Nobody can predict what the best watch in the world would say one hundred years from now. But God wound up the clock, and He says that "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." He keeps it going, He keeps His promise to every boy and girl here, every day in that respect; and He will keep His promise to forgive your sins. He is faithful, and He is just. It must be so, because Jesus Christ died for us. He had paid your debt. There is an old hymn that we don't hear very often now. I want to read it to you:

"From whence this fear and unbelief?—
Hast thou, O Father, put to grief
Thy spotless Son for me?
And will the righteous Judge of men
Condemn me for that debt of sin,
Which, Lord, was charged on thee?"

"Complete atonement thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid.
Whate'er thy people owed;
How then can wrath on me take place
If shelter'd in thy righteousness,
And sprinkled with thy blood?"

"If thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely, in my room, endured
The whole of wrath divine;
Payment God cannot twice demand,—
First, at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

"Turn, then, my soul unto thy rest!
The merits of thy great High Priest
Speak peace and liberty:
Trust in his efficacious blood;
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee."

He is faithful and just, and if we will but acknowledge our sins this morning, we shall be forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. How many will do it this morning? That is a children's message, is it not, a simple little word for the children; but supposing you be a child this morning for that is exactly what the Lord Jesus said we must all become. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Let us bow in prayer that we may, before God, where He alone will hear, confess our sins to Him.

O Lord, we thank Thee that the way of life is so simple that even little children need not err therein. Thou dost deal with us as a father with his children; and we would come to Thee this morning confessing our sins, every one of us, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, children, everyone. Help us, by Thy gracious Spirit, to pray the prayer of the publican of olden times, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Then, O Lord, by Thy Spirit help us to rest upon Thy promise, and be assured that since Thou hast promised, our sins are forgiven, and we are now Thy children. We thank Thee that Thou wilt cleanse us from all unrighteousness by the washing of Thy precious blood, and by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, by the instruction of Thy holy Word. Thus we shall be freed from sin, and by and by from its presence and its power, and we shall be without fault before the throne of God. Make this simple service an hour of great decision this morning. Work miracles, O Lord, this morning. We have asked Thee for it. May the Holy Spirit take the truth of the gospel and bring men to the feet of Christ, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

GRADUATION EXERCISES NEXT THURSDAY

The twenty-third annual graduation exercises of Toronto Baptist Seminary will be held on Thursday, May 5, at 8 p.m., in Jarvis Street Baptist Church. At this time the diplomas will be presented to the graduates of the year and prizes will be presented to the outstanding students. The public is cordially invited to attend this service and we would urge all readers within reasonable proximity of Toronto to make a special endeavour to attend.

GRADUATION ISSUE OF SEMINARIAN

Mr. Kenneth Miller, Editor of *The Seminarian*, tells us that the graduation issue of the paper will be off the press next week. It will contain twenty pages of interesting material and pictures concerning the work and ideals of Toronto Baptist Seminary. Readers would be well advised to procure a number of copies for distribution to young people who are contemplating training for full time service in the Lord's work. The cost will be twenty-five cents per copy.

ARTICLES IN THE GOSPEL WITNESS

In the past all unsigned articles which appeared in THE GOSPEL WITNESS were from the pen of the Editor, Dr. Shields. The Associate Editors signed their contributions with their initials. In future issues all unsigned articles may be attributed to the Editor, Mr. Tarr. The articles bearing the familiar O.L.C. will be from the pen of Dr. Clark and those signed C.D.C. from Mr. Cole. Articles and sermons by Dr. Shields will bear his name.

AMONG THE CHURCHESwith **H. C. SLADE****Kingston – The Gateway to the Seaway**

IT IS a great privilege for me to give a report of the work we are seeking to do in this fair city as we are enabled by the Holy Spirit. Kingston, with its present population of 50,000, affords ample opportunity for an aggressive, evangelistic testimony. Kingston, as we foresee it in the near future with a population crowding the 100,000 mark, will provide unlimited possibilities for the one who will venture forth bearing high the banner of the Cross. It is because The Conservative Regular Baptist Association has its eye of faith fixed on the future that it has endeavoured, not without some success, to establish New Testament churches in strategic centres in Ontario, yea, in all Canada. Surely we are following in true apostolic succession. We believe, nay we are sure, that Kingston, lying midway between Toronto and Montreal, is such a centre. With new industries moving in, new housing developments springing up overnight, a great influx of people from every walk of life converging on this new "BOOM TOWN" of Canada, Kingston stands in need of a distinctive Baptist testimony in this most important stage of its history, growth and development. Because of this conviction, we arrived on the scene of this new venture of faith sometime during the summer of last year. Since then we have endeavoured by the grace of God to give forth the glorious good news of the Saviour in no uncertain sound, witnessing to small and great, rich and poor, young and old, none other things than those things which are "written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come". The purpose of our being in this great university city is that there might be established a strong New Testament church according to the pattern showed on the mount, and so far the Lord has raised us up not a few to enable us to bring that purpose to fulfilment. For this we thank Him and take courage.

Our Special Ministry

We look upon our Radio broadcast every Sunday morning as a special means of meeting the condition of those who know not Jesus and who have not obeyed the gospel of the grace of God. We are firm believers in making use of all the legitimate means at our disposal which will enable us to dispense the only remedy for sin to all and sundry. We are glad to report that this ministry which is heard over radio station C.K.L.C. at 8.45 a.m. is listened to by an ever-increasing audience. We believe through the reports received that the simple gospel message is proving to be a great source of blessing to many people. One of the features of this broadcast, which is called The Old-Fashioned Baptist Hour, is the dedication of a record to those who are shut-in, sick, or sad through the many trials and temptations which the flesh is heir to. This has been the means of making many new contacts for the work.

Our Systematic Visitation Program

This is, we believe the greatest source of inspiration in any pastor's busy life. Not only is it a source of encouragement to him but also to those workers who will

venture with him along this line of service. Day by day and week by week we have sallied forth trying to do exploits for the Saviour and to find men for Christ. We have had many opportunities to speak a "good word for the Master." By printed tract and by word of mouth we have reasoned and alleged that "none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good". Realizing that "we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ", and believing that if "one died for all, then were all dead", knowing therefore "the terror of the Lord", we have tried to "persuade men".

Souls Converted

Through the medium of this visitation from door to door and from hospital to hospital, we have had the inestimable joy of being the humble instrument in the Lord's hand of leading a few souls from nature's darkness to the marvellous light of the kingdom of God. And what a thrill it has been to our souls to do so. An alcoholic, down and out, physically and morally bankrupt, without a ray of light on the dark horizon of his life, was the recipient of the infinite "grace which hath appeared to all men" and which "breaks the power of cancelled sin" in the lives of all who will receive it. Finding such men for Christ is surely the noblest task this side of heaven. Another illustration of the "power in Jesus' name" may be seen in the life of our Chinese boy who is at present in Queen's University taking an Arts Course. It has been our privilege to minister to this very fine boy in the things pertaining to the kingdom of light. Pray that these men will follow on to know the Lord in the length and breadth and depth and height of His fullness. Numerous contacts such as these have been made, and it is our prayer that shortly we shall see quite a number "seek the Lord while He may be found". Reader will you join with us in believing prayer in this matter?

Sunday School

How we have thrilled at the increase in attendance in this department of our work from week to week. Not too long ago our numbers were around the 25 - 30 mark, but at the moment of writing our objective in attendance had been set for 75. We expect to pass this figure in a week or two and then we shall press on to the century mark. Needless to say we have entered the Sunday School contest sponsored by Mr. Attenborough, and we expect to win it! Please pay attention all would-be contestants! Saturday after Saturday one of our very fine workers along with myself seek to round up new Sunday School material for the Lord's day following, and this has not been without success. In this department, as we continue to grow, we shall be greatly handicapped by the lack of proper facilities in our present location in the Orange Hall. However, we shall manage with what we have until such times as we are able to have our own church building.

Services

When a preacher was once asked about the attendance

at his services, he replied as follows: "In the morning we are not quite full and in the evening we are not quite empty". However, we are glad to report that we have been encouraged with the attendance at both morning and evening services. And what is more encouraging still is the presence in our midst of quite a few who know not the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Already one lady has intimated her desire to follow the Lord through the waters of baptism, and we believe there are others who are but "A step to Jesus". Pray, dear reader, that we shall experience times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. We long to see souls converted, backsliders restored and the "faithful in Christ Jesus" built up in their "most holy faith".

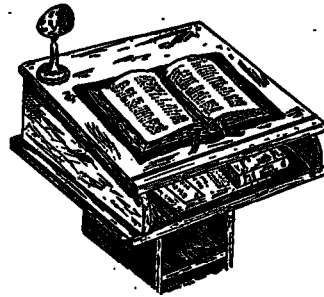
Every Wednesday evening, in the homes of our people, we have our "Hour of Power" service. Here we congregate to exercise our souls in the ministry of prayer and to study the word of truth. Last week we concluded our study of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Henceforth we shall be taking a series of studies under the general title, "WHAT WE BELIEVE", with the object in view of gathering together a strong nucleus of Bible Believing Baptists who will in turn form a "sanctified, fearless band" of God's consecrated workers ready and willing "to hail a revival" from on high.

Special Plea

Friends you can see by our SPECIAL MINISTRY through the means of Radio, our SYSTEMATIC VISITATION program, our SUNDAY SCHOOL department, our SERVICES and the measure of blessing which has attended our efforts through SOULS being CONVERTED, that we have been busy in the Lord's work. We would not desire it otherwise. Our hope is that we shall get busier as the days go by. We are praying that the Lord will take the laziness out of our bones and get us going at a faster step than hitherto. But we need help. We need money to maintain this ministry of reconciliation; we require money to purchase a lot on which to build what in future years will be known as Kingston's SOUL-SAVING STATION. We don't mince words. We need financial help and we need it now. And, reader, I know of no better way in which to invest money than in the Lord's work. Do you? It pays rich dividends not only here but hereafter. This work which I have brought before you, our Association which stands for a distinctive gospel, is worthy of your most liberal generosity. What, with new projects at Owen Sound, Valleyfield, Roseland, Delhi and now KINGSTON, we stand in need as never before of the liberal givings of God's people. We desire you to pray for these ventures of faith because we believe prayer changes things. But we want you to give as well as pray, and to give unstintingly to these noble causes. Pray, work and give, and for you the Lord will do "far exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think".

And so our mission in Kingston is "FINDING MEN FOR CHRIST"; and as men are found by the Saviour you, because of your support, will be able to rejoice with them, with us and with the angels in glory; with them, because their sins which were many have all been forgiven; with us, in that through your prayerful and financial support you have enabled us to perform our high, holy and heavenly calling in Christ Jesus; with the angels in glory, over sheep that were lost returning to the great Shepherd and bishop of their souls.

—REV. SAMUEL DEMPSTER



English Bible Course

Twenty-second Lecture in the English Bible Course
TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

By Rev. C. D. Cole

Thursday, April 21st, 1955

"CHRIST, OUR ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST"

Hebrews 7

FROM the very beginning of the Hebrew Epistle, the author seems eager to get to the main theme, which is the priesthood of Jesus Christ. He has alluded to it several times without entering upon the discussion of it. This is because some other things must be said to prepare the way for the full discussion of the main subject of the Epistle. Since it is the purpose of the writer to prove the superiority of Christianity to Judaism, some other comparisons must be made first. Jesus Christ must be shown to be superior to the Prophets and to angels and to Moses and to Joshua and finally to Aaron. And then the readers to whom he is writing are so sluggish and dull of hearing that they must be aroused from their state of indifference and to get their attention the author makes a digression in which there is rebuke and warning and encouragement. The digression being ended with the sixth chapter the author is now ready to launch out into the deep and to give us a full discussion of the things for which we have been waiting, a full treatise of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

The seventh chapter is the central chapter of the book but it is the introductory part to the doctrinal portion which has to do with the priesthood of Jesus Christ ending in chapter ten verse eighteen. Within the compass of these four chapters is compressed the fullness of the gospel of our salvation. The high-priesthood of Jesus Christ is the most glorious theme of all time. It is the very heart and life of God's saving program. It embraces the birth and the death and the life and the resurrection and the ascension and the exaltation and the continual priesthood of our adorable Saviour. In these chapters we have the truth which is so much needed today by Jew, Romanist, Arminian and Modernist. Here is heart balm for the discouraged and doubting Christian. We have in this section strong meat for the mature believer in Jesus Christ. Here is what all of us need for the good of our souls.

The Importance of Priesthood

Priesthood was at the very heart of Judaism as it is of Romanism today and also of true Christianity. Do away with priesthood and Romanism would fall under its own weight. And what could Christianity do without the priesthood of Jesus Christ? The worth of any religion is measured by the value of its priesthood. If the priesthood is wrong or insufficient the religion is worthless. I have friends and relatives among the Roman Catholics. They have turned their religious interests over to their

priest, the very thing I have done. But there is a vast difference between us and the difference is between their priest and mine. They have turned their eternal and religious and spiritual interests over to a sinful man like unto themselves, while I have turned my eternal interests over to Jesus Christ Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens. What a difference!

The greatest piece of polemic theology ever written is this Epistle to the Hebrews. The most devastating arguments against false religions of all kinds are in this Epistle. The Jews laid great stress on their priesthood and no doubt it was at this point that they brought the greatest pressure to bear on the Christians. They would doubtless argue that in leaving Judaism they had turned away from the sacrificial and saving portion of the law of Moses. They must have argued that the Christians had no priest to offer sacrifices and to make atonement for their souls. But the Apostle proves from their own Bible that the Christian has a better priest who offered better sacrifice than the priests of Aaron could ever hope to offer. He proves from the Hebrew scriptures that there was a priest of the most high God before Aaron who was superior to Aaron and who was declared to be a type of the High Priest who would arise and do away with the whole Levitical system of approach to God. The Apostle keeps ringing the changes on Psalms one hundred and ten verse four: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Here is a Messianic psalm with a prophecy of a coming priest different from the Aaronic order, a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. This is the theme of Hebrews seven, Christ our Eternal High Priest.

I.

Melchisedec Superior to Aaron (1-10)

In the first ten verses, the writer proves the superiority of Melchisedec as a priest over Aaron. The first three verses give a statement of facts and the following seven verses reason from those facts. The first three verses form one sentence: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually." Here we have all that is known about Melchisedec because this is all that is recorded of him and to go beyond what is written would take us into the field of speculation and cause us to indulge in mere conjecture. This man Melchisedec has been identified with Ham, a son of Noah, and with Shem, another son of Noah. Some thought he was an angel and others took him to be the Holy Ghost and some thought that he was the Son of God. But we get the truth from the scriptures and they give us all we need to know about this strange personage. We are told that he was a man, contemporary with Abraham, holding two positions, that of priest of the most high God and also King of Salem. Melchisedec is mentioned three times in the entire Bible, in history, in prophecy, and in doctrine. In Genesis fourteen we have the historical facts about him. In Psalms one hundred and ten we have his prophetic picture as a type of Jesus Christ. And in this

Hebrew Epistle we have the doctrine concerning him based upon the other two references. And everything in history, prophecy, and doctrine is clear and convincing. Historically, Melchisedec was a mysterious personage who suddenly appeared on the stage of human action and as quickly vanished. Prophetically, he is a type of Christ our Eternal Priest, and doctrinally, he illustrates the high priestly function of Christ in the heavenly tabernacle just as Aaron typifies and illustrates His high-priestly work here on earth.

The name Melchisedec is made up of two Hebrew words which means King of righteousness. He was also King of Salem which means King of peace. His name was thus symbolic of Jesus Christ Who is our righteousness and also our peace and in Whom righteousness and peace have been reconciled. Righteousness without peace punishes the transgressor and peace without righteousness condones the transgression. Jesus Christ is the High Priest we need because He upholds the righteousness of God and provides peace for the sinner. Melchisedec is presented in history without any record of his birth or death or genealogy. The silence of scripture is in order to give us a copy beforehand of the Son of God. Melchisedec is presented as a priest and as a priest he was unlike the Levitical priests whose genealogy was so important. The Levitical priests began to serve as helpers to the regular priests at the age of twenty-five and at the age of thirty they assumed the duties of the regular priest, and then retired at the age of fifty. But Melchisedec had no such limitations as a priest. Melchisedec did not inherit or transmit his priesthood. He is a priest in perpetuity, perpetuated in Jesus Christ. Thus it appears that the Levitical priesthood was a kind of parenthesis between Melchisedec and Jesus Christ. In Melchisedec figuratively and in Christ actually abides a priest forever.

Now we are told to consider how great this man was. Abraham, whose greatness no Jew would question, considered him greater than himself. On returning from the slaughter of the kings and the rescue of his nephew Lot, Abraham was met by Melchisedec who blessed him and took a tenth of the spoils of victory. Now every Jew could understand that the less is always blessed by the better.

The superiority of Melchisedec over the Levites is shown in the fact that the Levites were in the loins of Abraham when he gave the tenth of the best of the spoils to Melchisedec and thus paid tithes representatively in Abraham. And thus it follows that Christ being a priest after the order of Melchisedec is superior to the priests of the Aaronic order.

"Jesus in Thee our eyes behold
A thousand glories more
Than the rich gems and polished gold
The sons of Aaron wore.

W. Griffith Thomas sums up these ten verses by remarking that they show a fourfold superiority of Melchisedec over Aaron. First, through human benefactions, verses four to six; second, through divine benediction, verse seven; third, through human duration, verse eight; and fourth, through human position, verses nine and ten.

II.

The Priesthood Changed (11-19)

Now in verses eleven to nineteen we have the need and the proof of a change in priesthood. If the Levitical

priesthood had been sufficient there would have been no announcement and prophecy of a priest after a different order. The purpose of priesthood is to make the sinner perfect before God. And only a perfect priest with a perfect offering can make the sinner perfect before God. If perfection had come through the Aaronic priesthood, there would have been no need of another priest and there would have been no such prophecy as we have in Psalms one hundred and ten verse four about the coming of another priest after a different order. The priesthood of Melchisedec, the type, and of Christ, the archetype and antitype, is a royal priesthood, a priest on a throne. As a priest Melchisedec was made like unto the Son of God. This means that Christ's priesthood was the archetype or original pattern after which the priesthood of Melchisedec was copied. The only way a sinner can be made perfect in this life, objectively, and in heaven, subjectively, is by the work of a priest. The Holy Spirit in regeneration makes nobody perfect either subjectively or objectively. But Christ performing His highpriestly work on the Cross makes the believer perfect objectively and by His priestly work of intercession in heaven will keep on saving until He gets the sinner to glory. Christ put away the guilt of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He is now made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. Through faith in Him we are now justified and will ultimately be glorified. No sinner can make himself perfect. He can only be made perfect by a priest. And it behoves every sinner to discover for himself the right priest. I glory in saying that the Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest of my confession. I believe in living right but living right will take no sinner to heaven. Salvation by works denies the efficacy of the blood of Christ which He shed on earth and it denies the efficacy of His priestly intercession in heaven for neither of these would be needed if salvation were by works.

Now a change in priesthood calls for a change in the law concerning priesthood. The ceremonial law of Moses was given on the basis of priesthood and since the Levitical priests were dying men the law had to take this into consideration and provide for their successors. So the genealogy of the Old Testament priests was very important. They must show that they are from the tribe of Levi and from the family of Aaron. And the period of their ministry was also important. There had to be a law to show when they could enter upon the priesthood and to provide for their retirement. But in the case of Christ such a law was not necessary. He is High Priest not by any carnal commandment, not in obedience to any temporary law, but in virtue of indissoluble life. He is priest as long as He lives and this makes Him a priest forever. He is our Eternal High Priest.

Under the New Testament priesthood there is Christ the one High Priest and every believer is a priest in the sense that he can approach God through Christ. Roman Catholic priesthood is a sort of imitation and a poor imitation of the Levitical priesthood and denies the priesthood of the believer. The apostle Peter in writing to ordinary believers called them a royal priesthood. In the New Testament there is not even a hint of an official class of priests. The New Testament pastor is nowhere called a priest officially. He has no offerings to make for the salvation of sinners. He is a preacher proclaiming the one offering of Christ as sufficient for every believer. The New Testament preacher is a man with a

message not a priest with a wafer. Every believer can approach God through Christ. Our Lord said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Under the law the believers were kept at a distance from God but under the new covenant believers are brought nigh by the blood of Christ.

In Hebrews ten, nineteen to twenty two we read: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." We do not need a human priest to get us to God. The blood of Jesus Christ gives us boldness to enter into His holy presence. In the defence of the doctrine of purgatory, Fulton J. Sheen in his book, *The Preface to Religion*, says on page one thirty eight, "The necessity of purgatory is grounded upon the absolute purity of God. If there were no purgatory then the justice of God would be too terrible for words. For who are they who would dare assert themselves pure enough and spotless enough to stand before the immaculate Lamb of God?" What ignorance of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of the value of His precious blood such a statement as this betrays. We agree that no one is worthy to stand before the holy God but we have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. We agree that no one has any righteousness of his own but we also believe that there is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. I do not frustrate the grace of God for if righteousness come by the law then Christ is dead in vain." In *Our Sunday Visitor*, a well known, Roman Catholic paper, under date of August 11, 1946, are these words: "Are you insured? Write and ask about our plan to offer the Gregorian mass after your death. This is real insurance for your soul." What a travesty of the gospel of the Son of God! I'll take the offering Christ made when He offered Himself without spot to God. His blood is the only insurance that this poor man is interested in.

III.

The Perpetual Priesthood of Christ (20-25)

Now in verses twenty to twenty-five the emphasis is on the perpetual priesthood of Christ. It is perpetual because it is unchangeable and it is unchangeable because of the divine oath. Christ was made priest by an oath which was not true in the case of the Levitical priests. God is never represented as swearing to anything but what is fixed and unalterable and immutable. He swore to Abraham that all the nations should be blessed in his seed and that will be performed. He swore to the rebellious Israelites that they should not enter into His rest nor did they enter. He swore to David that his seed should endure forever and his throne to all generations. And Jesus Christ tonight and forever is on David's throne in fulfillment of God's promise confirmed by His oath.

The Levitical priesthood was divinely appointed but it was not confirmed by an oath. Had it been it could not have been changed. The law was given to Israel by God but it was repealable and has been repealed but the economy based upon the priesthood of Christ cannot be repealed for it was fixed by a divine oath. This is why the covenant of grace is called the everlasting covenant. There will never be any other way of saving sinners

except by grace through faith in Jesus Christ Who was made priest by an oath. Sacerdotalism and sacramentalism are twin evils. The first denies the superiority of the solitary highpriesthood of Christ and the other denies His blood as the only remedy for sin. It is a poor imitation of the Levitical priesthood which was temporary and ineffective. It has been remarked that Sacerdotalism is an attempt to sew again the veil that was rent in twain. There had been many priests of the Aaronic order because of their death and retirement age. Someone has said that there were one hundred Jewish highpriests from Aaron to Phineas when the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. But Christ has no successor because He ever lives. Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. How plain! Men go to God through Christ not through some human priest here on earth. How can any man dare put himself between the sinner and the Saviour. The only highpriest who is worth anything is now in heaven making intercession for those who have put their trust in Him. To save to the uttermost means complete salvation. It is an elementary truth but an important truth that our salvation is in three tenses, past, present and future. It includes deliverance from the penalty of sin in the past, deliverance from the damning power of sin in the present, and deliverance from the very presence of sin in the future. So Christ is able to complete our salvation in the future with eternal glory. He ever liveth to make intercession for us and to get us home to glory.

IV.

A Suitable Priesthood (26-28)

Now in verses twenty-six to twenty-eight we have Christ as our suitable High Priest. He is exactly suited to our needs as sinners. He exactly fits our case. As surety of a better covenant He paid our sin debt. As our High Priest He lives to intercede for us. And then He is suitable to us in His moral character. "For such a High Priest became us, Who is holy, and harmless and undefiled and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens." The word for *holy* here is not the usual word which means separation from a common to a religious purpose. But it is a word which denotes moral qualities. It speaks of our Lord's moral excellencies and perfections. It tells of His devotion to God. He was holy with reference to God. He was harmless with reference to men.

He never contaminated, tempted or injured anybody. He went about doing good. When He was ill treated He never retaliated. When He was reviled He reviled not again. As holy He loved the Lord His God with all His heart and as harmless He loved his neighbour as Himself. He was ever at the disposal of others. He was here not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life a ransom for many. And the third mark of His character was that He was undefiled. He could not be corrupted. He tabernacled for thirty-three years in the likeness of sinful flesh but never became tainted with the sins of the flesh. He lived among sinful men but contracted no defilement. Christ was undefiled morally just as the priests under the law were undefiled ceremonially. He touched the leper and made him clean but was not infected. He lived with the devil forty days and remained spotless. The undefiled is our high priest. And He was separate from sinners. This summarizes what has just been said of Him. He was the only man who ever lived that was holy and harmless and undefiled. Christ was absolutely unique as a man. He was perfect man as well as perfect God. The phrase "separate from sinners" also anticipates the next clause, "made higher than the heavens". He was made for a little while lower than the angels for suffering of death, but He is no longer made lower than angels. On the Cross we see Him in the place of sinners and numbered with transgressors but He occupies that place no longer. Our Saviour possesses a dignified station in the universe. He has all authority in heaven and in earth and He has unlimited power. He is the very kind of a priest we poor sinners need. Who wants any other priest when he gets a vision of the glorious priesthood of Jesus Christ? We are told that the law made men priests who had infirmities but the word of the oath which was since the law maketh the Son Who is perfected forevermore. In Jesus Christ we have a perfect high priest Who made a perfect offering when He offered Himself without spot to God. Oh! that everybody would be done once and for all with any other priest.

"Jesus, hail! enthroned in glory,
There forever to abide;
All the heavenly hosts adore Thee,
Seated at Thy Father's side.

"There for sinners Thou art pleading,
There Thou dost our place prepare;
Ever for us interceding,
Till in glory we appear."

Past Defects in the Ministry

Horatius Bonar

"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God:"

"O our God, what shall we say after this?"—Ezra 9:6, 10.

TO DELIVER sermons on each returning Sabbath, to administer the Lord's Supper stately, to pay an occasional visit to those who request it, to attend religious meetings—this, we fear, sums up the ministerial life of multitudes who are, by profession, overseers of the flock of Christ. An incumbency of thirty, forty, or fifty years often yields no more than this. So many sermons, so many baptisms, so many sacraments, so many visits, so many meetings of various kinds—these are all the pastoral annals, the parish records, the ALL of a lifetime's

ministry to many! Of souls that have been saved, such a record could make no mention.

Multitudes have perished under such a ministry; the judgment only will disclose whether so much as one has been saved. There might be learning, but there was no "tongue of the learned" "to speak a word in season to him that is weary." There might be wisdom, but it certainly was not the wisdom that "winneth souls." There might even be the sound of the Gospel, but it seemed to contain no glad tidings at all; it was not sounded forth from warm

lips into startled ears as the message of eternal life—"the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Men lived, and it was never asked of them by their minister whether they were born again! Men sickened, sent for their minister and received a prayer upon their deathbeds as their passport into heaven. Men died, and were buried where all their fathers had been laid; there was a prayer at their funeral, and decent respects to their remains; but their souls went up to the judgment seat unthought of, uncared for; no man, not even the minister who had vowed to watch for them, having said to them, Are you ready?—or warned them to flee from the wrath to come.

Is not this description too true of many a district and many a minister? We do not speak in anger; we do not speak in scorn: we ask the question solemnly and earnestly. It needs an answer. If ever there was a time when there should be "great searchings of heart" and frank acknowledgment of unfaithfulness, it is now when God is visiting us—visiting us both in judgment and mercy. We speak in brotherly kindness; surely the answer should not be of wrath and bitterness. And if this description be true, what sin must there be in ministers and people! How great must be the spiritual desolation that prevails! Surely there is something in such a case grievously wrong; something which calls for solemn self-examination in every minister; something which requires deep repentance.

The Tragedy of a Barren Ministry

Fields plowed and sown, yet yielding no fruit! Machinery constantly in motion, yet all without one particle of produce! Net cast into the sea, and spread wide, yet no fishes inclosed! All this for years—for a lifetime! How strange! Yet it is true. There is neither fancy nor exaggeration in the matter. Question some ministers—and what other account can they give? They can tell you of sermons preached, but of sermons blest they can say nothing. They can speak of discourses that were admired and praised, but of discourses that have been made effectual by the Holy Spirit they can not speak. They can tell you how many have been baptized, how many communicants admitted; but of souls awakened, converted, ripening in grace, they can give no account. They can enumerate the sacraments they have dispensed; but as to whether any of them have been "times of refreshing" or times of awakening, they can not say. They can tell you what and how many cases of discipline have passed through their hands; but whether any of these have issued in godly sorrow for sin, whether professed penitents who were absolved by them gave evidence of being "washed and sanctified and justified," they can give no information; they never thought of such an issue!

They can tell what is the attendance at school, and what are the abilities of the teacher; but how many of these precious little ones whom they have vowed to feed are seeking the Lord they know not; or whether their teacher be a man of prayer and piety they can not say. They can tell you the population of their parish, the number of their congregation, or the temporal condition of their flocks; but as to their spiritual state, how many have been awakened from the sleep of death, how many are followers of God as dear children, they can not pretend to say. Perhaps they would deem it rashness and presumption, if not fanaticism, to inquire. And yet they have sworn, before men and angels, to watch for their souls as they that

must give account! But oh, of what use are sermons, sacraments, schools, if souls are left to perish; if living religion be lost sight of; if the Holy Spirit be not sought; if men are left to grow up and die unpitied, unprayed for, unwarned!

For God's Glory and Man's Good

It was not so in other days. Our fathers really watched and preached for souls. They asked and they expected a blessing. Nor were they denied it. They were blessed in turning many to righteousness. Their lives record their successful labours. How refreshing the lives of those who lived only for the glory of God and the good of souls! There is something in their history that compels us to feel that they were ministers of Christ—true watchmen.

How cheering to read of Baxter and his labours at Kidderminster! How solemn to hear of Venn and his preaching, in regard to which it is said that men "fell before him like slaked lime"! And in the much-blest labours of that man of God, the apostolic Whitefield, is there not much to humble us, as well as to stimulate? Of Tanner, who was himself awakened under Whitefield, we read that he "seldom preached one sermon in vain." Of Berridge and Hicks we are told that in their missionary tours throughout England they were blessed in one year to awaken four thousand souls. Oh, for these days again! Oh, for one day of Whitefield again!

Thus one has written—"The language we have been accustomed to adopt is this: we must use the means, and leave the event to God; we can do no more than employ the means; this is our duty and having done this we must leave the rest to Him who is the disposer of all things." Such language sounds well, and to savor of submission to God's sovereignty; but it is only sound—it has not really any substance in it, for though there is truth stamped on the face of it, there is falsehood at the root of it. To talk of submission to God's sovereignty is one thing, but really to submit to it is another and quite different thing.

Submission Involves Renunciation

Really to submit to God's sovereign disposal does always necessarily involve the deep renunciation of our own will in the matter concerned, and such a renunciation of the will can never be effected without a soul being brought through very severe and trying exercises of an inward and most humbling nature. Therefore, whilst we are quietly satisfied in using the means without obtaining the end, and this costs us no such painful inward exercises and deep humbling as that alluded to, if we think that we are leaving the affair to God's disposal—we deceive ourselves, and the truth in this matter is not in us.

No; really to give anything to God implies that the will, which is emphatically the heart, has been set on that thing; and if the heart has indeed been set on the salvation of sinners as the end to be answered by the means we use, we can not possibly give up that end without, as was before observed, the heart being severely exercised and deeply pained by the renunciation of the will involved in it. When, therefore, we can be quietly content to use means for saving souls without seeing them saved thereby, it is because there is no renunciation of the will—that is, no real giving up to God, in the affair. The fact is, the will—that is, the heart—had never really been set upon this end; if it had, it could not possibly give up such an end without being broken by the sacrifice.

When we can thus be satisfied to use the means without obtaining the end, and speak of it as though we were

submitting to the Lord's disposal, we use a truth to hide a falsehood, exactly in the same way that those formalists in religion do, who continue in forms and duties without going beyond them, though they know they will not save them, and who, when they are warned of their danger and earnestly entreated to seek the Lord with all the heart, reply by telling us they know they must repent and believe but that they can not do either the one or the other of themselves and that they must wait till God gives them grace to do so. Now, this is a truth, absolutely considered; yet most of us can see that they are using it as a falsehood to cover and excuse a great insincerity of heart. We can readily perceive that if their hearts were really set upon salvation, they could not rest satisfied without it. Their contentedness is the result, not of heart-submission to God, but in reality of heart-indifference to the salvation of their own souls.

Covering Falsehood With Truth

Exactly so it is with us as ministers: when we can rest satisfied with using the means for saving souls without seeing them really saved, or we ourselves being brokenhearted by it, and at the same time quietly talk of leaving the event to God's disposal, we make use of a truth to cover and excuse a falsehood; for our ability to leave the matter thus is not, as we imagine, the result of heart-submission to God, but of heart-indifference to the salvation of the souls we deal with. No, truly, if the heart is really set on such an end, it must gain that end or break in losing it.

He that saved our souls has taught us to weep over the unsaved. Lord, let that mind be in us that was in Thee! Give us Thy tears to weep; for, Lord, our hearts are hard toward our fellows. We can see thousands perish around us, and our sleep never be disturbed; no vision of their awful doom ever scaring us, no cry from their lost souls ever turning our peace into bitterness.

Our families, our schools, our congregations, not to speak of our cities at large, our land, our world, might well send us daily to our knees; for the loss of even one soul is terrible beyond conception. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered the heart of man, what a soul in hell must suffer forever. Lord, give us bowls of mercies! "What a mystery! The soul and eternity of one man depends upon the voice of another!"

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 19 Second Quarter Lesson 6 May 8, 1955

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

THE PRAYER OF HEZEKIAH

Lesson Text: 2 Kings 19:6-20.

Golden Text: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."—Psalm 50:15.

I. The Occasion of the Prayer: verses 6-13.

King Hezekiah and the people of Judah were in dire distress. The Assyrians had invaded the land, conquering cities as they marched, until they reached the stronghold of Lachish (2 Kings 18:14). Sennacherib the king had sent a deputation of three men to the walls of Jerusalem to interview Hezekiah and to threaten him. The insolent spokesman of the group, Rabshakeh, uttered blasphemous statements against the Lord and against His people (2 Kings 18:19-35). Hezekiah's representatives, three of his chosen ministers, returned to their king in despair, their clothes rent, as a sign of degradation and affliction (1 Kings 21:27; 2 Kings 18:36, 37). The king

himself then displayed the same signs of mourning, covering himself with sackcloth (verse 1; 2 Sam. 3:31; 1 Kings 20:31; 2 Kings 6:30).

Hezekiah acted wisely in repairing immediately to the house of the Lord (verse 1; 1 Kings 8:29, 30; Psa. 73:16, 17), the place which symbolized the presence of the Lord, the sacred spot toward which He had promised that His eye would be directed. Moreover, the king sent two of his ministers, Eliakim and Shebna, clothed in sackcloth, to inform Isaiah the prophet of the danger and to ask for his prayers. It is probable that Isaiah joined Hezekiah when he went the second time into the house of the Lord (verse 14; 2 Chron. 32:20). Christian fellowship is a means of comfort to those in sorrow. Isaiah sent back a message of cheer (Deut. 31:6; Isa. 44:8) and a promise of deliverance.

In the meantime, Rabshakeh returned to his master Sennacherib, who had left Lachish and was now besieging Libnah, a neighbouring city. The impious ruler waxed bolder in his blasphemous threats, again sending messengers, this time with a letter. Sennacherib was still further angered by the approach of the king of Ethiopia, who had evidently been won over to the side of the Jews (2 Kings 18:21).

II. The Substance of the Prayer: verses 14-20.

When King Hezekiah had read this threatening letter (2 Chron. 32:17), he repaired again to the house of the Lord, and in simple, child-like confidence, spread it out before the Lord (Psa. 37:5; 1 Pet. 5:7). He did not spread the evil tidings among the people, lest they should become discouraged (Neh. 2:12-16). We may safely pour out our hearts before the Lord (Psa. 62:8), keeping back none of the griefs, perplexities and fears which oppress us. The Lord is a safe refuge for those who are suffering (Psa. 18:2; 28:1; 36:7).

The first element of true prayer is adoration. Hezekiah addressed Jehovah as the Holy One, the One dwelling between the cherubim, those heavenly angelic beings who guarded the holiness of God (Exod. 25:22; 2 Sam. 6:2; Isa. 37:16). He was also the Sovereign God (Isa. 41:4; 43:10, 11; 44:6, 8) and the Creator of all things (Isa. 40:26, 28; 42:5; Jer. 32:17; Acts 4:24).

Hezekiah voiced his prayer in brief, earnest words. He addressed the Lord now as his Heavenly Father, asking Him to bend down that He might hear the faint cry of His little child (Neh. 1:6; Psa. 31:2). He humbly besought the Lord to bow down, but also to look down. For Isaiah it would be sufficient, if the Lord should just pay heed to the words of reproach (Psa. 35:21, 22; Psa. 25:18; Acts 4:29), uttered not merely against His servants, but also against the Master (Psa. 69:9).

Hezekiah reasoned that it was the Lord Who had allowed the Assyrians to succeed in crushing the peoples who trusted in gods of wood and stone (Psa. 115:4), but surely He would deliver the men of Judah, whose confidence was placed in the living God.

The petition itself was brief and to the point: "Save thou us out of his hand." When one is in desperate need, he uses no superfluous words (Psa. 38:22; Matt. 8:25; Luke 18:13). Such a cry for help will reach the ears of the Heavenly Father (Exod. 2:23-25; 6:5).

The motive in prayer is an important consideration. Hezekiah prayed for deliverance, that the name of the Lord might be magnified, that He might be known in all the earth as the Sovereign, all-powerful God (Josh. 4:24; 1 Kings 8:42, 43; Psa. 83:18; 106:8).

God heard and answered the prayer of Hezekiah in a miraculous way, interposing on behalf of His servants (verses 35-37; 2 Kings 20:5; Psa. 65:2).

Daily Bible Readings

- May 2—The Prayer of Moses Numbers 14:11-19
- May 3—The Prayer of Hannah 1 Samuel 1:9-18
- May 4—The Prayer of Ezra Ezra 9:5-15
- May 5—The Prayer of Nehemiah Nehemiah 1:4-11
- May 6—The Prayer of David Psalm 38
- May 7—The Prayer of Jeremiah Jeremiah 32:16-24
- May 8—The Prayer of the Church Acts 12:1-17

Suggested Hymns

- Come ye disconsolate.
- Amid the trials that I meet.
- Jesus, Lover of my soul.
- Oh hear my cry!
- What a Friend we have in Jesus.
- The Lord's our Rock.

A Letter From The New Editor

The Gospel Witness

DR. T. T. SHIELDS - FOUNDER

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Dear Reader:

Since I cannot write a single letter to each of our many readers and friends, I take this opportunity to address you in what I want you to consider a personal note.

For thirty-three years the founder of The Gospel Witness served as its Editor and its chief contributor. Now he has been called home.. Those who succeed him in the editorial work of the paper are determined that, under God, The Gospel Witness shall continue and further that it shall grow.

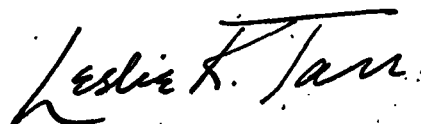
Over the years Dr. Shields valued very highly the prayers and interests of our readers whom he affectionately regarded as "The Gospel Witness family". May I ask for myself and my associates that same invaluable prayerful interest? Yea, I make bold to ask that you be even more faithful in this matter that God may give His servant a mighty portion of that blessing which rested so peculiarly upon the late Editor.

As the Chairman of the Board has already stated, The Gospel Witness shall continue in the same course. The gospel of grace shall be proclaimed, error exposed and God's people fed. May many sinners be saved and may all readers be profited through reading these pages!

My one great concern at the moment is to increase the circulation. During the past months we have seen many new subscribers added to our lists. Still we are not satisfied! It is our God-given desire to see The Gospel Witness in the homes of tens of thousands of Christians who as yet do not benefit from this ministry. You can help us in this endeavour. Interest others in the paper; send us the names of Christians to whom we could send sample copies.

Our call for the future is not merely "Carry On"; it is "Advance! Advance!" May the Lord grant that this ministry shall be crowned with success.

Yours in the Gospel,



Editor-in-Chief.