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SPONSORED BY CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES !

TEACHING OF DR. NELS FERRE

IN THE past two issues of THE GOSPEL WITNESS we made some very serious charges against Dr. Nels Ferre and the Canadian Council of Churches which sponsored him in a meeting in Toronto. Opportunity was given Dr. Ferre and the Council to deny these charges in the pages of THE GOSPEL WITNESS but we have had absolutely no reply. The old adage must apply here — "Silence is consent". By the silence we can only conclude that our every statement is conceded to be true and that the Canadian Council of Churches openly declares itself to be committed to an anti-Christian platform. If such is the case, then sides can be drawn up and the cry passed along — "Who is on the Lord's side?"

Let this be clear to every reader — *it is absolutely impossible to be on God's side and at the same time to acquiesce to this God-dishonouring teaching.* The Bible and Dr. Nels Ferre cannot both be right. One is wrong! Let those who want to stake their future upon the misty promises of teachers such as Dr. Ferre realize that they stand upon shaky and unproven ground. No Christian will so dishonour God as to believe for one moment that the word of any mortal is above the infallible Word of the living God.

Dr. Ferre's Teaching

Since our challenge has not been accepted, we shall proceed to outline briefly Dr. Ferre's teaching on eight points. The quotations which we give are taken directly from his book "The Christian Understanding of God" (published by Harper & Brothers, New York, and distributed in Canada by Musson Book, Toronto).

I. The Bible Is Not the Word of God

"When Protestants set up the Bible as an external authority, they showed their need of a 'paper pope'." (p. 178)

"Infallibility belongs to God alone and no human being nor any human group dare rightfully to claim that prerogative. Yet we idolize the relative and freeze history into perversion and impotence. Or 'the book' becomes perfect! Even the words become considered inerrant. Fearful human beings, claiming a liberating Gospel, barricade themselves behind a book. God's historic help in the Bible

becomes frustrating Biblicalism. God's good means is thus defiled through its perversion. The false use becomes demonic and destructive; and faith flees." (p. 179)

"What, however, of the historic credibility of the records? The records are obviously confused and accounts do not always seem to agree. . . . It may well be that I. Corinthians 15 is heavily edited." (p. 214)

"The scribes and Pharisees still murmur because Jesus receives sinners. Even those who wrote the Bible had to sponsor such attitudes, even to the point of making the saints clamor for revenge. How sad is such a state of the spirit reflected even in the New Testament." (p. 233)

II. Christ Was Not Sinless

"We have no way of knowing even, that Jesus was sinless, but such a claim is irrelevant to the reality of the incarnation. Such a proposition would, for that matter, depend mostly on some literal claim in the Bible. Such claims there are, but the Bible used in this external manner becomes a distinct danger to living faith." (p. 186)

"In the case of the Syrophenician woman we find Jesus affirming a narrow, nationalistic mission to the lost sheep of Israel and answering the foreigner with unnecessary sharpness even as the new vision broke in on him, accompanied with momentary pain even in his decision for good. He learned to be good and such learning was certainly accompanied by typical human reactions." (p. 187)

"Many of the passages where he speaks of himself, if allowed as at all genuine in import, are almost neurotically self concerned and invidious of others as thieves and robbers. Even his faith in the sword of the Spirit seems to have cooled off, and bitterly he seems to have warned his disciples that they would also need other methods. He seems hard rather than understanding in his relation to the Pharisees." (p. 188)

"Sinlessness is a bloodless category, making an anemic saviour." (p. 201)

"The disciples, Jesus perhaps knew, could not yet bear these implications. It may be of course, that Jesus himself never saw them." (p. 246)

III. Jesus Christ Was Not Virgin Born; May Have Been Son of German Soldier; Probably Joseph's Son

"Strange, however, is the hold which this doctrine in its more literal form has on countless people. Reference to the Virgin Birth is not found in Paul's letters, the earliest writings we have. It is not found in Mark, the

original Gospel. It is not found in the various epistles of the new Testament. It is not found in the Johannine tradition. As a matter of fact, the reference in John to the claim by the Jews to the effect that they were not born in adultery could give external credence to a Nazi claim that Jesus was German. Mary, we remember, was found pregnant before her engagement to mild Joseph, Nazareth was hard by a Roman garrison where the soldiers were German mercenaries. Jesus is also reported throughout a continuous part of the history of art, it is claimed, to have been blond. This is supposedly unnatural for the Mediterranean countries where this same tradition started and was continued. Hence Jesus must have been the child of a German soldier! After all, the claim develops, such is the experience of many girls near military camps. His great genius, spiritual agony, and serene victory would thus be accounted for, as far as the unusual conditions go which gave him the chance to respond in an exceptional manner in the fullness of time. Such an interpretation has been made of his life, and who can deny that such a conjecture COULD be true?" (p. 191)

"The birth stories are, to be sure, most improbable on other grounds, and perhaps, for this reason, the simplest thing to believe may be that Joseph was the natural father of Jesus. Certainly it seems queer for Joseph to have taken along an unmarried girl, nine months pregnant, on such a hazardous trip as to Bethlehem for the sake of paying any taxes! The stories seem forced throughout." (p. 192)

IV. Denial of Real Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

"But if Jesus takes the place of God, we still have idolatry. He is the mediator, not the eternal God." (p. 224)

V. Jesus Christ Not Unique Nor Is the Christian Religion Supreme

"We must remember, however, that 'God's gracious purpose in Christ Jesus' is the totality of God's activity, and though conclusively expressed in the historic Jesus, must not be limited to him." (p. 224).

"It is not necessary to know the historic Jesus in order for God's will and way to be accepted. The eternal God is not exhausted by the historic Jesus, and not to be equated with him in such a sense. In the eternities the Word has often taken flesh, and we can lay down no rule that would limit the freedom of God and the efficacy of the Son and the Spirit. Apart from the Christ and the Spirit, however, no one can ever be made whole and completed, for they are the very presuppositions of reality itself." (p. 224)

"In the one new world, where great cultures and religions must meet side by side, we shall rightly be conquered as we now are being to some extent by Hinduism and Buddhism, which have had and still have a far higher eschatology than the major sections of actual Christendom." (p. 247)

VI. All Men Will Be Saved

"The final destiny of man, as far as its general nature goes, we do, however, know; namely, to be with God and to share in His creative fellowship through all eternity. Staggering is this truth, but as sure as the Christian understanding of God. Divine love can be satisfied and need be satisfied with nothing less. The past, too, is within the present in as far as it exists, ready to be reworked, rearranged, redirected. The air bubbles will be kneaded out of the dough! Whatever of the past is canceled out has not even an old check to show for itself. It is completely gone into nonbeing. With God it is forgiven and most likely forgotten or else remembered through the beautiful spread of forgiveness, as an aspect of abounding grace." (p. 225)

"But the severity of God will lead us along with His goodness to our eventual repentance." (p. 239)

"The total logic of the Bible, however, is forthright and fine. GOD WOULD HAVE ALL TO BE SAVED AND WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. Either God would not or could not effect such a sovereign victory of His love, but He can and will!" (p. 246)

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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VII. Hell Is Not a Place of Eternal Punishment

"Eternal hell is naturally out of the question, both as subjustice and as sublove. No human judge has a right to inflict infinite punishment for finite transgression. The very conception of an eternal hell is monstrous and an insult to the conception of last things in other religions, not to mention the Christian doctrine of God's sovereign love. . . . That such a doctrine could be conceived; not to mention believed, shows how far from any understanding of the love of God many people once were and, alas, still are!" (p. 228)

"There are no incorrigible sinners; God has no permanent problem children. Heaven, to those who truly love all, can be heaven only when it has emptied hell. Therefore the good of each and of all requires that hell be an instrument of justice in the service of reclamatory love. All those who love, and supremely God, require that. Each one in hell is also completely important to God, and without the salvation "unto this last" God cannot be sovereign love. The Good Shepherd insists on finding the hundredth sheep. The MERCY of God, says the Bible, is EVER-LASTING; and love NEVER fails. What, then, is hell and how does it serve God's purposes?" (p. 229)

"It cannot be eternal." (p. 230)

"An eternal hell is incongruous, a false mixing of categories." (p. 234)

"... heaven can be heaven only when it has emptied hell." (p. 237)

"What inhuman hardness of heart could ever fashion so horrible a view as eternal hell and then connect it in any way with the boundless love." (p. 238)

"We think that it is at least likely that eternal damnation was actually intended by some of the writers of the Bible. We cannot be sure, but we think this to be at least highly probable. . . . Whether Jesus taught eternal hell or not is uncertain." (p. 245)

VIII. Purgatory!!!

"Hell is also to be distinguished from purgatory. While that term is not much used by Protestant writers, it nevertheless stands for an important truth in the realm of last things." (p. 230)

"When a person dies, though completely forgiven, he may still have untold consequences for which he must help to pay. The righteousness of God is vindicated, the sinner being enabled and thankful to participate in the work of reconstruction. Purgatory stands for this truth of reconstruction of consequences after death in whatever proper medium God may have prepared. Hell is for the bad; purgatory for the repentant. Hell leads away from heaven; purgatory is a necessary corridor to heaven. Purgatory may last through many lives and existences after this one, for God has much time to make a rich product, to foster wonderful children." (p. 231)

"Perhaps purgatory will be in hell." (p. 232)

By the wildest stretch of the imagination this teaching cannot be described as Christian nor can either the teacher or his sponsors be said to be doing the work of God as we have it described in the Bible. This doctrine

and program represents a religious fifth column of the first order as such men have the presumption to hold an unbiblical position and still pose as Christian teachers. No one can deny to Dr. Ferre and his associates the right to believe and teach whatever they desire but surely it is not too much to ask that they be honourable and cease posing as Christians and cease using pulpits and seminaries that were built with Christian money. If they are persuaded that their views are right, then let them seek to propagate them under their own banner rather than under the protection of the churches of God.

As you read these statements of Dr. Ferre, you will notice that his position is nearly that of the Jehovah Witnesses with regard to the low estimate of the person of Christ, the teaching of a second chance after death and the denial of eternal punishment. We can respect the Jehovah Witnesses more than we can Dr. Ferre for they have broken with the churches and do not seek to hide their colours by remaining within an institution with whose historic views they are opposed:

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LATE EDITOR

AN EXAMINATION of the papers and belongings of Dr. Shields disclosed a document which he had written nineteen years ago. It is entitled, "The Last Will and Testament of Dr. T. T. Shields." Mr. Slade read it at the morning service in Jarvis Street and we felt that it was of such interest that the readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS would want to keep the testimony for future reference.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF
DR. T. T. SHIELDS

Dated January 20th, 1936

I leave this as my confession and as the ground of my hope for the future.

I preached my first sermon in January, 1894, just forty-two years ago. I have been a Pastor continuously since October, 1894. In all that time I have had but one message, "Jesus Christ and him Crucified". I have no other message now. I believe this poor sinner's many — oh, so many! — sins have all been washed away by His precious blood, and that He has given me eternal life. In this hope I have lived, and in this hope I shall die.

I entreat all whom I love, and whom I have named in this document, to hold fast by this Gospel. I have proved the Bible to be the Word of God times without number. I marvel at the grace which has saved me, which has abounded to me the chief of sinners. I love the Saviour Who died for us — Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee! And when this document shall have legal force by "the death of the testator", I shall, by grace, have entered into possession of my inheritance which is even now mine by the death of the Testator, and shall be "with Christ which is far better."

"Ere since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

"When this poor lisping stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler sweeter song
I'll sing Thy power to save."

I have had a stormy life. I fear I have made some

enemies; but could I reach their ears or eyes, I would beg them to believe that I have been zealous for the Gospel, and have not willingly hurt anyone. I regret nothing of my contention for the faith, save that I have not striven more heroically and continuously for the glory of Christ and His Gospel.

I commend the dear church I have loved, and shall love for ever, to her exalted Head. Oh, how I have loved Jarvis Street — every member, past and present — and the thousands of dear children with whom I have had to do. Oh, Thou Shepherd of the sheep, save and keep them all for ever!

As I write I seem to get a glimpse of the Saviour's heart as He prayed (John 17) for those He was about to leave behind. Oh, Lord, keep dear Jarvis Street as the apple of Thine eye! Let no Modernist preach in her pulpit! Keep all the dear people true to Christ and His Gospel. Send a man to take my place who shall so preach the gospel in the power of the Spirit, that the glory of Jarvis Street's future shall eclipse the splendour of her most fruitful years.

To my dear people I leave this word: I love you all, and pray that I may meet you all in the Happy Morning Land. I can sincerely borrow Rutherford's sentiment and say:

Fair Jarvis Street, Toronto,

To me thou still art dear:

E'en from the verge of heaven

I'll drop for thee a tear;

Oh, if one soul from Jarvis Street,

Meet me at God's right hand,

My Heaven will be two Heavens

In Immanuel's land."

I leave this expression of Christian affection for the Office Staff, the Deacons of the Church, the Superintendent, Officers, and Teachers of our great School, and for the Church as a whole, and commend them to God and the Word of His grace.

I especially urge the Deacons of the Church to be watchful and patient in recommending to the church a successor. Make sure, absolutely sure, that he is free from all Modernistic taint.

From Our Files

Thirty Years Ago, THE GOSPEL WITNESS, May 21, 1925 —THE GOSPEL WITNESS of thirty years ago speaks of blessing at the regular services of the church. Under the heading "Last Sunday's Services", the following appears:—

The Pastor returned from Memphis on Saturday, Sunday was a day of blessing in all services. At the morning service the Pastor began the sixteenth year of his pastorate. On reaching his office on Saturday, the Pastor found a very gracious letter written on behalf of the Deacons and Deaconesses, and signed by Mr. Geo. Greenway. These faithful friends had hung within view of the Pastor's desk a fine portrait of his father, the late Rev. T. T. Shields. A fine bouquet of flowers, also, had been placed upon the desk.

On Sunday a magnificent bouquet of flowers was placed in the pulpit, and before the sermon Deacon Brownlee came to the platform and read the following address:

"Dear Dr. Shields:

"We, the members of Jarvis Street Church, Bible School, and congregation generally, wish to extend to you this morning our most sincere and hearty greeting on the occasion of your entrance upon the sixteenth year of ministry in this place. We could not permit the day to pass without expressing our esteem for you personally and our appreciation of your able and indefatigable work in our midst. We are deeply indebted to you, in view of your outstanding and always helpful pulpit ministry. We rejoice in the plan of salvation made plain, and in the message of comfort, caution, and counsel, consistently given to the people of God. Your preaching is always a blessing to us. Your insight and vision have often pointed the way to paths we otherwise might not have known. Your leadership has prompted us to lines of endeavour from which, without it, we would have shrunk. Your fearlessness has inspired us with a confidence which otherwise we would not have attained. We wanted you to know that now, after all these years, you occupy, more than ever before, a large place in the affection and regard of your people; hence these brief lines. We would unitedly assure you of our loyal support and co-operation as you continue your ministry among us.

"On behalf of the church and congregation,

(Signed),

Geo. Greenway
Jas. G. Hyde
Chas. Brownlow
Fred Turney
Harold G. Humphries
L. F. Shields
E. A. Brownlee

The Pastor replied, expressing his joy at being home again in the best church, and among the most affectionate people, in the world. The text was from Acts 26: 22-23: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to

the Gentiles." At the close of the service twenty-four responded to the invitation.

In the evening the church was packed to its utmost capacity with large numbers of people standing, while large numbers were turned away. The sermon of the evening appears elsewhere in this issue. Seven believers were baptized.

THE DEATH OF MRS. PRAYER MEETING

We note in the *Free Will Echo* that Mrs. Prayer Meeting is dead. In the belief that friends of the deceased might be interested, we print the death notice.

Mrs. Prayer Meeting died recently at the First Neglected Church on Worldly Avenue. She was born many years ago in the midst of great revivals and deep spirituality. She grew to be a strong and healthy child, fed mostly on testimony and Bible study. She was educated in the school of Christian service, under the supervision and teaching ability of the famous world wide teachers, the Holy Spirit and the Divine Scriptures. She soon grew to womanhood and was prominent throughout the world for a number of years, and was one of the most influential members of this famous church family.

For the last several years, Mrs. Prayer Meeting has been in failing health and gradually wasting away until recently she was rendered almost helpless by the stiffness of knees, coldness of heart, weakness of purpose, lack of will power, and inactivity.

At the last she was but a shadow of her former self. Her last words were whispered inquiries concerning the absence of her loved ones, now busy in the markets of trade and places of worldly amusements.

Experts, including Dr. Works, Dr. Reform, Dr. Joiner and Dr. Churchman, all disagreed as to the cause of her fatal illness, administering large doses of organization, socials, contests, and drives, but to no avail. A post mortem showed a deficiency of spiritual food coupled with a lack of faith and of heart-felt religion. Also shameless desertion and non-support hastened her death.

Only a few were present at her death, sobbing over memories of her past beauty and power. The body rests in the beautiful cemetery of Bygone Memories awaiting the judgment.

In honour of her passing, the church doors will be closed on Wednesday nights except the third Wednesday of each month, when the Ladies' Pink Lemonade Society will serve refreshments to the men's handball team.

—The Congregational Beacon

NEXT MONDAY IN OWEN SOUND

Monday, May 23, is a holiday. Perhaps many will feel inclined to go for a drive on that day. If such is your intention, we suggest that you drive to Owen Sound which is located on the beautiful Georgian Bay. Spend the day there and enjoy the fellowship as the new Baptist Church building is officially opened. Pastor Reg. Brown and his people have worked hard to erect this meeting place and now they invite their friends to rejoice with them.

Meals will be served at noon and at 5.30 p.m. in the Orange Hall. All meetings, however, will be held in the new building. Speakers for the day will be Rev. H. C. Slade, Rev. Samuel Dempster and Mr. L. K. Tarr. For further details contact Pastor R. Brown, 843—7th Street E., Owen Sound, Ontario.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

UNIVERSAL BLINDNESS

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, June 21st, 1936.
(Stenographically Reported)

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."
—Isaiah 53:3.

BY THE inspiration of the Holy Spirit the apostle Paul, speaking of the blindness which has happened unto Israel, says: "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

In principle that is true, not of God's ancient people only, but of all people. The Old Testament may be understood only as it is read in the light of the New. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." The Lord Jesus is spoken of as "The Word", Who "was made flesh, and dwelt among us". In one of His parables the Lord is represented as a King Who sent His Son last of all. The Lord Jesus Christ is the divine Ultimatum, a Summary of all that God has ever spoken, gathered up in His glorious Person, and given to men as the ultimate revelation of His will.

There are several passages in the New Testament which identify the Subject of this chapter. In the tenth chapter of Romans Paul evidently refers to it: "They have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" Again, you remember the familiar passage in the eighth chapter of Acts where Philip began at this same scripture, and preached to the Ethiopian, Jesus. Then there are other portions of the passage which obviously found their fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ: "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"; "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death"; "He was numbered with transgressors", and "He made intercession for the transgressors"; and because "He hath poured out his soul unto death", some day He shall "see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

I call your attention to these familiar words this morning in the hope that God may, in His grace, make application of them to some who even now may be hiding, as it were, their faces from Him.

I.

THERE IS NO QUESTION WHATEVER ABOUT THE FACT AS APPLIED TO EVERY ONE OF US: "WE HID AS IT WERE OUR FACES FROM HIM".

Sometimes in the ordinary relationships of life we may turn our faces from one whom to us, appears as a stranger, although we ought to be able to identify him. Apparently there are still a great many people who have not identified the Lord Jesus.

Some years ago when we were engaged in battle over these matters I brought to your attention the saying of a man who was once one of our own Baptist ministers, and he was at one time a professor in McMaster Univer-

sity. In one of his books Professor George Cross said: "Now after the lapse of all the centuries it may well be doubted whether it was right to speak of Jesus as the Christ." That is going pretty far, is it not? when the identity of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Whom the Old Testament speaks, is called in question? But there are still many who doubt that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Christ; and in the estimation of many He is reduced to the measure of a man, robbed of His deity, and made nothing more than an exemplary human character.

What is Jesus Christ to us? Is He but a Stranger Whom we may pass without recognition by the way? Is He nothing more than a remote Figure of history? Is there in our minds any doubts as to His identity? As you meet someone on the street or in some other place of public concourse, sometimes you are slightly attracted by a face. You say to yourself: "I ought to know that person, but I am not sure who it is. I do not know whether I should recognize him, whether I should speak or pass him by." If there be no answering recognition in the stranger's countenance you say to yourself: "I must be mistaken", and you turn your face, perhaps, in another direction.

Is it possible that any of us should thus meet with Jesus of Nazareth to-day, and entertain in our own mind a question as to Who He is? Do we hide our faces from Him as One in Whom we have no special and personal interest? I dare say there are still some even in this congregation this morning who have not gazed into the face of Christ, by faith, and seen there the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. If that be so, you are still numbered among those who hide their faces from the Son of God.

Sometimes people hide their faces from Christ by permitting their minds to be preoccupied by temporal affairs. Did you ever observe a man so occupied in the reading of his evening paper as to fail to recognize that there was a lady standing in the street car near him? Of course, he did not know it! He would not be so ungentlemanly as to permit her to stand! For the moment he is busily occupied with something, and he does not see! Then sometimes people allow their own minds to be monopolized with interests which exclude Jesus Christ from their thought, and lead them to turn faces away from Him. Were I to ask some of you this morning, perhaps, whether you have given serious consideration to the claims of the Lord Jesus, perhaps you would reply: "I have not thought very much about it." If that be so, it is because the mind has been occupied with other matters.

How many young people there are who seem to imagine

that it would be well enough for them to make the acquaintance of Jesus Christ in later years! And so they pass Him by, saying: "I shall seek Him again. I shall have plenty of time to make His acquaintance. It is not necessary that I should recognize Him and have direct dealings with Him today. For the moment I have other interests."

I remember years ago preaching in a certain little village, and when the invitation was given the man who was principal of the village school stood to his feet, expressing an interest in Christ. I saw him the next day, and enquired as to his attitude. He said: "I am afraid it was a mistake. I was somewhat moved by the appeal, and rather impulsively expressed an interest. But when subsequently I deliberated upon my programme I found that I had certain plans in life, certain ambitions which I am determined to realise, which would be incompatible with a Christian profession, and so after I went home I decided that these matters of which you speak must be put aside until my ambitions have been realized."

It is not always that people speak with such plainness; not always that people are so frank in their admissions. And yet I am afraid it is true that there are a good many who prefer not to recognize Christ because their minds are set upon other interests.

Sometimes men hide their faces from Him deliberately, of set purpose, excluding all thought of religion, and its implications, from their lives. They definitely make up their minds that they will have nothing to do with Christ.

Did you ever meet with someone who, for some reason or another, had taken offence, and was rather displeased with you? Did you ever meet anyone in that frame of mind on the street, and have you observed them deliberately turn their faces the other way when you met them? There are people who do that; who say: "I will have nothing whatever to do with this matter." They hide their faces from the Son of God.

II.

WHY DO MEN HIDE THEIR FACES FROM JESUS? Why do they turn their thought away from Him? I have seen countenances which were almost repulsive, men or women who have suffered a severe accident, whose faces have been marred, disfigured. In how many cases was that true during the War!

I went once, at the invitation of the High Commissioner in London to see the opening of an exhibition of the art of plastic surgery, where there were wax masks displayed of the work of facial restoration, effected by skillful surgeons during the progress of the War, where men had been so terribly disfigured that they feared to return to their homes, feared to have anyone who loved them look upon them. One can understand one's turning his face away from an unwelcome sight of that sort; but surely that cannot be said of the Lord Jesus. The spouse in the Song says that He is the "Standard-bearer, the chiefest among ten thousand", that He is not only lovely, but "altogether lovely", every feature of His matchless countenance serving to accentuate, to augment, the beauty of all the others. A marvellous symmetry is displayed in the character of the Godman. There is no reason why anyone having a love of the beautiful should ever turn their faces away from Him. And yet: "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." If one be without spiritual enlightenment, it may be that the very wounds of the Lord Jesus become to him repulsive.

It is a singular fact that there is scarcely any doctrine of the Scripture which elicits such antagonism as the doctrine of the crucifixion. I notice that a certain minister was concluding his ministry today, after nineteen years. According to a report last night in the paper he was asked his opinion of the hymn: "There is a fountain filled with blood . . ." He was asked, if the choice were left to him would he select that hymn, or employ that figure. To which he replied he rather thought he would not.

There are many people who do not seem to like to gaze at the Crucified. They hide, as it were, their faces from Him, as though there were something in that fact itself which was especially unwelcome to their view.

Why do men hide their face from the Son of God? I think it is because of His moral splendour, of the perfection of His character. There was a legend among the Jews to the effect that it was when Satan discovered that God was minded to make a man in His own image and likeness, and reproduce the perfection of His holiness in a human character that, fired with jealousy, he determined to spoil the beauty of the man whom God should make.

I have read of jealous rivals attempting to disfigure each other, as though by so doing they would destroy the attractiveness of one of whose power they are envious. So is it spiritually true, dear friends, that men are foolishly jealous of the supremacy of Christ, envious of His beauty, condemned by His moral superiority. We see that often among men. The boy who excels in school is not always a favourite with other boys. The girl who is specially attractive, and finds it easy to make friends, is not always the most popular girl in her set. Men and women, and boys and girls too, become jealous of each other.

I wonder if there is not that element in the attitude of men toward Christ? So perfect is He, so Godlike, so absolutely does He represent God, that men are afraid to look upon Him, and so they turn away from Him. The man whose tongue is clean is not welcomed to the circle of blasphemous men. The man who is manifestly frank and honest, will not be received by a company of thieves. Even in political life the man who is unpurchaseable, the man of conviction and manifest integrity, is not always included in the cabinet, lest he should be an awkward member under certain circumstances. And is not that true of the Lord Jesus? "Why" says the man, "were I to look upon Him and recognize Him and acknowledge Him as my Master, there are certain things that would have to be excluded from life immediately. I had better not see Him. I had better look the other way, as I meet him on the road."

Sometimes, perhaps, it is because of the implications of His sinless suffering. The cross is a great problem. The death of One so morally perfect as the Lord Jesus, must be accounted for. Even His enemies, all those who feign indifference toward Him, acknowledge His faultlessness, even as Pilate did. He said: "I find no fault in him at all." Pilate's wife warned him, saying: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man".

What are the implications of the death of Christ? Often have I directed your attention to the principle that apart from the assumption of the vicariousness of His death, if once His moral perfection be admitted, His death impugns the whole moral order, and challenges the government of the universe,—for how else could a sinless man die? Ah, yes, the fact that He died implies the presence of sin, and the knowledge of it is with us all. Not

in the strictly evangelical sense, and apart from divine illumination I knew, and yet all religions are based upon the assumption of the existence of moral evil, and all have for their ends its removal. And so the very death of Christ challenges us, and men turn their faces away from Him, unwilling to face all the implications that are involved.

III.

But very simply, there it is stated in the chapter. **WHAT IS THE CULMINATION OF UNBELIEF?** "He was despised and we esteemed him not." We acquiesced in the world's contempt of the Lord Jesus.

It is very difficult for a man of moral sense to turn the pages even of profane history and read of the conflict of principals there described, of the evils that have been from time to time rampant, the stories of wicked men, without taking sides. Sometimes I suppose we have all felt: "I wish I could have been there. I would not have been silent. I would never have consented to that act had I been there."

How do you feel when you read the story of the Lord Jesus? How do you feel when you read the story of His trial before Annas and Caiaphas, and Pilate. Where would you have been had you been present? Would you have kept company with Peter, warming yourself at the enemy's fire? Would you have joined the other disciples who forsook Him and fled? Would you have allowed the false witnesses to have it all their own way? Would you have volunteered your testimony and said: "Let me speak for this man"? Or would you have shared the general cowardice, even of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, and would you have allowed that trial to pass without one solitary word being said in favour of Jesus Christ? Men do it to-day. I have seen it done in religious assemblies. I have heard the Bible, the written Word, held up to contempt. I have heard men make light of the book of Jonah, and mock at the inspiration of the Old Testament, and even speak contemptuously of the blood of Christ in religious assemblies, and I have seen men whom I have known for half a lifetime, professed ministers of the gospel, sit there in silence without ever a word of protest at all. It is only a repetition of the ancient trial: "He was despised, and we esteemed him not". We allowed the general verdict to stand. We allowed the crowd to say: "Not this man, but Barabbas". And when Pilate gave sentence that it be as they required, we offered no protest, some of us until: "Grace these sightless eyes received, His loveliness to see". But having once seen Him, it was impossible that we should longer agree to the general judgment, was it not?

There is a character in our modern life who has a place in the front page of the newspaper. He is called by various names. He is usually described as a hit-and-run-driver. He injures someone with his car. It may be a child or a man or woman, but some pedestrian is knocked down, injured, or in some cases killed, and the car speeds on. There is no type that merits, and receives, such—what shall I say? I won't say contempt; something more than that. You feel that a man of that sort does not deserve recognition among decent people,—the man who is responsible for inflicting injury upon someone, and knows that he is responsible, and yet seeks to evade his responsibility, and to conceal his identity, and to shut his eyes to what he has done, and speeds on his way in the hope that the law will never be able to discern any relation

between that injured or dead person in the road, and the man at the wheel. A hit-run-driver! But in principle that is what we all have been: "He was despised", "Wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him", but "we hid as it were our faces from him". "He was despised, and we esteemed him not", utterly repudiated responsibility for the stripes that were laid upon Him.

What is it to be a Christian? Just the opposite of that. To recognize that His stripes were mine, that His wounds were mine, that all His griefs were mine, that all His sorrows were mine, that the iniquity that was laid upon Him was mine, that His death was mine, His burial—"He made his grave with the wicked"—that was mine; "Numbered with the transgressors" on my account; "made intercession for the transgressors"—for me. His resurrection at last was mine. My debts are paid, the prison doors are thrown wide. I come out into liberty, and I hide my face from Him no more, but gaze upon Him as being the embodiment of all that is beautiful in the universe.

What a lovely Saviour He is! I once asked a friend years ago, before I had heard him, if he had ever heard Dr. Jowett preach. He said, "Yes." I said: "With what result? What was your estimate of him?" "Oh", he said, "He always makes me feel what a beautiful thing it is to be a Christian." Do you ever feel that? Do you ever, young ladies, look upon someone who naturally has the advantage of you, and say: "I wish I looked as she does?" Did you ever look upon the Lord Jesus, and surveying the splendour of His character, the transcendent loveliness of His countenance, and say: "I wish I could be like Jesus!" I wish I could bear His image. I wish I could be made over again so as to be just like Him. Those who are predestinated, are predestinated to become conformed to the image of His Son. That is just what the gospel is, a promise of loveliness, a promise that all the marks and marring of sin shall be washed away, and He will make us at last to stand without fault before the throne of God.

I have noticed in this summer time how very careful people are who wear white—just afraid, you know, of touching someone. But when we have on the wedding garments, the beautiful garments which Christ provides us with, we shall be in a place where we cannot spoil them, for "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth".

In the name of the Lord Jesus I offer you that salvation. May He help us to receive it!

Let us pray: O Lord, we pray Thee to help us this morning. It may be there are some here who have not yet received Christ. We pray that their hearts may, by divine grace, be opened to Him, and that this service may result in the justification of many, and in bringing Thine own people just a little nearer to Thee.

We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

On the past Lord's Day the preachers were Mr. Samuel Tulloch and Rev. H. C. Slade. In the morning Mr. Tulloch, who is the Jarvis Street Church Visitor, preached from Mark 5 and dealt with the healing of the Gadarene demoniac. In the evening the Pastor had for his subject "Pentecostal Preaching". During the day three publicly responded to the invitation—one for salvation and two for baptism.

AMONG THE CHURCHES

with H. C. SLADE

Notes From The Mission Fields

ONE of the challenging new fields confronting the Association is that of Valleyfield in the province of Quebec. Late last year Rev. Yvon Hurtubise moved there to open the work in that needy area. The hand of the Lord was evident as the various difficulties were overcome and a place of meeting procured. Now Miss Margaret Eddy, a first-year student of Toronto Baptist Seminary, has gone to Valleyfield to assist Mr. Hurtubise and his associates in the work of French evangelization.

In a recent letter Mr. Hurtubise writes:—

"Since our coming to Valleyfield seven months ago, we have much cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving. Valleyfield is a city with a population of 25,000, ninety per cent. French Roman Catholic. New industries are coming in and the St. Lawrence seaway is going to give new life. The place is expected to double its population in a few years; big sections are given over to new housing projects. It is centrally located so that we can reach a great number of smaller towns and villages all around. Already we are drawing a few people from a thriving community close by.

We praise God that He has enabled us to rent a conveniently located meeting place with accommodation for up to seventy-five people, and which our small group of Christians is now endeavouring to furnish adequately. It was an unused store on one of the main streets next to a small public park. However, our stay in this building is quite indefinite since the property is for sale. (Perhaps the Lord will enable us to buy it ourselves!)

A little group of Christians has gathered around us, and we carry on five meetings a week: 2 English, 2 French, and a bilingual Sunday School, with attendances averaging around 20.

In my visitation I have found some interest among a few Roman Catholic families which have requested New Testaments. Many doors are open for us to visit again and bring the Gospel message to hungering hearts. It was a joy to be able to lead a young French couple to the assurance of salvation and to see them continuing with us in the services. It was my privilege to marry a young French couple; she was recently saved from Roman Catholicism and is receiving a measure of opposition from her family, but they are continuing faithful in their attendance at the meetings.

We expect to complete a house to house canvass of the whole city this summer, D.V., and carry on special children's meetings, as well as make other special endeavours in the communities round about.

Please pray with us that God will firmly establish a testimony to His glory in this place, and that He will work mightily in the hearts of some unsaved who meet regularly with us that they soon might come to a definite knowledge of salvation through Christ."

In Jamaica the Conservative Regular Baptist Association assists in the support of Rev. John W. Knight. In that island Mr. Knight does a heroic work for the Lord

and has gathered faithful bands of people around him. Because of his extreme modesty, he seldom sends us news of his labours and when he does communicate, his letters are devoid of exaggeration.

Writing recently from Clarksonville, he says—"We had quite a few special meetings in December and the early part of January. Mrs. Knight's cousin, Rev. George Cutting, a southern Baptist from California, was with us for five weeks of meetings in the various churches. They were times of heart searching for every one. A number professed to get right with the Lord, several of which are now in our candidate classes. Sin was not spared and we are hopeful that one result of these meetings will be to help believers to face up to the evils now sweeping the world. As usual at the beginning of the year, congregations have arisen in number. Eighteen were baptized here this month and nine at Mount Moriah."

THE POWER TO SEE GOD IN SORROW

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.—Rev. 1:7.

A strange thought, surely; why should every eye see him when he cometh with clouds? Do not clouds obscure the sight? Would we not have expected the words to be: "Behold he cometh without clouds, and every eye shall see him?" Yet bethink thee. It is not said that he cometh in clouds, but he cometh with clouds. The clouds are not to envelop him; they are to accompany him. All the mysteries of life are to follow in his train to prove that they have been all along the servants and ministers of his love. Why is it that to me the God of the universe often seems to hide his face? It is because the clouds of the universe are seen apart from him. They are looked at as blots in his handwriting. They are seen as accidents that have marred the plan of his providence. They are felt as influences that have disputed the reign of his empire. But if I could be told that the clouds are with him, if I could be made to feel that they are parts of himself, modes of his being, features of his plan, workings of his love—if I could be brought to know that, so far from delaying his coming, they are the very chariots in which he comes—then, indeed, I should understand what the seer of Patmos meant. Every eye sees the clouds of life, therefore every eye shall see him when he is known to be coming with the clouds. All hearts have the revelation of sorrow, therefore all hearts shall have a revelation of him when sorrow is known to be a voice from him. O thou that hast made the cloud as well as the sunshine, help me to see that the cloud as well as the sunshine follows in thy train! Help me to learn that thou makest the very winds thy ministering spirits! Help me to know that the affliction of time is actually working out the weight of glory in eternity! Let my vision of thy faithfulness reach even unto the clouds of my earthly day! Show me thy love in the things I called loveless; show me thy face as it shines behind the veil!

—GEORGE MATHESON

The Marks Of A Time Of Revival. And The Means Of Bringing It About

By Robert Murray McCheyne

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

—Acts xix. 20.

IT'S A BLESSED time, brethren, when the word of God grows mightily and prevails. It's a blessed time in a soul, it's a blessed time in a family, it's a blessed time in a congregation, it's a blessed time in a country—when the word of God grows mightily and prevails. Is this your desire? I do not think that the desires of a Christian should be bounded by anything short of eternity. It's a blessed state of things of which the prophet Isaiah speaks, "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." It is a blessed state of things that is described in that passage, "Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?" Isaiah xxix. 17. It is a blessed state of things that is described by the prophet Ezekiel, "I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season: there shall be showers of blessing." Ezekiel xxxiv. 26. It is a blessed state of things that is described in the seventy-second Psalm, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." Ah! these are just lively descriptions of such a state of things as is described in our text, when the word of God grows mightily and prevails.

From these words I would show you —

- I. *The marks of such a time.*
- II. *The means for bringing about such a time.*

Let us consider, then,

I. THE MARKS OF SUCH A TIME, and first of all, *in ministers.*

1st. *When ministers have got a deep and abiding discovery of sin.* Often ministers do not see much of sin, but oh! when God gives ministers a true discovery of sin, then their words come with power. When God gives ministers a deep discovery of indwelling sin — sin in their own heart, ah! that is a time when the word of God grows mightily and prevails. Sometimes, God gives ministers a deep discovery of the ugliness of sin in their people — shows that your sins are like the torch that set hell on fire. Then do they preach with power. O brethren, pray for such a time. We cannot preach if we do not see sin. It is only outside preaching if we do not see sin.

2nd. A second mark in ministers is, *when they have a great discovery of Christ.* Jonathan Edwards relates, "Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet

grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. This love of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour, which kept me the greatest part of the time in a food of tears, and weeping aloud, I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise to express, emptied and annihilated; to be in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him, and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity." Is it any wonder that such a man preached with power, and that many were converted under his ministry? Those of you who have been reading the eighth chapter of the Acts this morning, will have seen that when Philip went down to Samaria, he preached Christ unto them, "and there was great joy in that city." So it must be with ministers still; Christ must be the theme of all their preaching; but oh! there are many times when ministers preach of Christ as through a veil. There are times when ministers cannot speak with any power, for they do not see the preciousness of Jesus; but oh! when he shows himself through the lattice, when he shows ministers his hands and his side, as it were; when they have got a fresh view of his finished work, oh! it is then, it is then that the word of God grows mightily and prevails. It is then they can speak as with the manna in their mouth. Oh pray for such a time! Pray that ministers may not be without Christ, for, O brethren, it is a true saying, "Like priest, like people."

3rd. There is a third mark. It is *when ministers have an awful sense of the value of immortal souls.* The redemption of the soul is precious. A soul is of more value than a house of gold and silver: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." There are times when ministers do not realize the value of souls. There are times when ministers see no value in the souls of their people. But, brethren, there are blessed times when God gives us to know that your souls are of infinite value. There are times when God lets us see that you must live for ever, either in heaven or hell. There are times when ministers see that all that you are busy about is vanity, unless you get pardon, unless you get your soul saved. There are times when ministers may be said to be insatiably greedy about precious souls. You may have seen a father standing on the sea-shore, beholding the vessel that bears his son dashed upon the rocks. Oh! at that moment when she goes to pieces, he would be willing to dash into the boiling surge to try and save his child. Something like this at times is the feeling of ministers for souls. You have seen a house on fire. The father has escaped, but his wife and children are left behind in bed; and as he stands beside the fire engine, you may have seen his feel-

ings working, his agitation, and his look of intense anxiety; as the means are being applied to attempt their rescue; but greater than this is the feeling, at times, of ministers for souls. Yea, they are willing to die — to lay down their own life if souls could thereby be saved. "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." These are times when the word of God grows mightily and prevails.

4th. There is another mark I should not miss; that is, *when ministers can pray for their people's souls*. There are times when ministers can only pray for themselves. But ah! brethren, it is a blessed time when ministers are not only near God themselves, but can bring their people with them; when they can say, "Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?" Ah! these are blessed times, when ministers can take the Lord to witness, "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son; that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." These are blessed times, brethren, when God gives ministers the grace and spirit of prayer, and that spirit is diffused through their sermons, their only desire being the conversion of souls. It is said of Shepherd, when dying, that when speaking to a young minister, he said, "God is my witness, that I never preached a sermon without having the conversion of souls in view." It is said of a Scottish minister, that always on a Sabbath night he used to pray for every one of his people individually. Pray that ministers may have the same yearning for souls now, for it is then, and not till then, that the word of God grows mightily and prevails.

Secondly, *the marks of such a time in God's people.*

1st. *When they undergo, as it were, a second conversion.* The disciples of Christ once put the question to him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you; Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." At another time Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." These two passages show you that there is, what ministers call, a second conversion. At such a time believers get a deeper and more awful discovery of the pollution of their own hearts; they get such a view of the volcano within that they are brought to see Christ after a different manner; they are brought to see him, it may be, as Thomas was, when he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." They are brought to see a new power, and love, and beauty in Christ, which they never saw before. They hear Jesus saying to them anew, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord." And they join themselves to Christ in a perpetual covenant that shall never be broken. Ah! brethren, at such a time, they give themselves again to the Lord. Brethren, pray for such a time; you know it is not now, and you know you need it.

2nd. A second mark in believers is, *when the sanctuary becomes amiable*. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts." You know, brethren, when the soul of a believer is dry and languishing, the house of God becomes as a dry and thirsty land where no water is.

There is no power in ordinances. The voice of the Beloved is not heard; and the song of praise touches no chord of sympathy in the heart. But oh! it is quite different when the ordinances are felt to be sweet; when the Psalms are like the notes of the songs of the New Jerusalem; when it is like a breeze wafted across from the shore of the better land; and then the prayers are like speaking to God face to face, there is a real meeting with God in prayer; there is real confession: there is a real taking hold of the robe of Jesus and saying, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And, O brethren, at such a time as that, the preaching of the word comes with authority. The preaching of the word is like his rod out of Zion, it is then that the doctrine drops as the rain, and the speech distils as the dew; and then the broken bread and the poured out wine are like the avenues leading into the palace of the king. These are times when the name of Christ is like ointment poured forth. Pray for such a time, brethren.

3rd. Another mark is, *holy living*. It is a time when Ephraim shall say, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Now there is much careless walking; now there is little care to keep yourselves unspotted from the world; now there is little earnest walking with God; but oh! brethren, how different when the word of God grows mightily and prevails! when it pleases God to pour out his Spirit with the word! then believers walk softly — they walk with God; then believers begin to lay their hearts before God, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." At such a time believers begin to search their hearts, to see if there be any leaven in the house. You remember, the children of Israel were commanded, when keeping the passover, to put away all leaven out of their houses; so the leaven of malice, and envy, and evil speaking, is put away. There is a holy circumspectness in their walk and conversation. And the family altar is set up, and family government is exercised. You remember the case of Abraham, how we read of him over and over again building an altar unto the Lord, and calling upon the name of the Lord; and how the Lord says of him, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Ah! that's a lovely sight, brethren. Is it so amongst you? It will be the case when the word of the Lord grows mightily and prevails. Pray that it may be so.

Thirdly. I would now notice shortly the marks of such a time *among the ungodly*.

1st. *Notorious sinners will be converted*. It was the case at this time at Ephesus, verse eighteen: "And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds;" and they will not be contented to leave their idols — but look at the nineteenth verse, and "Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men." The same thing took place at Corinth. Paul said, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God;" and yet of these, Paul says, "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit

of our God." O brethren, so it is in every time when the word of God grows mightily and prevails. It's a sad mark of a town when there are no open profligates arrested and brought to Christ. But, brethren, it's a blessed time when open sinners are seen leaving their sins and seeking the Saviour; when men are seen giving up their unholy gains; when tavern keepers take down their signs and burn them — when they give up their licenses; and it's a blessed time when card players throw away their cards and take the Bible instead. It's a blessed time when the gaudy lovers of dress take their gaudy dresses and burn them. Once there was such a time in this place. Pray that it may come again.

2nd. Another mark is, *many who are not converted are yet remarkably restrained*. Many leave their outward sins and seem to turn unto the Lord but feignedly, and not with the whole heart. Do not mistake me, however, as if I meant to say I would like to see hypocrisy; but it is a mark that God is in a place that the wicked are forced to give up their ways, when the taverns are deserted, when there are no lights in such houses on Sabbath night. And, brethren, though these are nothing in themselves, yet they are the marks of a time when the word of God grows mightily and prevails.

3rd. A third mark is, *it is a time when there are many adversaries*. The lion of the forest will seldom roar if you let his hair alone. So that is the way Satan is so often quiet. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace;" but when the word of God begins to grow, then Satan soon stirs up the spirit of persecution. If the word of God grows and prevails in this place, you will soon see husbands looking out their wives, parents looking out their children, and heaping upon them reproach because they will follow Christ. Ah! it's a good sign when the lion roars; I cannot say I would we had more reproach, for oh! it is ill to bear, but I would say, I wish we gave *more occasion* for it. The offence of the cross is not ceased yet.

II. Let me speak a word as to THE MEANS FOR BRINGING ABOUT SUCH A TIME.

1st. The great and only agent in bringing about such a time is, *the Holy Spirit*. You know it is written, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." It is not by argumentative preaching; it is not by human eloquence or persuasion, nay, though I had the tongue of an angel it would not avail unless accompanied by the Spirit. You remember the text, "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars—until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." Until the Spirit be poured on ministers, the word will not grow mightily and prevail. Observe that passage in Isaiah where it is said, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." What is the cause of all this? "For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." There must be a breaking out of waters if ever the eyes of the blind are to be opened, or the ears of the deaf unstopped. Pray then, brethren, that ministers may get the anointing of the Spirit. Pray that they may be like John, "Filled with the Holy Ghost, that many of the children of Israel may be turned to the Lord their God." "Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

2nd. A second means is, *the ministry*. Now I do not say that revivals cannot begin without ministers, because they may, but they generally begin with ministers first.

In all the great revivals of which we read, ministers have been under God the instruments employed. Pray that it may be so amongst us. I am sure, brethren, I would never more speak if I were persuaded that this end were not to be accomplished by my ministry; and I am also sure that if God is to work any mighty work by us, he would need to make us holier — he would need to consecrate us afresh. Ah! brethren, we would need to be like those who said, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

3rd. The last mark I would mention is, *believers are more devoted*. The work begins first in the hearts of believers, thus it spreads to those around. Brethren, if anything is to be done in this place, the Holy Spirit must begin with believers. They must be more prayerful and more devoted in the cause of Christ. Brethren, could you not lay this more to heart? *Could you not give more time to prayer?* Could you not plead more with God for ministers that they might be more successful? And then, could you not live more holy lives? Could you not keep your garments clean? Could you not reprove sin? Could you not speak modestly for Christ, and warn the wicked around you of their fearful danger? Brethren, could you not do more by writing letters to unconverted friends at a distance, using any and every means, if by any means you may gain some? Brethren, could you not do *your utmost*? God has done *his utmost*. "What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" Do you not know that every unconverted sinner will soon be in hell? Do you ever lay this to heart? Do you ever consider that in a little while our last sermon will be preached, and our last opportunity of doing good will be over? Oh! do you ever think that you will reflect in heaven, if such a thing were possible, that you did so little for Christ? If any thing could make your tongue silent then it would be that you had done so little. Oh! how few tears bedew your pillow by night; how seldom does the midnight hour hear your strong crying and tears. Oh! how lightly does it seem to sit upon your conscience that so few are saved. You know many around you will soon be cast down to hell, and can you do no more to arouse them from their slumber? Ah, my brethren, these are the means by which the word of God grows mightily and prevails, will you use them or not? The Lord grant you may, and to him be all the praise. Amen.

A WORD TO CANADIAN READERS

The Canadian Council of Churches has sponsored Dr. Nels F. S. Ferre whose teaching is briefly outlined in this issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. The following churches are members of the Canadian Council of Churches:—The Church of England, Baptist Federation of Canada, The Church of Christ, Evangelical United Brethren, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Reformed Episcopal Church, United Church of Canada, Salvation Army, Society of Friends. Affiliated are the YMCA, YWCA, and the Student Christian Movement.

If you are a member of one of these churches, ponder this question — Do I believe God's Word or do I sympathize with this anti-Christian teaching? If you believe God's Word, then you cannot countenance this other teaching.

HOW TO PLEASE GOD

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, June 12th, 1932

(Stenographically Reported)

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." 2 Cor. 5:9.

THE APOSTLE has been speaking in this chapter of the future life, declaring the believer's hope, that when this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved "we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He has said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And he declares that it is his supreme ambition—for that is about what the text means—whether present or absent, whether here or yonder, to be well-pleasing to God. It is a fine illustration of what conversion really accomplishes in the soul.

Paul was a very religious man; he had been trained religiously; he was learned in religious lore. Touching the righteousness of the law he had counted himself blameless. And hearing of Jesus of Nazareth he had offered to Him, and to all who called upon His name, the most strenuous opposition. And he declared that he had done so conscientiously, for he said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth"; he had made it a matter of conscience to oppose Jesus of Nazareth at every point. But the Lord met him on the Damascus road; He introduced Himself to him, and immediately this man, Saul of Tarsus asked the question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" And he tells us in this chapter that the current of his life has been so changed that the centre of all life's interests has been so radically altered that it has now become his supreme ambition, his highest aim in life, always, under all circumstances, at all costs, to please Jesus Christ.

Now that surely is a worthy ambition for every one of us! I have known indulgent parents who seem to live to please their children. I have known some wives whose supreme ambition seemed to be to please their husbands—some husbands equally ambitious to please their wives. Politicians, you know, are usually very solicitous for the good favour of their constituents, and endeavour so to conduct themselves that they may please them. A merchant tries to please his customers. The preacher, too often I think, tries to please the people. But the worthiest aim of all is to bring all the interests of life into captivity to this supreme ambition, to be well-pleasing to God.

Now what shall we do? What can we do to please God? Would you not like to leave this place this morning with the assurance in your hearts that you are well-pleasing to God? That would help us to endure the criticism of our fellows. We should be able, perhaps, to survive the displeasure of men if only we could be sure, beyond all possibility of doubt that our lives were well-pleasing to God. My aim this morning is to be as simple and direct as it is possible to be. I have selected this text because it lends itself so readily to simple and direct exposition and application.

I.

WHERE SHALL WE BEGIN, THEN, TO PLEASE GOD? We live in a time when it seems as though men are, almost in-

variably, suspicious of each other. A man telephoned me last week to tell me of many disillusionments which had recently come to him. People in whom he had confidence, had failed him. Religious professors as he thought—I do not know the facts—had given evidence of uncertainty in their profession, a want of genuineness in their religious life. There was just a suggestion of cynicism in his attitude toward life generally. I said, "After all you are only learning what the Psalmist learned long ago, what he had learned before he wrote that cursed was the man who made flesh his arm." It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes, and that want of confidence, that attitude of distrust and suspicion is the thing that paralyses the commerce of the world to-day. No one trusts anybody.

How shall we please God? We must begin with this: "without faith it is impossible to please God"; we must, in our thought, separate God from all others; we must recognize that God is a Person apart, that He is God, that is all, and beside Him there is none else. He is not subject to the influences which play upon human life; He is not conditioned by circumstances which crib, cabin, and confine us; He is not actuated by motives which actuate men: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He. And we must conceive of God as being God, infinitely holy, the very source of truth and of righteousness and faithfulness—in one word, of holiness; and we are to give unto Him the glory that is due unto His name. We are to regard him as the God of truth, and to assume the only attitude toward that tenet that is reasonable and that is merely to believe it, to believe Him, to trust Him.

I think that is what kept Paul sweet amid all his most trying experiences. No man ever had more disappointments than the Apostle Paul. No man was more frequently betrayed than was he. He, too, was in peril among false brethren. He had to learn to distinguish between the precious and the vile. But the thing that gave direction, and poise, and balance, and sweetness, and beauty, and fruitfulness to his life was that he kept God always in His proper place as God. And that had become the guiding star of his life, to be well-pleasing to Him; and, therefore, it was ever his way to let God be true, and every man a liar, to believe God in spite of all contrary theories. Can you do that?

I heard from another last week who said, "I have had some bitter experiences recently." There are people who allow some root of bitterness to come into their lives because of difficulty, because of untoward circumstances. And sometimes they blame God for it. Now the question I ask is this: Are we able, in spite of all the contrarieties of life, whatever they may be, even when we have to say, judging from appearances, as did Jacob, "All these things are against me",—can we say, "God is for me, and the reason I know it is that I believe Him. I am not going to allow the suggestion of a doubt to find hospitality in my

mind at all. I know that I should displease Him if I question the reliability of His word, 'without faith it is impossible to please Him', therefore I will trust Him: 'though he slay me, yet will I trust him'!

Then the question arises, How am I to begin to please Him? What is the first thing I must believe in order to be well-pleasing to God? Well, the first thing, of course, is just to believe that we are a bad lot, just to believe that we are such sinners that a holy God could never receive us apart from the cleansing of the blood of His Son. We are just to believe the testimony of the gospel that there is only one way by which we can come to God, and that is through the blood.

I speak that word to any of you who are not Christians, and when I said a moment ago that that was a worthy ambition, you said in your heart, "I can say Amen, that I should like to please God, but I do not know where to begin." Well, I will tell you. Begin with the publican's prayer; "God be merciful to me, a sinner"; begin with the promise of salvation, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved". Say, "I accept what God has said; I bow my knee to Him, and I call upon Him for salvation. I will not insult Him by questioning His word: I accept it as true. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." Can you say that? Well, that is a good place to begin. We must all begin there.

II.

THEN WHAT ELSE MUST WE DO? I wish we could come to the word of God like little children. One of our little boys is very ill. His father and mother are Ukrainians. This little chap is a Canadian by birth, but he has been coming to this school ever since he could walk. He is in the Primary Department. His name is Victor Dutchek. He was run down by an automobile a week ago Thursday. He seemed to be getting on fairly well in the hospital; but he suffered a relapse yesterday morning. I had not heard of it before, but his father came to me. He was unable to speak very good English, but I could understand him. He had been in the hospital all night, and the doctors had feared the worst, and he came to know if he could get the help of a specialist. I found the little boy was in the hands of the most skillful of all doctors, and that everything that was humanly possible was being done for him. But the father came into my study, and he pointed to my Bible and he said, "I have a Book at home three times as big as that, and it is in English". And he said, "It is full of pictures. Victor did not like to play as so many boys, but liked books—he was only nine years old—and he loved the Bible. He would call me, whenever I had time, and ask me to explain the pictures to him, and I did the best I could." Then the poor father said, "Why did not somebody kill me, and let that lovely boy live? He was such a good boy." I think the Lord is hearing our prayers. His elder brother came to me last night, and said "God has heard our prayer, and Victor is improving."

What I wanted to say is this: it is worth while, is it not, to teach the little children the word of God, so that they take up that attitude toward the Bible: "O I wish somebody would explain it to me!" And what I wish, dear friends, is that all of you could forever remain like little children. I wish we could all be little children, and just go to God's Book. This Book is—I was going to say a million times bigger than you think it is—it is the word of the Infinite. And if you were the greatest scholar in the world, and had all the degrees of any university, or

all universities could confer upon you, the most appropriate attitude toward this Book would be for you to be on your knees before the Word of God, saying, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth". The proper attitude for every true child of God is, "I want to find out what God wants me to do, so that I may please Him." And the only way that I can find out what God wants me to do is to go to His holy Word as a little child, and listen as God speaks to me. Do not complicate it. There are some people who are fond of finding some strange interpretation, until you listen to what they say with amazement; and you say, "How did they find that out?" I believe the Bible is a simple, plain, Book for plain people. And if we come to it as a little child, we shall find out what it means; we shall discover what our Lord wants us to do.

III.

WHAT, THEN, OUGHT THE BELIEVER TO DO? Let me be very plain. Have you believed on Christ? "Yes." Are you really saved? "Yes." Are you a child of God? "Yes." And you would like to please Him? "Yes." Are you sure? "Yes." Have you been baptized? "No." Then do that; that will please Him. How do I know? Because it is in the Bible.

I met a certain gentleman some years ago when I was in London. He said to me, "How is it that so many people go to your church to be baptized?" "Well", I said, "some-one came to me, the other day, and asked a question as to what they ought to do, and I told them that if they would just read the New Testament they would find out." That person read the New Testament, and found out that he ought to be baptized. And I said, "That person came back to me and told me that he wanted to be baptized. I said, 'Why?' 'Because I found it in the Book.'" This man was a minister of another denomination. "Now" I said, "If anybody comes to you saying, 'I am a Christian; what ought I to do next?' I said, 'Will you send him to the New Testament and tell him to do exactly what the New Testament tells him to do? If so, he will leave your church every time, and you know it.'" He shrugged his shoulders and said, "Good afternoon."

All you have to do is to go to the Bible. Was the word of God intended for ministers and learned professors or was it intended for little Victor Dutchek, who wanted to know what the Bible meant? It is intended for the boys and girls as well as for the men and women. It is simple, that Jesus took my place, and went to the cross, and they crucified Him, and buried Him, and after three days He rose again. And God has left us a very beautiful ordinance in which we may show our union with Christ when we are buried with Him to rise again to walk in newness of life.

I would like to give a testimony in that connection. I was young when I was converted,—oh not as young as some of you; about fifteen I think. And a very matter-of-fact conversion it was. This was my verse, as I have so often told you: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I believed that, and then I said, "If that be true then I am a Christian, or God is a liar: one or the other." I knew God could not lie, and I knew I must be saved. But if you had asked me if I were happy about it, I should have said, "No; I have not had any special feeling about it; it is purely a matter of taking God at His word, and believing what He says. And then after I saw what my duty was, and I remember when a

committee received me, and examined me to see whether I was fit to join the church. They asked me as to my emotions, and I said, I did not have any. They wanted to know if I had no special gladness, and I said, "Not a bit." And then they said, "How do you know you are saved?" I said, "Because I have accepted the word of God Who cannot lie, and it must be true. That is all. I have no feeling about it at all, but because I believe it to be true I must obey Him, and I want to be baptized." Well, I was baptized. And I shall never forget to the longest day I live that Sunday evening. There was a great congregation present, but I forgot all about them. I came to understand what the Bible says about baptism as I could never have understood it without experiencing it. I suppose I knew that that passage was in Peter, which teaches us that the obedience in baptism brings the answer of a good conscience. I suppose I had read it but it was not clearly in my mind at the time, but I can tell you what was in my mind: the story of Christ's baptism. I did not see the form of a dove—only one saw that, and that was our Lord Himself—and I did not hear a voice from heaven saying to me, "I am well pleased" as Jesus did. But I did hear a voice, that is to say, I was made overwhelmingly conscious of this fact, that God, in His infinite mercy, had made it possible for a poor, guilty sinner to have his sins washed away, and then to do at least one thing that was pleasing to Him. And because I knew I was in line with the teaching of God's word in that act of obedience, I seemed to hear God saying to me, "I am pleased with you for obeying my commands."

Oh, I have learned since that it is possible for the believer to have that testimony that he pleases God in a thousand other ways as we do His will, as we apply the principles of His gospel, as we do those things which are right in His sight. And there is no joy in the world like that.

I was once the unwilling, reluctant, participant in a university convocation, when certain degrees were conferred, and I was one of the victims. And there was a gentleman sitting beside me who strained his neck to try to get sight of somebody in the congregation. There was a great crowd of people. This man said, "I am just looking to see if my father is here." He was proud of the distinction. When he made his reply in recognition of this honour conferred upon him, he told of a great day in his experience when he was a little boy, and when he had a new pair of shoes with little brass toes. And he said, "I was just as proud as a king when I walked with those brass tipped shoes. And this is another great occasion in my life." I thought it was a happy association after all, the brass tipped shoes, and the doctor's hood.

What I wanted to say was this: this man was evidently greatly elated by this honour conferred; it was a great pleasure to him. And he wanted to be sure his father was there that he might have a share in that honour. What childishness it all is, after all, these ribbons and fur-belows. But my friends, we may have such an occasion as that every day we live; we may have a degree conferred upon us from heaven when we do something that is the expression of our supreme ambition to be well-pleasing to God. And then we have the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and all the angels to witness the recognition of our obedience.

O we are saved by grace, but we shall be rewarded for our obedience, and therefore we ought always to endeavour to be well-pleasing to God. And then after that you take the word of God, and you apply its principles

to every emergency of life, the question for you as a Christian will be not, Is this profitable? not, What will my friends say? not What will my minister say? not What effect will this have upon my church relation? not How will this affect my business interests? none of these things at all, nor even, How will this influence my companions in recreation? O there are people, I suppose, with whom we delight to have an hour or so off duty in free conversation. You young people have your companionship. And sometimes when some duty comes before you the question you ask is, "Will it affect so and so if I take the right course?" All these things must be dispelled from mind, and you must set the Lord always before you, and you must ask the question always, "What would Jesus have me do? What is the teaching of His word? How does its principles apply." You may say, "I do not know what I ought to do." Well, if you don't know what you ought to do, do not do it. "Oh" you say, "I must do something." No; you must not do something. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Whenever you have a course before you concerning which there is some doubt, you deliberately incur the risk of doing that which is displeasing to God, and you cannot afford to do that. You must set the Lord before you and apply the principles of His word, and in all the affairs of life always ask, What is well-pleasing to Him. Then dear friends, we shall know something of what it is to be happy in Jesus. The only abiding joy in life consists in knowing that we are well-pleasing to Him. One of our teachers said in prayer meeting the other night that he had never had such difficulty in his life as he was experiencing just now, never such straitness as that which characterized his life to-day, and yet he said, "I have never been brought so near to Christ; I have never had such experiences of His love and favour as I am experiencing just now." I do believe that it is possible for every one of us so to live our lives before God that we may be conscious of heaven's smile, and, having that, we can put up with all earthly disabilities. And we can say we make our ambition whether present here in this vale of woe, or absent, departed to be with Christ, to see Him face to face, here or hereafter, it makes no difference to me, my one ambition is to be well-pleasing to God. May we thus be fired with a spiritual ambition and enter into the joy of the Lord.

Let us pray: O Lord, we thank Thee that Through Thy cross Thou hast thus opened the gates for us into a present paradise, so that we may abide in Thy will, and rejoice in the Lord always. We pray that every one of us may learn this joyous secret, that so we may be happy in Christ. We ask it for Thy name's sake, Amen.

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

By DR. T. T. SHIELDS

"Other Little Ships"	\$2.00
"The Plot That Failed"	2.00
Special Illustrated Number of Sept. 2825
"Russellism or Rutherfordism", 71 pages25
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"Does Killed in Action Mean Gone to Heaven?"05
"The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements"05
"The God of All Comfort"05

The Gospel Witness

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 Canada

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 19 Second Quarter Lesson 9 May 29, 1955

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

MANASSEH'S SIN AND REPENTANCE

Lesson Text: 2 Chronicles 33:1-13.

Golden Text: "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word."—Psalm 119:67.

I. His Sin: verses 1-10. Compare 2 Kings 21:1-9.

The sin of Manasseh was unreasonable and foolish. He was the son of good King Hezekiah, and with the example of his father before him, and with the knowledge of the way in which his father had been blessed by the Lord, he, too, should have been a wise and good monarch. But the career of Manasseh is a warning to all that no one can trust in the Lord for another; each is responsible to the Lord for his own soul (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 14:12). The son or daughter of godly parents has a wonderful privilege (1 Cor. 7:14), but he or she must be born again to have favour with God (John 8:7).

The sin of Manasseh was deliberate. In his youth he may have been influenced toward evil by corrupt counsellors, but he knew the will of the Lord concerning idolatry (Deut. 18:9; 2 Chron. 28:3). He sinned against the light granted to him by a Sovereign God Who had cast out the heathen nations because of their idolatrous practices.

The sin of Manasseh was presumptuous. He not only rebuilt the high places, once destroyed by his father, erected altars and groves for the worship of Baal (Deut. 16:21, 22; Judg. 2:13) and worshipped the powers of heaven, the moon and stars, as did the Babylonians (Deut. 12:3; 2 Kings 23:11; Jer. 19:13; Ezek. 8:16; Zeph. 1:5), but he presumed to erect altars to these heathen deities in the very temple of God, which had been built for His praise in Jerusalem. (2 Chron. 6:6; 7:12-16).

The sin of Manasseh was great and extreme; he indulged in every type of idolatry and witchcraft (Deut. 18:10, 11; 2 Kings 16:3; 21:6). Not only the heathen altars, but even idols to the heathen gods were placed in the very house of the Lord, dedicated to Jehovah as the only God (2 Kings 21:7; Psalm 132:14). Moreover, he was cruel and unjust, putting to death those who refused to follow him in idolatry (2 Kings 21:16).

Manasseh sinned himself, most grievously, but he also led the children of Judah into sin. In this regard he followed the pattern set by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, of whom it is frequently said that he sinned and caused Israel to sin (1 Kings 15:30; Matt. 5:19). His own son, Amon, followed his example (verse 22).

The sin of Manasseh was inexcusable. He was warned by the Lord through the prophets (2 Kings 21:10-15), but he refused to hearken; therefore, his sin rested upon his own shoulders. (Rom. 2:1-4). The prophets who ministered during his long reign were Hosea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk and Isaiah. Their warnings were recorded to form part of the national chronicle (verse 18).

All this did Manasseh do "before he was humbled" (verse 19).

II. His Repentance: verses 11-13.

Compare 2 Kings 21:10-18.

When Manasseh refused to hear the word of the Lord when called upon to repent, he was compelled to give heed to the Lord Who spoke to him through affliction. God in mercy did not allow the king to continue indefinitely in his evil course, but in sovereign grace intervened by allowing the King of Assyria, Esarhaddon, the successor of Sennacherib, to invade the land, capture Jerusalem and carry off the King of Judah to Babylon in chains (Deut. 28:36). He hid himself among the brambles, trying without avail to escape from his capture. In Babylon Manasseh had time to meditate upon his sins, and he seems at last to have realized that the evil course he had been pursuing was leading him into moral bondage, and that because of his apostasy he had been permitted to suffer. Sin ever enslaves the soul (John 8:34; Rom. 8:15, 17).

Moreover, in Babylon the king would see heathenism as it really was, not as the refined and moderate paganism

which he had introduced in the land of Judah. His soul was probably disgusted with the orgies and foul practices of idolatry when seen in their proper light. Manasseh had been trained in the ways of the Lord, and this wickedness would be revolting to him, when he came to himself (Luke 15:17).

In his affliction King Manasseh remembered the Lord, and then earnestly besought the Lord Whom he had neglected in the time of prosperity (Psa. 119:71, 75; Jer. 31:18, 19; Heb. 12:6-11). Men may think they can live without the Lord, but when sorrow comes, they instinctively turn to Him.

As Manasseh sought the Lord, the word of the Lord became precious to him and wrought repentance in his heart. He humbled himself before the Lord, acknowledging his sin (verse 23; 2 Chron. 7:14). The Lord used His prophets as instruments, not merely to rebuke the king, but also to bring him to repentance (2 Sam. 12:1; 13; 24:11). The ministry of restoring the backslider is a precious one, difficult and frequently neglected (Gal. 6:1, 2).

The Lord hears the cry of those who turn to Him in humility and with a contrite heart (2 Chron. 12:7; Psa. 9:12; 34:13). In mercy and in sovereign power Jehovah brought about the release of Manasseh (1 Chron. 5:20), restoring him to his former position on the throne of Judah.

The repentance of Manasseh was genuine, for he put away the false gods, destroyed the altars and images which he had set up in the house of the Lord, repaired the true altar and commanded Judah to serve God alone (verses 15, 16). Through sad experience he had become convinced that the Lord was Jehovah God (Dan. 4:23-36).

Daily Bible Readings

May 23—Warning against Idolatry	Deut. 18:9-14
May 24—The Folly of Idolatry	Isa. 40:19-26
May 25—The Sin of Manasseh	2 Kings 21:1-9
May 26—The Repentance of Manasseh	2 Kings 21:10-18
May 27—The Ministry of Affliction	Psalm 119:65-80
May 28—The Call to the Penitent	Hosea 14
May 29—The Restoration of the Penitent	Luke 15:11-24

ALTERNATIVE LESSON SPIRITUAL BLESSING THROUGH GENEROUS GIVING

Lesson Text: Philippians 4:10-19.

Golden Text: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."—2 Corinthians 9:6.

The Apostle Paul was languishing in a dismal, dark, uncomfortable Roman prison when he penned this letter of joy to the Christians at Philippi. One of his causes of rejoicing was the liberal gifts of the Philippian believers (2 Cor. 11:9). How welcome their gifts would be! Have the scholars ever been in hospital or confined to their homes for a time? Did someone send them flowers or a gift? What pleasure it brought to the patient, and what joy and blessing to the giver!

These Philippians had long desired to send some material comforts to assist Paul in the time of imprisonment, but until then lacked the opportunity of expressing their love, as they had expressed it on previous occasions (verses 14-18).

In thanking the Christians for their token of fellowship, the Apostle Paul made it clear that he was not complaining about his lot. He had learned by experience that no matter what his outward circumstances might be, his heart could be at rest in the Lord (1 Tim. 6:6). In the time of distress he would not despair (2 Cor. 4:8-10), and in the time of prosperity he would remain humble (Deut. 8:11-18; 1 Cor. 4:7). The word "therewith" (verse 11) is in italics, indicating that it is not in the original Greek: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content." There is a difference between being content with our circumstances and being content in our circumstances. The former might imply a fatalistic attitude, a loss of ambition, but the latter implies a trustful submission to the Father's will, enabling one to wait patiently till the Lord opens the door (Psa. 31:8; Heb. 13:5, 6).

The gifts sent by the believers were gladly received; not because the Apostle was in great need, but because these gifts were tokens that the Lord had given to the Philippians the grace of generosity (2 Cor. 1:11). Under these conditions the gifts given to the servant of the God were in reality given to the Lord Himself (Matt. 10:42; 25:40); constituting a sacrifice well-pleasing unto Him (Gal. 6:10; Heb. 13:15, 16). As such, both gifts and givers would be blessed of God, as the Lord will not be debtor to any man. He Himself would

reward the liberal believers (Prov. 11:25; Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:38). Their own needs would be supplied from the inexhaustible and heavenly supply of the riches of God, coming to them through Christ, even as in the time of famine the riches of Egypt were made available to the starving people through Joseph (Gen. 41: 37-57; 2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 3:16).

"Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7, 8) is true not merely of the nature of the seed and harvest, but also of their amount. One cannot expect a large harvest when but little seed has been sown (Prov. 11:24, 25; 22:9; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7). The liberal soul shall be blessed of the Lord.

VICTORY OR DEFEAT

By A. NORMAN MCMILLAN

JACK EVANS was in a serious state of depression. His team had lost the hockey game. That alone was not enough to account for his present dejection of spirits. He had lost before, and usually with good grace. But today nothing could rouse him from his depression.

His mother, whose experiences with boys had taught her much, waited patiently for the situation to develop and at last the silence was broken. Solemnly Jack said:

"Mother, God was on the side of the other team today, and they won."

"Perhaps, they won," suggested his mother, "because they were the better team."

Jack frowned and his blue eyes showed fire. "But they weren't, Mom, they lost their tempers and cheated and swore. We made up our minds to play fair and cut out the bad language. And they won and we were licked. God was on their side, and it's not fair."

Mrs. Evans tried to comfort him but Jack would not be consoled. The ugly fact remained. His team that had tried to keep the rules and play fair had been beaten by a team that didn't give a hang about these things. God, it seemed, was on the side of might—not right. You couldn't explain that if you argued all night.

Jack's father arrived home from work at six o'clock and before Jack had seen him, Mrs. Evans had related the incident and presented Jack's problem.

Mr. Evans pondered the matter carefully before ascending the stairs to his son's room. He discovered Jack sprawled out on his bed, perplexity written on his face.

"Well, my boy, I hear you won out today," he exclaimed, cheerfully.

"Well, then," reported Jack, "you heard wrong, 'cause we didn't; we were licked."

"Oh, but I heard that there were two contests," continued his father with caution, "Which did you win?"

Jack sat up and folded his hands over two rather dirty knees.

"I don't know what you're driving at, Dad. What do you mean?"

Mr. Evans sat down on the bed beside his son.

"Mother told me all about it, Jack. She told me you lost the match but you won in what really counts. You didn't beat the other side but you conquered yourselves when you refused to cheat, lose your tempers or swear. I want to congratulate you, Jack. You won out and I'm proud of you."

The sullen look disappeared from Jack's face as he came to see the truth in his father's words. A slight smile appeared on his lips.

"I never thought of it in that way, Dad," he said, "Then God was really on our side all the time, wasn't He?"

"Inasmuch as you were on the side of right," replied his father, "You must have been on God's side and He

on yours. You know, son, a great man, many years ago spoke a wise word when he said—'Greater is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' Do you think you understand?"

Jack nodded. "Thanks, Dad. I see it differently now. I guess I had the wrong idea about God, and a lot of other things too."

THE CONSECRATION OF OUR HOME LIFE

By faith Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house.—Heb. 11:7.

What a humble, what a modest sphere for the exercise of faith! One would have said that the purpose was quite disproportionate to the work. The ark was a great undertaking, but what was it undertaken for? To save his own family. Is so narrow a sphere worthy to be the object of faith? Is so commonplace a scene as the life of the family circle fit to be a temple for the service of God? I always thought that the family was a secular thing. I always held that the duties of a man's household had nothing to do with his religious duties; that they were far too small things to have a place beside the reading of chapters and the singing of psalms. Going to church was the service of God, but to perform the duties of the household was only the service of man. Here is a voice which tells me all this was a delusion and a dream. Noah is bidden to prepare an ark for the saving of his house. His whole life on earth is a work for his family, and that is counted to him for a religion; it is called faith. He is only allowed to have one motive for action—a domestic motive, a commonplace motive, an intensely practical motive—the protection of his family, the sustenance of his sons and daughters; but because he fills that sphere to the measure of his power, he is reckoned among the company of those who through faith and patience inherited the promise.

My soul, when thou hast finished thy prayers and ended thy meditations, do not say that thou hast left the house of God. If thou art true to thyself thou shalt seek, like the psalmist, never to leave God's house, but to remain in it all the days of thy life. God's house shall to thee be everywhere, and thine own house shall be a part of it. When thou enterest into thy home thou shalt feel that thou art going into a temple, a place of divine worship, an atmosphere of holy service. Thou shalt feel that all the duties of this place are consecrated, that it is none other than the house of God and one of the gates to heaven. Thou shalt feel that every one of its duties is an act of high communion. If thou art breaking thy bread to the family circle thou art fulfilling one form of the command: "this do in remembrance of me." If thou art shedding the warmth of thy love around the domestic hearth, thou art giving to the members of thy household, it may be, their first sense of God. How shall they love the divine Father except through the image of a human fatherhood? How shall they prize the divine Brother except through the form of a human brotherhood? How shall they appreciate the revelation of the house with many mansions if their experience of an earthly home has not been suggestive of peace? Therefore be it thine to make thy house his house. Be it thine to consecrate each word and look and deed in the social life of home. Be it thine to build thine ark of refuge for the wants of common day; verily, thy labor of love shall be called an act of faith.

—GEORGE MATHESON