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The Jarvis Street Pulpit The Liberation of Spiritual Captives

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

(THIRD IN A SERIES ON REVIVALS OF THE BIBLE)

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, November 7, 1929

(Stenographically Reported)

"And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

"And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

"And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."
—Exodus 2:23-25.

I READ these verses as being a definite record of revival. The children of Israel had been in Egypt for about four hundred years. They were the children of the promise. They were the seed of Abraham. But they were now in bondage to an alien power. The text tells us how they sighed; and then cried; and how at last revival came. We shall look at this in order that we may see by the operation of what principles God effected a revival there, and how He brings about a revival in the life of the individual and of the church and of the people of God everywhere.

I.

FIRST OF ALL, WE OBSERVE THAT GOD SOMETIMES LETS PEOPLE ALONE FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD, THAT THEY MAY LEARN DEEPLY THEIR NEED OF HIM. We read in one place where He said, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." God does sometimes let His people have their own way for a little while, that they may learn how bitter a thing it must always be for a man to have his own way. These people had been long in Egypt, and apparently the hope of divine interference in their lives had gradually died out among them. Their history was rich in the record of miracles: God had come to their fathers again and again graciously interposing, graciously laying His hand

upon them and changing the current of their lives. But now for four hundred years or thereabout nothing had happened to them as a people.

When you view the history of these people retrospectively, when you see it in the perspective of history, four hundred years is a very short time; but for those who actually lived within that period it must have seemed a very long time. Some of you look back to the days when you heard Moody or Spurgeon preach, when you saw God do mighty things. "But," you say, "that is a long time ago." It is a great deal less than four hundred years! You are not as old as that! Yet this people had gone on the even tenor of their way, and had been without any sort of divine visitation for a period of four hundred years, until, I fancy, they had gradually concluded that miracles belonged to the days long since past, and that it was useless to expect them now!

I wonder if we are not in a period like that just now? One can scarcely pick up a newspaper or a magazine or a religious book or hear a sermon without meeting with the assumption that God does not now visit His people as once He did. Even some very orthodox people have fallen into that deadly assumption. I frankly confess myself a premillenarian. I can see no hope, from the teaching of the Book, of any sort of reign of righteousness until the Lord Himself shall come. I do not mean

that it could not be, for God the Holy Ghost is just as mighty as God the Son, and if God had so ordered it, He could, by means of the preaching of the gospel, bring the entire world to His feet. It is not what God could do, but what He has said He will do that concerns us; and so far as I can see, there will be no golden age until He comes Who wears the crown!

There is a type of teaching which I frankly confess I abhor. It makes me shudder, that type which assumes the world is bad as it is, that it is gradually growing worse — as it probably is — that there is no use to expect anything better, and the more rapid the descent the greater reason for Hallelujahs. There is nothing in the Bible to justify that view of life. While it is possible for one soul to be saved, the Holy Ghost is with us; and He Who saves one soul, can, if He will, save a thousand, or a million. Let us get that out of our minds, and let us not join the army of unbelievers and look upon God's visitations to the sons of men as being so remote as to be of no concern with us. That, I think, must have been, in part, the attitude of the children of Israel. Nothing had happened. Though they had heard of God, they no longer expected, apparently, that God would do anything for them.

And yet the fear of God had not utterly died out among them. We read that the midwives feared God; and when Moses came to them he "supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them" — but they understood not. Moses knew something of the people, and he "supposed" that they were still looking up, and still expecting God. But when in obedience to the divine impulse, as he believed, he undertook their deliverance, he discovered that the vision which was his had not as yet been shared by the people. Apparently they were not expecting any deliverer just then. Bitter as their bondage was, they had come to regard it as inevitable and unescapable. Like African slaves, they had accepted their enslavement as something from which there was no possibility of escape.

That is a terrible condition to get into, when men accept evil as a thing that must be, and from which there is no deliverance. There is no surer sign of spiritual declension than when one hears preachers and others complaining that they are in bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil; and considering how they may adjust themselves to the bondage. I remember a while ago there was a meeting of ministers in the Y.M.C.A., and with one accord they admitted that the young people — whoever they are — had forsaken them. They said, "The young people do not come to church. We must do something to attract them. Whether we like it or not, these are the facts, and we have to accommodate ourselves to changed conditions." One preacher was bold enough to say, "Our bread and butter depends upon it." There were all kinds of suggestions that perhaps the "young people" might be induced to return to the church if the church were to have a moving-picture machine installed, and provide certain kinds of entertainment.

But here is the deadly aspect of that condition; here were a company of religious leaders who were settling down to accept their chains as something from which there was no escape. They said in effect: How can we wear them without their galling us too much? How can we face these conditions and make the best of them? I met an outstanding minister of a large city some years ago—and I think in simple fairness it should be said

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that his was an extremely difficult situation. But he said, "There was a time when many came to prayer meeting, but now" — and he shrugged his shoulders and said, "we must put up with the changed condition of things. It cannot be helped." When a man becomes accustomed to his chains, and ceases to hope that the shackles can ever be broken, he is certainly in a condition of slavery.

That is about the condition of the modern church today. Men say, "Why have a prayer meeting when God does not answer prayer? Why pray at all when science tells us that God never interferes? Why petition Heaven's help if the operation of inexorable law shuts us up to the conditions we now face? What is the use?" God leaves people alone in their folly sometimes until the chains really begin to smart, until men are driven to the end of themselves. In the case of His people Israel God seemed to have withdrawn Himself altogether from them, and left them alone in their misery that they might learn their need of Him.

All that is true sometimes in the history of the individual. I have seen some tragedies among professing Christians. I have seen those who once looked into the face of the sun like mighty-pinioned eagles, become chained in a cage,—

"Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these earthly toys;
Our souls can neither fly nor go
To meet eternal joys."

Left to ourselves, how helpless we are. We ought to be thankful for any kind of visitation from the Lord, even if it is a rod. We ought to praise God for anything in

the world that reminds us that He is near. You remember that significant word in the story of Hezekiah? — "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." When God left good Hezekiah as the ambassadors came to enquire of the wonders done in the land, of how God had heard prayer and restored Hezekiah, "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up." He did not say anything about God's visitations, but took the ambassadors proudly through his mansion and showed them his silver and his gold. He acted like a little boy showing off his Christmas toys! If we are left alone of God we get into the condition in which Israel was at this time.

But they learned at last of their helplessness. They discovered that there was no human power that could break their chains. It is a good thing when people begin to recognize their trouble. I read a great many papers. We have many of them coming to the office in exchange for THE WITNESS; I do not know how many, but scores and scores of them. I think it is rather a healthy sign when one finds articles that acknowledge the church is about at the end of itself. It is a very hopeful sign when one hears that note. The thing I fear is the Laodicean attitude which boasts, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Self-complacency in the midst of sin is the most deadly thing of all.

II.

LET US LOOK FOR A MOMENT AT SOME OF THE FIRST SIGNS OF REVIVAL. God left them until they got to the end of themselves. Perhaps empty churches and empty treasuries and troubles of all kinds will do us good after all. They may drive us back to God. A man may be so seriously injured and have lost consciousness to such an extent, that even the skilled physician does not know whether he is alive. But as consciousness gradually returns, and the man becomes aware of his pain, he utters a groan, a sigh; and the doctor smiles when he hears it— for dead men do not sigh; dead men do not groan.

It is a great thing when we can sigh. It is a fine thing when you see the professing Christian, or the professing church, beginning to complain of itself, beginning to wail a little, beginning to cry out because of the prevailing conditions. There may be no clearly articulated prayer, there may be no sign of returning spiritual intelligence as yet, there may be no going to prayer meeting, or seeking directly and of set purpose the face of God in Christ — there may be nothing but a sigh, just a grumble, just a groan. Did you ever do any groaning? "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." Some people do little else! They are always groaning! I used to know a man whose company I enjoyed in many respects, but he had a very sad habit: every little while he would utter a huge sigh, "Oh dear"! I do not know what it was about — nor do I think he did! But I found when I had been in his company a while, I did it myself!

I do not mean to say that that kind of sighing and groaning, that habitual and unnecessary grumbling, is commendable. I do not mean to commend to you the spirit that our coloured friends sang about in their "Grumbling Song". There are people like that, but I do not mean that. I mean when, out of the bitterness of our

sorrow, there comes an awareness of the limitations of human life and the unsatisfactoriness of everything in this mundane sphere, and people begin to sigh.

I read an article the other night by a man who writes in one of our city papers. He is a man with whom I do not often agree, but he writes in such a way that, even when one does not agree with him, he cannot help reading the articles; he is a very interesting writer. He said the night he was writing the article to which I refer was a dreary night. It was raining — and his article sounded like it. You could hear the wind blowing in the trees, and the rain pattering against the window. It was a dark, dreary, uncomfortable night; and the spirit of it possessed the man. He spoke of the futility of human efforts, of the folly of a man's trying to satisfy himself, of the valuelessness of gold and of all earthly things. I said to myself, "That sounds as though the man might begin to pray again." It was not a prayer, but it was a very distinct sigh.

What is prayer?

"Prayer is the heaving of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near."

It is said that the Lord "heard the voice (cry) of the lad" when Hagar had cast her son under the tree that she might not see him die. Ishmael did not know how to pray — at least, some people would say so. But he cried, and "the Lord heard the voice of the lad".

Let me tell you why the Israelites sighed — and it will shatter your theory as to what constitutes prayer. They sighed "by reason of their bondage". They did not sigh for a return of God. They were not longing after God. They did not know what they wanted; they only knew that they were weary of their present situation. "They sighed by reason of the bondage". There are some people who take up a doctrinaire attitude toward all these practical matters; they say that God does not hear your prayer until your motives are right. God give us pure motives! but I fear if He never heard any prayer but that which was absolutely unmixed with evil, not many of our prayers would be answered.

I remember a young man, at the close of a service, coming into the enquiry-room at the church where I was Pastor some years before I became Pastor of this church, I said to him, "Do you feel your heart warm toward God?" "Not a bit, sir," he replied. "You have no love for God whatever?" I enquired. "Not a bit, sir, so far as I know," was his answer. I asked, "But what are you doing here? Why did you come here?" "Because I am like the man of whom you were preaching: I am afraid. I am terrified because of my sin." "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." I do not care what makes men sigh, if only they will sigh. Anything that will break up their complacent spirit and make them desire deliverance from their present condition is certainly a step in advance. It is a symptom of returning spiritual life when a man gets out of sorts with the world about him. Even though he cannot say, "I love God," if he has less love for sin, less love for the world, the flesh, and the devil, it is a sign of quickening.

I have met many a man who had no religious intelligence, and who did not know what he wanted except that he wanted something other than that which he had. The world was a weary, cold, dull place, and he wanted some-

thing else; yet all he could do was sigh. And out of the sighing comes the crying; the inarticulate groan is replaced by a more intelligent cry. Faith, after all, while it is the gift of God, is very often a development. It is always a development, in fact. "Lord, increase our faith." The more we know of God the stronger our faith becomes.

You remember the story of the man whose eyes were opened, how he was interrogated by the religious leaders who asked all about how the thing happened. Without intending to do so, he found himself defending his unknown Benefactor. "How were thine eyes opened?" they asked. "A man called Jesus — I do not know who He is. I do not know where He came from. I know nothing about Him — a man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight." At last, when they had asked many questions, they said, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he do to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." Then he who had been blind said a significant thing. "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. . . . Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." But he was cast out at last. The poor fellow had his eyesight—but not much else. "Jesus had heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." Faith, full-orbed, shone upon him when personally he looked into the face of the Lord Jesus Christ and knew that He was the Son of God.

So, my friends, you must not make a strait-jacket for people who are coming to Christ, and insist that they come in precisely your way. The important thing is that they come, for "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out". If only they will pray, He will hear them. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." It does not even appear that this people cried to the Lord first of all. They sighed, they cried; and their cry came up unto God "by reason of the bondage".

Have you ever seen a wireless operator operating away out in mid-ocean somewhere? You have heard the crackling of the electric current and have seen the sparks fly as he manipulated the instruments, but you could not see the message. You only knew that those electric waves were sent out into space. You said to yourself, "They are lost. No one will pick them up." But another ship did pick them up. When a vessel is sinking it simply sends out an S.O.S. signal, and another vessel attuned to that delicate apparatus gets it, and is at its side very shortly. I love that picture, — simply the cry of need broadcast; nothing but a deep, agonized, cry for help from somewhere. The cry went out — and it "came up unto God".

"Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy." You want to read a book on prayer, do you? Begin sighing and crying! Pray the best you know how, and God will hear you!

"An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

Tennyson is not always right, but he is at that point. I think very often the most effectual prayer is the prayer that has no language but a cry.

III.

THEN HEAR THIS WORD: "AND GOD HEARD THEIR GROANINGS." He always does. It was not without design that our Lord said to us — to believers, mind you. And these were a people in covenant relation with Him—I say, it is not without design that our Lord said to believers, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven."

There is some mother here who, at the end of a hard day's work, could sleep down on the corner of King and Yonge Streets! She could sleep in any noisy place, any place at all, I do not care where it is. Rushing railway trains, street cars, motor cars, and all the rest of it, would not disturb her rest at all. She could fall fast asleep in the midst of it — and stay there. But if the baby should utter a little cry, instantly she is wide awake. What the rushing train or airplane could not do, the simple cry of that child will accomplish. She "hears" its cry. And our God hears the groanings of His children always. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

I wonder how often we pray after that fashion? It is not the words we utter that he hears: it is the urgency of our desire expressed in the — what shall I say, in the tone of it, the deep groaning of a soul travailing because of trouble of some sort. When we are in despair we have no time for a long prayer. There is a place for praise and adoration, and that may take us hours, weeks, months, as we worship God, and pour out our hearts before Him. But usually when people are in deep need, and they need some particular help, their prayers are short and to the point. It is a cry, it is a groan, it is something that registers with God immediately.

I wonder when the day will come that the church will groan "by reason of its bondage?" God has blessed us here in Jarvis Street with ten thousand blessings, and we have very, very much for which to be thankful. And yet if we could see God's picture of what He wants to make of us, if we could only get a glimpse of the blessing He stands ready to pour out upon us, I think we should all fall on our faces and groan because we have missed it. When thus we groan, the Lord will "hear" our groanings.

And He will remember. Israel may have forgotten, but God did not. They may have forgotten that God had said to Abraham in that horror of thick darkness, "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. But when My time shall come, and My hour shall strike, I will visit Israel. I will bring them up again out of Egypt." They had forgotten it, but He had not: "And God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."

Are you not glad that God remembers what he planned

to do with you when He saved you? He has never changed His plan. He has never changed His purpose from the day He quickened us into newness of life by the Holy Ghost. He still has the same ideal before Him. He still sovereignly determines somehow or another to conform us "to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born, among many brethren". We get our eyes on other things, and are inclined to forget it; but at last when we groan, God remembers His promises. That is our guarantee of ultimate perfection. It is the guarantee of the ultimate triumph of the individual believer and of the blood-bought church of Christ, that our God will not forget the covenant He made with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, the Mediator of which is our glorious Lord Himself, for "he saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And of thy seed, which is Christ". All the promises are in Him.

"And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." The chains were there; the taskmasters' whips were there; the power of Pharaoh was still undiminished, and his determination to effect his purposes in the lives of these slaves was the same. But God "looked" upon the children of Israel and "had respect unto them". His hour had come, and He determined to deliver them. That is our hope. That is the hope of the church to-day.

I hope, dear friends, that we shall pray for revival here, an increasing revival; and for revival everywhere. Do not too readily interpret what you hear from some place. Do not be cynical about it when you hear somebody admitting bankruptcy and trouble. Oh, let me give you a verse. I had almost forgotten it: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them" — then you find the story of revival, and it is written — "then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses." Again and again that refrain is repeated. We have the story of those who go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; "then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses." Read the hundred and seventh Psalm before you go to bed to-night, and see how the people go down, and down and down and down, and then "cry unto the Lord" — and God comes to their help.

Perhaps what you heard about somebody the other day, and that you were ready to repeat with a sneer, if you had God's mind you would say, "Hush! Hush! I can hear somebody sighing somewhere over their chains. I can hear somebody crying somewhere because of their bondage. I can hear some penitent spirit as he bows and admits that he is fighting a losing battle, and desires to turn to the Lord." And who knows but that God's "then" shall strike? Then they cry, and He delivers them.

"O Thou that hearest prayer!
Attend our humble cry;
And let Thy servants share
Thy blessing from on high:
We plead the promise of Thy Word;
Grant us Thy Holy Spirit, Lord!

"If earthly parents hear
Their children when they cry;
If they with love sincere,
Their children's wants supply:
Much more wilt Thou Thy love display,
And answer when Thy children pray.

"Our heavenly Father Thou
We — children of Thy grace;
Oh, let Thy Spirit now
Descend and fill the place;
— That all may feel the heavenly flame,
And all unite to praise Thy name."

The Editor's Corner

A Neglected Ministry

During the past twelve months THE GOSPEL WITNESS has carried on a program of advertising in selected papers. The response has been excellent and we have obtained many new subscribers. Probably many who read these words were reached in this way. We are aware however that we have not yet "scratched the surface" in this matter and that hundreds of new friends could be reached if we advertised more extensively. At the same time we could give a wider circulation to *The Canadian Council of Churches—Whither Bound?* Those who have done any advertising, however, are aware that it costs money. Although it eventually pays for itself, the initial outlay is considerable. If a number of our readers should feel led to help us financially, we see no reason why we could not advertise on the church page of every daily in this country. So many write to tell us that the ministry of THE GOSPEL WITNESS is greatly needed. Let us then expand our borders!

The Doctrines of Grace

We have not yet advertised Dr. Shields' forthcoming book but have merely mentioned its publication in several short notes in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Despite our relative silence, numbers of people have written to order copies of this volume. It appears therefore that this fine presentation of fundamental truths is going to have the wide distribution that it merits. Readers would be well advised to send in advance orders now. *The cost for this 208 page book is only \$2.50!* One good friend sent us \$25.00 for one book and asked that the remainder be used in the publication of Dr. Shields' other works.

A Testimony

The church bulletin of the Beacon Baptist Church of Kansas City, Missouri, recently came to our notice. It is dated April 24, 1955. The pastor of the church, C. E. Cloyd, writes as follows in the publication:

"Tribute to Dr. T. T. Shields of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, who passed away April 7th. Dr. Shields was, in the opinion of the pastor, the greatest preacher on the American continent. A funeral of a man of Dr. Shields' faithfulness is almost a joyous occasion. We ought always so to live that when our summons comes our loved ones can sing the song of victory over the bier. Dr. Shields was a great blessing to the pastor of this church. I have read his sermons every week for over 11 years. As I received the news of his death I felt that I had lost a great friend *although I never saw him in the flesh*. He exercised a great influence over my life through the medium of the printed page. A prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel."

Rev. W. W. Fleischer, B.A., Rejoins Staff of Toronto Baptist Seminary

WE ARE most happy to announce that Rev. W. W. Fleischer, who for about eighteen years lectured in the subjects of Homiletics and Church History at Toronto Baptist Seminary, has, at the hearty invitation of the Trustees, rejoined our Faculty.

Apart from any prospect of relationship to the Seminary, Mr. Fleischer, in a personal letter some weeks ago, issued the following statement:

Whitevale, Ontario
September 15, 1955.

Dr. H. C. Slade,
Toronto Baptist Seminary,
337 Jarvis St., Toronto 2.

Dear Brother Slade:

Had the opportunity presented itself before the passing of Dr. Shields I should like to have taken his hand and said something like this —

"Thank you for enabling me to see and appreciate a form of Christianity rich in cultural, doctrinal, and spiritual values. Thank you for always giving me the privilege of disagreeing with you on matters of policy. Please accept my sincere regrets for affixing my name to a document whereby your spirit was so grievously wounded.

In saying the above I desire only to remove from my mind and conscience that which stands in the way of a complete reconciliation."

I know, Brother Slade, that you will appreciate the above word, inasmuch as it will help us to come closer to each other in the work of the Kingdom.

As the years pass on, and we draw nearer to the final consummation of our earthly pilgrimage, there are many, many things which we have done and said in earlier years which the later and more discreet years tell us were unwisely, and unkindly said. St. Augustin wrote many volumes dealing with the great spiritual issues of those times, but in his declining years wrote his "Retractions", which were designed for the purpose of unsaying many things which more mature thought declared to be wrong. I am not an Augustin, neither am I a Saint after his style, but believe me if I have hurt or harmed anyone consciously or unconsciously, I would do anything to undo the damage.

Please accept this word with the sincere hope that under your ministry Jarvis Street will blossom forth and bear much fruit in the days to come.

Yours sincerely,

W. W. FLEISCHER

While we regret exceedingly that Dr. Shields is not here to receive this formal communication our GOSPEL WITNESS readers and Seminary friends will be happy to know that these sentiments of Mr. Fleischer were known to Dr. Shields some months before his passing, and even at that stage he welcomed the possibility of Mr. Fleischer's return to us.

We would like to think that Mr. Fleischer's feelings are representative of a good many.

Mr. Fleischer's coming back to the Seminary will be a great addition to the strength of our Faculty. He has resigned the pastorate of the two churches with which he has had a temporary arrangement.

—H. C. SLADE

BOOK REVIEWS

HALDANE ON ROMANS—Published by and obtained from The Sovereign Grace Book Club, 413 S. E. First Street, Evansville, Ind.

This verse by verse commentary which many believe to be the best exposition on Romans ever to be published has long been out of print, and is difficult to obtain. As much as \$25.00 is being offered for a second hand copy of this book. The Sovereign Grace Book Club is republishing this monumental work in five volumes in attractive cloth binding. Each volume contains approximately 150 pages. The price is \$2.00 per volume or \$7.50 for the entire set when ordered at one time. The first two volumes covering the first seven chapters of Romans are now off the press. Every Bible student will profit greatly from the study of this commentary, and every minister, who does not have it, is not as rich as he might be.

—C. D. COLE

THE SIGN OF HIS COMING, by H. C. Heffren, 64 pages.

Here is another book on the doctrine of last things. It is written in a straight-forward manner, is easy to read, and can be read at a single sitting. The author deals with such interesting subjects as "The Great Tribulation", "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel", "The Rapture", and "The Millennium". As one reads this book he is bound to be impressed that the writer is making an honest and able effort to present the truth on such passages as Dan. 9:24; Matt. 24; and Revelation 20. Whether one is a pre-; post-; or an A- he will find help in this book. We like it as well as anything we have read on the matters discussed.

—C. D. COLE

A LETTER FROM REV. W. P. NICHOLSON, NOTED IRISH EVANGELIST

Dear Miss Lindsay:

Many thanks for sending us THE GOSPEL WITNESS. It arrives regularly. It is very kind of you to send it to us, and we sincerely appreciate it.

I see you are publishing the booklet The Devil's Mission of Amusements. I enclose \$1.00. Please send us as many as this amount will purchase. I remember well when this booklet was published in Great Britain. It must be over fifty years ago. What a stir it kicked up! It was cussed and discussed. It was a great blessing to me as a young Christian. It was a very necessary message then. How much more to-day, when so many churches are becoming picture shows and amusement bureaux! God bless you people for publishing it, and giving it a good boost by advertising.

It is fine to hear about the good work being carried on in the church. May you soon be in the throes of a real Bible Holy Ghost revival!

Wishing you God's very best every day, and all day long, and with kind regards from Mrs. Nicholson and

Yours respectfully,

WM. P. NICHOLSON

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The Sunday School in Jarvis Street has shown a notable increase in attendance. On September 25 there was a gain of 100 over the same Sunday of 1954. The workers are anticipating even greater increases and look for a spiritual harvest.

Dr. Slade preached at both services on Sunday. In the morning his subject was "The Training of Youth"; in the evening he spoke on "The Cross". Two were baptized during the evening service. At the communion service following the evening service the church received five new members.

A Devotional Study in Revelation

by Dr. R. D. Barry

CHAPTER SIXTEEN THE CONFEDERACY OF EVIL Revelation 13

THE whole of Scripture unfolds before us a divine confederacy of good, in the persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who work with one accord for the happiness of the Bride. Now, the book of Revelation undertakes to reveal to us the existence of a Satanic counterfeit of that heavenly community.

To the Father there corresponds the dragon or Satan, who is at the origin of all evil. To the Son, begotten of the Father, corresponds the first beast rising up out of the sea and to which the dragon will give "his power, and his seat, and great authority." To the Holy Spirit, proceeding out of the Father and of the Son, there corresponds the second beast coming up out of the earth, and which, as a "false prophet", will exercise "all the power of the first beast before him." To the Bride there corresponds Babylon, the mother of harlots, described in the last pages of the book. The dragon is therefore an anti-God; the first beast an anti-Christ; the second beast, an anti-Spirit; Babylon, an anti-Bride.

Likewise, the dragon will exercise full authority, and act in a manner calculated to create the impression that he is God. "Wounded to death" as Jesus Christ was, the first beast will also have, by a kind of resurrection, its "deadly wound healed". Capable of having "power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should speak," the second beast will endeavour to counterbalance the action of the Holy Spirit, who "takes the things of Christ" to "convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment."

Finally, and by contrast, whereas "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church" (Eph. 5:25-27), the beast will eventually "hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." (17:16).

Leaving for a later study the elucidation of the "mystery" of Babylon, which will be dealt with at length in our study of the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation, we shall now endeavour to probe the thirteenth chapter in order to discover its teaching concerning the false trinity which will oppose itself to the true one.

In our preceding study we learn several important things with regard to what the dragon is and wants. We shall now examine what instruments he will use to ac-

complish his evil purpose, and under what conditions those instruments will appear.

We do not know of a better definition of sin than that of the apostle Peter: "the foolish behaviour delivered by your fathers" (1 Peter 1:18 literal). The reference is here, not to "sins" but to "sin", that initial and permanent substitution of the human will for the divine will, in other words, that deification of the natural man. The seven great universal empires which have succeeded one another: Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, political Rome, religious Rome, have in turn served that perfidious ambition with great effectiveness. Each one of those baleful powers has endeavoured to maintain in man the illusion that the only ideal of life consisted in being conformed to the spirit of this world.

Satan could not therefore fail to enrol against Christianity all the successive regimes under which it was to make its appearance and expand. He thus incarnated himself in the first beast, using the imperial Rome as his instrument against the people of God. He then incarnated the first beast in the second beast, causing a political absorption by the ecclesiastical Rome of what remained of the people of God.

Those preliminary remarks thus being made, we shall now come to a commentary of our text. As in the past, we shall devote our study to a word for word analysis of these "prophetical" passages, so replete with facts, and so full of details.

I. THE FIRST BEAST, RISING UP OUT OF THE SEA (vv. 1-10)

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea."

Commentators are at variance concerning the identifying of the one observing what will happen. Be it the apostle John or the dragon, the reference to the "sand of the sea" — a figurative expression for mankind — as well as the context, show that the thought of John himself now goes back to the origins of the moral history of the peoples.

"I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy."

We know that, in prophetical language, the sea symbolizes the restless, unruly and unorganized nations. The beast rising up out of it represents a political and moral sovereignty exercised over the whole of the then-known world. The ten horns symbolize its power, the seven heads its composite unity, and the ten diadems its ascendancy. The names of blasphemy written on those heads prove that we have here a description of evil authorities summoned by the "prince of this world". The fact that

the horns are more numerous than the heads, and wear the crowns, seems to imply that, under the dominion of the first beast, physical might will preponderate over skill.

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion."

This description takes us back to that of the seventh chapter of Daniel. But while Daniel has a vision of separate empires, John makes only mention of certain features making part of a whole: the aspect of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion. We are thus inclined to think that John beholds, at the beginning of his new vision, the origin of all the human empires mentioned above, whose main characteristics were to be finally embodied in Rome.

Although those animals can be numbered, in a way, among the least vile of wild creatures, their blind instincts offer a striking picture of the natural man. The mission of the empire represented by this composite monster will therefore be twofold: to give satisfaction to the flesh and to oppose itself to the dominion of the spirit.

"And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

An invisible domination of Satan would have jeopardized his designs, which could only be realized through the medium of a great visible power. He will therefore purposely stand as it were on one side in order to leave room for an authority of his own creation, which he will endow with all the privileges which are his, the throne included. We have here a repetition of the devil's attempt against the Son of God in the desert: "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it." (Luke 4:6).

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

The victory of the Cross inflicted a death-wound upon Satan and upon his instruments. When the tomb burst open, his head was bruised. But the divine purpose was to retard the final punishment, that Christ may be preached unto the end of the earth, and that His true people may be manifested. During this long period of waiting, the power of evil was fully restored, and the men whose lives were self-centred enthusiastically pledged allegiance to the regime which they thought to be right, because it seemed the strongest. In the fourth century, there was a new miraculous reviving of the beast when paganized Christianity triumphed within the Roman empire, and when, under the protection of Constantine, it assumed the reins of the imperial government. This false Christianity became in its turn the object of an admiring obedience throughout the whole world. Therefore, during the present economy, the true people of God will always suffer the antagonism of all human powers, as well as of all falsely so-called religious organizations.

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

To the name borne by the archangel Michael, meaning: "Who is like unto God?" is opposed the foolish cry: "Who is like unto the beast?" To the defeat of Satan, only able to give a diminished power to his instrument, is opposed the blasphemous shout: "Who is able to make war with

the beast?" In the midst of such seduction, the adoration offered to the dragon and the beast, can be easily explained: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (II Cor. 4:3-4). Consciously or not, all men worship, either the true God, or His counterfeits. The worth of a worship is therefore determined, not by its fervour, but by its object.

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."

The three and a half years' duration of the beast's government refers to the same length of time during which the people of God will witness to the truth and suffer for it. While songs of praise will ascend to the throne from the lips of those witnesses and martyrs, while the things of heaven will be the object of their yearnings, the natural man, wise in his own conceit, challenges the powers which he dreads, and even curses all that which is in heaven, or even here if it is in any way related to the true God.

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints; and to overcome them."

Able to turn itself against God, then against the celestial beings, the beast was commissioned to pit itself against those who, in this world, endeavour to live as "not being of this world". It was further "given unto him to overcome them": in other words, it had the power to cause their earthly abasement; it could even inflict partial or temporary spiritual defeats upon the Christians who would yield to the attraction of the flesh. That power—too often unsuspected—is therefore most to be dreaded, while a continual watchfulness is here necessary.

"And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

The power of the beast is here manifested in a third way: it is not any more the blasphemy against the Lord, or the war against His saints, but the total seduction of mankind. We cannot therefore see, let us repeat it, in the vision of the first beast rising from the sea, a symbolical picture of the Roman Empire only. Great indeed was the hostility of its government toward true Christianity; but its influence and action were far from having the scope of what is here described. This first beast, in which all the characteristics of the spirit of this age are found, thus seems to be, not only an authority outwardly manifested, but mainly a seductive force exercised within the hearts of men. The existence of the Latin Empire only facilitated and favoured that seduction. Just as the Roman state considered itself as infallible and irresistible, the human heart is identically wise in its own conceit. Everything is permitted to it, and everything must yield to it. The seduced mankind worships itself, because it has not understood that its true ambition should have been the fellowship of the crucified Saviour. That is why the safety offered by the "book of life" is blindly rejected by so many hardened sinners.

"If any may have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth

with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

Patience, that is, the capacity for suffering, and faith, that is the aptitude for true enjoyment, must constitute the twofold testimony of the saints during the Christian dispensation. And their spiritual victories will be of the same nature as those mentioned at the end of each of the seven letters — which explains the repetition of "he that hath an ear".

Our text emphasizes that the trials of the people of God are inevitable. But it also lays stress on the fact that the saints will be sustained by the assurance that their adversaries will in their turn suffer the same punishment as they will have inflicted on the innocent Christians.

II. THE SECOND BEAST, COMING UP OUT OF THE EARTH (vv. 11-18)

The role of the first beast being to give free scope to the natural bent of fallen man, the second beast's goal will be to consolidate the illusions of man thus seduced: it will give him a false feeling of security by introducing him to a counterfeit Christianity. Thus will be completed this maleficent trinity of the false monotheistic religions, whose first two elements we have already studied in previous chapters: the apostate Judaism and the Mohammedan imposture. The second beast will therefore symbolize the different counterfeit manifestations of true Christianity; paganizing Romanism, official Greek orthodoxy, Romanizing worldly Protestantism, modernism; and fraudulent religious impostures.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

The appearance of this new creature is distinctly subsequent to that of the first one. The latter had arisen above unorganized populations (out of the sea), aiming at directing their coarse natural instinct toward *blasphemy*. The former arose above the organized nations (out of the earth), and aims at directing toward *error* their more refined faculties.

Possessing at once certain features of the Lamb and some attributes of the dragon, that second beast is capable of *offering* its seductions; but it is unable, by itself, to *impose* them.

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed:"

Wrongly believing the human forces to be indestructible, false Christianity has always relied upon them, whatever they may be — governments, or the natural heart itself. And, in return, it has always endeavoured to give them back whatever it took from them, under the form of tribute, concessions, or favours.

Thus has papal Rome perfectly accepted its union with the world; for such is the meaning of the phrase, "before the beast": it has reference to an "intimate collaboration". That essential fact is further emphasized by the simultaneity of the reigns of the Usurper's main agents.

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men."

The "wonders" mentioned here may have or may not have been miraculous: they could at any rate deeply impress "men". Thus, we can take the expression "fire from heaven" to refer, among other things, to all the

threats and all the persecutions suffered by the true believers and exercised in the name of the Lord.

"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast."

The miracles of the false religion have been clearly foretold by Jesus Christ; the apostle Paul also predicted them during the whole of the present economy and especially towards its close. Furthermore, on account of the permanent miracles constituted by the Scriptures and the people of God, the genuine material or physical miracles are no longer necessary to true Christianity: what a unique opportunity for the Enemy now to use the working of miracles as an unrivalled means of seduction!

Those miracles were wrought "in the sight of the beast", which means that not only are the two beasts contemporaries, but that the first will be profited by the miracles of the second.

"Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

Among numerous explanations, we shall choose the most natural one: the second beast invited the inhabitants of the earth to recognize in its own person a prolongation of the power from which it had issued. In like manner, the Roman ascendancy was to pass from the enfeebled emperors to the rising papacy.

The danger which threatened the beast arisen from the sea is here recalled; we can thus notice the skill of Satan who will as it were give an assistant to the first ruler, better adapted to the new conditions brought about by the advent of the gospel.

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

Those words seem to confirm our interpretation. A new power of a falsely spiritual nature, continues and intensifies the action of the evil instincts in the human heart, by giving it a visible master whose false teaching he will follow. That power allows the second beast to "teach" and to "condemn" thus considering all rejection of the spurious Christianity as a capital offence.

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

Such sweeping authority, as is possessed by the beast, implies that false Christianity, in all its different manifestations, and in all times and all places, is one — in its origin, its nature and its efforts. Throughout the centuries, it has brought prosperity to its adherents, and hardships to its adversaries. This widespread action must necessarily result in a co-ordinated enterprise, as the biblical teaching and experience confirm it. After having to fight, not only against a remarkably organized secular power, but against the natural heart, true Christianity will have to fight against the united action of all the elements constituting the counterfeit Christianity. Such unity will especially allow the latter, a possibility of monopolizing the spiritual provision of mankind. For the tendency of false Christianity is to bring together Church and State, the religious and the secular, the flesh and the spirit.

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding

count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six."

We are here facing one of the most difficult problems in all biblical interpretation. We shall only recall the main views of the interpreters.

According to some commentators, the "mark of the beast" would not be a symbol for the evil works (the mark on the hand) and the depraved mind (the mark on the forehead), but would refer to a sign similar to the brand borne by slaves and soldiers. Some think that this mark would nearly be the appending of a certain number through an ineffaceable process.

Others take into consideration that the Greek has no special characters for the numbers, which are designated by letters (a equals 1, b equals 2, and so on . . .) Having noticed that 666 could be approximately written "X Z S", they point out that "X" and "S" are the first and last letters of the word "Christos", as well as its abbreviated form, whereas, "Z", inserted between those letters, has in Greek the sinuous aspect of a serpent, for which it also served as a symbol. As false Christianity, represented by the second beast, is a delusive mixture of divine and Satanic aspects, it would rightly be symbolically described by those three characters, which would thus seem to be the "number of a name".

Others still manage to reconstitute names whose letters, added as numbers, give a total of 666. Thus, more or less modifying the spellings, they reconstituted the names of Nero, Caligula, Mohammed, Luther, Napoleon, and even that of General Boulanger . . . They would certainly find many others if they further stretched their imaginations. However, among those names, there is one, and only one, "Lateinos", which, without any orthographical manipulations, gives a total of 666. There does not seem to be any more appropriate word than that one. For it perfectly designates the "Latin" empire, represented by the first beast.

A third explanation of the number 666 is linked to the symbolical meaning of number 6. This is the number of man at his best, whereas 7 expresses the perfection of God. Whatever the human efforts may be, they will never attain to the divine level. A threefold repetition of 6 would therefore emphasize the utter inability of false Christianity in all its attempts to supplant the true God. The action of the seduced sinners (the hand) and their schemes (the forehead) would thus be doomed to bear the mark of human impotency.

As this distinguishing mark is conferred by the reigning power itself, it is unthinkable that this power would make the childish mistake to consciously resort to a symbol which would be unfavourable to those who receive it. On the other hand, there is no need for a literal appending of this quasi-universal brand, especially when it would conflict with logical, practical, and aesthetic considerations. Therefore the language is again here highly figurative.

If so, we are led to conclude that the mark of the beast solely consists in an opportune conformity to the carnal spirit of the present age, just as the divine seal of grace is placed upon those who are spiritually minded.

The name "Lateinos" could therefore refer to the spirit of this world in its highest degree of *carnality*—and assuming the guise of a sort of nationalism, or rather of a proud and jealous universal humanism, at once

embracing the temporal and religious interests of each and everyone, and fiercely threatening the slightest attempt at non-conformity. Thus, the Lord would here denounce the Satanic action successfully using the instrumentality of the false messiah (X Z S), and bringing about the spiritual helplessness of mankind (666 and not 777). The three most plausible meanings of the mark of the name of the beast would thus be linked together.

As we give the above explanations, let us note that time alone will prove whether they are well-founded. This remark will also apply to any other point, whose obscurity may well have been divinely purposed.

The writer of the book of Revelation himself may have considered those three interpretations — and others still — as being admissible. For the mark of the beast could evidently refer at the same time to several things which complement each other.

Whatever the merits or the teaching of the interpretations may be, it is a sure fact that those who place themselves under the sign of false Christianity, may expect to have the right and privilege of "buying" and "selling". But those who have the Father's name written on their foreheads are in possession of the eternal privileges offered to the "redeemed". So that our earthly calling is reduced to a choice between two signs. Our conclusion will therefore be that of our preceding study:

"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE!"

—(Joshua 24:15)

THE FRUIT OF MODERNISM

MANY Christians are complacent about the increasing menace of modernism. They regard with indifference attacks upon the faith and feel that evangelicals should co-operate with those who deny the faith. Probably they are not aware of the real nature of this adversary of the gospel for many modernists cleverly conceal their real sentiments or veil them under clever speech. Occasionally however some bolder (and more honest) individual does dare to express himself and the utterance is appalling. In a recent I.C.C.C. newsletter, Dr. Carl McIntire quotes a letter from a Congregational minister in South Africa. Here is part of that epistle:

"Your publication does not really interest me, because of its apparent 'Anti Bias', especially towards The World Council of Churches.

"Further I am not a 'fundamentalist'.

"It is my belief that if a man lives up to everything that he sincerely believes to be true and right, there will be a place for him in God's Heaven, whether he be Plato, Ghandi or any other non-Christian. The Heaven that I envisage will and must include such men, if the God I try to worship is the God of Love that Christ has taught us to believe is a Loving Heavenly Father. He must have a place in His Heaven for Abraham, for Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, Moses, Plato, Ghandi, and countless number of non-Christians. How can we be separated from those we really love? I love all GOOD men and women regardless of their religion—may I be more bold and say, perhaps some would-be Atheist will find himself in heaven too, because his qualification was a life of goodness, purity and love."

This is modernism arrived at its logical and inevitable destination!

"We reverence the teaching of the prophets, and the Apocalypse, but for many of the professed expounders of these inspired books we entertain another feeling."

—C. H. SPURGEON

AN ALARMING DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

BECAUSE of the loose relationship existing between India and the remainder of the Commonwealth, the citizens of other Commonwealth countries have enjoyed special privileges in their contact with the Indian government. The Government of that country has recently announced, however, that missionaries from Commonwealth countries will no longer enjoy these benefits although all other Commonwealth citizens will continue in their privileged position. In other words, Commonwealth citizens are now of two classes: first class (non-missionaries), second class (missionaries).

Will the governments of Canada and the other Commonwealth countries countenance this injustice? Can they sit idly by without lifting the voice in protest against discrimination against citizens who go out as missionaries to India? Are we to assume that missionaries do not merit the rights that are accorded to people in other realms of life?

John L. Dorsey, the Secretary of the India Bible Christian Council recently sent the following letter to Bishop D. A. Thompson of the United Kingdom, Rev. D. S. F. Carlisle of New Zealand, Rev. W. R. McEwen of Amsterdam and the Editor of THE GOSPEL WITNESS:

Beloved in Christ,

We are living in days when Satan is making unprecedented attacks of the Church. As all of you know the land of India to which we have been called has taken an attitude toward the work of missions which makes it very difficult to know what the future will hold for any of us. Due to the forces at work here of nationalism, resurgent Hinduism, and Communist propaganda this attitude can be easily understood in those who have no understanding of the Truth as we know it in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is for such that the Lord prayed "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

If this were the end of the international situation in regards to the Church we could say, "What more can we expect." However we are now living in days which fulfil Psalm 2—the rulers of the earth are taking council together against the Lord. The nations of the Commonwealth are involved and it is for this purpose that I write to you Brothers specifically.

Within the next few days you will be receiving air mail a copy of the September issue of BIBLICAL WITNESS. Page 3 reproduces in full a letter from the Australian High Commission which is being sent to all Australian citizens here in India who are missionaries informing them that as missionaries they will be treated differently from other Australian citizens. This letter could well have been written from any of your lands. The serious point is not that India has made the regulations aiming only at the missionary community, but that the Commonwealth nations — nominally Christian — have accepted this discrimination against the ambassadors of Christ. No other Commonwealth citizens are involved in this arrangement — just missionaries. The acts of your nations therefore are even more wicked than that of India. What India has done in ignorance, not that she is without excuse, the Commonwealth nations have done with full knowledge. I hope that the Lord will enable each one of you to cry an alarm in your own lands. Perhaps the Lord will yet grant our lands time to repent of such a national crime against the Lord of Hosts.

If there is any other manner in which we can be of help to you, please let us know and we will do everything in our power to help. Brethren, we need your prayers. We would love to hear from you. The Lord bless you in your labors for Him.

Yours in His Service,

JOHN L. DORSEY

We shall seek further information on this matter and trust that the Government of the Dominion of Canada is merely unaware of the implications of this move.

WHEN PERSECUTORS ARE PERSECUTED

HOW easy it is for men to become blind to their own faults and at the same time to condemn those very sins in others. History records numerous instances of bloody persecutors complaining because they in their turn had become the victims of oppression. We think of the black record of the Roman Catholic Church and yet in modern times while Rome cruelly persecutes Protestants in Colombia, Spain, Quebec and Italy, she indignantly protests the Communist persecutions in Central Europe and Russia. Physician, heal thyself!

Within recent years, too, we have read with sorrow the story of the sufferings of evangelicals in Greece where they have been the victims of the powerful, entrenched Greek Orthodox Church. *The Toronto Star* of October 3 carries a story and tells of the persecution of Greek Orthodox people at the hands of the Turks. Here is the story:—

BURN INSTANBUL CHURCHES, CHARGE WEST INDIFFERENT

Archbishop Michael, head of the Greek Orthodox Church in North and South America, yesterday accused the Western world of being "extremely indifferent to the recent persecution of the Greek Orthodox church in Turkey."

Speaking at a banquet given in his honor by Toronto's Greek community the visiting prelate said that 80 out of 85 Greek Orthodox churches were burned down by anti-Greek mobs in Istanbul a few weeks ago, "but over here nobody seems to care."

While a large audience of Greek-Canadians sat in hushed silence the white-haired archbishop said: "The press in Canada and the United States acted in a most unusual way about the whole thing."

"One orthodox priest was burned alive, others were attacked, and thousands of Christian homes were burned down by rioters," he declared, "but newspapers on this side of the ocean remained quiet."

"Since it all happened in a country which is allied with the West, nobody took an interest," he added with bitter irony.

Communist persecution against churches has been most inhuman and cruel, he stated, but the persecution by the Turks is just as cruel and inhuman.

"When Communist mobs tore an arm off a religious statue in Hungary once the entire Western press was up in arms," he asserted, "but not one paper has protested against the most recent mass desecration."

The prelate then made a plea to Canadians and Americans of Greek origin or descent, "to help the unfortunate victims of the unhuman attacks against our church in Turkey."

Archbishop Michael expresses his surprise at the indifference of the West to these cruel persecutions. We do not want to seem to justify this Turkish violence but we wonder what Archbishop Michael has dared to say about his own Church's oppressive acts against evangelicals in Greece. Furthermore, what has he said about Roman Catholic persecution of Protestants? We could hear his protests more easily if we knew that the Greek Orthodox Church in the homeland had renounced its past policy of force.

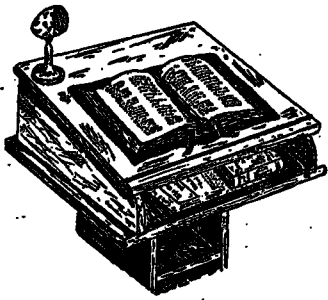
A Christian regards all persecution as wrong. Violence in the name of religion is shameful; when carried out in the name of the Christian religion it is abominable.

ANNUAL CONVENTION OF CONSERVATIVE REGULAR BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 18 — OCTOBER 20, in

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English Bible Course

SECOND LECTURE
in the
ENGLISH BIBLE COURSE
TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY
By Dr. C. D. Cole
September 29th, 1955

THE MEANING AND EXCELLENCY OF FAITH Hebrews 11:1-3

WE HAVE in the section before us an unfortunate chapter division. Calvin says that whoever made this the beginning of the eleventh chapter unwisely disjointed the context. The writer has already stated that there is need of patience and this is the major proposition to be proved. And for the proof of his proposition he quotes Habakkuk two four, "The just shall live by faith". And he will prove from the definition and description of faith and from examples of faith that faith cannot be separated from patience. Patience inheres in the very nature of faith. Patience is of the property of faith so that you can no more separate faith from patience than you can separate faith from itself. So in this eleventh chapter the writer takes us into God's hall of fame, as it were, and shows us the portraits of the ancient saints and in every case it is seen that they had persevering faith. For it is written of them, "These all died in faith."

I.

The Perseverance of Faith

Someone has remarked that Hebrews eleven is a sermon on Habakkuk two four. This verse in Habakkuk is quoted three times in the New Testament and W. Griffith Thomas thinks with different emphasis in each case. In Romans one eighteen the emphasis is on righteousness, "The righteous shall live by faith." In Galatians three eleven the emphasis is on faith. "The just by faith shall live." But in Hebrews the emphasis is on life. "The just shall live by faith." In Romans and Galatians it is faith for justification or faith in its beginning. In Hebrews it is faith in its progress and consummation. Our salvation began in faith and it shall be continued and completed in faith. In Hebrews faith is dealt with as that which enables us to retain the blessing of justification unto the end of our earthly pilgrimage. Perseverance in faith is evidence that one has been born again. It is evidence that he has the initial aspect of faith in justification. In Hebrews three six we are told that Christ is "a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." And in the fourteenth verse, "For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

The Future Tense of Salvation

Now the book of Hebrews presents salvation in its finality and completeness. It speaks of salvation in the sense of glorification. In this sense salvation is a goal for which patience is needed to reach it. In Hebrews salvation is something to be waited for and therefore it is a matter of hope. Many Christians have a contracted view of salvation. They can only think of salvation in the sense of justification. But salvation is far more than justification. Justification is the beginning of salvation. And justification is only one of the many blessings which is ours under the New Covenant. Justice is deliverance from the guilt and the penalty of sin. It is not deliverance from a sinful nature. It is not deliverance from the depravity and presence of sin. We have several steps in salvation given us in Romans eight twenty-nine and thirty. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here we have salvation beginning in justification and ending in glorification. There is a sense in which salvation is received by instalments. But there must be no thought that we have to pay for any of the instalments out of our own pockets. Our pockets are empty of what it takes to purchase salvation. Christ paid it all and He paid it in cash. But salvation is not delivered us in one lump, at a single time. In Romans thirteen eleven we are told, "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." This proves conclusively that there is some sense in which salvation is still future, a matter of hope to the believer. Hebrews deals primarily with the future aspect of salvation, when salvation shall be full and complete. This is brought out in many passages in the epistle. In Hebrews two ten salvation is represented as the work of bringing many sons unto glory. In chapter one verse fourteen we are told that the angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be, not who are, heirs of salvation. In chapter seven verse twenty-five we read that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, or completely, all who come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. In chapter nine verse twenty-eight we find that Christ is coming the second time without sin unto salvation. He is coming to bestow full and complete and glorious salvation on them that look for Him. So there is a very real sense in which nobody is yet saved or will be saved until in the resurrection when Christ returns. Nobody is completely saved as long as he struggles against indwelling sin. Nobody is completely saved as long as he groans within himself waiting the adoption to wit: the redemption of the body. Nobody is completely saved as long as his body lies mouldering in the dust. Nobody is completely saved until he is saved in spirit, and soul and body. Nobody is gloriously saved until he is saved in glory. Salvation is for the whole man. It is not a mere salvaging process. If I may anticipate a bit, in chapter eleven verse thirty-nine we find that all the Old Testament saints from Abel to the last sufferer of Old Testament history obtained a good report through faith and yet received not the promise. Some of them received many promises, to be sure. But there was a distinct promise called "the promise" that no believer has yet received. "The promise" throughout the epistle to the Hebrews is the promise

of eternal inheritance after the resurrection. The Old Testament saints believed God's word about this promise and they died in faith without having received that which was promised. There is something better provided for us in glory that they without us should not be made perfect. Believers of Old Testament times and New Testament believers are perfectly justified but there is a fuller sense in which nobody has yet been perfected. This perfection will be the common blessing of both Old Testament and New Testament saints when Christ comes and fashions these vile bodies of ours like unto His glorious body; when all of us shall awake in His likeness and be satisfied.

II.

The Meaning of Faith

Now the eleventh chapter of Hebrews has two main divisions. The first is introductory and in three verses gives us the meaning and excellency of faith. The second division, the main body of the chapter, gives us the achievements of faith. In the first three verses faith is described in its subjective exercise. In the main part of the chapter we see faith in action. We see faith enabling men to do and to suffer and to obtain what they could not have done, and suffered and obtained without faith. We see faith as a vital living principle in human lives.

Faith in Relation to the Future

Let us ponder now for a while this definition or description of faith as some prefer to call it. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We first note that faith operates in two realms, the realm of the future and the realm of the unseen. In relation to the future faith gives substance to what is hoped for. The Greek word for substance has been variously translated. The word means literally "that which stands under". Faith is that which stands under hope. Faith is the foundation or prop of hope. Faith supports hope. Faith keeps hope alive in the human breast. Hope of itself may be thought of as a fair but delicate flower which will be blasted by the frosts of adversity if it is not protected by the strong hand of faith. Our hope is only as bright as our faith is strong. A weak faith means a dim hope. Some render it like this, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for." Others make it read, "Faith is the confidence of things hoped for." This same word is translated confidence in Hebrews three, fourteen, "if we hold the beginning of our confidence" — that is, our faith — "steadfast unto the end." Faith therefore is the confident expectation of obtaining what God has promised. Hope has nothing to rest upon but faith in what God promises. In Romans four, eighteen we read of Abraham "who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be." When Abraham was childless with no hope in the laws of nature, God pointed him to the stars and promised a seed to be like them for number. "Who against hope believed in hope." Abraham looked at the circumstances surrounding him and saw no hope of a child. Then he looked to God in faith and hoped for a posterity. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." If we want to give glory to God we must be strong in faith.

Now faith originates hope to receive what God has promised. Some have told us of certain papyri that have

been unearthed in Egypt on which this word translated substance is used in the sense of title to property. Others think that it is used in the sense of an inventory. And they don't think much of the translation that "Faith is the title deed of things hoped for." If I should question your claim to a piece of property you would naturally exhibit the deed and that would end the argument. Now our faith is the only proof, the only title deed we have to a heavenly inheritance. Faith makes God's promise so real and present that we rejoice even now in hope of the glory of God.

Faith in Relation to the Unseen

Now let us consider faith in relation to things unseen. And here we get a wider view of faith. Things hoped for are limited to the things laid up for us in heaven. Things hoped for are limited to that eternal inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled and unfading. But things not seen include all that is revealed as to the past, the present and the future. Things unseen take in all that is revealed in the Word of God about God and creation, about salvation, about heaven and hell, everything that is beyond the physical senses to discover. Faith operates in these two realms where nothing but faith can enter. He who waits for science to confirm what God says in His Word does not have faith. He does not believe God. Someone has said that faith shuts the eyes to all that is seen and opens the ears to all that God says.

Now there are three effects of faith set forth here in the first three verses of Hebrews eleven. Faith gives reality and substantiality to things which the Word of God warrants us to hope for. And second, faith makes a believer approved of God. For by faith the elders obtained a good report. Faith immortalized their name in Scripture. Faith put their names in God's "Who's Who?" Because of their faith God recorded their achievements. The third effect of faith is that it makes a man understand things incredible to sense and reason. Faith is not irrational. Faith is not opposed to knowledge. Faith is not believing something that we know is not so! Faith is believing what God says. And to believe what God says is the most rational thing a person can do.

It is "through faith that we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." This sentence is somewhat involved. But in short it means that we can know by faith that this vast universe of beauty and order was spoken into existence by God without the use of any pre-existing materials. Here is New Testament endorsement of the Genesis account of creation. Mr. C. B. Williams' translation is more of an interpretation, but I think his translation of this verse gives the true meaning. He says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were created, beautifully co-ordinated and now exist at God's command, so that things that we see did not develop out of mere matter." Now this verse not only tells us that matter was created by God but it also tells us that this matter was framed into a universe of order and symmetry, the universe as we see it today, by the word of God and not by any evolutionary process. This verse refutes theistic evolution as well as atheistic evolution. God spake and it was done. He said, "Let it be." And it was.

Now let us see if we can go down a little deeper, stay down a little longer and bring up something, and not be like the preacher of whom it was said, that he could go

down deeper and stay down longer and come up drier than anybody else. Now we have seen the blessed results of faith. We have seen how faith makes real to the heart things which are yet matters of hope. We have seen how faith brought God's approval of the saints. And we have seen how faith gives knowledge of things beyond human investigation and the reach of reason. Now the question is, what gives faith such a value? How can faith accomplish so much?

III.

The Object of Faith

Now to begin with, faith must have a person for its object. There can really be no faith in a thing, in a material object. If we speak of faith in a machine we either personify the machine or think of the man who made it. Faith rests in a person. And if that person is trustworthy faith is valuable. Mr. Andrew Fuller was once going by horseback to fill an appointment. There had been recent rains and he came to a swollen stream. He had no way of knowing how deep the water was and he hesitated about urging the horse into the stream. But a farmer on the other side who was well known to Mr. Fuller had just crossed the stream and knew its depths and seeing the hesitancy and the anxiety of Mr. Fuller, he cried out to him: "Come on, Mr. Fuller, it is not deep. You can make it." And so Mr. Fuller said, "I'll go across on faith." But suppose that farmer had been a liar, had been untrustworthy. Suppose the waters had been too deep for the horse to ford. Then Mr. Fuller's faith would have resulted in injury or maybe loss of life. Now religious and saving faith derives its value from its object. If the object is worthless then faith is vain and worthless. Faith has no value in itself. Faith can be dangerous as well as helpful. I need legal counsel. But if I put my case into the hands of a shyster lawyer I might suffer loss. I need medical attention. But if I trust myself into the hands of a quack doctor I may become worse.

God the Object of Saving Faith

Now saving faith must have God for its object. And I want you to get this if you don't get anything else I say tonight. Saving faith must have nothing short of God for its object. And God must speak concerning the thing we need. He must give us a saving message. For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Saving faith must have God as Saviour for its object. To believe in God as creator or law-giver will not save. It must be God the Saviour that is to be the object of faith. This leads to another question. What has God done as a Saviour? The answer is that He sent His Son to do the saving work. Still another question. What has the Son done to save sinners? And the answer to this brings us to the Cross where He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself to the Cross where He bare our sins in His own body on the tree — to the Cross where He died the just for the unjust to bring us to God — to the Cross where He was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Jesus Christ saves us by redeeming us from the curse of the law. So in the New Testament saving faith is sometimes said to be in God. (John 5:24): "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Saving faith is sometimes said to be in Jesus Christ. In Acts

16:31 in answer to the question of the jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Saving faith is sometimes said to be in the gospel but the gospel is how Christ died for our sins and was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures. When saving faith is in God it must be God who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. When faith is in Christ it must be the Christ of Calvary. Not merely Christ as an example, or a martyr, or a teacher but Christ as Redeemer from the curse of the law. Christ as a helpless martyr is only a helpless Saviour. Christ as an example or teacher merely would doom every man to everlasting despair. I believe it was J. Gresham Machen who said that Christ did not come to this world primarily to be something, or to say something, but to do something! He came to redeem sinners from the curse of the holy law of God. He came to be punished in the room and place of sinners. He came to meet the demands of divine justice so that those whom justice would forever damn might be forever saved.

Vain Faith

Now in first Corinthians fifteenth chapter Paul talks about vain faith and of believing in vain. He said if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain and we are still in our sins. That is to say, faith in a dead Christ would not be saving faith. Remember that faith gets its value from its object. Christ in the grave is no Saviour. His resurrection is a part of the gospel. It is upon a living Christ that we pin our faith and our hope, who was dead but who is alive evermore. In Isaiah the forty-fourth chapter the prophet gives us a picture of idolatry. He follows the idolater into the forest where he cuts down a tree and cuts it up and with one part of the tree he builds a fire and warms himself. With another part he kindles a fire and bakes his bread. And with the rest of it he makes a god to trust. And Isaiah says, "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" The idolater may have had ever so much faith in his god but it was a vain faith. Vain faith is not necessarily a weak faith. Nor is strong faith necessarily saving faith. Strong faith in a weak god is a vain faith. Weak faith in a mighty Saviour is saving faith. We are not saved by the strength of our faith. All the faith that multitudes have tonight is faith in their faith. That's a vain faith. Faith must lay hold upon God if it saves. We are saved by the strength and willingness of a Saviour. Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save so that none ever comes to Him in vain. For He said, "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Mr. Fearing in Pilgrim's Progress

In the second part of Pilgrim's Progress there was a man known as Mr. Fearing. Mr. Fearing was a true Christian. He had the root of the matter in him. But his faith was weak. And he didn't get much comfort out of his religion. When he came to the Interpreter's House he was afraid to go in and stayed outside until he was almost starved. But when he was finally brought in he received a hearty welcome and Mr. Great Heart said of that experience, "I will say for my Lord that He was wonderfully loving to him." But Mr. Fearing, in spite of all encouragements that were given him, went moaningly on his way. And when he was come to the Valley of the Shadow of Death he was so fearful that the Guide

was sure that he was going to lose him. And at last when he came to the river which all of us must cross he was just sure he would be drowned. But Mr. Great Heart said that that river was never so low as it was that day when Mr. Fearing had to cross it. So when Mr. Great Heart took his leave of him he wished him well and a good reception above. And Mr. Fearing replied, "I shall, I shall." Mr. Fearing had a weak faith but he reached Home at last. But let us be like Abraham who was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

"Hope on, hope on, O troubled heart
If doubts and fears o'er take thee,
Remember this—the Lord hath said,
He never will forsake thee;
Then murmur not, still bear thy lot,
Nor yield to care or sorrow;
Be sure the clouds that frown today
Will break in smiles tomorrow.

"Hope on, hope on, though dark and deep
The shadows gather o'er thee;
Be not dismayed; thy Saviour holds
The lamp of life before thee;
And if He will that thou today
Should'st tread the vale of sorrow;
Be not afraid, but trust and wait;
The sun will shine tomorrow.

"Hope on, hope on, go bravely forth
Through trial and temptation,
Directed by the worth of truth,
So full of consolation;
There is a calm for every storm,
A joy for every sorrow.
A night from which the soul shall wake
To hail an endless morrow."

Thank God for the gift of faith! And may He be pleased to increase our faith!

For Younger Readers

THE RUINED PHOTOGRAPH

Johnny's mother was dressing up, and he was greatly interested. Where was she going? Why was she so excited? He was waiting expectantly, and soon heard, "Son, I want you to be a good boy. I am going out on special business, and I want you to promise to stay in the house and look after your baby sister. Will you be a good boy?" "Yes, Mum." "You really promise? You will not go out till I return?" Johnny nodded.

His mother looked at the sleeping baby, and whispering farewell to her little son, pulled on her gloves and went down the front steps. Johnny climbed to the window to watch her. He was so interested by all this mystery. Where was she going? With his nose pressed against the window he watched until she passed from sight; then he ran to the steps, and saw her disappearing round the corner at the bottom of the street. This was very exciting. Where was she going? Hurriedly he looked at his baby sister, and believing that all would be well, he ran down the street — to see his mother entering the big gateway of a large house. The boy felt he was a detective about to solve a great mystery. He listened and heard voices. A strange man was saying something, and his mother's whispered reply suggested that she was frightened. She was very quiet; he would need to be careful, for there might be danger. He looked for a foothold in the wall, and skilfully climbed and looked into the garden. His mother was sitting with her back toward him, and in front of her was a man who crouched behind a funny thing on legs. He heard the man saying,

"Now," and an ominous click followed. Then all kinds of wild thoughts flew through his mind, and he half expected his mother to sink to the ground. Instead, she stood and shook hands with the stranger. When she turned toward the gate, Johnny dropped to the roadway and ran as fast as he could, to get round the corner before his mother reached the street. He was quite breathless when he reached his home, but by the time his mother arrived he had fully recovered, and was sitting quietly beside his baby sister.

"Well, Johnny, have you been a good boy since I left?" "Yes, Mum." "You haven't been outside?" "No, Mum." "Are you sure?" "Yes, Mum." She smiled, gave him a kiss, and placed three new pennies into his hand. She said he could keep these all for himself. The lad looked at the new coins and his eyes sparkled with delight—he had the best mother in the world. He felt a little guilty because he had deceived her, but there was no need to worry about it. His baby sister was quite safe, and no harm had been done.

As the days passed by, his mother seemed to be expecting a very special letter. When it arrived she was excited, and once again Johnny wondered what had happened. He saw her carefully removing the thin soft wrappings, and behold, there lay the photographs. She studied them for a moment, and then slowly turned to the boy. Most of the pictures she laid aside, but one remained in her hand. Johnny looked at it, and saw his mother sitting on a chair in a beautiful garden; she was smart and smiling. He looked into her face, but his words died on his lips—she wasn't smiling now.

She seemed upset, and again he failed to understand her. She turned round and asked, "Did you really stay with your baby sister the other day?" "Yes, Mum." "And you didn't go out at all?" "No, Mum." "Johnny, you tell lies." "No, Mum." "But you do. Look at this." She showed him the final photograph — and there, behind the chair on which she was sitting, could be clearly seen a little boy looking over the wall. Her finger slid over the proof until it rested beneath the place where his eyes were peering into the garden, and she asked, "Isn't that you? You followed me to see where I was going. You climbed the wall and looked into the garden just when the gentleman was taking my photograph. You naughty little boy. You tell lies." And poor Johnny was crestfallen. He had discovered that the message of the Bible was true — "Be sure your sins will find you out."

—Ivor Powell in *Bible Windows*

THANKSGIVING RALLY

The churches in the Windsor area will be staging a Thanksgiving Rally on Monday, October 10, in First Baptist Church in Essex. The afternoon meeting will be held at 2.30 p.m. and the evening meeting will convene at 7.30 p.m. The special speaker for the day will be Dr. C. D. Cole, Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary. Dr. Cole is no stranger to GOSPEL WITNESS readers who receive spiritual profit from his English Bible Course Lectures which appear weekly in these pages. All friends within driving distance of Essex (which is near Windsor) are urged to proceed to this rally that they might enjoy the fellowship and inspiration of the day. The people of First Baptist Church have not forgotten that the body too requires food and with that in mind they will serve a fine supper in the Sunday School auditorium. Come, for all things are made ready!

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 19 Fourth Quarter Lesson 3 October 16, 1955

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

CHRISTIAN GIVING-

Lesson Text: 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-15.

Golden Text: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."—2 Corinthians 9:7.

I. Christian Giving Exemplified: 8:1-5.

The early Christians gladly shared one another's burdens (Acts 2:44; 45; Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:2). At this time the saints in Jerusalem were experiencing persecution and difficulty (Gal. 2:9, 10; 1 Thess. 2:14, 15), and the Apostle Paul had undertaken to administer the funds to be given for their relief by the Gentile Christians (Acts 24:17; Rom. 15:25-28; 1 Cor. 16:1-4, 16). Titus and two others were sent to Corinth to collect money donated by the Christians in that wealthy city, that it might be ready when the Apostle Paul arrived.

We may do much to encourage one another to perform good works (Heb. 10:24). The Apostle Paul commended to the Greeks the liberality of the Macedonian churches, the chief of which was at Philippi (Phil. 4:10, 15, 16), and he also praised the generosity of the Greeks, when speaking in Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:24; 9:2-4).

The Christian life is full of paradoxes. In the midst of a great trial of affliction the Macedonians exhibited abundance of joy (2 Cor. 7:4; 1 Thess. 1:6), and in spite of their deep poverty they displayed the riches of their liberality (2 Cor. 6:10; Jas. 2:5).

The willingness of the Macedonians to give far exceeded their ability. Such cases are comparatively rare, but God measures gifts according to the desires of the heart (verse 12), and He will abundantly reward sacrificial giving (Luke 21:1-4). So great was the generosity of the Macedonian believers that the Apostle hesitated to accept their gift. The servants of the Lord are sometimes embarrassed by amounts offered to them.

The offering of the churches in Macedonia went beyond the Apostle's expectations. Three reasons for their liberality are suggested: (1) The people had first given themselves to the Lord; they recognized that they were His (Rom. 12:1, 2). They had given Him the great gift — themselves, and they had no hesitation in giving Him the lesser gift — their means. Money represents the time, strength, ability and talents which God has first given to us. When the spiritual life of the church is at high tide, financial difficulties will be trivial.

(2) The Macedonians had given themselves to the Apostle by the will of God. They had confidence in their leader and gladly responded when he told them of the need of their Jewish brethren. Devotion to the Lord and loyalty to the local work are both essential to the successful prosecution of the church's task. Some Christians are generous in response to appeals for work in the far regions, yet fail to see their responsibility to support the local cause.

(3) Their liberality was as a gift of God's sovereign grace (verse 7): "We make known to you the grace of God which hath been given to the churches of Macedonia" (verse 1). Selfishness, not generosity, is the natural quality (Phil. 2:20; 2 Tim. 3:2). The gift of liberality is a desired gift, and it is also a gift which can be cultivated (verse 6; 1 Cor. 12:31). The Scripture teaching on Christian giving is of the utmost importance, but it is largely neglected.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is set before us as the greatest example of giving (verse 9). He gave Himself for us (Matt. 8:20; Phil. 2:6, 7; 1 Tim. 2:6). What have we given for Him? The realization of His condescending love is the one great incentive to Christian liberality.

II. Christian Giving Encouraged: 9:6-15.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the Christians to give liberally on the following grounds: (1) The law of cause and effect operates in the spiritual, as in the natural world. Abundant seed-sowing would mean an abundant harvest (Gal.

6:7-9), and the bountiful soul would receive much blessing (Prov. 10:22; 11:24, 25; Ezek. 34:26).

(2) God loves the willing, joyful, cheerful giver (Prov. 22:9; Isa. 32:8).

(3) God is able to reward the liberal ones (Deut. 15:7-11; Psa. 112:9; Mal. 3:10). The giving of alms is one form of righteousness (Deut. 24:13; Matt. 6:1).

(4) God would receive the glory (2 Cor. 8:19), and thanksgiving to Him would arise from the hearts of the recipients (2 Cor. 1:11; 4:15), not merely because their wants had been supplied, but because the gifts would be a token of the obedience of the givers to Christ, and of their love to their fellow-men.

(5) The donors would be assured of the prayers and love of those to whom they contributed.

(6) God would not be a debtor to any man, nor could any man surpass Him in giving. The great gift of His Son to us includes all other gifts (Rom. 8:32).

Daily Bible Readings

Oct. 10—Give as Stewards, not Owners 1 Chron. 29:10-16
 Oct. 11—Give Because Commanded to Give 1 Tim. 6:11-21
 Oct. 12—Give According to Christ's Example 2 Cor. 8:8-15
 Oct. 13—Giving Rewarded Prov. 11:24-31
 Oct. 14—Give As the Lord Prospers You 1 Cor. 16:1-6
 Oct. 15—Give As Unto the Lord Matt. 6:1-4
 Oct. 16—Give Motivated By Love 1 John 3:11-18

Suggested Hymns

Thy life was given for me.
 Brightly beams our Father's mercy.
 Saviour! Thy dying love.
 Sow in the morn' thy seed.
 Rescue the perishing.
 Shining for Jesus.

A COMMENT ON ARGENTINA

Things have happened at a rapid rate in stormy Argentina. Newspapers, both secular and religious, have tried to assess the situation and have been either pro- or anti-Peron. The *Baptist Bible Tribune* of September 30 has a profound comment which seems to sum up the situation well:

IN ARGENTINA THE DEVIL HAS CAST OUT SATAN.
 To which we say, "Amen!"

Three Days of Blessing!

October 18 - October 20.

Two Great Speakers

—Dr. G. B. Vick, Pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Detroit. (Speaking on Sunday School work).

—Dr. K. R. Kinney, Pastor First Baptist Church, Johnson City, N.Y. (President of American Council of Christian Churches).

Accounts of Pioneer Work

Thrilling stories of the establishment of new churches in the growing centers of population.

Don't Miss These Meetings!

For the complete program of the Annual Convention of the Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada; watch the pages of coming issues of "The Gospel Witness".