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"HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE"

By C. H. SPURGEON

BELIEVERS are to shine as lights in the world, and in part this shining is to be the natural result of character; for they are to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" (Phil. 11:15). No one can pronounce this part of the case with too great an emphasis. As we live we teach — teach in the most effectual fashion. But at the same time the saints are to be light-bearers by making known the gospel of the Lord Jesus, which the apostle calls "the word of life". This we are to "hold forth" as men hold torches aloft, that their light may be scattered far and wide. The torch of truth will enlighten, for this is its nature; but it stands greatly in need of a strong hand to hold it up, and hold it forth, or else it will burn to small purpose. A torch lying on the ground rather smokes than shines. It must be held forth. This necessity is too much overlooked, and incalculable evil comes of forgetting it.

Many indulge an indolent reliance upon the innate power of truth. "Truth is mighty, and will prevail," is almost a proverb. Much truth lies in it, but it may be so used as to be far more false than true. A great doctrine, if it be never preached or written upon, will be forgotten. A humbling truth, which is much opposed because it is at war with human pride, may be so travestied and ridiculed that it may be driven out of the field of present practical influence for lack of someone to maintain and defend it. There may be such a wide rejection of sound teaching that no faith in it may remain among the masses of the people. Does any man believe that a doctrine will win believers if it is never taught? Does he imagine that truth will, in some miraculous way, spread itself, without human voice or pen? Does any man dream that the people will come to know and love that which they have never heard, and therefore do not know. The idea of some innate power in truth, apart from its being advocated, must be placed among those venerable traditions which work to the hindrance of practical effort among men. The fact is, that truth has influence in proportion to the zeal which accepts and spreads it; and if it be not received and published, it will die out from among a people quite as soon as an error would have done.

Protestantism is said to have taken such a hold upon

the English nation that it can never return to Popery. This may be true; but it is equally certain that if our people never hear a word about Protestant principles, and are daily made familiar with Popish ceremonies and teachings, they will return to Romanism as surely as fancy pigeons revert to the old stock. Shut our eyes as we may to so great a danger, it is a grim reality. If the fundamental doctrines of the gospel are kept back, and our congregations are constantly plied with questions about inspiration, evolution, and progressive thought, our young people will become Unitarians first, and infidels afterwards, as surely as eggs are eggs. No secret and mysterious power of truth will keep the old faith alive in a community in which it is persistently ignored and perpetually assailed. The human mind is all too surely fond of falsehood; but the votaries of it do not trust to the natural fascination of their inventions. False doctrine flourishes in the unrenewed heart as a weed indigenous to the soil; and yet the propagators of error do not trust to its natural vitality, but water it day and night with assiduous care. How foolish shall we be if we neglect any endeavour to keep alive the delicate foreign plant of gospel truth in a soil so unfriendly, and in a season so unpropitious! To rely upon the inward vitality of truth, and so to leave it untended, is to expect a harvest from good seed, though we have never sown it, and have never touched the soil, which remains hard as the rock on yonder mountain-side.

Truth has such voices as its lovers give it — such, and no more. We are not unmindful of the supernatural element connected with the gospel; nay, we are joyfully confident in the Holy Spirit, who works for the truth, and by it. But this does not weaken our argument; say, rather, that it greatly intensifies it. Not only is the gospel powerless without men's voices, it is also powerless with them unless the Holy Ghost applies the word with power to the hearts of those who hear it. But the divine Spirit goes forth with surroundings of prayerfulness, faith, and zeal, without which he is never known to display his sacred energies. Hence the need, not alone of those who hold forth the word of life with the voice, but of those who hold it forth with earnest pleading, generous giving, intelligent obedience, and zealous effort.

If these be not present, we may conclude that the Holy Spirit is not at work, and in his absence the boasted power of truth will prove itself a myth. We may cease shouting *Magna est veritas*, and learn that error, when well advocated, is greater in its power over men than truth left in the limbo of forgetfulness.

A simple illustration may set forth our meaning clearly. The doctrine of the right of every man to freedom is a noble truth; but if one had ever advanced it, would not whole nations have remained in slavery? Suppose that in America no abolitionist's voice had broken the guilty silence, no philanthropist's pen had written a line on behalf of the negro, and no statesman had agitated for emancipation; would not the fetters have been upon the black man's wrists to this very hour? A truth is like a mass of coal; there are so many pounds of force latent in it; but, without fire to bring it forth, the coal will lie an inert weight, which can do nothing for itself, much less for others. Be the truth what it may, whether social, scientific, or religious, its power will not operate if it is stored away, and left to itself.

What, then, is the duty of the present hour? Clearly, it is our main work to make known "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." We must preach the doctrines of grace more distinctly, and more in detail. To get back the power of the gospel, we must first get back the gospel itself. If we want the shade, and hope to obtain it without the tree, we are greatly mistaken. Gospel influence will follow upon gospel doctrine, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit; but it will not come apart from our plainly teaching the Word of God. We hear something of "life" being more important than doctrine. Why, the doctrine we contend for is "The Word of life", and any life apart from it is not the life of God. Some even affect to aim at a higher spirituality, and to be careless as to what becomes of the doctrine. That is a poor pretence of godliness which undervalues Christ's words, and, under the cloak of sanctimoniousness, plays fast and loose with inspired teaching by uniting with the lovers of error. There must be a balance among the Christian virtues, and to cultivate pietistic emotion without the subjection of the intellect to the teaching of Christ is a dangerous experiment. The Lord's words, to say the very least, are quite as important as our feelings; and he that would sacrifice a revealed truth is scarcely to be commended when he pours out his soul over a theory of emotion.

Let us go over again the foundation truths. Let us make our ministry distinctly instructive as well as hortatory. Let us set forth the doctrine of the Lord Jesus as the basis of his ethics, and as the motive force of obedience to them. If some men were to preach more gospel, their congregations would be happier and larger, and their influence in every direction would be increased. Crowds may be attracted by talent; but the most reliable loadstone is the thorough-going gospel. Gospel-and-water will not be sought after; but the genuine, undiluted article will not want for admirers. Can we suppose that vast audiences would have imperilled their lives to listen to a "modern-thought" oration? Men are not so numerously insane. But in hearing the Calvinism of the preachers of the Desert, or of the Covenanters in Scotland, the gain was more than equal to the risk. There was something to feed upon, something worth living and dying for. Does the new theology contain within its range a single teaching for which it were worth while for a man to lose a button from his waistcoat? The white heat of

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Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 Canada

Telephone WALnut 1-7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

enthusiasm will never be produced in our churches without the gospel; and it is this white-heat that is wanted just now.

Controversy, painful as it is, is often demanded of us; but, after all, the best campaigns against falsehood are those in which truth comes most boldly into the field in her own proper array. Preach that which is true, and there will be the less need for pointing out what is not true. To drive out darkness bring in light.

Do not take it for granted that the people know. We must go over the elementary truths; for the bulk of the population do not know. We need not fear repetition; we ought to aim at it; that, line upon line, precept upon precept, the revelation of God may be written on the minds of men. All the work is to be done over again; we need to begin at the beginning. The first principles of the Reformation must be expounded as if they had never been heard of, for some congregations have never heard of them from the present occupants of their pulpits. The doctrines of grace must be taught as carefully as if they were quite new, for new they will be to most minds nowadays. They have heard them caricatured, and wilfully belied; but they have never heard them expounded in their simplicity. What effects would follow if they could so hear them!

Now then, O man of courage, lift high your standard, and fling your colours to the breeze! Holding forth the word of life, take your places, and stand there, God helping you, till the living truth of the living God has routed all its adversaries!

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Revival and Separation

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

(FIFTH IN A SERIES ON REVIVALS OF THE BIBLE)

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, November 28th, 1929

(Stenographically Reported)

Exodus, chapter 10:16-29.

WE HAVE been thinking for a little while in these Thursday evening meditations of Israel's position in the land of Egypt, and I shall pursue that study a little farther this evening. We must ever bear in mind that God does not change with the years. He was the same holy God in Old Testament times as He was in the full-orbed revelation of Himself through Christ Jesus our Lord. The principles governing the approach of a soul to God have always been the same. God was no more tolerant of evil in Old Testament times than He is now; and those who were saved were saved in precisely the same way as they are saved now. There is no ground of approach to God but through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The promise was given, and on the ground of its certain fulfilment men were accepted before God even in olden times.

The children of Israel present a picture, in their position in Egypt, of God's people in other times than theirs. They were His own peculiar people, chosen of Him for His service, that through them He might be glorified. Yet this book of Exodus shows them as a company of serfs, a nation of slaves, subject to the dominance of some other power than the will of their God. I think you have there a picture of multitudes of professing Christians to-day: while really the Lord's at heart, they live in Egypt instead of being perfectly free to serve their God. God's call to His people was that they should leave Egypt behind and go out into the wilderness where they would be free from all limitations, and from all encumbrances, that they might have full freedom to serve the Lord, and to do the will of God from the heart.

I.

GOD'S PEOPLE WERE INTENDED TO BE FREE. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"; "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." God's people are exhorted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. And yet how many people there are who, knowing the truth, viewing their duty in this Holy Word, having a clear course marked out for them by the teaching of Scripture, are yet subject to so many other considerations that they are not free to do the will of God from the heart! How many people there are who live amid conditions of life which circumscribe their freedom! The condition in which they labour at the daily task, their social life, their recreational life — in all these conditions they find themselves subject to some other power than the will of God. What a blessed thing it would be for every one of us if we could turn to God's Word and learn our duty day by day, and never have to ask what other people think, what con-

ditions require, but simply and freely to do the will of God!

I say, there are people — and I fear we have all been included in that class at some time or another — whose lives have been lived very largely in Egypt, subject to other wills and other considerations than the simple question of what is right. Wherever that is true, revival is very urgently needed; for every new born soul ought to be freed, untrammelled, unshackled, as free as the air to know the will of God, and then simply to do it.

I wonder if there are any here this evening who in some sense may be subject to Pharaoh's influence? Here were a people whose time was given to someone else than to God. They had no time to serve God: they were busy making bricks for Pharaoh. How many people there are who profess to be Christians, who have no time to render Christian service, no time to witness to the ungodly, no time to execute the Great Commission and go out to teach all nations, no time to do any bit of distinctly Christian service! Why have they not time? There are twenty-four hours in their day as well as in anyone else's. It is because they are otherwise engaged, because they are preoccupied with some worldly matter that leaves them no liberty at all to do the work of God.

We have a big Sunday School here, but we are far, far from where we ought to be, and from what we ought to be, even in that matter, yet I have been impressed with this, that when people have come to examine the operation of the school, as people do all the time, they have gone through it all, and they have shaken their heads and said, "It would be no use trying that in our church." "Why?" we have enquired. "Our people would not have time to do it." Of course, they would not have time! You get a company of young people who have to go to the movies two or three times a week, and who are engaged in a hundred other worldly practices, they have no time to give to Christian service. They are so busy serving Pharaoh that they have not time left to serve the Lord. That is the trouble with most of our churches to-day. Talk about giving the Lord a tenth of our income! There are comparatively few people, I fear who give the Lord even a tenth of their time. They are so busy doing something else.

I read an article last night on the opening of a certain church in town, and — well, it read as though it had been written by a blind man — as though the Lord cared whether the aisle is in the middle of the church or not, as to whether the pulpit is on one side and the reading-desk on the other, whether the choir sit behind or before the preacher, and whether the preacher wears a gown! I wonder if people consider how God is labelled by such

puerilities, by such childishnesses? as though God cared anything for the style of a building, or were worshipped with men's hands; as though He needed anything! As I read it I said, "If there are many people called Christians who entertain such views of the work of God as that, then we are sorely in need of a great revival." It is like discussing the question as to what sort of uniform the Israelites shall wear while they make Pharaoh's bricks! It makes no difference how they are dressed: the point is they are so busy doing something that is not of God that they have not time to serve God.

I wonder are there any here who are thus preoccupied with the work of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that they have no time left to give to the service of God? We might pursue that a little farther, but I leave it with you to show you, if I can, how a real revival came to a whole nation; and how at last they were brought forth into liberty with full freedom to serve the Lord.

II.

HOW DID ENLARGEMENT COME TO THESE PEOPLE WHO WERE REALLY IN BONDAGE? There are so many church members that have no freedom. There are preachers who have no freedom. I am sorry for the man who cannot take a given course until he has asked his wife about it, and for the woman who is afraid to move until she has had a conference with her husband, and for the poor preacher who dare not call his soul his own, and must wait until next week when he can call the Deacons together to find out what the dear brethren would like him to do! And then sometimes, when preacher and deacons have come together, they must not do anything until "we find out what the great congregation want to do." They are all busy making bricks, and sometimes without any straw!

How did enlargement come? I brought it to your attention two or three Thursday evenings ago, how they mourned and complained because of the bondage, and how they cried to the Lord, and the Lord was intreated of them. Then in our last study we saw how, when Moses went to Pharaoh, their burdens were but multiplied, and the difficulty of their situation was increased, until they came to Moses and said, "Hold your hand; stop your entreaties. If that is what a revival causes we do not want it. It is making things worse instead of better." Often things are worse before they are better! How did enlargement come at last? What was the proposal made to them when they sought an open door that they might serve the Lord?

You remember the way of compromise which Pharaoh suggested. You remember he said to them first, "Now I have no objection to your serving the Lord, providing you serve me too. Stay right here in Egypt, set up your altars in Egypt, serve the Lord where you are; but do not separate yourselves from us. Do not take yourselves out of the land; do not be a separated people. Let us be good mixers. Let us be on good terms with one another, and though I may not agree with your religion, still I have no objection to your serving here."

That is the cry to-day. One can scarcely pick up a paper without seeing proposals that we set up altars in Egypt, and not be over particular. "Why," said this writer whose article I read last night in one of our papers, "the United Church of Canada was only the first step. It was the first step in the direction of Union. By and by the

Anglican communion might be included; and of course there was still the larger union yet to be thought of, union with Roman Catholicism, and union with the Eastern Church." And they call that Christianity! What is it but saying, "Serve the Lord if you want to, but stay in Egypt. We are quite willing that you should sing Moody and Sankey hymns if you want to! If you are a little bit orthodox and still talk about the blood, we shall not object so long as you do not make yourselves objectionable. We will find room for you." The article said, "The United Church ought to appeal to people who have the Anglican temperament" — whatever that is — "but they must not forget to find a place for the old Methodist spirit, and to make room for that power which will transform the lives of men. Why should we not have in the United Church a little bit of everything?" Certainly! Stay right where you are, in Egypt.

That is what a great many of our Baptists are doing to-day. They say, "I do not agree with Professor Marshall, I do not agree with his Modernistic tendencies; but I am not quite ready to leave Egypt yet, I am going to stay where I am for a while."

My friend, revival does not come that way. Moses was well advised when he said, We cannot serve God in Egypt. We must get clean out of the land, and be an entirely separated people, so that we shall have the utmost liberty to serve the Lord as we will, and as He directs." Let me suggest to you that when any body of people find themselves so circumstanced that they have no compromise, and are not free to follow the dictates of an intelligent conscience, and to obey the precepts of this Word to the uttermost, then they had better get out of the land, out into the wilderness alone with God. When they are ready for that, the revival will come.

Then you will remember the second suggestion of Pharaoh. He said by and by, "Well, if you must go, I will consent thus far: Go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord. Leave your wives and your children here." There is a tendency nowadays, you know, to relegate religion to Sunday. You must not carry your religion into everything — and certainly not into your families! Ye that are men! You who are grown up! The tastes and desires of youth are past, so far as you are concerned, but you must not be over-particular about the young people. You must make allowances for that sort of thing, and you had better not be too strait-laced!

That is the attitude of a great many ministers. I have sat on committees with them when they have said: "Of course, so far as we are concerned, we have a very clear view of these things; but you know, brethren, young people are young people, and if you are going to be too strict in these matters you are simply going to drive them all away. If you want to go to prayer-meeting two or three times a week, there is no objection to that, but do not insist that the whole family go! Do not make your religion objectionable by putting it into everything. You will only drive the people away."

In principle, that is just about the same thing. But you cannot have a revival in a divided church; you cannot have a revival in a divided house. Moses said, "No; we are not going to have a revival for half the family, but for our whole family. Our wives and children will go along with us when we go. We shall all go, and we will be entirely separated unto the Lord our God. These are the terms upon which God will bless us."

Then Pharaoh said, "Well, do not go very far away

anyhow. Just move a little bit out, just out on the rim of things, so that you can easily get back again. Do not be an extremist. Do not allow yourself to become fanatical. Do not be too rigid in your demands." Many people there are who are afraid of being called fanatical, who are afraid of being over extreme! They remind me of a remark Sam Jones once made when, very solemnly, as he was speaking to a large congregation, he said to the women present that it was a very dangerous thing to be beautiful. Everyone felt as though there were a funeral on! He solemnly warned them against the dangers of it, and then he said, "But do not be alarmed, you are all safe; you have nothing to fear!"

Most people have a long way to go before they are in danger of being called extremists. But that is the problem with a great many young people. I still have it. Scores of people ask me, "Is there any harm in this?" Or, "Now, Pastor, just how far do you think we need to go? Do you not think if we go only a little way, as long as we get a little bit away from the danger line — do you not think that will be all right?" There is a tendency to compromise with evil, instead of being free of it altogether! There is a life against which there is no law, and we are to seek that larger freedom where we shall have full liberty to do the will of God.

Pharaoh had a still further compromise to suggest. He said, "If you must go, and if you must go right out of the land, and if you insist on taking your religion into your business, leave your flocks and your herds here anyhow. Do not take the money away from the country." There are many people who would be quite willing for you to leave the old Convention as long as you leave your flocks and your herds behind! They have no objection whatever to your withdrawal, as long as you do not affect the Treasurer's report! But this idea of being religious seven days a week, of preaching Christ on Monday as well as on Sunday, and of carrying the principles of the Christian religion into our everyday business so that even the flocks and herds have something to do with our sacrificing to the Lord, that is altogether obnoxious to some people. I heard a man say once that the first creature that really knew he was saved was his cat, because when he was accustomed to coming home drunk he was in the habit of kicking that poor creature around; and when he came home sober and kindly disposed toward everyone, he said, "Even my cat knew I had been changed."

The principle upon which Moses insisted all the way through was that laid down in the verses which I read to you to-night. He said, "We will go, and not even a hoof shall be left behind. There shall be complete separation between us and Pharaoh, and we will go out into the wilderness where we are answerable to God, and where we can obey the direction of His Spirit. Only as we thus keep ourselves free from all entangling alliances, and shut ourselves up to the will of God, can we really be used in His service."

Our further step is too large a subject for me to embark upon this evening, but you read the book of Exodus and see how a nation is brought into liberty through the liberating power of the blood and the outstretched arm of God. Only thus, by passing under the blood and through the sea, by being born again by the power of God's Spirit into a new life, can we enjoy that liberty which belongs to the children of God. May He set us free every one!

A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

IN MAY of this year the Canadian Council of Churches sponsored Dr. Nels Ferre in a Toronto meeting. Dr. Ferre has, in his writings, denied nearly every truth of the Christian faith and especially has ridiculed the virgin birth of the Lord, His sinless life, the existence of hell and the inspiration of Scripture. THE GOSPEL WITNESS alone among religious publications protested this appearance of such a sceptic and challenged the Canadian Council of Churches to deny that it had been responsible for sponsoring one who denied precious truths of the Bible.

We are still waiting for a denial of the truthfulness of *anything* we said in this regard. The Council stands condemned by its shameful silence. One of the secretaries declared that the Canadian Council of Churches had "absolutely no comment to make".

We have tried to understand why such an attitude has been taken and have come to the conclusion that the Canadian Council of Churches believes that, if no comment is made about this matter, the whole issue will die a natural death. **WE HEREBY SERVE NOTICE THAT SUCH SHALL NOT BE THE CASE!** We fully intend to further publicize this matter from Newfoundland to British Columbia in order that Christians may learn the real attitude of this Council toward the Gospel.

Already thousands of copies of the pamphlet: "The Canadian Council of Churches—Whither Bound?" have been circulated across this country. Christians who belong to member denominations of the Canadian Council of Churches have been aroused and have written to encourage us and to seek further information. We do know however that there are hundreds of thousands who need this pamphlet and who have not yet heard of it. We therefore pledge ourselves to reach these persons with this information. Let all our readers join with us in prayer that the Lord will use this means to awaken His people to the perils of modernism!

The following letter appeared in the Letters to the Editor column of *The Presbyterian Record* of October:

Dear Editor:

It is disappointing to find that our representatives on the Canadian Council of Churches have failed to come up with a rejoinder to the article which appeared in the Toronto "Globe and Mail" on July 16, expressing an apparently well-founded criticism of the address given by Dr. Nels Ferre at the meeting of the Council of Churches last spring.

I think the Committee owed it to our Church to publicly dissociate itself from such ridicule of a doctrine "most surely believed among us" the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

There are many like myself in our Church who have little enthusiasm for this Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches. Many look upon these monuments as a modern edition of the tower of Babel. The incident reminds me of a story told last fall at our Synod by Dr. Joseph McLelland of a saying current in Scotland when he was studying at New College, Edinburgh, a few years ago: "Germany creates theology; Scotland corrects theology; America 'corrupts' theology."

Our pulpits and the pulpits of those with whom we seek to co-operate in the spread of the Gospel should not be open to men who repudiate and ridicule doctrines to which our ministers subscribe before being admitted to the ministry.

Toronto, Ont.

GEORGE BEARE

"It is not defeat and wretchedness which come out of the stores of adversity, but strength and calmness and joy."—GILCHRIST.

LESSONS FROM THE REFORMATION

THE hammer is the commonest of all tools. Over four hundred years ago, however, the sound of the blows of a small hammer in an insignificant German town was the signal for the commencement of a mighty spiritual movement. The Roman Catholic Church which seemed to be invincible, rich and increased with goods, little knew that the blows of that hammer signalled a stunning defeat to papal Rome — a defeat from which she has not recovered to this very day.

The day was October 31, 1517; the time was the evening; and the central personage in this drama was a relatively unknown Augustinian monk by the name of Dr. Martin Luther. In his later years Luther declared that at the time of which we speak he never realized the far-reaching implications of this seemingly provincial affair. He was merely acting as a faithful pastor when he nailed to the door of the Wittenburg church his ninety-five theses. A Dominican friar by the name of Tetzl was selling indulgences and telling men that they could buy the forgiveness of their own sins and secure the release of tormented souls in purgatory if they would only give money toward the erection of magnificent St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. The clang of a coin in the money-box was the infallible guarantee that the souls of loved ones would be loosed from the indescribable torment of this fictitious abode. This religious imposter was carrying on a brisk trade in souls near Luther's parish and so the future Reformer felt that he must challenge the practice. With this in mind, he drew up in writing ninety-five propositions which he declared he would discuss with any and all. They were not intended to be dogmatic declarations but were rather statements which could be the basis of discussion.

As soon as these theses appeared on the church door they created a great stir not only in the small university town but throughout Germany and eventually throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Other devout souls in clerical circles, students and multitudes of the common people felt that the plain statements of the monk were true and that at last a champion was raised up to confront Rome and to reform the abuses which were so obvious.

Luther himself was amazed at the vigorous response for he had no intention or desire to lead a reform movement. He had not deliberately set out to engineer a break in the organized Church of his time for he considered himself a devout son of the Church and a defender of the papacy. To his amazement no one successfully challenged the contents of his ninety-five theses. Even the most renowned champions of Rome could merely cite the declarations of former popes and arrogantly demand "Recant! Recant!" Luther's arguments from Scripture overwhelmed them and won many of the studios to the truth of the Gospel.

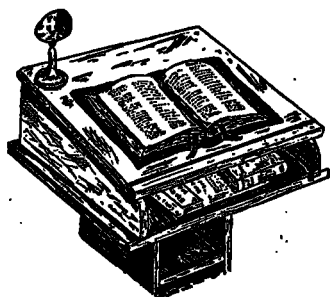
From this act of Luther's we can learn some valuable lessons. History, especially the history of great Christian leaders and movements, should be our teacher; it does not replace Scripture nor does it nearly equal the Word but it does serve to confirm great principles of the Bible and enable us to see these principles worked out in the confines of time. In the next few issues of THE

GOSPEL WITNESS we shall seek to learn some of these lessons from the Reformation and especially from the life of Martin Luther.

In this act of Luther (i.e. the nailing of the ninety-five theses on the church door), there is much instruction. That a Reformation was needed in that time few will dare to deny. Who will be the human instrument by which reform is effected? Anyone living then might hazard a number of guesses — Perhaps some reforming Pope might be elected. Maybe a Church Council would press for reform. Could it be that the brilliant, witty scholar, Erasmus, would be used? The head of the Empire, Maximilian might be the vessel. In short, the mortal mind would automatically think of those in positions of power and prestige as the logical instruments by which reform would come. Very few had ever even heard of this obscure monk in a relatively new university. In the divine choice of Martin Luther we see fulfilled the Scripture — "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men *after the flesh*, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Cor. 1:25-29).

How contemptuously the priests, cardinals and the Pope treated Luther's protest! The Pope regarded the whole matter as a squabble between monks. They were persuaded that an unknown monk could not overthrow or seriously threaten an entrenched institution such as the Church. How right they were! No mere man in his own power could dent this edifice *but* God had determined that the hour had come in which He would demonstrate His power in using a man whom the world despised. Truly we need to remind ourselves again and again that the Lord can use frail vessels in mighty exploits if they rely upon Him. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal . . . but they are mighty!"

This incident impresses upon us the fact that the Lord can use a man in great enterprises only if he is faithful in the common duties. The act of placing the theses was intended for the protection of his own congregation from the wiles of the religious thieves. In the mind of God this small act of obedience was the means of preparing His servant for one of the great works in the world's history. David could slay Goliath because he had been faithful in the desert as he tended his father's flocks. How often we may dream of great exploits and overlook immediate and pressing tasks. Only as we obey in the smaller sphere shall we be led into and equipped for larger fields. Like Paul we would do well to enquire diligently — "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" Luther never dreamed that his faithfulness in such a trivial matter would lead to his being called out to deliver to spiritual Babylon the most damaging blow she ever received. Nor can we ever dream what the Lord has in store for us if we simply take Him at His Word and daily seek to do His will.



English Bible Course

FOURTH LECTURE
in the
ENGLISH BIBLE COURSE
TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY
By Dr. C. D. Cole
October 13th, 1955
THE HEROES OF FAITH
Abraham to Moses
Hebrews 11:8-29

WE ARE still occupied with the heroes of faith and their accomplishments. The Christian religion which might be termed the religion of faith. Faith is the one word that distinguishes the true religion from all false religions. This is not saying that the Christian religion does not have a place for good works and does not inculcate moral living. But good deeds must be based upon faith in God. A work may be good in itself but it is not good in the eyes of God if it is not rightly related to Him. A good work is a work done to please God and "without faith it is impossible to please him." A good work can only be done by a born again person for they that are in the flesh cannot please God and "every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." Saving faith is the result of a birth from above for "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Faith is the fruit of grace and the root and strength of every good work. But as we have said before it is not the purpose of the writer of the Hebrew epistle to show how faith originates. He is concerned about the accomplishments, the manifestations of faith. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews tells about faith in its manifestation, its determination and its triumph over difficulties. Faith is the most powerful thing in a human life not that there is any power in faith of itself but because it lays hold upon the Almighty God. In this eleventh chapter the apostle does not attempt a biography of any one of the men of faith. He makes no attempt to tell all that any man of faith accomplished. He selects particular deeds to serve the purpose of his epistle which is to illustrate the nature of faith as confidence of things hoped for and as conviction of things which are not apparent to the physical senses. He wants to show the enduring element of faith. Faith is not like Jonah's gourd which came up in a night and perished in a night. And the examples of faith that we are to have before us tonight are particularly interesting in showing faith in its beginning, its progress and its consummation.

In Romans four twelve Paul speaks of those who walk in the steps of Abraham's faith. Faith is born walking though it may not be able to take but one step at a time. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob who are to be before us tonight never found in this life or on this earth the goal of their faith but they died in faith that they would ulti-

mately obtain what God had promised and for which they had hoped.

I.

Abraham (verses 8-19)

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

Abraham is known as the father of the faithful. Fleshly relationship to Abraham is no guarantee of salvation or of an heavenly inheritance. When the unbelieving Jews claimed Abraham as their father, our Lord said to them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham." And in Galatians three seven Paul says that believers in Christ, Jew or Gentile, are the children of Abraham. So Abraham is set forth in the scriptures as the pattern man of faith. He set the pace in living by faith. Abraham's faith stood more severe trials than the faith of any other man, save the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. This does not mean that Abraham's faith was perfect. For like all other men of faith his faith went into eclipse occasionally. Faith may become weak but faith never expires. Faith always stages a comeback for we "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

The Call of Abraham

The writer selects three incidents or stages in the life of Abraham to illustrate the workings of faith. He first mentions the call of Abraham to leave his country and his father's house, and his father's gods, for a land that will be shown to him. It was a call to separation. This call of Abraham was a miraculous call. Abraham's faith was not self originated. It was the result of a divine call. Abraham was an idolater, among idolaters, and this call made a new man of him and separated him from his heathen relatives and heathen neighbours. In Acts fourteen sixteen we are told that God "in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." At the time of the call of Abraham the world had gone astray as before the flood. In Joshua twenty-fourth chapter and verses two and three we read, "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac." Notice that Joshua says that God is saying—I took your father Abraham from beyond the river. Then in Isaiah fifty-first chapter and the first three verses: "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." Now the point the writer wishes to make in the case of Abraham's call is that Abraham by faith performed a most difficult task. By faith he severed all connections with kindred and with old associations. He left well known scenes to go to a place he had never seen. God gave him no description of the country to which He called him. There was no reason for Abraham to start for such a place except by faith in God's word. And by faith Abraham, when he was called to go

out into a country that would be shown to him; obeyed. Abraham did not know when, nor where, the promise would be fulfilled. But he had faith. He had the inward assurance that the promise would be fulfilled. By faith "he went out, not knowing whither he went." Faith asked no questions. Faith simply obeyed.

The Sojourn of Abraham

"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."

When Abraham reached Canaan he found the country already occupied for the Canaanite was then in the land. Stephen tells us that God "gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." Walking by faith Abraham looked beyond the earthly Canaan to a heavenly country and to "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." There is no indication that Abraham was disappointed in not finding the realization of his hope in earthly Canaan. Abraham and the heirs with him of the same promise were looking for a heavenly country. They were not interested in any earthly inheritance. After discovering that Canaan was not the inheritance promised they could have gone back to Mesopotamia but they desired a better country. They were not interested in swapping one earthly country for another for they had their eyes on a heavenly inheritance. Abraham never owned a foot of Canaan except a burial lot and he paid for that. Abraham did not consider Canaan as the fulfilment of God's promise. And why should Abraham's natural descendants, the Jews? Why should they expect to have it for a national home? Abraham did not regard it as his possession. He was a stranger and a pilgrim in Canaan. This perpetual squabble between Jews and Arabs over the land of Philistine on the ground of fleshly relationship to Abraham is entirely outside of any scriptural ground. If Abraham never owned Canaan how could he will it to his descendants? The earthly Canaan only foreshadowed the heavenly city which Abraham and his spiritual seed shall inherit forever. The New Covenant, the Covenant ratified in the blood of Christ, the only Covenant that is now, or ever will be in effect, promises nothing but a heavenly inheritance. Under the New Covenant the spiritual descendants of Abraham are pilgrims desiring a better country.

"Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

The meaning of this verse depends on whether we follow the authorized version or the revised version. If we follow the authorized version, the city God hath prepared for His people is given as the reason why He is not ashamed to be called their God. The city that God hath prepared for His people will prove Him to be great and glorious and good. That city that God hath prepared for His people will be worthy of Himself. That city will prove God to be all that He claims to be. Let me illustrate. A young man wins a bride for himself and in the marriage ceremony he promises to protect and provide for her. And that young man is not ashamed to be called her husband when he takes her into the beautiful mansion he has provided for her. That home vindicates his claim to be a worthy husband. And the city that God hath prepared

for His people vindicates God and will prove Him to be a great and mighty and glorious God.

Now if we follow the revised version it means that God is not ashamed of His people who are seeking this city, who desire this better country. And the proof that He is not ashamed of His people is the city He has prepared for them. The city is the reward for their faith and vindicates their faith.

The Trial of Abraham

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

There is a temptation to become sentimental right here and talk about how faith triumphs over natural affection. We can think and talk about the emotions in Abraham's heart when he left home early one morning with Isaac to take him to Moriah and offer him in sacrifice to God. We can think and talk about how his heart must have grieved when Isaac said, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" There is a tradition to the effect that when Abraham told Sarah the object of his mission it caused her death. Now that is only a tradition. But what the writer does here is to use it to show how faith triumphed over carnal reason. Abraham's faith harmonized two apparent contradictory statements that God had made. Ishmael had been set aside. He is out of the picture so far as the inheritance is concerned. And Isaac is thought of and spoken of as his only begotten son. Isaac was the seed through whom Christ, the Messiah, should come. God had said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." And now while Isaac is childless Abraham is told by God to offer him up in sacrifice. Reason would have said to slay Isaac will destroy the promise of the coming Messiah. If Isaac is killed the promise will fail. Reason would have hesitated and argued with God. Reason would have called God's hand and reminded Him of what He had promised. But Abraham acted by faith. He believed God would keep His promise of a seed through Isaac. He harmonized the command of God with a promise of God in expecting God to raise Isaac from the dead. "From whence also he received him in a figure."

To all intents and purposes Abraham sacrificed Isaac and to him Isaac was dead and God's intervention was like raising Isaac from the dead. It was a figure or a parable of death and resurrection. And all this was done by faith in God.

When these Hebrews read this account of the trial of Abraham's faith, they must have felt that their trials were small in comparison. I have read somewhere that faith is at first a blind instinct and that sometimes faith is exercised when there is no revelation to go by. But I do not for a moment endorse this view. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." There can be no faith unless God has spoken. Abraham had a revelation from God to the effect that the promised seed should come through Isaac. And he believed this even as he purposed to slay the one through whom the promise was to be fulfilled. Abraham was not walking by blind instinct. He was walking in the light of God's revelation. And Abraham was willing to trust God to take care of any seeming contradictions between His command and His promise.

II.

Isaac (verse 20)

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." In giving this blessing Isaac is foretelling the future of Jacob and Esau and for this story we are taken back to Genesis twenty-seven. God had given a revelation making known the destinies of Jacob and Esau. The revelation was made to Rebekah before they were born in which it was said that the elder brother should serve the younger. In this prediction it was not Jacob and Esau so much as individuals as in their posterity that was in view. Because individually Esau never served Jacob. It was the foretelling of the destiny of future peoples who came out of the loins of Jacob and Esau. Isaac must have known this but he wanted Esau to have the blessing. Isaac was self indulgent. He pampered the flesh. He loved Esau because Esau ministered to his fleshly appetite. Esau was his favourite because he ate of his venison. And now that Isaac is nearing the end of his earthly pilgrimage he sends Esau into the field to get venison that he might eat and bless him before he dies. But Rebekah had keen ears and listening to the plan of Isaac and Esau she goes into action and by her scheme she secures the blessing for Jacob instead of Esau. As we read this account in Genesis twenty-seven we find it rather difficult to discover any faith in any of the parties involved. We see selfishness and a pampered flesh in Isaac. We see Rebekah scheming and following the policy that the end justifies the means. And we see in Jacob lying, cheating and deception. We also see divine sovereignty working effectually through the frailties and imperfections and sins of all the parties concerned in the matter. And the author of our epistle discovers faith on the part of Isaac. When Isaac had discovered that he had blessed Jacob instead of Esau he trembled very exceedingly. He was greatly agitated when he realized what he had meant to do in opposition to the will of God. He realized that he had been out of harmony with God's revealed will and that divine providence had intervened to thwart his plan. And instead of showing anger at Jacob for what he had done, Isaac said to Esau concerning Jacob, "I have blessed him: yea, and he shall be blessed." So Isaac suddenly and sweetly bows in submission to the will of God and by faith confirms the blessing that he had bestowed in ignorance. Later on the writer of our epistle will tell us how Esau sought the blessing, sought it with tears but could find no place for a change of mind on the part of his father Isaac.

III.

Jacob (verse 21)

"By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

We are furnished three examples in successive verses of the actings of faith in the final crisis and conflict of life. What is more beautiful in the end of life than the working of faith? And the writer of our epistle tells us that these all died in faith. David in Psalm thirty-seven and verse thirty-seven, says, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." Spurgeon commenting on this verse says, "With believers it may rain in the morning, and thunder at midday and pour torrents in the afternoon, but it must clear up ere the sun goes down." "The end of that man is peace." That is what faith brings us to in the end of our earthly

pilgrimage. That was a magnificent sermon of Dr. Shields on Jacob, and all he said about him as a selfish man was true and to the point. But Jacob was also selfish in a good sense, in another direction. He put great value on the birthright which profane Esau despised. I think the commentators are wrong when they take the position that the birthright concerned itself about nothing but earthly possessions. Certainly they were involved in it on the human level. But being an heir with Abraham meant far more than any earthly possession. And there is hardly any evidence that Jacob received any of the property of his father Isaac. Jacob dearly prized his interest in the everlasting covenant of grace. He coveted the spiritual blessings under the covenant of grace. And in this regard all of us may be scripturally covetous. We ought to covet, we ought to seek spiritual blessings. We are commanded to do so, commanded to set our affection upon things above, commanded to seek the fatherland, a better country, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We need more of that sort of covetousness among God's people. Oh, yes, Jacob was naturally shrewd and cunning but he was also keen in spiritual discernment. Woe to the man who tried to get rich trading with Jacob! Jacob, the supplanter, but he was also Israel the prince who had power with God and with men. Dr. B. H. Carroll was a southern soldier in the Civil War and a Southern Baptist preacher and scholar. He said Jacob was a prototype of all the Yankees and modern Jews in driving hard bargains. Think of Jacob that night on the banks of the Jabbok at Peniel. The angel of the covenant, even the Lord Jesus Christ, wrestled with Jacob and crippled him so he could do nothing but hold on. And the angel said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." And Jacob's faith grasped at a hint. Jacob's faith was keen. He said, "Let me go? Can I keep him from going?" And so Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Jacob was thinking about spiritual blessings. He was thinking about that inheritance of which he was an heir along with Abraham and Isaac. And the angel said, "What is your name?" And Jacob replied, "Jacob, the crooked supplanter." Then the angel said, "I'll change your name from Jacob to Israel, prince of God." Yes! there was revival that night in Jacob's soul. The last thing recorded about Jacob was an act of faith in his dying moments. He worshipped God, leaning upon the top of his staff.

"By faith Jacob, blessed both the sons of Joseph."

Jacob had adopted the sons of Joseph as his own sons and had given them his name. When Joseph brought Ephraim and Manasseh to his father for the blessing, he had Manasseh the firstborn on his left hand towards Jacob's right hand and Ephraim on his right hand towards Israel's left hand. But in laying his hands upon them, Jacob crossed his hands and put his right hand upon the head of Ephraim and he did it by faith. The record tells us that he wittingly guided his hands, knowingly guided them. He couldn't see but faith enabled him to bestow the blessing where God had intended. This displeased Joseph and he took his father's right hand to put it upon the head of Manasseh and reminded his father that he had made a mistake. But Jacob refused to have his hand placed upon Manasseh's head and said to Joseph—"I know it. I know it."—as if to say, "I know what I am doing."

IV.

Joseph (verse 22)

"By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the

departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

Joseph believed the divine revelation that Israel would be redeemed from Egyptian bondage and taken back to the land of Canaan. To see the force and beauty of Joseph's faith we must remember that it had been some two hundred years since God revealed to Abraham that his seed would sojourn in a strange land and be evilly treated four hundred years and then come out with great substance. At the time of Joseph's death only a part of this promise had been fulfilled. Israel were in Egypt but they were not enduring afflictions for at this time they were in great favour with the Egyptians. And Joseph, one of them, had reached the highest position next to Pharaoh. And there was little prospect that Israel would ever wish to leave the land of Egypt. But Joseph walking by faith believed the revelation God had given to Abraham would be fulfilled. In his dying moments he gave orders that his bones be taken back to Canaan when they left Egypt.

V.

Moses (verse 23-28)

The writer of our epistle now leaves Genesis and goes to Exodus and dwells at length on Moses. His readers held Moses in high esteem and they were thinking of forsaking Christianity and Christ for Moses and Judaism. And so the writer holds up before them Moses as one of the greatest examples of faith in Jesus Christ. If they will follow the faith of Moses they will cling to Jesus Christ as Moses did and thus keep both Moses and Christ. And in leaving Christ they would lose both Moses and Christ. Moses is first seen as a child of faith. Amram and Jochebed certainly knew of the divine promise to deliver Israel from Egypt. When Moses was born they saw something about that baby that inspired their hopes of deliverance and they must have believed their baby was the promised deliverer. And because of their faith in God's promise and God's power they were not afraid of the king's commandment and hid Moses three months. Then it seems their faith went into an eclipse. I do not believe they were acting by faith when they exposed Moses to the dangers of the river. But the writer says nothing about that part of what the parents did. There is no intimation that they acted by faith in putting Moses into the river. Their faith may have failed for a moment but God's purpose did not and it was miraculously carried out and Moses was saved and brought up at the expense of the very king who had decreed his destruction.

The Choice of Moses

Faith is seen again when Moses reached manhood and refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Moses' choice was made by faith. On one hand there was a high position and worldly honour in living at the royal court along with all that heart could wish of earthly riches and sensual pleasures. And on the other hand there was a suffering people, and the reproach of Christ and a distant reward. What an unselfish but wise choice from the standpoint of the present was the choice of Moses when he chose to cast his lot with his suffering people rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The treasures of Egypt were great but Moses by faith esteemed the reproach of Christ of greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. Moses was looking forward to

the sufferings of Christ and to the glory that should follow. Moses like Abraham saw Christ's day and was glad. Moses believed God's promise of a coming redeemer. And how Moses came to choose as he did is explained. "For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Moses kept looking away to the future pay-day when God's promise would be fulfilled. Moses kept his eyes on things not seen. He too desired that better country and the city which hath foundations.

The Courage of Moses

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." Moses was walking by faith. When the time came for Israel to be delivered he defied Pharaoh and led the people out. The secret of Moses' faith in defying Pharaoh the king is that "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." God is invisible to the physical senses and that is sufficient reason that it is both useless and sinful to try to make any material object to represent God. God is invisible to the physical organ of sight but He is visible to the eyes of faith and Moses endured, as seeing him who is invisible. He saw God in His personal perfections. He saw God in His omnipresence, and power, and faithfulness. And that's the only way God can be seen save in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the image of the invisible God. Pastor Oncken of Germany was once ordered by the burgomaster of Hamburg to cease his preaching. The official held up his hand and said to the Baptist preacher, "As long as I can lift that little finger, I'll put you down and stop your preaching." And the humble Baptist preacher in the strength and courage of God replied, "I see a hand that you cannot see. And as long as His hand is lifted you shall not be able to put me down." "He endured, as seeing him who is invisible." May we do likewise!

"O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe."

The Editor's Corner

The Doctrines of Grace

They're here! Yes the first shipment of *The Doctrines of Grace* has arrived. All who have seen the book have commented on the fine appearance of the volume. Many have expressed their amazement at the low cost of \$2.50 for this 208 page book. Bound in a rich maroon fabric cloth with gold stamping, this volume is the first in the Dr. T. T. Shields' Memorial Library. We fully expect that thousands of copies will be sold before Christmas time. Order your copy now.

Four Cents a Day!

Be sure to read about the Dollar-a-Month Club in the article on page 11. We felt that many of our readers would want a part in this great work. The cost of one four cent stamp per day can be the means of untold blessing. May we hear from you? We shall look forward to the return of many of the pledge forms during the next week.

"There is most help where there is most danger."

—ST. AMBROSE

25 CENTS PER WEEK

A VIGOROUS OFFENSIVE

FROM one end of this land to the other there is a crying need for gospel-preaching churches that will carry on a vigorous program of evangelism and teaching. This need becomes increasingly apparent when one recalls that the major denominations have embraced the pseudo-gospel of modernism and have become more interested in social and political questions than in the salvation of never-dying souls.

Re-Evangelization of Canada

How shall Canada be re-evangelized? The New Testament pattern emphasizes the need to commence with the large centres of population. As strong New Testament churches are established in these, they will in turn reach out to the surrounding areas. We envisage the day when there will be a vigorous evangelical Baptist church in every major city of this land; in addition, these churches will evangelize the surrounding towns and villages so that the country will become dotted with gospel lighthouses.

The Men for the Task

The Lord has graciously provided a place where men may train for the gospel ministry. Toronto Baptist Seminary has sent out scores of labourers who have proceeded to various centres and there been used to erect New Testament churches. In recent years men of the Lord's own choosing have been sent to us and we feel confident that they will be used in a mighty way.

How to Finance

As these young men proceed to the spheres of work, they are confronted with many problems. The cost of land in the large urban centres is excessively high. The cost of building is nearly prohibitive. Consequently they must struggle along holding meetings in rented halls, homes, tents or any place available. Experience has shown that any work progresses more rapidly if the church has a building of its own. But how are such pioneer works to bear the burden of financing the erection of a place of worship.

A Loan Fund

The problem of financing this work would be solved if a central loan fund could be established. The churches could apply to the fund for loans which would be repaid and loaned again to other worthy causes. At present Jarvis Street Baptist Church has a modest church edifice

loan fund which has rendered valiant service but is inadequate to meet our pressing needs.

One Dollar Per Month!

At Sunday's services in Jarvis Street the pastor announced that a "Dollar-a-Month Club" had been formed. Members and friends were asked to agree to send one dollar per month to be used in a church edifice fund. Over two hundred persons signed as members and it is expected that many more will join. Let our readers picture what can be done!

Our Goal - 1,000 Members

If one thousand people agree to pay one dollar per month (or 25 cents per week!) the fund will reach twelve thousand dollars in one year - sixty thousand dollars in five years! The money will be loaned out but will in time come back to the fund to be loaned again. Each dollar will be the means of blessing to multitudes of souls and will be used again and again to help erect gospel testimonies.

Pressing Needs of the Hour

At this moment the Association has some pressing needs in larger centres. In Don Mills, a rapidly growing section of Toronto, Mr. Raymond Reed has gathered a band of people and has the only gospel testimony in the area. The work has reached the stage when a building is imperative. The fund could be used to help Brother Reed and his people erect a suitable place of worship.

Then in Kingston, Brother Dempster has been used to establish a strong work; at present meetings are held in the Orange Hall. A Sunday School of over 100 and a full program during the week makes it necessary that a building be erected there. Again the fund could be used to effect something for the Lord.

Little Is Much When God Is In It

Perhaps someone reads these lines and feels that he or she can do little to help in such a work. The "Dollar-a-Month Club" offers you an opportunity to use your small resources to the glory of God. Your dollar and the dollar of hundreds of friends can be the means of untold blessing to thousands of souls. Eternity alone will reveal all that such a fund can accomplish.

If you desire to have some part in this work, please fill in the following form and mail to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Ontario.

MY COVENANT

Desiring to have a vital part in the work of the furtherance of the Gospel, I hereby pledge One Dollar per month, to be applied to the Church Extension Loan Fund of The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada. This money will be loaned out to deserving causes to assist in the erection of suitable places of worship. (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Name

Address

Note: Please forward one dollar promptly the first of each month. Such consideration will save extra office work.

DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB

A Devotional Study in Revelation

by Dr. R. D. Barry

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CHRISTIAN PRELUDES TO THE POURING OUT OF THE LAST PLAGUES

Revelation 15

ALTHOUGH the fifteenth chapter of the book of Revelation is the shortest in the New Testament, the momentous importance of its teachings and the fact that it forms a whole, suggest that a separate chapter might be devoted to its study.

"And I saw, saith John, another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

Three times only does the apostle use the words "sign" or "wonder", in connection with a heavenly vision. *First*, in relation to "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." (12:1). We have here announced the destiny of the "man child" to whom this woman gave birth and who "was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." The *second* wonder is the appearance of a "great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads", and which "stood before the woman for to devour her child." (12:4-5). In the *third* sign, mentioned in our text, we witness the epilogue of that supreme conflict. The deep significance of that epilogue is underlined, from the beginning of the chapter, by the adjectives "great" and "marvellous".

The events described here are of a *final* character; they are the "last" plagues, the last manifestations of divine justice: "in them is filled up the wrath of God." Those events will have a *world-wide* bearing; unlike the previous visitations they will affect not only the half, the third, the fourth or tenth part of earthly things or of human collectivities, but each plague will strike the whole. Moreover, the events described will follow one another in *rapid succession*. Whereas some of the previous calamities were described at length or happened over an extended period of time, the twenty-one verses of the sixteenth chapter depict the hasty pouring out of the last seven plagues. Those are in so close succession that their terrible consequences are sometimes simultaneously felt, as in the case of the sores of the first plague and the pains of the fifth. (16:11). These calamities of the last days will be *punitive*, not reforming, measures. The previous retributions were meant to chasten, that is, they aimed at provoking repentance and restoration. But the sanctions of the end are solely retributive, as the word "punishment", taken in its strongest sense, indicates that all possibility of reformation is discarded. For the wrath

of God now condemns without appeal any one who will have deliberately rejected the entreaties of grace.

Let us further note the striking analogy which exists between the vision of the seven plagues and the scenes which attended the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian captivity. Such an analogy is very enlightening, for it brings out the legitimate and inevitable character of the final sanctions we are now going to study.

It is "in heaven" that John beholds the two preliminary visions of the fifteenth chapter. The fifth verse lays stress on his privilege as he becomes the intimate confident of the divine revelations: "And after that, I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." Moses alone had had the same privilege, evidently because that place was too sacred to be seen of the ungodly. (Acts 7:44).

Two visions, which complement each other and which will prelude to the pouring out of the last seven plagues, will now be beheld by the apostle John. The heavenly witnesses and the celestial agents successively appear on the scene, and by their attitude confess that the divine justice is rightfully exercised against all of God's enemies.

I. THE HEAVENLY WITNESSES OF THE LAST PLAGUES (15:1-4)

The *qualifications* of the witnesses have to be noticed in the first place: They have gained the victory "over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." They were not "of this world" and are no more "in this world." Refusing to give way to the spirit of the age, they have triumphed over the most formidable power ever known in the history of the world, a power which did not seek so much to dominate the human will as to seduce it, in order to associate it, consciously or not, to the hostility of Satan against the Lord. However, the faithful witnesses have overcome only "by the blood of the Lamb", that is, after submitting themselves to the protection of His sacrifice.

The *attitude* of those witnesses is thus described: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

The unstable, irresistible and deadly waters of the Red Sea are here contrasted to this stable and glittering element. *Holiness*, represented by the crystalline transparency of the sea, and *justice*, symbolized by the fire, are the theme of the meditation and admiration of all those who have miraculously escaped the fate of the Egyptians.

They "stand, having the harps of God": what nobler attitude could be coveted by the "children of dust" transformed by grace?

The occupation of the witnesses is threefold:

(1) They "sing", devoting their most beautiful faculties to the celebration of the most sublime things.

(2) They verify the testimony of their lips by expressing their emotions through the instrumentality of the "harps of God", thus showing that we should associate with our service and our praise all the means which God, and not the flesh, can provide us.

(3) They add to the language of *emotion* that of *reason* by "saying" what they see of the divine things, as those are revealed in their heavenly aspect.

The theme of these glorified witnesses is also threefold:

(1) "They sing *the song of Moses*, the servant of God." Whether the remarkable hymn sung by hundreds of thousands of grateful voices on the shore of deliverance was prophetically composed in advance by the faith of Moses, or whether it came forth at the sight of the miracle which saved Israel, the marvellous meaning of its content could not be exhausted by the emotion of one day. Throughout the centuries, the memorable liberation of Israel has served as the most appropriate historical image for our salvation. Isaiah, then Hosea, took pleasure in quoting what remains the oldest Hebraic hymn. And, while the holy Victim was in the garden of Gethsemane about to offer Himself, His soul and His mind must have intensely communed with the Psalmist, as He sang, toward the end of the great Hallel (Matt. 26:30): "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation." (Ps. 118: 14)—this verse only being a direct quotation from the song of Moses (Ex. 15:2). The heavenly and eternal repercussions of the song of Moses are therefore well explainable, since they are a testimony to the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose beneficent effects the redeemed have already enjoyed along their earthly pilgrimage.

(2) The witnesses also sing "*the song of the Lamb*". Is it not here the same "new song" mentioned in the preceding chapter (14:3)—a reproduction or a paraphrase of the three stanzas of Revelation 5?

(a) First, the praise of the twenty-four elders and the four beasts: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

(b) Then, the proclamation of the myriads of myriads of angels: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

(c) Finally, the testimony of every creature: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Just as the song of Moses magnified the work of redemption as typified by the miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians, the song of the Lamb magnifies the same redemptive work as it is brought to consummation.

(3) The witnesses *say* (v. 3), either reciting or singing them, profound things concerning the judgment, the awful counterpart of redemption.

(a) "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!" Thus praises ascend unto God for the perfections of His creative work, as He laid the scene where human history was to unfold itself. But at the same time there seems to be a reference to the works of justice exercised against the Egyptian despotism.

(b) "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!" Those words are a striking summary of the divine government. They describe the profound depths of the divine designs and the justice of the sanctions prophetically decreed against Egypt.

(c) "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" Awe and praise appear to the redeemed as the natural twofold reaction of any one who witnesses the divine judgments.

(d) "For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." Justice and holiness meet here, as they often do in the rest of scripture; but here their meeting occurs in connection with the supreme manifestations of the divine perfections. The unknown beauty and virtue of those perfections will therefore compel universal recognition. However, the nations shall spontaneously "come and worship" before the Lord.

II. THE CELESTIAL AGENTS OF THE LAST PLAGUES (vv. 5-7)

The quality of these agents is described by their title. They are "angels", that is, messengers accredited by the Almighty God. In the heavenly hierarchy, these "seven" must have proved themselves worthy, through their wisdom and obedience, and through their perfect fellowship with the Lord's designs, of fulfilling the task which is now theirs.

The *appearance* of those executors of the divine justice is depicted under three aspects:

(1) They came out of the temple, described in the context as "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony". They have therefore drawn their inspiration and received their impulse from the contemplation of the majestic mystery of the Most Holy place. The rejection by the rebels of the atoning blood which covered the ark of the covenant and satisfies the demands of the law will therefore appear to them as the unpardonable blasphemy: the seven avengers are thus ready to inflict the supreme retributions.

(2) "They are clothed in pure and white linen." They participate in that glorious holiness which is only satisfied by the vision of grace symbolized by the mercy seat.

(3) They have their breasts "girded with golden girdles". Their "loins" are not girded for war or work, but as representatives of God they wear the emblems of glory and majesty.

The *role* of the seven angels is the object of a twofold description.

(1) As they come out of the temple, they are represented as "having the seven plagues", which means that they have received their mission directly from the divine Being dwelling in the sanctuary.

(2) Their final preparation is then recorded: "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever." It was meet that one of the representatives of the earth gave, by means of such a gesture his approval to the equity of the judgments which were about to visit the earth. The golden vials and the wrath of God — what contrast and what unity! The value and the indestructibility of gold make of those vials an appropriate symbol for even the most sudden manifestations of justice, for those have been eternally decreed.

Their *spirit* gives us a twofold lesson.

(1) A lesson of patient *waiting*. They start for their austere task only at the signal of the great voice coming out of the temple, (16:1). They thus can — and so in our turn must we do — meditate upon the possible imminence of the judgments of God, and upon their terrible effects. But we can do one thing which, in that day, the angels will not have the power to do: we can still supplicate the sinners to "flee from the wrath to come".

(2) A lesson of *silence*. The angels wait, then act without uttering a word. They feel that the solemnity of their duty does not allow them to add to, or to lessen, the plagues by making unnecessary observations. Thus, when Nadab and Abihu were consummated for offering strange fire before the Lord, we read that "Aaron held his peace". (Lev. 10:3). The angels will therefore open their mouths only after performing their awful mission.

III. THE CELESTIAL ANTICIPATIONS OF THE LAST PLAGUES (v. 8)

"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

The darkening of the heavens during the time when the divine justice is exercised through the pouring of the seven vials, should be a serious warning to us. The prospect of the closed doors and of the awful "too late" emphasizes the extreme urgency and the blessed truth of the appeal which will serve as our conclusion:

"LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY UNTO THE THRONE OF GRACE, THAT WE MAY OBTAIN MERCY, AND FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED." (Hebrews 4:16).

THANKSGIVING RALLY

First Baptist Church, Essex (Pastor - B. R. Oatley-Willis) was the scene of a Thanksgiving Rally on Monday, October 17. Friends from many centres were in attendance as the following were represented: Tilbury, Windsor, Roseland, Delhi, Courtland, London, Toronto and Stouffville. The church auditorium was well filled for the afternoon service and was filled for the evening session.

Speaker for the day was Dr. C. D. Cole, beloved Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary. Those who were present were richly blessed as Dr. Cole faithfully expounded the Word of God.

Over one hundred persons were the dinner guests of the ladies of First Baptist Church as the meal was served in the church dining room. The day there proved to be one of fellowship as friendships were renewed.

An offering of over \$50.00 was taken for the work of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

Rev. Norman Day, pastor of the Fundamental Baptist Church in Fort William was the speaker at the Sunday morning service. Brother Day preached on the subject, "The Whiteness Harvest". His ministry was much appreciated by all and was an encouragement to the workers of the church to "abound in the work of the Lord".

In the evening Dr. Slade spoke on "Present Enjoyment of Gospel Blessings". Again the blessing of the Lord was experienced and His Word was faithfully preached.

"I have cause to love home with all my heart, and to take the opportunity of the day to hasten to the end of my journey; that I may at night fall in, weary and tired as I am, into Christ's bosom."

—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

For Younger Readers

"SKIPPER, YOU HAVEN'T PRAYED"

The strength of the gale had turned the ocean into a raging fury, and with heavy waves dashing against the headlands, thick fog had descended to increase the perils of the night. Radio warnings had gone out to all shipping, and lifeboat teams were standing by in readiness for emergencies. The coastguard slowly made his way along the shore, but his actions seemed foolish, for the swirling waters obliterated everything. Yet, impelled by a strange intuition, the untiring man continued his vigil. A ship might be in distress; he would not fail in the execution of his duty.

He was correct. Battered and driven by merciless seas, a vessel completely out of control was drifting toward the rocks. The skipper and his crew, who had striven in vain to save the ship, now faced almost certain death. Thick fog had negated the usefulness of their rockets, and as the waves pounded the vessel, the position seemed to be hopeless. Fearful lest the surging water should sweep them overboard, the men tied themselves to the rigging of the ship. They were weary and helpless, and every moment threatened to be their last. As the crashing waves filled the night with terror, the skipper shouted, "Men, I have done my best to save you. I have done everything I could do." His announcement was followed by a silence broken only by the noise of the storm; but suddenly a boy, the youngest member of the crew answered; "Skipper, there is one thing you have not done." "Boy, what is that?" "Skipper, you haven't prayed." The lad's reminder sounded like a rebuke; but the despairing man realized that the boy was correct. The need was urgent, and if prayer could perform miracles then it was imperative that someone should pray. His men listened as in rough sailor fashion the captain asked the Almighty to have mercy upon him and his crew. In plain language and in a plain way, he cried to God for help; and the Lord heard him. When the prayer was ended the captain looked at his watch. The time was twenty-five minutes

past one a.m. He then looked toward the silent boy and said, "Son, now I have prayed. I have done everything."

The men were amazed when a lifeboat appeared from the blackness of the night. It was unbelievable, for their rockets had long since been fired in vain. They closed their eyes and opened them again, to discover that this was not a mocking mirage. The boat was slowly drawing nearer to their wrecked vessel. Could it be done, or would the lifeboat capsize in the mountainous seas? Slowly but surely the miracle was performed, and one by one the men were seized by willing hands. Then began the hazardous journey back to the shore, where a small crowd had gathered to greet the shipwrecked men. As the skipper of the vessel stepped ashore, he said, "We had almost lost hope when the boy said we should pray. We did; it was twenty-five minutes past one. Soon afterwards, you came and we were saved."

The coastguard went forward and said, "Excuse me, skipper, but did you say it was twenty-five minutes past one, when you prayed?" The first speaker intimated that this was correct. The crowd marvelled when the coastguard went on to tell his part of the story. He had been patrolling the cliff, and was debating the futility of his actions when quite suddenly the fog had parted, to reveal a wrecked vessel. Within a second or two the mist came together again, leaving the man wondering if he had really seen a vessel or had imagined that he had. He looked at his watch, and the hands registered 1.25 a.m. Realizing that men might be in great danger, the coastguard reported to the lifeboat station that he thought a vessel was wrecked off shore. His timely action saved a crew from drowning. The coastguard asked the skipper to compare watches, and both men were thrilled to find that their times were identical. When the anxious men prayed, the fog had miraculously parted, enabling a coastguard to obtain a glimpse of the wreck. The prayer had been wonderfully answered.

—Ivor Powell in *Bible Windows*

"A loving confidence in the Divine mercy: this is the weapon wherewith thou must fight and conquer cowardice and vain thoughts. This is the treasure whereby thou must enrich thy soul."—MOLINOS.

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

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

Lesson Text: Galatians 3:17-29.

Golden Text: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."—Galatians 3:26.

Introduction:

To understand the truths taught in the Epistles of Paul, we should know something of the people to whom they were primarily addressed, and also the occasion which prompted the writing. The province of Galatia in Central Asia Minor was inhabited largely by people of Celtic origin, who were naturally quick, intelligent, eager and impetuous, but at the same time changeable, impatient, unstable, unfaithful and avaricious. In religion they favoured ritualism.

The Apostle Paul took the message of the Gospel to them during his Second Missionary Journey, being detained there because of illness (Acts 16:6; Gal. 4:13-15). They readily received both the Apostle and his message. Some few years later he revisited the church and found that Judaizing teachers had been troubling the Christians, endeavouring to persuade them to practice circumcision and other ceremonies of the law. As a result of this propaganda, the Galatians turned against the Apostle (Gal. 4:13-16), questioning his authority and repudiating his message that salvation was to be obtained by faith alone.

The Apostle found it necessary to write this message of warning to those who were in danger of departing from the faith. The Epistle, written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has been preserved to show us the importance of trusting in Christ alone for salvation (Eph. 2:8-10). Read the whole Epistle.

The Epistle to the Galatians may be analyzed as follows:

- (1) Personal: The Apostle Vindicating His Authority
—chapp. 1, 2.
- (2) Doctrinal: The Apostle Describing the Gospel
—chapp. 3, 4.
- (3) Practical: The Apostle Counselling Good Conduct
—chapp. 5, 6.

I. The Law Was Preparatory to the Gospel: 3:17-24.

The doctrinal part of this Epistle (chapp. 3, 4) is largely devoted to a contrast between the law of Moses and the Gospel. The Galatians must be taught the serious results of commencing again the Old Testament sacrifices and ceremonies. The law might be summarized as follows: "Do these things and you will be blessed," whereas the Gospel teaches as follows: "You have been blessed in Christ, therefore do these things." The law teaches that to be justified a person must obey its every provision (Gal. 3:10; Jas. 2:10), but the Gospel proclaims that to be justified he must believe in the Christ Who has kept every provision of the law on his behalf (Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1; 8:1-4; Gal. 2:16; 3:11; Tit. 3:5-7).

The teaching of the Gospel that justification is by faith in the Word of God and in the God of the Word was declared to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-6), so that the covenant which God made with Abraham on the principle of faith is a forerunner of the Gospel, which is also a covenant of grace by faith. The first step in contrasting the law and the Gospel is to contrast the law and the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal. 3:6-18).

Consider the character of that covenant. The promise of God to Abraham was accepted at its face value: "Abraham believed God" (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:6). As a result, he was counted as righteous before God (Rom. 4:16-22). All who have believed God are regarded as spiritual successors or children of Abraham (Rom. 4:23-25; Gal. 3:9-12). Moreover, the promise that in Abraham and his seed all nations should be blessed was to be fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3:13-16).

The promise to Abraham, which was received by faith and fulfilled in Christ, could not be nullified or modified by the law of Moses, which was given 430 years after the promise (Gen. 12:40, 41). No fresh clauses could be added. Therefore, the promise would continue to prevail until its ultimate fulfilment. This would imply that if the Galatians wished to share in the inheritance of blessing promised by God to Abraham, they must adhere to the principle of faith in Christ, and not to the practices of the law.

The law, however, had a definite place in the purpose of God. It prepared the way for the coming of Christ. It clearly showed the transgressor his sin and condemned him for it. One must know that he is a sinner, condemned in the sight of God, before he is ready to acknowledge Christ as his Saviour.

The Jews before Christ were under the domination of Sin, locked up in a prison house, as it were, in order that they might realize their helplessness to save themselves, and more readily believe in Christ (verse 23; Rom. 8:18).

The law was like the pedagogue or "child conductor" (English translation of the word is "Schoolmaster"), the one trusted with the discipline of the child until he became of age. The law had disciplinary powers for the Jews, and although its moral principles hold for all times and ages, once Christ came, the One Who fulfilled its symbolism, its usefulness was ended, so far as the ceremonies were concerned (Matt. 5:17; John 1:17).

Teachers should endeavour to show that we must believe on Christ to be saved; we dare not trust in our own good works. If we could have been saved by the law or by good works, it would not have been necessary for Christ to die (Gal. 2:21; 5:4).

II. The Gospel as Final and Permanent: 3:26-29

The duties of the tutor ceased when the child became an adult son, and the Galatians, as sons of God by reason of their faith in Christ, were no longer under the domination

of the law. The Gospel message declares that those who believe in Christ are born again by the Spirit of God and enter His family as children (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:5; 1 John 3:1, 2). The outward sign of union with Christ is believer's baptism. In that ordinance we put on, as it were, the uniform of Christ, declaring to all that we have in our hearts been united with Him in death and in resurrection life (Rom. 13:14). In symbol we portray our oneness with Him in His death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:4-6).

Since all true believers have been joined unto Christ, we are all one, "one moral personality" in Him (1 Cor. 10:17; Eph. 2:14-16). In Christ racial, social and natural distinctions disappear, so far as relationship to God is concerned; spiritual relationships alone have prominence (Rom. 1:16; Gal. 5:6; 6:15). If we belong to Christ, we are Abraham's seed, even as Christ was (Rom. 9:6-9; Gal. 3:16), and also Abraham's heirs (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:1, 7; Eph. 3:6). Salvation with all its eternal blessings is ours; we have a right to the inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away (1 Cor. 3:21-23; 1 Pet. 1:3, 4).

Daily Bible Readings

- Oct. 24—Law, Gospel and Salvation Rom. 6:14-23
- Oct. 25—Law, Gospel in Believer's Holiness Rom. 7:7-25
- Oct. 26—Law, Gospel in Believer's Resurrection..... Rom. 8:1-17
- Oct. 27—Law, Gospel in Believer's Completeness..... Col. 2:1-17
- Oct. 28—Law, Gospel in Believer's Ministry Heb. 10:1-11
- Oct. 29—Law, Gospel in Believer's Liberty Acts 15:1-29
- Oct. 30—Christ, the End of the Law for Righteousness Rom. 10:1-11

Suggested Hymns

- Free from the law.
- The God of Abraham praise!
- Not all the blood of beasts.
- Am I a soldier of the cross?
- Christ has for sin atonement made.
- O Jesus, I have promised!

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