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PREACHING TO SINNERS

By C. H. SPURGEON

WE SHALL always, I trust, as a church, cultivate an anxious desire for the conversion of all who come within our gates, yea, and of all who dwell around us. Never, I hope, will you wish the pastor to preach so that you shall be fed, careless as to whether sinners are saved or not; nor will you make yourselves into a snug corporation for purposes of profit and mutual admiration. We long to see the wedding furnished with guests, and our Redeemer seeing of the travail of his soul. The public ministry must not be confined to a part of the truth, for it should reflect the whole counsel of God as far as mortal mind can do so. It is my delight to preach the doctrine of election, and all the other grand teachings which declare Jehovah's special love to his chosen; but at the same time I have felt it to be my duty to preach the gospel to every creature. We know no other limit to our invitation than this, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

I have been amused lately with a story told me by a dear fellow-labourer in the gospel. One of his church-members came to him, and said that she was going to unite herself with another church, a church higher in doctrine, and less given to evangelistic efforts. She said, "When you preach the doctrines of grace I am very happy; but when I hear you inviting sinners to Christ, my heart goes down into my shoes." "That is a very sad thing," said the minister, "but I cannot alter my preaching on that account, for I think you are wrong." When our brother met his people at the prayer-meeting in the evening, he told them what had occurred, and said, "I cannot help preaching to sinners as I do; and even if more of you go, it will be the same. I shall preach to sinners as long as there are any sinners left." Our friend then went on to say that the mode of preaching among certain friends reminded him of his school-boy days. A boy had a nice, rosy-cheeked apple, which he tossed up in the air before our friend's eyes; and then he shouted to him, "Do you see this apple?" "Yes."

"Well, now, take a good look at it," replied the boy, "for that is your share of it;" and he put it back into his pocket. Another playmate pretended to be more generous, and said, "Oh, give the poor fellow a smell!" Even his liberality went no further. Have you never heard preaching of that sort? "Here is a precious salvation! I hope you sinners see how precious it is, for that is your share of it." The minister puts the heavenly fruit back again into his pocket, and the sermon is over: and this is called free-grace! The most liberal of those who dare not invite the sinner, try to give him a smell of the gospel by telling him of the peace and joy which it brings. Now, when I am preaching to sinners, I feel inclined always to beg everyone of them to put the golden apple in his pocket, for this choice fruit of the tree of life may belong to millions, and yet the whole of it will remain for millions more. There is not a sinner in the world who is to be told that he may not come to Jesus and receive the whole of the blessings of the gospel. What a blessing to have a free salvation to preach as well as a full salvation! At least, I feel it to be so. Everyone must speak according to his light; but while I see clearly the doctrines of distinguishing grace, I see also the universality of the gospel command.

Many years ago I had a good old friend, who, like myself, had a very sweet tooth for Calvinistic doctrine; and I cannot do with any other doctrine any more than he could. He said to me one day, "I love to hear you preach the doctrines of grace, but I feel very uncomfortable when you are giving free invitations to sinners; I feel as if I could not sit in the place." I said to him, "Well, shall I give up inviting sinners in order to please you?" "No," he replied, "by no manner of means; for about a month or two ago my son-in-law, about whom I was very anxious, went to hear your sermon, and you were very persuasive with sinners, and set Christ before them most freely. I did not enjoy it at all; but when I got home I found my son-in-law in tears, and that sermon, by the blessing of the eternal Spirit, brought him to the Saviour. Therefore I think you had better go on in your own style, and don't alter your preaching to

please a poor old man like me." I answered, "That is just how I feel; I would gladly agree with you in everything, but I dare not try to appear consistent by leaving out one side of the truth." He said to me afterwards, "If I do not quite agree with your invitations to sinners, it is clear that God blesses them; and therefore I must look into the matter, and see whether I am right or not. You have declared the doctrines of grace, yet you have freely given the invitations of the gospel; and I hope, my dear sir, you will long continue to preach what you feel you have learned in your own soul." I have followed his advice, and I hope to do the same as long as the Lord spares me. We shall proclaim the doctrine of God's sovereignty without toning it down, and electing love without any stuttering over it; but we shall have the other also.

Those who differ from us in one direction ought also to remember that there are others who differ from us on the other side. A sister has written to me saying that even if I do believe in election she would not have me preach it, but keep it in my own mind, and get comfort from it for myself. I do not know who the friend is, for she forgot to put her name to her letter; but I would like her to know that I cannot accept her idea for a moment. I feel sure she does not expect me to do as she says, for if I did I should act like a Jesuit: I should say one thing and believe another, and that be far from me. I hope that no earthly power could bring me to do that; no, not even an anonymous letter from a good lady. Everything that I believe to be in God's word I shall preach, whether my hearers accept it or not. It is to me a great comfort that such numbers do receive my teaching; and I never feel surprised when I meet with those who do not. I do not expect everybody to eat everything that I put on the table. I may flavour a dish with too much salt or too much pepper at times, but your own prayerful judgments will guide your tastes. We must preach all the truth; and this one thing is certain, we shall never give up loving the souls of men, or cease from trying to bring in the lost from the highways and hedges. We shall throughout life echo that blessed call of our Lord Jesus—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Labourers and burden-bearers shall hear continually that gracious word; and if they do not come to Jesus, their blood shall be upon their own heads, for the invitation is as free as the blessing is full. The gospel trumpet rings out clearly over hill and dale. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." We cannot make men come; that is the work of the Holy Spirit; but we can persuade them by the love of Jesus and by the terrors of the Lord. We can preach Christ to sinners if we cannot preach sinners to Christ; and we know that the Lord's word shall not return unto him void.

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The pastor spoke at both services on the past Lord's Day. In the morning his subject was "Deliverance Through Prayer". Three responded to the invitation—two for salvation and one for baptism.

In the evening Dr. Slade preached on "The Most Successful Sunday Evening Church Programme." Once more the Lord Jesus Christ was exalted and the gospel clearly set forth.

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields
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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16

Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

Telephone WALnut 1-7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

I.C.C.C. DELEGATION TO AUSTRALIA

AS OUR readers view these words, the delegation of evangelical leaders sponsored by the International Council of Christian Churches will probably have arrived in Australia. Led by Dr. Carl McIntire, the I.C.C.C. president, the party also includes Dr. K. R. Kinney, Burgomaster A. Warnaar, Pastor A. Ormeo, Rev. Timothy Tow and Dr. H. C. Slade. Dr. Slade, who is pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church and the chairman of the Board of Directors of THE GOSPEL WITNESS will be relaying cable accounts of some of the meetings so that our readers will have first-hand reports of developments.

The purpose of this journey is to acquaint the Christians of Australia with the issues of modernism and communism. As these evangelical leaders hold their meetings in the southern continent, the ecumenical leaders, including pro-Communist Joseph Hromadka of Czechoslovakia and modernist Bishop Bromley Oxnam of U.S.A., will be speaking in Australia's large centres in an endeavour to arouse enthusiasm there for the inclusivist ecumenical program. At the invitation of the Bible Union of Australia, the I.C.C.C. party has journeyed there to bear witness to the historic Christian faith.

Press Time Note—The Christian Beacon, the weekly paper edited by Dr. Carl McIntire, today wired a message to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, telling of the arrival of the I.C.C.C. delegation in Honolulu. At Los Angeles the group was interviewed by three of the local papers. From Australia they have received word that wide open doors await them. Watch THE GOSPEL WITNESS for further reports.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Pleading the Promises

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, April 30th, 1933
(Stenographically Reported)

"Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified."—Isaiah 43:26.

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence,

"And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."—Isaiah 62:6, 7.

IN THESE verses prayer is reduced to very simple terms. It consists of putting God in remembrance, of reminding Him of that which He has purposed and promised to His people. Nor do these verses monopolize the principle. You will recall that God said to Noah, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth . . . and the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." To Moses the Lord said that if the people should transgress and again should repent of their transgression, and confess their sin: "I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." When Nehemiah in the court of Artaxerxes prayed, he began his prayer by saying, "Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses". When Hezekiah prayed for healing he began his petition with a request that God would remember him. So that is what it is to pray: to remind God, to be His remembrancers. And that involves, among many things, at least three: *the one who prays must have some knowledge of that which God has promised*, otherwise he cannot remind Him of His promise. And secondly, *he must be in agreement with what God has promised*, otherwise he will not desire to remind Him of that which He has said He will do. And then last of all, *he must have some confidence in Him to Whom his petition is addressed*, and must expect the exercise of His faithfulness, otherwise it will be useless to remind Him of His promise.

That is the simple outline of our study this morning.

I.

We begin, then: **THOSE WHO WOULD BE THE LORD'S REMEMBRANCERS MUST HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WORD**, and of His will for them as therein revealed. It is not the part of those who pray to give instruction to the Lord. There are people who seem to think the Lord is in need of information. But our Lord assures us that our heavenly Father knows what things we have need of. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" It is not for us to tell God what He should do; we are only to remind Him of what He has promised to do. That does not mean that we may not pour out our complaints before Him, and tell the

tale of our sorrows into His ear, even as a child pours out her heart to father or mother; but it does mean that the Lord is not in need of information respecting our state; nor does He require instruction as to the best way in which our case may be relieved. So often have we heard people, praying for the unconverted, specify exactly how the thing is to be done. The fact is, of course, no two people are converted in precisely the same way, though they are saved by the operation of the same principle, by the application of the same power. But it is not for us to dictate to God, and tell Him what He shall do. The very hairs of our head are numbered, and this principle presupposes that God has a plan for every one of us, that the sovereign purpose of His grace runs through every redeemed life, and that the plan and the purpose are disclosed to the view of faith in this word of revelation.

It is possible for us to know something of what God desires to do for us, what He has planned to accomplish in our lives. And if we are really to pray effectively, we must be diligent students of His Word. We must learn therefrom what God wants to do in the life of every believer, so that we may put Him in remembrance of the things which He has promised to those who trust in Him.

There are those in our day who tell us that in the light of the discoveries of modern science the principles and the practice of prayer are really absurd. They tell us that all things are regulated by law; that nature's laws are fixed and invariable, and that it is folly to pray against the inexorable. They say it is useless to pray against the laws of heredity, — If a man has inherited certain tendencies those tendencies will express themselves in his life. It is useless to pray against the law of gravitation, against the laws of light and of heat. Quite impossible, of course, that Joshua should have asked God to delay the going down of the sun, and that the sun should have stood still in its place! That would have put the whole world, and the universe, out of joint, and, therefore, it could not be. Therefore, that part of the Bible cannot possibly be true. And so our scientific friends, as I have observed in some instances at least, preach the doctrine of predestination as mercilessly and mechanically as any hyper-Calvinist you ever met in your life. Things are fixed, they are cast in a certain mould, and it is useless to pray: "or", say they "if pray you must, then let your prayers relate to that other realm of

which we have no knowledge. You talk about a spiritual realm. We don't know anything about the laws of operation there, but certainly we know that in the realm of the physical and of the moral, natural law governs, and no prayer can possibly avail to change its operation."

Now I believe, properly understood, the revelations of science are to the very opposite effect. All that the man of science does is to discover how certain natural forces work. He does not undertake to set in operation new laws, nor to suspend the operations of the old; all that he does is to study his book to find out how these principles operate in the natural realm, and how they may be utilized for human advantage. Science comes to us, and says, "You may put out your candle now for I have discovered other sources of light by which your houses and your streets may be illuminated." Science does not say, "I have made new power, I have made new sources". All that she says is, "I have discovered existing sources, and how these powers may be utilized." Science comes to us and tells us that the journey is too long for us to take on foot, and the road is too wearisome. She tells us that she has learned how to substitute lightning for horses, and how to harness great natural powers to human chariots that we may make our journey with greater speed and with a larger measure of comfort. And so she comes to us in all walks of life, telling us when we are approaching the point of physical exhaustion, how we may multiply our power a hundredfold, how the productivity of the earth may be multiplied by forces resident within the earth, by learning how the forces of nature operate.

So we might multiply illustrations. She comes to us, for instance, and she says, "There are very few wise men in the world, not very many true artists, not very many real musicians". And so she has learned to conserve, to preserve, the wisdom of the wise, and how to multiply and apply the taste of the chosen few, and the skill of those who know something about the realm of harmony. And she says, "I will tell you how you may have the wisdom of the sages on your shelves, and the taste of the artist to decorate your walls, and the skill of the musician to fill your houses with melody." She puts at the command of the multitude the abilities of the few. We are taught how we may make use of all these things. But if we are thus to substitute electricity for elbow grease, and various natural powers for our own ability, then we must have some knowledge of these principles, how they operate, and how they may be applied to our profit.

That is just what the Bible tells us. Science, properly understood, is not the antagonist of revealed religion, but its handmaiden, which stands at the door of the sanctuary even to open it wider for our entrance. Revealed religion on the other hand tells us that it, too, has discovered a realm that is hidden from the natural view. It tells us there are resources of power, of light, of pleasure, of joy, about which the natural man knows nothing and that if he studies this true book of real science, he will learn where these reservoirs of power and of blessing are, and how he may establish connection therewith, that out of their fulness he may be enriched.

Nowhere does the Bible tell us we are to substitute our plans for God's. But as we come to an understanding of this Book we shall find that God's plans are better than ours, — exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think is the measure of their transcendency. And

so we must study the Word to find out what God has planned for us.

Sometimes if you pick up the newspaper, perhaps, from the Old Country, or from the United States, or one of our own papers you will see an advertisement to this effect that if So-and-So will communicate with such a firm of solicitors he will hear some news to his advantage. I heard of somebody who knew someone not very long ago who received a letter from a friend in the Old Country and that friend in the Old Land had read an advertisement of this type in a London paper. The lawyers did not know her address. But somebody reading that knew the address of the person concerned, and cut out the advertisement and sent it to that person in this country, and when communication with the solicitors was established it was discovered that a wealthy man had recently died, and he had bequeathed a large part of his personal property, a great deal of silver, etc., to this particular person, and his entire fortune to another person for use during their lifetime, and at that person's death the fortune itself was to go to the person who now was bequeathed the silver. What did this person do when she found out that she was included in someone's will, and that there was a small fortune held in trust for her? She prayed. How did she pray? She just wrote a letter saying, "My Canadian address is so and so. I am here, and I understand that by the will of Mr. So-and-So I am entitled to receive certain things." She prayed in accordance with the last will and testament of her deceased relative, and received the benefaction to which she was entitled.

Now that is the principle of prayer. We are to learn what is provided for us by the last will and testament of Him Who is the Heir of all things, to Whom belongeth all the riches of this world, and of all other worlds. And by the study of God's Word, and a familiarization of ourselves with His promises, we shall learn what to ask for. I recall in this connection a chapter of which I am very fond, and to which I come again and again, as to a well of water, for refreshment. You remember what David planned to do for God. He said to Nathan, "I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains". In effect, he said, "I should like to build for God an house that would be worthy of His Name." Nathan said to him, "Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee. That is a very good plan." And then the Lord spoke to Nathan, saying, "You have given David the wrong advice. I have never asked David, or anyone else, to build an house for Me. Go back to David, and give him My words instead of yours." And so Nathan returned to David, and spake to him the word of the Lord. In effect he said, "Did I ever ask Moses or Aaron, Joshua, or even my friend, Abraham, — did I ever ask anyone to build Me an house? Why do you want to build Me an house? When I want a house I will build it, in My time, and in My way." And then He drew aside the curtain, and he showed David the long line of His purpose — almost like one pointing down the long road and lending him a telescope and saying, "What do you see at the end of it?" And as he looked through it, David said, "Oh, but that is bigger than I have ever dreamed of." And Nathan said, "The Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house. What God wants, David, is not that you should do something for Him, but that you should consent to His doing something for you. And He is going to build you an house. The throne of thy

kingdom shall be established forever." Then David humbled himself in the dust, and he said, "Thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great time to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And he concluded his prayer by saying, "For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house; therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee." In effect he said, "I never would have dreamed it, Lord, in the wildest stretch of my imagination. I should never have conceived such a purpose as God has revealed to me. But the Lord has revealed it to me. That is His will for me. Now," said he, "do as Thou hast said."

Oh, how often have we all found, as I have so frequently reminded you, that the prayer and study of God's word are inseparable companions! You cannot include the one without including the other. And just as the scientist studies nature that he may learn how these forces operate, so that he may relate himself to them and make use of them for his profit, so are we to study this divine revelation of forces which operate in the spiritual world, so that we may know what to ask God for, and pray that He may do as He has said.

II.

Well, the next thing is that we must not only know what God has promised, but WE MUST BE IN AGREEMENT WITH THAT WHICH HE HAS PLANNED FOR US. You would not remind a man of something you wanted him to forget, would you? A man has said a certain thing, and I have heard people say, "Well, I hope he won't remember it, and if he does not, I am not going to remind him of it." But if he has promised something to your advantage, something which you want him to do, you will be quick to remind him of it, will you not? Then the question is, Do we want God to do what He says? Are we in love with the will of God for us? Can we say:

"I worship Thee, sweet will of God,
And all Thy ways adore;
And every day I live, I long
To love Thee more and more."

If we are to be the Lord's remembrancers, and to put Him in remembrance of His promise, we shall not be content with merely being resigned to His will, but we shall be positively in love with His will, and desire that that will be executed in us. I am aware that, in general, we hold that as a theory. I do not suppose there is any Christian man here who would be disposed, if he could, to take his life out of the hands of God, and say, "I can plan my affairs better than God can". I don't believe that for a minute. You believe that the wisdom of God is greater than yours, and that He can plan things for you better than you can plan for yourself. Don't you think so? You know, I do not share the curiosity of some people, the passion that some people have for tearing aside the veil of the future. A lot of things have come into my life that I am glad I did not see in advance. I am content to see just as much as the Lord is pleased to reveal to me. I do not want to see any more.

I am not interested in clairvoyance, and the people who profess to know all about the future. I know that if God is pleased to reveal the future to me He will give me grace to face the revelation. But apart from that, one day at a time is often one day too much, — just a

little at a time, if you please! That is all that we can endure. But we must somehow learn this principle, that the will of God is best, not only in respect to the general plan, but to all the details of life as well. And therein lies the difficulty of prayer. We believe that God has planned for us salvation with eternal glory. Well and good, and we believe that in order to that eternal glory there will have to be certain discipline in life that will work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And we are glad enough of the result. But few of us are particularly in love with the intermediate process. We are anxious that the diamond should be polished, but we do not like the idea of the lapidary's wheel, the noise of it, or the feel of it either as it cuts.

Now let me point out to you that it is folly to pray to anyone who is not absolutely sovereign. Only as all things, present, future, here, everywhere, work out together for good can we know what ultimate good is. One single exception to that universal "all" may neutralize the result, so as to make an experience of absolute good impossible. And so the little things of life, dear friends, are part of the "all things", and we must learn to love the will of God in respect to these lesser matters, and to seek to know the will of God in the little details of life, so that a step at a time we can take the will of God, and pray that God's will may be done even in the kitchen, in the office, in the shop, everywhere.

Again I say the revelations of science, so far from discouraging the exercise of prayer, offer us much encouragement. You have all seen Niagara. What a magnificent spectacle it is! I never weary of seeing it, and hearing it. And we can make a Niagara of the will of God, of the collective purpose of God, His sovereign power sweeping through human history. And we say, "It is splendid, glorious." But Niagara may be an irresistible opponent. Science has never yet produced an engineer capable of stilling its flow or silencing its thunder. If you oppose Niagara it will destroy you. Science does not oppose it; science never tried to build a dam to stop it; but it bored a tunnel underneath the Falls, and put a turbine in to catch its torrent, and turn its wheels, and utilize its force. In olden times the population in the country invariably followed the direction of the rivers. You will find that the early settlements in this country clustered about the shores of the lake, and on the various rivers. Why? Men learned, even then, though they did not call it science, it was just a little bit of common sense, but they learned to drop their wheels into the stream of power flowing by, that they might grind their grain and make flour, and make it possible for them to live.

Now listen: the lesson of science is this — you can never profit by the powers of nature by opposing them, only by obeying them can you make use of them. And so, the man of science, whether in the realm of electricity, or chemistry, or physics, whatever it may be, stands reverently as he looks at the operation of these laws. And then he says, "I must relate myself to them, so that I can make use of them." And when he discovers that there is a law in operation that will minister healing, how he rejoices to discover it.

I heard of Banting working on the problem of diabetes, and if I am correctly informed it was about three or four

o'clock in the morning that he reached his conclusion. But when he saw the operation of law in the human body, he said, "I know how to obey it now!" And out into the night he went, and jumped on his bicycle and away he went to the abattoirs, in order to get the material for his experimentations, not that he might make a new law, but he had fallen in line with the operation of a certain law, and he said, "I know how to operate it."

That is prayer: And let me tell you this, no human will, no combination of human wills in the form and fashion of the world's greatest empire, has ever been able successfully to oppose God. Try it! The man, or nation, is swept to destruction. But let me tell you, a little child can use God. Empires cannot oppose Him, but little children can make use of Him, and He loves to have His children make use of Him. He loves to put at the disposal of faith all the resources of Deity. And when you and I have fallen in love with the will of God, we can believe it.

III.

An illustration occurs to me from the Old Testament. There were ten men who appeared before a great man in Egypt. They knew who they were, and he knew who they were, but they did not know who he was. Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew him not. And when he began to ask them questions, they were like men that were pulling the curtains together, almost as though they had agreed among themselves, as though they had said, "Now let it be understood among us there is one chapter in our life's history that is forever closed. All that we dare say about that absent brother is that 'one is not'. Do not let any one say any more." They told about the youngest brother at home; they told about the famine that prevailed, but as for the other, they merely said, "One is not." That secret no one must know. Then they went away, and they came back again for more corn. This time they had their youngest brother with them. And you remember they went away again, and a cup was found in Benjamin's sack, and they were all brought back to Joseph. Now they were under condemnation. The governor said, "The man in whose sack my cup shall be found, shall abide as my servant for ever." And then it was that Judah began to pray the high priestly prayer, parallel to the seventeenth chapter of John. He told this governor all about conditions at home, but he spoke differently. He said, "Thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my Lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.' And then he told them about the one who went from his father, and never came back again, and he declared that he never would go up to his father again without taking the lad with him.

The point I make is this: Judah's argument was the pleading of the word of the governor, of which he had first of all been afraid. That was the thing that filled them with terror. When the Governor said "Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you" they said, "What shall we do?" And for a long time they tarried, and at last only driven by famine did they come. And now the very word which they had feared so much becomes Judah's sovereign plea: "Thou saidst to thy servant . . . That is why we brought him. If it had not

been for thy word, he never would have been here." And they found that the word they so much feared was their own salvation.

So always is it, my dear friends:

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take!
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and will break
In blessings on your head.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

We must accept God's word for us, the revelation of His will for us, not that we may be resigned thereto, but in the spirit of Him Who said, "Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." Only, then, as we have confidence in Him to Whom we pray will it be profitable for us to remind Him of His promise.

I remember having to deal with a certain man one time some years ago, who was in danger of bringing reproach upon the name of the church by recklessly incurring debts everywhere, apparently with no intention of paying. And so we insisted that if he was to retain his membership in the church he must go to those creditors and promise them that at the earliest possible moment he would make an effort to pay. He laughed. We said, "What are you laughing at?" "Well," he said, "I have promised them so often that they no longer believe me, and it would do no good to promise them again."

We are to receive God's promises as the promises of One Who never fails to implement His word, and coming to Him we have only to find certain things promised in the Book.

Then we come to Him, and put Him in remembrance. Ask of Him that He will do as He has said, that which He has promised with His lips He will perform with His arms.

"There is an eye that never sleeps,
Beneath the wing of night;
There is an ear that never shuts
When sinks the beams of light.

"There is an arm that never tires
When human strength gives way;
There is a love that never fails,
When earthly loves decay.

"That eye is fixed on seraph throngs,
That arm upholds the skies
That ear is filled with angel songs
That love is throned on high.

"There is a power which man can wield
When mortal aid is vain;
That eye, that arm, that love to reach,
That listening ear to gain.

"That power the prayer which soars on high
Through Jesus to the throne,
And moves the hand that moves the world,
And brings salvation down."

You have the power. Turn on the switch. Let us actually be rich in Christ Jesus.

How often do we attempt work for God to the limit of our incompetency rather than to the limit of God's omnipotency.

—HUDSON TAYLOR

A LAND TO CONQUER FOR GOD

THE bleak hours before any great religious awakening have certain definite similarities. At the very moment when it seems as though the picture is as dark as it could possibly be, God intervenes to bring about sweeping changes, transform lives and to alter the whole face of things. Thus the Christian in the midst of every circumstance rejoices in the knowledge that God is still upon the throne and that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound". Civilization's blackest times present opportunities for the Lord to show His mighty hand.

I.

THE APOSTOLIC AGE

As one reads the Acts of the Apostles, this becomes abundantly clear. Judaism and the other religions of that time were firmly entrenched although they were sadly corrupted. The moral condition of mankind as pictured in the first chapter of the book of Romans was probably an accurate picture of the Gentile life of that era. Upon this scene of religious bigotry on the one hand and religious indifference on the other, came the Spirit-anointed and Spirit-filled ambassadors of the gospel. Instead of complaining that their lot was cast in such a time, they rejoiced in the privilege of being the instruments through which God was to turn the world upside down. Soon the decadent empire trembled beneath the marching feet of a few humble men who were determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

In all the annals of history, has there ever been written a more thrilling account of the great accomplishments of seemingly ordinary men? Their environment did not make them for, as we have observed, their environment was such that it could only discourage even the strong-hearted. The Lord raised them above their surroundings and caused them to see history and time in relation to eternity.

While others were content to trifle with sin, or to withdraw from society to live some solitary life apart from their fellows, these ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ went out into the crossroads of empire to beckon never-dying souls to look to a crucified Saviour. A mighty compassion for men prevented them from being the dis-interested spectators who coldly watched the follies of mortals. We read in the account of Paul's visit to the cultural capital of the world that "his spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." Others may have regarded this situation as cause for speculation and philosophizing but not Paul! To such persons he must bring the news of a Saviour and a judgment to come. Let the philosophers of Athens spend their time, as do some modern ministerial associations, "in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing" but an apostle cannot so squander his moments. With Charles Wesley, he could declare:

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky:

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil,—
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will.

Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live;
And O, Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give.

Help me to watch and pray,
And on Thyself rely,
And let me ne'er my trust betray,
But press to realms on high.

Paul's holy devotion and consuming zeal were typical of the believers of that time who knew what it was to suffer for the sake of the gospel. Before them lay a world that their Master had commanded them to conquer in His all prevailing Name; at their disposal were all the resources of heaven. With such a simple and yet profound faith they confronted the age that looked so unpromising. Who would have dared to predict that they would emerge triumphant? The marvel of history is that in the face of the current of the age, they did conquer!

Four Elements in This Success

Who would venture to say that any time has ever been so discouraging as the apostolic era? Lacking influence, personnel, and finances, this intrepid band set out with an impossible task upon its hands. Yet it possessed at least four other marks that made the conquest to be inevitable.

First of all, those pioneers who tread across the page of the Book of Acts are persons who have been saved *and filled with the Holy Spirit*. As we read of their exploits we realize anew that they did not live at a poor dying rate and that they were not content with being saved from a wrath to come. Present power for service was a real necessity or else their labours would only mock them. Unlike moderns, they could not fall back on past gains to justify present stagnation. A perpetual walk with God was needed or else the press of the world and the opposition of the age would overcome them. Those to whom Paul wrote would understand keenly the real import of his command in Ephesians—"Be filled with the Spirit." For victory this was not optional but essential.

Then, these ambassadors for Christ had a *God-given vision* of men that age and all ages. Ringing in their ears were the last words of their exalted Lord—"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Despite human failings, they kept that great vision before them and sought to see it realized. The Book of Proverbs declares that "where there is no vision, the people perish." If the apostolic churches had as little vision as many modern churches, the great work which they accomplished could hardly have been started. But those who were held captive by the Holy Spirit and who had before them a vision could do nothing else but advance.

Then we are impressed with the *implicit faith* of the apostolic pioneers of the cross. Taking God at His Word they proved His promises to be true. Among the flaming evangelists of the era, a "higher critic" would have had a cold reception, while some of the cautious doctors of divinity would have occupied a back seat. Whenever a

believer comes to the place where he is prepared thus to take God at His Word, things begin to happen!

Finally, it seems to us, that another element in this conquest is to be found in *the apostles' adherence to the divine program of evangelization*. This is closely allied with the consideration of their implicit faith in Christ. We realize that many will dispute this point but any candid reader of the New Testament becomes aware of the fact that, *in obedience to the Lord*, the missionaries of that time saw the local church as an essential part of their program and that the work of evangelism was not complete until such a local assembly was established. The type of evangelism which leaves converts to shift for themselves or entrusts them to the tender mercies of anti-Christian organizations is unknown in the Word of God!

The God of the Unlikely

If the apostolic era teaches us nothing else, it clearly demonstrates that God can move in to work mightily in the most unpromising moments and that He can use those who from a human standpoint seem to be the most unlikely instruments. Still He looks for those who would thus take Him at His Word to see if He is faithful.

II.

THE MODERN ERA

Increasingly we are made aware of the many similarities which exist between this hour and the apostolic age. That there are many superficial differences, no one would deny and that there are several major differences is obvious but basically there is a great similarity which can either frighten us or challenge us.

Contrary to optimistic impressions, the gospel is not making mighty advances but rather heathendom is larger today than it has even been before. Then in those countries which are denominated as "Christian", the situation is not as promising as some would have us believe. A large proportion of "Christendom" is Roman Catholic and by no stretch of the imagination can that church be regarded as the custodian of the grace of God. In the major Protestant churches, too, modernism has made such inroads and achieved such conquests that only someone lacking discernment could fail to see these churches as legitimate mission territory.

To the Christian this time does seem to be a discouraging one as religious indifference, false religion and positive immorality confront him. Indeed the hour could well be the incubator of pessimists if we fail to behold it through the eyes of the Lord. Of necessity, we shall proceed and confine our remarks to our own fair land of Canada but probably these remarks will have a decided application elsewhere.

In this land evangelicals are a very small minority. Let us be more specific and speak of evangelical Baptists or, as we prefer to think, New Testament Christians. Scattered across the dominion are a few evangelical Baptist churches but they are so few that one must bow the head in shame. Nearly every town, village or hamlet has its community church where once the gospel was preached but thousands, yea tens of thousands, of such places have no gospel testimony.

What makes the situation even more discouraging and therefore challenging to the servant of God is the fact that these modernist churches have led millions to believe that they are secure when in reality they are on the broad road that leads to destruction. Thus, like Paul,

we come to a people who are "too superstitious" or more properly "exceedingly religious". Bearing the name of "Christian", they know not anything of a changed life or the power of God resting upon them.

Our prospect then *at this moment* is one of being an exceedingly small minority in a land where modernism and Romanism nearly divide the land equally between them. Yes, that is our *present* position and while we thus seem unable to cope with the *present* population, we see the great expansion which surrounds us on every side. Canada is one of the fastest growing of the western powers and is enjoying an unprecedented "boom". New suburbs, new towns and whole new communities spring up all around us and seem to tease us as we look upon them and realize that we haven't even managed to reach all the older areas. If we were to consult our own feelings we would be utterly overwhelmed with despair and pessimism in the face of such developments.

This seemingly impossible situation, however, must challenge us to renewed consecration and vision. Before us lies a land to conquer for the Lord. In the pages of the Acts of the Apostles we can see the blueprint which must be followed if we expect to see victory.

First of all we must depend more upon God and know more of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. With this must come a vision of the great work in which we are engaged and a view of the expensive field that lies before us. Then with childlike faith, we are called to take God at His Word as we go from place to place evangelizing in the New Testament fashion, leaving behind New Testament churches as local soul-saving stations.

Let others despair if they will, but the true servants of God will declare with Paul — "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." With Hudson Taylor they will confidently affirm, "We are asked to do an impossible task, but we work with Him who can do the impossible."

Such words of exhortation and encouragement will probably warm the hearts of Christians but our intent in writing this has not been merely to provide a momentary thrill nor to raise unfounded hopes that the road before us is an easy one. Mr. Churchill promised the motherland and the commonwealth "blood, sweat and tears". A sweeping spiritual triumph in our land will occasion at least sweat and tears. SACRIFICE will be the order of the day for all who truly desire to see God work in this hour.

Sacrifice will be involved for those who would labour as leaders in the work of the Lord. Some will be called upon to forsake attractive employment and security in order to give themselves entirely to the labour of the gospel. Others will sacrifice some of this life's attractions as they labour in prayer. Still others will be called upon to sacrifice their means in order that the gospel may be advanced. Just during the past week we heard from a lady who wrote in to join the Dollar-A-Month Club and thus have a part in erecting new church buildings in strategic areas. She told of receiving an old age pension and said that she wondered how, with such a meagre income, she could possibly assist in this gospel work. Finally she decided to stop receiving the daily paper in order to have her part in pioneer work in the dominion.

Those who are Christians should hardly shrink at the thought of sacrifice, for their hope for eternity rests upon the sacrifice of Another. The contemplation of the

multitudes in our own Dominion who have never heard the gospel should surely move us to go out in obedience to the Lord in an endeavour to make Christ known in communities, large and small.

Let us seize this brief hour of challenge and seeming hopelessness and put ourselves in the place where we can be used to conquer this land for God.

BOOK REVIEW

BIBLE BAPTISM—THE ROMAN CHURCH AND THE BAPTISTS. (A Historical Research) by Dr. J. B. Rowell of Victoria, B.C.; 30 pages; 35 cents per copy or 3 for \$1.00—may be obtained directly from the author, 2056 Hampshire Road, Victoria, B.C., Canada.

Dr. Rowell, the pastor of Central Baptist Church in Victoria, has written a valuable booklet on the subject of Bible baptism. In addition to a brief examination of the Scriptures, the booklet contains a number of quotations from prominent Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars and historians; these are augmented by some declarations of the early "church fathers".

Unless the mind is entirely closed on this matter, every reader of this booklet will be stirred. Those who have been persuaded from the Word of God that scriptural baptism is the immersion of believers in water, will rejoice to see that this point is conceded by most historians. Those who hold to infant sprinkling will see that their cherished practice has no scriptural foundation but rests upon the shaky basis of church tradition (yea, very recent church tradition!).

The fact that the work is only 30 pages in length should encourage all Christians to read it. Unhesitatingly, we give the booklet our highest commendation and pray that it will enjoy a wide circulation.

GREAT MISSIONARY RALLY

Thursday, March 8, will be the date of a great missionary rally sponsored by The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada in Jarvis Street Baptist Church. Come along and hear accounts of the hand of God in the work of the gospel.

Obedience is the one qualification for further vision. —G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

Who Pays the Bill?

FROM Canada's Northwest Territories comes word that the Roman Church is interfering in the educational program. In two places there, Fort Simpson and Aklavik, the Roman Catholic students are separated from the other pupils in order that they may receive sectarian instruction from their church's representatives. This situation came to light when two members of the Northwest Territories Council expressed their opposition to what is rightly described as "segregation". The Toronto Telegram of January 21 carried the story:—

OPPOSE SEGREGATION IN N.W.T. SCHOOLS

Ottawa, Jan. 21—(CP)—The Dominion Government's practice of segregating Roman Catholic and Protestant children in schools in the Northwest Territories has been condemned by two members of the N.W.T. Council.

The practice was described as improper yesterday by John Parker, Yellowknife lawyer, and by Commissioner L. R. Nicholson of the RCMP, who said they were opposed to Roman Catholic and Protestant children being taught in separate rooms in some schools by teachers of their own faith.

"It is not right to divide children on religious grounds; nobody can defend this practice as making any sense from an educational point of view," Mr. Parker insisted.

Commissioner Nicholson, an appointed council member, said he shares Mr. Parker's misgivings.

J. W. Goodall, Fort Simpson postmaster, said he is not entirely satisfied with the new policy.

Mr. Parker said the Government day school at Fort Simpson, about 350 miles west of Yellowknife, has two rooms — one for Catholic students and the other for Protestants.

R. G. Robertson, commissioner of the N.W.T., said there will be segregation only at Fort Simpson and Aklavik under the new system. He said this represented a compromise. The majority of children at the two points were Catholic and their religion provided for religious instruction in grade school.

If this account is correct, then are we to understand that all the taxpayers are required to pay for this duplication? Is it not reasonable to ask that, since the government is providing adequate facilities and teaching; those who desire to propagate a sectarian program should also be required to pay the bill? All the information that we have at the moment on this matter is what is contained in the newspapers but there is visible in this one instance the same policy that Rome seeks to employ wherever she sees the possibility of success. We trust that an alert public and conscientious officials will put a stop to this public-supported sectarian educational program.

MY COVENANT

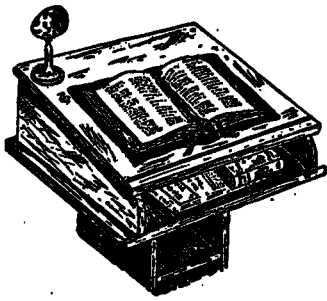
Desiring to have a vital part in the work of the furtherance of the Gospel, I hereby pledge One Dollar per month, to be applied to the Church Extension Loan Fund of The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada. This money will be loaned out to deserving causes to assist in the erection of suitable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

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By DR. C. D. COLE

January 19th, 1956

A SELF-SEEKING MINISTRY
Philippians 2:19-30

WHILE a prisoner in Rome the apostle Paul was seized with the feeling of unusual concern for the church at Philippi. He seems to have had a foreboding of impending danger to their faith, and being unable himself to go to them he makes a search among the brethren who are with him at Rome for a man to send to them to step into the breach and save the Philippians from the impending attack upon their faith. And when it became evident that Timothy was the only man with him willing and qualified for the task, he laments the situation by saying, "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

Up to this point, the dominant idea in the epistle is that of consideration of others. Paul had admonished the Philippians to do nothing through strife or vainglory, but with lowliness of mind esteem other better than themselves. We have previously observed that a better rendering of this makes it mean that each one of them was to put others above himself for helpful consideration and loving attention. The Lord Jesus Christ has been set forth as the supreme example of such a principle. Out of consideration for others, He left the heights of heavenly glory for the depths of earthly woe and shame. That He might consider us, the Lord Jesus Christ considered not Himself. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. And so Paul wants the Philippians to have the mind of Christ and seek to minister rather than to be ministered unto. This beautiful Christian spirit finds illustrations in the several characters that are to come before us tonight. There was a mutual concern in which each gave priority to others.

Mutual Concern and Sympathy

To begin with, the Philippians out of consideration for Paul, as a prisoner in Rome, sent Epaphroditus as a messenger with a love offering to help him meet his personal necessities, and to render what personal aid he could give beyond that of money. Then out of consideration for the Philippians, Paul was willing to part with Timothy that he might go to them in the fulness of the

blessings of the gospel. And out of consideration for Epaphroditus, when the Philippians heard that he had been ill but had heard nothing of his recovery, they were filled with great distress. And out of consideration for the Philippians, Epaphroditus, when he knows that they have heard about his sickness, is filled with heaviness and longs to return to Philippi. And out of consideration for the Philippians, Paul sends Epaphroditus at once that they might rejoice at seeing him again, and tells them that their joy would make him less sorrowful. And out of further consideration for the Philippians, Paul tells them that he will find comfort in hearing good news of their state. It is a picture of mutual love and sympathy. What a society when everybody vies with everybody in taking care of everybody in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

But that is not the whole picture. That is not the end of the story. There are other characters who are introduced. All the people around Paul were not unselfish. All were not of such a lovely spirit. There were selfish men among them. They were brethren, and they join Paul in the closing salutation where he says, "The brethren which are with me greet you." And yet Paul says of them, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

I.

The Selfish Preachers (20, 21)

Our attention will first be given to these self-seeking preachers. Who were they? We do not know, for Paul does not name them; he only briefly describes them. Nearly every interpreter is sure that Luke is not one of them. I quite agree, and I would also except Titus and possibly other names that are familiar. Luke and Titus and other brave souls must have been away from Rome in other Christian service. How did Paul know that these brethren around him were self-seekers? I am sure that it was not by direct revelation from the Lord. He must have known them through the experiences he had with them. A sure way to know a man is to associate with him. Live with him, talk with him, work with him, counsel with him, and you will know him. It is not too much to suppose that Paul asked for volunteers to go to Philippi to care for the state of the Philippians. He seemed to be aware that there was impending danger facing their faith in Christ Jesus. And he was concerned about this. In the next chapter, he tells them to beware of dogs, of evil workers, of the concision party. This suggests that he expected the Philippians to be harassed and troubled by the Judaizers which up to this time had not been very prominent in Philippi.

A Call to Arms

Paul's call was a call to arms. And nobody volunteered but Timothy. Nobody else was ready to fight the good fight of faith. These brethren let Paul down, just as the inhabitants of Meroz failed Deborah and Barak and would not come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Somebody must go to Philippi. And nobody is willing and fit to go but Timothy. Nobody else had any heart for the task. And this seems to have been disappointing to Paul for he hated to give up Timothy at such a time of crisis in his own life. But to Paul the cause of Christ at Philippi was more important than his personal interests. And so to Philippi, Timothy shall go, just as soon as it becomes more apparent what the fate of the apostle will be.

Paul the Ready

The apostle Paul was ready for any alternative. Martyrdom may come soon. If it comes it will be welcomed without a murmur. If he lives, he will send Timothy. Understanding his words, from the standpoint of the time of the reading of the epistle by the Philippians, he hopes to send Timothy soon, almost immediately. And he trusts that he himself will come shortly. And Epaphroditus will already be with them. Paul was always ready for any event. He never knew what would befall him but nothing ever took him by surprise or came on him as a shock. He lived constantly conscious that his times were in the hands of the Lord. He hopes in the Lord, and trusts in the Lord, and anything the Lord does or allows others to do is well-pleasing to him. What resignation! How rare even in Paul's day, and much more in our day.

Now back to these self-seeking ministers. Somebody has said that this does not sound as bad in the Greek as it does in the English. It can hardly be thought that these preachers had no interest at all in Christ, for then they would not be recognized as Christian brethren. But their interest was not sufficient to make them undertake the long and hazardous trip to Philippi. They were half-hearted. They had divided interests. Their interest was not sufficient to make them walk into a fight. They did not feel that they were fitted for the work at Philippi. And in that, they were right. They must have persuaded themselves that they could do better work at Rome with Paul. The situation was not so bad at Rome just then. Paul enjoyed much freedom and these brethren were allowed to visit him and labour with him. And so they would rather work at Rome than go to Philippi. Paul's case in court had taken a most hopeful turn and they were not hazarding so much in labouring with him at Rome. I am sure that they justified themselves, in their reluctance to go to Philippi, at the bar of their own conscience. And I am just as sure that Paul did not urge them to go.

No Task for a Coward

This mission called for full devotion to Jesus Christ. It was no task for a coward. These men were not bad men, neither were they heretics. They knew the truth, but they did not want to contend for it in the face of Judaizers. They were brethren, but they had not yet joined the army of Christ at all. They had their own interests to consider. They were thinking of themselves and not the cause of Christ at Philippi. They were not putting the spiritual welfare of the Philippians above themselves for consideration.

Now for personal reasons, Paul wanted to keep Timothy with him. But for the sake of the cause at Philippi he decides to part with him. And with a heavy heart the great apostle says, "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." If the heart interest of all preachers today could be photographed and thrown on the screen, I wonder if the sight would not be shocking, even disgusting. If the heart-throb of many of us in the ministry could be fully revealed, I expect we would be alarmed. How few men in the world have ever so completely abandoned themselves to the cause of Jesus Christ as did the apostle Paul. A self-seeking ministry is sickening, but I expect it is a common sight if all the truth could be known.

II.

The Mission of Timothy (19, 22-24)

This brings us to consider the mission of Timothy. To read about Timothy is like a breath of fresh air. He was a notable exception to the common run of preachers surrounding Paul at that time. Of all the preachers in his company, he was the only one fitted for the mission to Philippi. Timothy had no natural fitness for such a task. He had a timid soul in a frail frame. Physically, he was sick much of the time. Naturally he was timid and nervous and easily discouraged. And Paul found it necessary on occasions to urge him to stir up the gift that was in him, and not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, or of him as a prisoner. Paul would urge him to be strong in the grace that is in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. But Timothy was a man of God, a man of unfeigned faith, and a man of deep devotion to Jesus Christ. He was unselfish in his soul, and would seek no selfish ends when he went to Philippi, but would have a true, genuine concern for their welfare.

Timothy's Relation to Paul

Now Timothy had a fitness for the task at Philippi by virtue of his relation to the apostle Paul. He was converted under Paul's preaching and was trained by Paul. He was not only the spiritual son of Paul, but Paul was his father in the ministry. The language that Paul uses in various places in which he calls him "son", "my own son", "my beloved son", "my dearly beloved son"; shows the affection that Paul had for this young preacher. In his conversion, Timothy so completely passed under the formative influence of the great apostle that there was a kind of natural assimilation to him of what Paul was interested in and cared for. The features of the father were repeated in the son. It would be the natural thing for Timothy to care for the Philippians.

Timothy's Relation to the Philippians

And then, Timothy was also fitted for the mission to Philippi by virtue of his relation to the Philippians. "But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." Timothy was with Paul at the founding of the church at Philippi, and had at least on one other occasion accompanied Paul on a visit to the Philippians. He had served under Paul as a son with the father. And we have here a fine example to the young preacher who serves under his senior. Timothy had the confidence of the Philippians, without which no man can serve his people. Whenever a church begins to question either the character or the courage of their pastor, he is finished, so far as rendering any service to them is concerned. And the sooner he goes, the better it is for him and for them. A man must have the confidence and the esteem of his people if he is to serve them. And because of his relation to Paul, and his devotion to Jesus Christ, and his acquaintance with the Philippians, Timothy would have a deep concern for the state of the Philippians.

The Apostle Paul and Dr. Shields

In my meditations preparatory to this hour, I was made to think of many similarities between the great apostle to the Gentiles and our own beloved Dr. Shields. They had similar experiences with their associates and friends. Gifted with leadership, both of them gathered

around themselves other men, particularly young men, as their helpers. Like all great men, they both had the faculty of attaching others to themselves. And in their associations, both of them had their joys and their griefs. When Paul faced a crisis and had to depend upon his helpers, he was disillusioned and also disappointed. But some of them remained a joy to his heart and a consolation, to his dying hour. So it was with Dr. Shields. He had his disappointments but was not without cause for rejoicing unto the very end. Dr. Shields must have loved Jarvis Street somewhat as Paul loved Philippi. When Paul could not go to the aid of his beloved Philippians and had to depend upon somebody else to go, he met with disappointment. But he had a man upon whom he could fall back, in the person of Timothy, a tried and trusted lieutenant. And so it was with Dr. Shields. When he realized he could carry on no longer and had to depend upon somebody else, he had, in the person of Harold Slade, a man upon whom he could depend, a man who had served as a son with the father in the gospel. Who could know better than Dr. Shields *who had* served unselfishly and uncomplainingly without any personal ambitions? Who could know better than Dr. Shields and the deacons' board *who would* naturally care for the state of Jarvis Street? Who could know better than they *who would* be bold and uncompromising in the time of temptation? Who could know better than they *whom* to recommend to Jarvis Street? "Wisdom is justified of her children." I could carry the analogy on further but not as far as you can, or as far as you will.

The Distortion of Nature

Selfishness is abnormal when you think of the man God made. God never created a selfish creature. God made a man who could love Him supremely and his neighbour as himself. But sin came in and made of man a selfish creature. Selfishness is the distortion of human nature. Selfishness is contrary to the very law of nature. Take these bodies of ours as an example of unselfish consideration among the members. The hand will instinctively and unselfishly ward off the blow that is aimed at the head and particularly the eyes. These feet of ours do not have to be coaxed to take us out of the range of fire when a gun fight is going on near us. Let an infection come on the arm. Does nature sit down and say, "There is nothing that can be done about it. The infection cannot be stopped." Why, on the contrary, the white corpuscles (nature's standing army of defence) rush with reckless abandon to the place of infection and die by the millions in an effort to repel the invading army of germs of death. The pus that we wipe off after the battle is over and the victory is won is made up of the corpses of the white corpuscles which have unselfishly sacrificed their lives for us. Selfishness, I repeat, is contrary to the very law of nature. God did not make a selfish man. Selfishness is a sin in anybody and especially in preachers, who profess to be the ministers of Christ. A self-seeking ministry is a contradiction in terms. The word minister means a servant, and a man who professes to be called as a minister of Christ is declaring that he is a servant, and a servant must be unselfish. Paul in writing to the Corinthians said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." John the Baptist once preached a great sermon in very few words. After a brief spell of preaching to the crowds, his popularity began to wane and the crowds left him never to return.

Jesus began His ministry in the same territory where John was preaching and baptizing and their work was contemporaneous for a while. And one day some folks came to John the Baptist to remind him that the Person he had been bearing witness to was now baptizing and the crowds were flocking to Him. They expected the jealousy of John the Baptist to be aroused. But his reply reveals a marvelous spirit of self-abnegation. Why he says to them, You have already heard me say that I am not the Christ, but I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; and the friend of the bridegroom is always happy to hear the voice of the bridegroom; and thus my joy is fulfilled. And he epitomizes the truth in a single statement, "He must increase, but I must decrease." That is the spirit which ought to characterize the ministers of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was willing to recede that Christ might proceed. He was willing to be ignored that Christ might be prominent and occupy the limelight. He was willing to be forgotten that Christ might be remembered. He was willing to sink if Christ might rise. He was willing to be nothing that Jesus Christ might be everything in the hearts and the lives of the people.

III.

The Work of Epaphroditus (25-30)

Now just a few words about Epaphroditus and his mission. Epaphroditus is one of the less well known of Paul's friends and associates. All we know about him is what is said about him in the passage before us. His name means lovely, and he wore the name with becoming honour. But it was a common name, and many people wore it in his day only to disgrace it. We are told that one of the dictators assumed this name. And it had an heathen origin. The name was evidently derived from the heathen goddess Aphrodite. Epaphroditus was a member of the church at Philippi, and some think he was the presiding bishop. Others think perhaps he was one of the deacons. But he was the church's messenger to Paul with a love offering. And when he came to Philippi and delivered the money to the apostle, he did not take a chair and consider his work done. He plunged into missionary labour and worked with such enthusiasm that he hazarded his life and became ill. And Paul writing to the Philippians said, "He was truly sick, sick nigh unto death."

Paul in writing about Epaphroditus calls him "my brother", to indicate the fellowship and the love and sympathy that existed between them. Nobody can know what tender ministrations were his to Paul. He must have performed hundreds of little offices of love and sympathy for the apostle. As a brother, he shared Paul's sufferings and did whatever he could to make them lighter. Paul also refers to him as "my companion in labour", to signify the common work in which they were engaged. Let us remember that Paul, though a prisoner in Rome, was also a missionary in Rome and that he carried on a mission work in the city, and when Epaphroditus joins him he joins him in missionary endeavour. And therefore Paul speaks of him as "my companion in labour." Then the apostle also speaks of him as "my fellow soldier", to signify the common perils and sufferings of gospel work. One may recall the words of Martin Luther before the Emperor and his Diet: "My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is

neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen." So Epaphroditus was as brave as he was tender and sympathetic. He hazarded his life. He shared the apostle's dangers.

Now in some way the Philippians had learned of the illness of Epaphroditus, and not having heard of his recovery they were in great distress. And he knew how distressed they would be about his sickness and this filled him with heaviness and a longing to return. He wanted to go back to his beloved people and Paul was as anxious for his return. Paul tells them that the joy they will have at seeing Epaphroditus will make him less sorrowful. What mutual concern we see among the faithful brethren and servants of Christ!

The Recovery of Epaphroditus

Now Paul attributes the recovery of Epaphroditus to the mercy of God. There is no indication that Paul healed Epaphroditus. There is nothing said about it at least. If it had been Oral Roberts we would have heard about it. Did not Paul have the gift of healing? Did not the greatest of all apostles have this gift that was given to many lesser lights? And if he had this gift of healing why did he not heal Epaphroditus? I cannot answer that. I can suggest something that might be helpful. In the early days of Christianity, the gift of healing was practised quite widely, but in later years it was less frequently exercised, and finally ceased to be practised. I think the gift was one of the sign gifts with a credential value and was withdrawn entirely. In the last letter that Paul wrote he tells Timothy that he left Trophimus at Miletum sick, indicating that he did not have the gift of healing. And now here he writes about the illness of Epaphroditus. He was sick nigh unto death and he attributes his recovery purely to the mercy of God without mentioning the means or agency of his healing.

It is good for us to know that our times are in the hand of God; that while we may not know what the future holds, we can always know Who holds the future.

"God holds the key of all unknown,
And I am glad;
If other hands should hold the key,
Or if He trusted it to me,
I might be sad.

"What if to-morrow's cares were here
Without its rest!
I'd rather He unlocked the day;
And, as the hours swing open, say,
'My will is best'.

"The very dimness of my sight
Makes me secure;
For, groping in my misty way,
I feel His hand; I hear Him say,
'My help is sure.'

"I cannot read His future plans;
But this I know:
I have the smiling of His face,
And all the refuge of His grace,
While here below.

"Enough! this covers all my wants,
And so I rest!
For what I cannot, He can see,
And in His care I saved shall be,
For ever blest."

R.C. PRIESTS OF THE CHURCH OF THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD(1) *Give Hot Racing Tips*

The *News Chronicle*, a daily newspaper of London, England, carries a story which contains an interesting commentary on the Roman Catholic priests' concept of morals. The account, carried in the issue of December 31, 1955, informs us that two priests distributed racing tips to the people in the parish and that to the amazement of all, the horse won. When interviewed, these clerics were asked their views on gambling. The newspaper report proceeds—"Gambling is like drinking and sex. It's all right when taken in moderation. 'I often have a couple of bob each way myself,' confessed Father Moore." These gambling "fathers" are in charge of the *Church of The Most Precious Blood*.

Here is the account in full as it appeared in the *News Chronicle*:

The people who live down Southwark way—and who fancy a flutter—haven't got over it yet for the latest racing tip to pass among the local Cockneys came from two Catholic priests.

On Christmas Eve, 1,100 copies of the parish bulletin from the local Catholic church were poked in letter-boxes of houses in the borough, containing a tip for the winner of the big Boxing Day steeplechase.

With disbelieving smiles, the locals who live within the sound of St. Mary-le-Bow "got on", but when they heard the horse — Limber Hill — won the King George VI 'Chase by a neck they took notice.

Last night the two priests who brought luck to their parishioners owned up.

"It was us," said Father Anthony Reynolds and Father John Moore, of the Church of The Most Precious Blood.

Father Moore said: "The tip was just a little idea we had as a Christmas speciality. We were amazed when the horse actually won."

These two tipster priests tucked the tip away at the end of their parish bulletin, "The Borough Piper," using the name of Joannes Cavanensis.

What are their views on gambling?

Gambling is like drinking and sex. It's all right when taken in moderation. "I often have a couple of bob each way myself," confessed Father Moore.

"We don't intend to make a habit of it," said Father Reynolds, "perhaps one every so often'."

LOVERS OF JESUS

They that love Christ, love to *think* of him, love to *hear* of him, and love to *read* of him. They love to *speak* of him, for him, to him. They love his *presence*, his *yoke*, his *name*. His will is their law, his dishonour is their affliction, his cause is their care, his people are their companions, his day is their delight, his Word is their guide, his glory is their end. They had rather ten thousand times suffer for Christ than that he should suffer by them.

—MASON

—*The Sword and the Trowel*

THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER

Soon the postman will be delivering to your door the Editor's Annual Letter. Read it carefully and prayerfully and see what the Lord would have you to do in support of this printed ministry.

A Just Rebuke

That the ecumenical movement is a budding religious tyrant becomes more obvious with the passage of time. Pleading for "tolerance" and "charity", its leaders at the same time display a shocking intolerance and betray the fact that their aim is one big church. The following editorial in the *Florida Baptist Witness*, a Southern Baptist state paper, represents the feeling of some evangelical leaders in the United States:—

WHITE FASCISM AND NON-COOPERATING CHURCHES

WE HAVE long resented the repeated attempts of ecumenically-minded leaders in the National Council of Churches to speak for what they have represented as the majority of non-Catholic Christians in this nation. We believe a fair investigation will reveal that they have arrogated an authority which, while they passionately crave, they have never and do not now possess.

They have talked loudly and long about no one in the Council wanting any authority over anyone else, and no church or church group ever being asked to surrender any rights or convictions, and of full liberty being in order for any group to participate or not to the extent it sees fit.

On the other hand, frequent statements and actions are in rather severe contradiction to such magnanimous claims. A good example is contained in a report by Religious News Service from Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, of an address of Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, president of the National Council of Churches, to the annual assembly of its Division of Home Missions, in which he said that the "sharpest ideological challenge" facing Protestant churches today is "the revival of a white Protestant fascism based on racism." He went on to say that this fascism presents its greatest danger through use of "the same Scriptures by distortion to support almost an opposite ideology from our own."

So they are Protestant "fascists"? That doesn't sound much like language designed to promote peace, understanding and good will, either between church groups or between the races, does it? Inflammatory language of disrespect toward the beliefs of these white brethren (however wrong they might be) is not one whit more Christian than their similar remarks toward the brethren of any other race. It hardly behooves one in such a prominent position to appear to feel that he must bolster up the righteousness of his own "ideology" by throwing off on the unrighteousness of theirs, particularly when by his theory they are at least potential brethren in his great ecumenical fellowship.

In the same address Dr. Blake is reported to have said that Protestantism must recognize the true nature of its competitors or it will lose out in the struggle for the hearts and minds of the American people. He listed the competitive elements as Marxism, materialism, humanistic nationalism and competition offered by "non-cooperating Protestant churches."

Just read that last sentence and see where you and I as Southern Baptists fit in. We know we are not Protestants, but he doesn't and he uses the terms to include us among the "non-cooperating Protestant churches" since we do not affiliate with the National Council. His classification putting the competition offered by "non-

cooperating churches" along with Marxism, materialism, etc., was hardly designed to win friends and influence people, unless he thinks the "non-cooperating" can be brought into the ecumenical fold by intimidation. His words sound more like a declaration of war than an invitation to fellowship.

We can't help wondering if the strides made by the groups named "non-cooperating Protestant churches" (including Southern Baptists) haven't left some National Council leaders just a trifle embarrassed, since the greater proportionate progress in Kingdom affairs has been made by those outside rather than inside of the ecumenical movement. Ecumenicity has not proven itself to be the answer, either to evangelizing or Christianizing the nation.

Southern Baptist churches, with a mighty few exceptions, have repeatedly turned a deaf ear to the wooing of the National Council (and its predecessor Federal Council) of Churches, and projected their own New Testament program of preaching, teaching and healing without the small help or the much larger hindrance of membership in either Council. The same free course for the future will continue to promote both a finer fellowship and a fuller fruitfulness. We have the feeling that a lot of these ecumenical leaders would be mighty glad to have as much real cooperation either in the National Council or in their own churches as may be seen in so many of these churches they are branding as "non-cooperating" competitors.

—Editorial, *Florida Baptist Witness*, January 12, 1956.

NEGRO'S FIDELITY AT FUNERALS

A good story showing unusual fidelity to truth at a funeral is told concerning the late John Jasper, the famous Negro Baptist preacher of Richmond, Va.

It appears that Jasper was conducting in his church two funerals at the same hour — one of Aunt Martha, the cook, and the other of John, the porter. It is said the procession bringing the remains of Aunt Martha reached the church first and they waited quite a while for the appearance of the second procession.

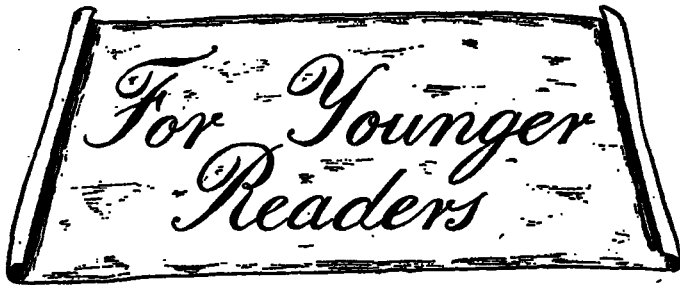
Finally John Jasper rose and said, "While the second deceased is arriving we will proceed with the funeral of the first deceased." After prayer the second procession arrived and the casket was placed in appropriate position. "Now," said Jasper, "everybody knows that Aunt Martha was a good Christian. She read her Bible, said her prayers, came to church, and lived her religion every day. Aunt Martha was the best cook in this city; and if there's a kitchen in Heaven, she is now astonishin' de angels with de cakes she is makin'. Aunt Martha loved the Lord and glorified Him, not only on Sunday, but in de kitchen every day."

Then the preacher paused and looking over his glasses toward the casket of John, the porter, all he said was, "As to de second deceased, de less said de better!" And the service closed.

—*The Baptist Examiner*

All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them.

—HUDSON TAYLOR



A TALK TO BOYS

Boys, do you know you are being watched? Do you know your idle actions on the street are all being noted and remembered?

"By whom?" you say. "Who is watching us?"

The business men of your town. All the responsible men, those who have business enterprises of some sort that require the employment of trusty boys and young men. They are watching your actions as boys and setting them down against you. Do you want to be remembered when you are out of school and seeking a position in which to work, by your actions as a boy? You will be so judged, and now is the time to act in a way that you shall never be ashamed of the record.

The story is told by a noted writer of a banker who approached the humble home of the village washer-woman the morning after her son had been graduated from the village high school.

After a few preliminary remarks, the banker asked if her son had any special prospects for the future. Being told that he did not, and must depend upon his own efforts in getting and keeping a position, the banker promptly offered the son a position as messenger in his bank. The poor woman was dumbfounded and asked who had taken the pains to recommend her son to this position. The banker replied:

"Madam, no one has recommended your son to me. I have always taken an interest in our boys, and give one of them employment in preference to an outsider, provided he is worthy. For a long time I have watched your son when on the street among his fellows. I have noted his actions, his conversation, his attitude toward those older than himself or toward any one needing assistance. Unknown to him and to every one, I have thus kept track of him for several years, and whether standing alone or in comparison with his fellows, I have always found him honourable, clean, upright, and a perfect gentleman. I want such a boy to train for my business now, since my own son has chosen another occupation, I shall be glad to give your son the preference of this position."

Boys, how many of you would be satisfied to be judged by your occupations in public during the past five years? How have you conducted yourself? What language have you used? How have you behaved in the presence of ladies and elderly people? What have you done when little accidents render temporary assistance highly desirable to others? Are you willing to be judged by your conduct in each case?

A village produce buyer made a trip to the bank in an adjacent city to draw from it two thousand dollars, his whole capital, to be used in buying the new season's grain. With him was his clerk, a young man of twenty years, the son of parents in humble circumstances — one

who, like the former lad, had attracted the merchant's attention and drawn a trusted position. After the money had been drawn, all bills of small denomination, the produce buyer rolled them up and, placing them in a sack, handed them to the young man, remarking:

"Here, take this to the store. You can go on the next train, but my business will not permit me to go till night."

After his departure, the banker, who had been a keen observer of everything, asked the merchant:

"Is that young man in your employ?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "I could hardly do without him."

"Well," said the banker, "I will not interfere with your claims on him, but if your affairs ever shift so that you do not require his service, send him to me. I care not how many other men we may have, there will be a place for him."

"Yes," said the merchant, "I always knew Henry to be a reliable young man from boy up, but what do you see or know about him that makes you offer this position?"

"Well," the banker replied, "I saw the young man himself, and while his clothes were plain and somewhat worn, they were neatly brushed and his entire person was scrupulously clean and well cared for. Then, when you gave him that money, all you have with us, without the scratch of a pen to show that he had it, and the money in small bills, the easiest kind in the world to dispose of secretly had he fled with it, I was impressed with your opinion of his honesty. I thought if you, who have known him from boyhood, should thus trust him, there must be very good reasons for so doing. I want such a young man as that, and no matter how many others we may have there is never a time but that I have employment for a lad of this young fellow's description."

Remember, boys, you can not spend your youth in deeds of wild recklessness and at young manhood hold the respect of the men to whom you must appeal for employment if you would learn a business and prepare yourself for a man's place in the world. And not only should you guard your actions for what others may think of them, but you should do so for the effect upon your own character. Character is but the result of your habits. Whatever you have formed a habit of doing becomes a part of your nature, and is a corner-stone for good or bad, a pillar that supports your character, your personal integrity. Are you willing to become the result of your present habits followed out continually for the next few years?

There is only one way to act if you would secure the good opinion of the best people and form a character such as you really wish your later life to be. That is, act now as you wish to be in the future. Form good habits of speech and conduct. Fortunately, good habits are as tenacious as bad. Form good habits now and persist in them, and when you are a young man ready to step forth into the world, your habits will have formed a strong, steadfast character, a personal integrity for honesty and uprightness that will give you the respect of your fellows and the approbation of your own conscience.

—Publisher Unknown

We have all eternity to tell of victories won for Christ, but we have only a few hours before sunset to win them.

—ANON.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 20 First Quarter Lesson 6 February 5, 1956

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

JESUS TEACHES THE MEANING OF FAITH

Lesson Text: Luke 7:1-17.

Golden Text: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
—Hebrews 11:6.

I. The Servant of the Centurion: verses 1-10.

Read also Matthew 8:5-13.

A centurion is a Roman officer commanding a division of approximately one hundred men. Several good centurions are mentioned in Scripture (Matt. 27:54; Acts 10:1, 22; 22: 25, 26; 27:43). This centurion seems unlike the ordinary stern Roman soldier; he is remarkable for his affection for his servant, really a bond-servant or slave; for his forbearance, sympathy and generosity toward the Jews, their customs and religion; but, above all, he is remembered for his faith.

The Jewish leaders, acting as intercessors, besought Christ "instantly"; that is, earnestly, eagerly, diligently, to go to the house of the centurion. They held the centurion in high honour, even although one of his duties as a military representative of Rome would probably be to keep order among the Jews. But, although these leaders thought the centurion worthy of Christ's consideration, he himself felt unworthy to come into the Master's presence. This becoming humility and the respect which he showed the Lord by sending friends and not servants as messengers, were tokens of his real worth (Luke 14:11; 18:14). The elders and the friends who went to Christ were acting as representatives of the centurion. The Evangelist Matthew omits these details and speaks only of the centurion, who was the one responsible for the message, even though he was acting through others (Matt. 8:5).

In performing former miracles mentioned in this Gospel Christ had touched the afflicted ones, or had been close to them (Luke 4:39, 40; 5:13, 24; 6:10), but this Roman officer showed a simplicity and directness of faith, believing that the mere word of Christ was sufficient (Hab. 4:12). "Speak the word only" (Matt. 8:8); "Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." His own word produced results in his sphere of life; so would the word of Christ in His sphere.

The centurion himself was under authority, hence worthy to be placed in authority; obedience is the first qualification for leadership (1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 5:8, 9).

Christ marvelled at the genuine faith displayed by the military leader, especially since he had not had advantages, such as the Jews enjoyed (Rom. 3:1, 2; 9:4, 5). But perhaps from the Jews he had learned about the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah.

The faith of the centurion was amply rewarded in the public tribute of the Saviour, as well as in the healing of his servant.

II. The Son of the Widow: verses 11-17.

The One in whom we are to put our trust is all-powerful: He can raise the dead, those who are dead spiritually, as well as those who are dead physically. He is the Lord of life (John 5:25-29; 10:25; Eph. 1:19, 20; 2:1).

Christ stopped the sad funeral procession just outside the little village of Nain, situated about twelve miles from Capernaum. He had regard for the tender human ties; He remembered that the young man had been his mother's sole earthly support (John 11:35). Christ had compassion upon her, and compassion is loving-kindness in action.

We can comfort the sorrowing only to a limited extent (2 Cor. 1:3-5), but Christ could comfort her by word, bidding her "Weep not," and by deed, removing the cause of her tears (Rev. 21:4). He had pity, and also power. His word can heal the sick and raise the dead (Luke 8:52-55; John 11:43, 44).

Death is an enemy, but he will one day finally be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26; Heb. 2:14, 15; Rev. 1:18; 20:14). In God's own time every tear will be dried.

This miracle was performed by the unconditional sovereign power of Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life.

Daily Bible Readings

Jan. 30—Faith Defined	Heb. 11:1-5
Jan. 31—Faith Demanded	Heb. 11:6-13
Feb. 1—Faith Exemplified	Heb. 11:17-22
Feb. 2—Faith Exercised	Heb. 11:23-30
Feb. 3—Faith Rewarded	Rom. 8:28-39
Feb. 4—Faith and Works	Jas. 2:20-26
Feb. 5—Faith and Worry	Matt. 6:24-34

Suggested Hymns

The Gospel of Thy grace.
Father, I stretch my hands to Thee.
Begone, unbelief!
Pass me not, O gentle Saviour.
Come, every soul.
Jesus, I will trust Thee.

A WAR-SONG

By C. H. Spurgeon

Forth to the battle rides our King,
He climbs his conquering car;
He fits his arrows to the string,
And hurls his bolts afar.

Convictions pierce the stoutest hearts,
They smart, they bleed, they die;
Slain by Immanuel's well-aimed darts,
In helpless heaps they lie.

Behold, he bares his two-edged sword,
And deals almighty blows;
His all-revealing, killing Word
"Twixt joints and marrow goes.

Who can resist him in the fight?
He cuts through coats of mail.
Before the terror of his might
The hearts of rebels fail.

Anon, arrayed in robes of grace,
He rides the trampled plain,
With pity beaming in his face,
And mercy in his train.

Mighty to save he now appears;
Mighty to raise the dead,
Mighty to staunch the bleeding wound,
And lift the fallen head.

Victor alike in love and arms,
Myriads around him bend;
Each captive owns his matchless charms,
Each foe becomes his friend.

They crown him on the battle-field,
They press to kiss his feet;
Their hands, their hearts, their all they yield:
His conquest is complete.

None love him more than those he slew;
His love their hate has slain;
Henceforth their souls are all on fire
To spread His gentle reign.