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The Glory of His Resurrection

By CHRISTMAS EVANS

THE Resurrection of Jesus is the most stupendous manifestation of the power of God, and the pledge of eternal life to his people.

The apostle calls it "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." This is a river overflowing its banks — an idea too large for language. Let us look at it a moment.

Where do we find "the exceeding greatness of his power?" In the creation of the world? in the Seven Stars and Orion? in the strength of Behemoth and Leviathan? No! In the deluge? in the fiery destruction of Sodom? in the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host? in hurling Nebuchadnezzar like Lucifer from the political firmament. No! It is the power which he wrought in Christ. When? When he healed the sick? when he raised the dead? when he cast out devils? when he blasted the fruitless fig-tree? when he walked upon the waters of the Galilee? No! It was "when he raised him from the dead." Then the Father placed the sceptre in the hand of the Son, "and set him above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come; and put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church."

This is the source of our spiritual life. The same power that raised the dead body of our Lord from the grave, quickens the soul of the believer from the death in trespasses and sins. His riven tomb is a fountain of living waters; whereof if a man drink, he shall never die. His raised and glorified body is the sun, whence streams eternal light upon our spirits; the light of life, that never can be quenched.

Nor here does the influence of his resurrection end. He who raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies. His resurrection is the pledge and the pattern of ours. "Because he liveth we shall live also." "He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." We hear him speaking in

the prophet: — "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead."

How divinely does the apostle speak of the resurrection-body of the saints! "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written — Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ever since the fall in Eden, man is born to die. He lives to die. He eats and drinks, sleeps and wakes, to die. Death, like a dark steel-clad warrior, stands ever before us; and his gigantic shadow comes continually between us and happiness. But Christ hath "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." He was born in Bethlehem, that he might die on Calvary. He was made under the law, that he might bear the direst penalty of the law. He lived thirty-three years, sinless among sinners, that he might offer himself a sin-offering for sinners upon the cross. Thus he "became obedient unto death," that he might destroy the power of death; and on the third morning, a mighty angel, rolling away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, makes the very door of Death's castle the throne whence he proclaims "the resurrection and the life".

The Hero of our salvation travelled into Death's dominion, took possession of the whole territory on our behalf, and returning laden with spoils, ascended to the heaven of heavens. He went to the palace, seized the tyrant, and wrested away his sceptre. He descended into the prison-house, knocked off the fetters of the captives; and when he came up again, left the door of every cell open, that they might follow him. He has gone over into our promised inheritance, and his glory illuminates the mountains of immortality; and through the telescope

which he has bequeathed us, we "see the land that is very far off."

I recollect reading in the writings of Flavel this sentiment — that the souls in paradise wait with intense desire for the reanimation of their dead bodies, that they may be united to them in bliss for ever. O, what rapture there shall be among the saints, when those frail vessels, from which they escaped with such a struggle, as they foundered in the gulf of death, shall come floating in, with the spring-tide of the resurrection, to the harbor of immortality! How glorious the reunion, when the seeds of affliction and death are left behind in the tomb! Jacob no longer lame, nor Moses slow of speech, nor Lazarus covered with sores, nor Paul troubled with a thorn in the flesh!

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." The glory of the body of Christ is far above our present conception. When he was transfigured on Tabor, his face shone like the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. This is the pattern shown to his people in the mount. This is the model after which the bodies of believers shall be fashioned in the resurrection. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

In conclusion:—The angel said to the women—"Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him; lo! I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word."

Brethren! followers of Jesus! be ye also preachers of a risen Saviour! Go quickly — there is no time for delay — and publish the glad tidings to sinners! Tell them that Christ died for their sins, and rose again for their justification, and ascended to the right hand of the Father to make intercession for them, and is now able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him!

And you, impenitent and unbelieving men! hear this blessed message of salvation! Do you intend ever to embrace the proffered mercy of the gospel? Make haste! Procrastination is ruin! Now is the accepted time! O, fly to the throne of grace! Time is hastening; you will soon be swallowed up in eternity! May the Lord have mercy upon you, and rouse you from your indifference and sloth! It is my delight to invite you to Christ; but I feel more pleasure and more confidence in praying for you to God. I have besought and entreated you, by every argument and every motive in my power; but you are yet in your sins, and rushing on toward hell. Yet I will not give you up in despair. If I cannot persuade you to flee from the wrath to come, I will intercede with God to have mercy upon you for the sake of his beloved Son. If I cannot prevail in the pulpit, I will try to prevail at the throne!

Souls are not saved by "systems" but by the Spirit of God. Organizations without the Holy Spirit are like mills without power. Methods and plans without the grace of God are pipes without water, lamps without oil, banks without money. Even a church that has an orthodox creed and accepts the Biblical standards is as useless as are clouds without rain until power comes from God.

—C. H. SPURGEON

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DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET!

The gospel was never given to be kept as a secret. Nowhere do we hear it said, If you have any bread, keep it to yourselves, no matter who is hungry. Nowhere is it said to the Christian Church, "You are in a time of reserve and self-consideration, and you must make your own souls guests at the Lord's table, without regarding the innumerable vacancies at the banqueting board; eat and drink, O beloved, and do so abundantly, and care nothing for those for whom nothing is prepared." That is not the voice of Christianity; that is not the purpose of the Gospel; that is not the mission of the Church. Is it possible that men can have good news and keep it to themselves? Here is a man to face with a sufferer; he observes the sufferer's emaciated condition, he notes his languid eye, his sunken cheeks, his bloodless lips, his gait of helplessness, his deepening infirmity, and all the time he knows precisely what would meet the case, and never speaks the secret. What is that man if the sufferer should die? He is a murderer! Can he in charity be called by any other name? He knew what would cure the man and never told him, and the man died. What does the Lord say? He says, His blood will I require at the traitor's hand. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain: if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

—JOSEPH PARKER

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

The Literal Physical Resurrection of Christ a Guarantee of the Redemption of the Whole Creation

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 17th, 1927

(Stenographically Reported)

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."—Romans 8:19-23.

THE redemption accomplished for us by our Lord Jesus Christ is an infinitely greater achievement than any of us have ever dreamed. So often in our day our glorious Lord is set forth as an Example merely, as a Proponent of an ethical system, and poor bankrupt men and women are exhorted to follow in His steps, and by their own labour to accomplish their own salvation. What a pitiful caricature it is of the scheme of redemption as revealed in the Word of God! "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." The centre of His redemptive work is represented by His death and resurrection. He *was* a Teacher, He *was* an Exemplar. He *did* leave us an Example that we should follow in His steps; but He did infinitely more than all this: He "died for our sins according to the scriptures", "he was buried", and "he rose again the third day according to the scriptures".

To be saved ourselves is surely a priceless boon, to be assured that we have passed from death unto life, and that all our sins have been blotted out, is something for which we ought to be ever profoundly grateful; but the redemption accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ is something far greater than merely providing a way whereby our sins should be forgiven — that is a marvellous gift, even that is utterly beyond all possibility of human achievement; but the text I have read to you this evening shows us that even as sin extended to the whole created order, so shall the redemption that is in Christ Jesus result in delivering the whole creation from the bondage of corruption, to share in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Let us try to look at this for a few moments this evening from the divine standpoint, that we may have some better understanding of the far-reaching effect of the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus the Lord.

I.

What, then, was THE EXTENT OF THE RUIN BROUGHT BY SIN WHICH MADE REDEMPTION NECESSARY? It may be

a divine mercy that we do not fully understand, any of us, what sin is. If we could understand its real nature, and the extent of its influence, and what it is in the sight of God, we should perhaps despair of being delivered from it. I venture to believe it is because men fail so generally properly to apprehend the malignity of this disease from which the world is suffering, that they fail to recognize the impossibility of providing a human remedy, and the magnitude of the price that was indispensable for man's redemption. Of course, if you can accept that strange delusion that we are evolving from a lower order of being, and that sin, what we call sin, this moral evil that drags us down, is but the residue that has been left from that lower estate, and that we are therefore to be commended for having progressed so far instead of being condemned for having sunk so low — if you can accept that strange philosophy, which is the biggest lie the Devil ever foisted upon the human mind, if you can accept that, you will fail utterly to realize the necessity for the Cross, or for the redemption that is in Christ.

But there is absolutely no support whatever for the theory of evolution in God's Holy Word. If you believe this Book, you will have to abandon utterly your evolutionary hypothesis as being contrary to the revealed Word of God, and being without one scintilla of evidence to support it in all human experience. It is one of the Devil's lies, invented for the blinding of the "minds of them which believe not." If we accept the diagnosis of God's Word we shall find sin is not merely an offence written in the divine record of human life, that it is far more than a mere moral abstraction: it is an act of rebellion against God that has affected the whole created order. The whole creation, as we shall see, has been plunged with us into bankruptcy, and is in need of the redemption which our Lord Jesus has accomplished in our behalf.

As to the individual sinner: sin is not an offence of the hand, or of the foot, or of the eye, or of the ear, it is not in speech — it is not merely in outward conduct:

It is a something that has entered into the very constitution of man, and is as much a part of our natural state to-day as is the colour of the Ethiopian's skin natural to him; sin inheres in the very warp and woof of our constitution. We are ourselves a bundle of enmity against God, and there is not a faculty of the mind, or a power of the body, that has not been pressed into the service of evil; conscience is defiled, the heart is deceitful, the memory for God's goodness is impaired, the will is enfeebled and enslaved, the judgment is warped — the whole man is biased toward evil, so that "the carnal mind is enmity against God".

Sin has its effect not only upon the mind, but upon the body. There is no disputing the fact that we have become mortal, and that these bodies are mortal; they are corruptible, the mark of sin is upon us all. Your grey hairs, your visits to the dentist, your patronage of the doctor, if you will only think about it, indicate that every day you live your body is crying out a message from the Book, that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." And that law is in us every one, and from the cradle we move forward to the grave, because the germ, the seed, of mortality is within us.

Nor is it confined to man himself. The Bible tells us that when man sinned, the tempter, the serpent, was cursed above all cattle, and the ground was cursed for man's sake. If I were talking to a company of farmers: this evening I think they would agree with me that their greatest difficulty is not the plowing or the sowing or were I speaking to those who have to do with horticulture in its various forms, they would all agree that their greatest task is to do battle against the pests of the earth. Every plant has its blight, every apple, if it is not cared for, will have a worm at its core, every tree will deteriorate, every farm will go to ruin, if it is left alone, beyond the shadow of a doubt — the very earth itself bears the evidences of the divine curse, that sin has not only entered into our minds, and into our bodies, but it is in the very earth upon which we walk.

This text speaks about the bondage of corruption. What does that mean? It means that in the created order there is a law of degeneration, a tendency to deterioration. Now is that true? Never mind your science, you do not need to go and ask the professor about it. Let me ask you women, Why do you dust your houses? Why are you for ever cleaning them? Why do they not stay clean, I wonder? The wise man said, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof". You do not need to sow weeds in your garden — all you need to do is to let it alone; you do not need to plan the decay of a building — let it alone, that is all. I saw a house, a magnificent mansion, some years ago when the lawns roundabout were well kept. As one passed by, he was attracted by its beauty, it had every appearance of prosperity. But after a while the house became vacant, it was without a tenant, there was no one to look after it. How long did it stay in that well-kept condition? In just a few months the grass was long, the weeds were abundant, and anybody could see that the law of corruption was operating even in that mansion. It is everywhere apparent: you have only to withdraw your hand and allow these tendencies to have free course, and whether it be in your own mind, or your body, or in your garden, or in your house, or in the world at large, you will find it is true

that the whole-created order is under the curse, and needs redemption as truly as does every individual soul in this world.

And not only so, there is evil beyond this material world. You remember the story of Job — I am quite aware that if certain so-called scientists were here they would laugh me out of court. A couple of years ago I was down in Indiana in a place that was just touched by the skirt of a tornado. A few hours later I rode slowly through the devastated country, and I saw what the awful powers of nature could accomplish. I preached a sermon a little while after that on the subject, "Does God Control Earthquakes and Tornadoes?" and later there was an editorial in *The Christian World* of London on that sermon. The article was entitled, "Fundamentalism Gone Mad", and the writer expressed his surprise that there could be found anyone on earth that was supposed to be even ordinarily intelligent, who still believed that there was any divine superintendence of tornadoes and earthquakes! All these things, he said, were subject to natural laws, and were to be accounted for by their operation. I read a few years ago that Sir Oliver Lodge had said that there was something wrong with the earth's crust; he said that it was in a very unsatisfactory state, and that it was somewhat restless and disturbed in some quarters. I am not aware that science has discovered any means of adjusting these abnormalities, these irregularities in the earth's crust! I have never heard of a syndicate being organized to patch up and strengthen the weak places of the earth — for instance, in California, or somewhere like that! These are powers that are entirely beyond human control.

But the teaching of God's Word is to the effect that some of them are subject to the control of principalities and powers. Consider the case of Job, and you will recall that when the Lord said to the Devil, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?" the Devil confessed God's protection, saying, "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" How did the Devil know about that hedge, I wonder? Because he had been trying to get through it for a long time, but discovered that he could not touch Job without divine permission! The malignant purpose was there; but Satan was impotent until at last God let down the hedge and said, "I will let you touch him, only spare his life."

There is a Scripture which says that Jesus Christ came to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." And the Devil has the power of death, the Devil would kill you to-night, if you are a believer, if God did not take care of you. Your life, if you trust in the Lord Jesus, would not be worth a penny, if He did not give His angels charge concerning you. Do you suppose Satan would have allowed the Apostle Paul to live, and to go on with his work, or any other preacher of the gospel to continue his ministry of the Word had he been able to destroy him? Not at all. But the Lord puts a "hedge" about us, even in this world that is under the curse. But when He let down the hedge, the Devil showed his power — and where was his power? The tornado was in his hand; fire from heaven was at his command; sickness was let loose upon Job; disease, and all their material powers, were at the command of the prince of the power of the air — but he was limited to the extent that God's sovereign power limited him. That

is to say, He lengthened his chain, and permitted him to persecute Job, but He did not permit him to take away his life.

My friends, sin is not only on this earth, and in human-kind, but there are evil principalities and powers that have to be brought into subjection, and subdued, that our God may be all in all. Your little professor reads the sermon on the mount, and says that he may study the ethics of Jesus! What does he know about it? What is the measure of Christ's redemption? It is as deep as hell; it is as high as heaven; it must provide defence against "principalities" and "powers" and the "rulers of the darkness of this world" and "spiritual wickedness in high places." It requires the might of God to deal with these evil forces which afflict humankind. Men who propose their little man-made schemes of salvation remind me of children with a box of toys laying out a town! When men shut this Book, and get away from these tremendous truths that are disclosed from heaven, they become little children "carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Notwithstanding some of them strut around as doctors of philosophy! Poor benighted souls they are. May God bring us all back to His Word, and to the perspective of this divine revelation, that we may see the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God that "passeth knowledge"!

Sin has set its mark upon the whole earth, and everything in it.

II.

THE RESURRECTION IS REALLY THE CLIMAX OF THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST. I will not take time to argue it this evening, although that is always a great temptation. The resurrection is a fact. When we speak of the resurrection we mean, as we said this morning, that the body of Christ which was laid in the grave, rose again a body of flesh and bones, a body with the marks of the nails in His hands and His feet and His side. The very same Jesus that had been nailed to the cross, in the same body of flesh and bones appeared to the disciples, when "He shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs." I am old-fashioned enough to take that Scripture that we read this evening at its face value, and to believe that "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Therefore, when a man like Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick says, "I do not believe in the resurrection of the flesh", we can only class him as anti-Christian for he denies the thing that is absolutely essential to Christian faith. The Word of God says that if there be no resurrection there is no redemption, and "faith is vain", and "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished", and "we are of all men the most miserable". The same is true of everyone who denies the resurrection; the denial of the resurrection is a denial of the gospel, and the rejection of the whole Christian revelation.

Shall we accept it as a fact? and, being a fact, what is the proof? Well, it attests the value of the sacrifice of Christ. I am quite willing to agree with those who say, "We do not understand what the atonement is." The best we can say is what the Scripture itself says, that He died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"; that He did pay the price of our redemption. It was a substitutionary work He did, He expiated our

guilt, rendered to the law of God that which the law demanded in our behalf. All that, but oh, when you have said all that can be said in explanation of it, you must recognize that the height and depth and length and breadth of it, only eternity itself can reveal; because when the blood of Jesus Christ flowed from His heart, it was the blood of Incarnate Deity, and the value of it is attested by the fact that He rose again from the dead. He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And they destroyed that Temple — and in three days He rose again from the dead, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

That principle we have propounded again and again, and must continue to do so. But we set it forth once more in this connection because of its bearing upon the considerations which follow.

III.

Consider therefore THE VAST IMPORT OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IN VIEW OF THIS WIDE AND LONG RESULT OF SIN. The resurrection meant *the emergence of the material from the bondage of corruption*. Our Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection was a pledge and though they laid Him in the grave, "it was not possible that He should be holden of it" — and He saw not corruption. The law of deterioration, when it touched the body of Jesus Christ, became impotent, because the sinless One had put away sin by His expiatory death; and this mortal in Him put on immortality, and this corruptible put on incorruption; and the fact that there is one element of the material universe that is delivered from the operation of that law of corruption, is a promise of the deliverance of the whole created order by the same power.

Not only as to our bodies, but when Christ returns He will reign on the earth. His redeemed people will be more than disembodied spirits, flitting about from star to star. We are to have literal, physical, bodies just as our Lord had; and when He comes we shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

That deliverance symbolizes also the abolition of death. Christ has abolished death, and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel". If the Lord Jesus does not come before, every man and woman, and boy and girl, here to-night in this congregation will die; unless He should come in the clouds of heaven summoning us to His presence — every one of us, there will be no exception at all — oh, I know it seems a long distance off for a good many people, even to those whose hairs are grey, but inevitably we shall go the way of all flesh, we shall die. How do I know it? It is written here, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened" — and we groan a great deal, we are nothing but a company of groaners and grumblers, there is not any doubt about that. But our Lord Jesus died, and is alive again, and He is alive for ever more. And He has abolished death: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Death is an enemy; he does an enemy's work: he leaves behind him the wreck and ruin of an enemy; he is no friend at all.

I never have been able to sympathize with that sentiment, "O lovely appearance of death." Death is not lovely, it is the ugliest thing that ever came into human life; and it is best that it is ugly, for it is the offspring of sin. I used to hear my father say, "Death is the off-

spring of sin, and sin never did bring forth anything lovely in the world — and it never will." God, by His sovereign grace, has robbed death of his sting. I know he is still an enemy; but blessed be God, he is to be put under His feet, and death is to be banished from God's creation.

Do you believe that? ("Amen, yes!") I do. We will not need any cemeteries in the millennium at all, we shall have done with them for ever. We shall be alive "for ever more", even as to our bodies, and we shall never grow old. And when we have been a million years with Him in glory, we shall still be youngsters, just beginning life in full physical health and vigor, animated by the Spirit of God. And so, you see, the resurrection of Christ promises not only the regeneration of the individual, but of the whole creation. And this earth, which was made for man's habitation is going to be redeemed, and purified, and brought back again to more than its original glory.

Would you like to know when that will happen? Well I can tell you exactly, I can tell you the exact time when that will happen — all that will take place when Jesus Christ comes again. ("Amen!") I cannot tell you when He will come. But what does this text say? — "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" — and then the writer goes on to say that even we who are Christians, even we who have the earnest of the Spirit, the pledge of that ultimate glorious deliverance, "not only they but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan" — there is some hope that we may be delivered from groaning, but I never knew anybody who did not do a little bit of it — "within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Everything looking forward to that day when the completed redemption shall be ours: spirit, soul and body, may appear in His sight — and all that when the Lord Jesus shall come again.

I propose to keep on preaching this gospel of the resurrection, for I cannot see any other way by which this great transformation may be accomplished but by the power of God. With all our schemes for bringing in a better day, I have yet to learn of any that has power to effect the transformation that this gospel can bring about. You cannot change the very nature of things by legislative processes, or by any processes of education; you cannot give the Ethiopian white skin; and you cannot eliminate the leopard's spots — it is in the blood of the creature, it is natural. There is only one way by which these can be done, and that is by the power of His resurrection; for His resurrection changes the nature of things. It was natural for a body to be mortal, but by His resurrection its nature is changed, and this mortal puts on immortality, and this corruptible puts on incorruption, and "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory".

And that which shall be true for the individual, shall be true for the whole created order, and our glorious Lord will reign.

That is a gospel worth having, worth believing. I wish I could make you see it as I feel it. But when these things are brought into the light of this Holy Word, man's plans and schemes seem so very little, so utterly inadequate for the world's great redemption, and therefore we come back to this, that —

"None but Jesus, None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

Nor can any but Jesus Christ our Lord do good for a world that shares the sinner's curse and condemnation.

SPURGEON THOU SHOULD'ST BE LIVING AT THIS HOUR

A small item in the pages of the December issue of *The Christian Herald* of England escaped our attention. Just this week a friend drew it to our attention. It reads as follows:—

The Metropolitan Tabernacle, London—which withdrew from the Baptist Union almost 70 years ago during the days of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon—has now rejoined the Union.

This news will come as a distinct surprise to many Baptists. The Metropolitan Tabernacle was the scene of mighty spiritual triumphs in the last part of the past century. Its illustrious pastor was Mr. C. H. Spurgeon (who would have objected to *The Christian Herald's* designation of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon). Under his ministry the tabernacle which could seat 5,000 was crowded morning and evening. Multitudes were saved and Christians were taught in the things of God. By many Mr. Spurgeon is regarded as the greatest preacher since the days of the apostles.

His withdrawal from the British Baptist Union was no accident nor did he ever regret his action. It was his decided and well-grounded conviction that the Union was slipping and that its course was downward. Subsequent history has substantiated his fears. In reply to those who might seek to have him remain in the Union, Mr. Spurgeon wrote — "I beg you not to send anyone to me to ask for reconsideration. I fear I have considered too long already; certainly every hour of the day impresses upon me the conviction that I am moving none too soon."

Now, seventy years later, we learn that the Tabernacle has rejoined the Union. This prompts the question — Has the Union improved since the days of Spurgeon or is the Metropolitan Tabernacle on the downgrade? Those who are close to the Baptist scene in Great Britain assure us that the Union has not improved so we must conclude that either the Tabernacle has let down the standard or else is failing to exercise discernment. May the Lord grant another Spurgeon to the Tabernacle that the glory of the past may be eclipsed by the splendour of the future.

IN PRINT

A Defence of Calvinism

By C. H. Spurgeon

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THE GOSPEL WITNESS

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IS OBSCURITY A MARK OF PROFUNDITY?

CONCERNING the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God declares—"The common people heard him gladly." The Saviour was no remote philosopher who gloried in speaking continually so that no one understood Him; on the contrary, He chose to speak in such a manner that it is recorded that the children thronged Him. The eagerness of the common people to hear Him can be attributed to several factors. As the Son of God, He spoke with a decisiveness and finality that was not characteristic of the scribes or pharisees. Of equal importance, however, is the consideration that He purposely spoke in such a plain manner that no one need be under any misapprehension as to what He meant. He did not engage in the futile speculations that were common to the interpreters of the law nor did He make a practice of expressing Himself in such an obscure way that no one could understand what He meant. For His parables which baffled the crowd, He provided the key to His disciples. Like Paul, the Master placed a high estimate upon "plainness of speech".

It is regrettable that even in some religious quarters there should be a premium placed upon obscurity of speech and thought. Surely no one would be so foolish as to mistake obscurity for profundity or to think that veiled expression is any indication of deep thought! We have heard some theological professors who seemed to glory in speaking in such a manner that no one could understand them. From a few plain remarks sprinkled throughout their muddled addresses it was obvious that they were busily engaged in peddling some old, out-worn heresy and had disguised the poor beggar under the dress clothes of obscurity. Such dubious speech may win the plaudits of others of the same turn of mind but it merits only the contempt of all honest men. We are sure that at the last day it will be clearly labelled of God and assigned to the place of its origin together with its advocates.

Have we all not heard some preachers who were specialists in obscurity? We would suggest an additional degree for such gentlemen: D.U.—Doctor of the Unintelligible. These persons can take a perfectly clear and simple point of the gospel and so dress it up in masquerade costume that no one could possibly recognize it. The cross of Calvary in their hands can become so bedecked with garlands of flowers that poor souls would never realize that, for salvation the Lord requires only simple faith in the One who hung there in the sinner's room and stead. Surely a terrible fate awaits those who thus deal with what is indispensable to the salvation of precious souls.

For ourselves, we never want to be accused of writing in an-obscure manner. Some of our readers write to complain of our bluntness but we are not perturbed for we would much prefer to be accused of journalistic forthrightness than to be labelled as a coward who did not dare express the unvarnished truth in a plain manner. Love to God and to the souls of men dictates that we deal plainly and clearly with eternal truth; if we cannot thus deal with it, we would prefer to be silent.

"WHY SHOULD ANYONE HEAR THE GOSPEL TWICE BEFORE OTHERS HEAR IT ONCE?" IS AN UNSCRIPTURAL, FALSE APPEAL

SOME beloved friends of mine use this appeal, but they ought not to use it. When they say, "Why should anyone hear the Gospel twice before others hear it once," they infer that it is wrong for anybody to stay at home and preach the Gospel as long as there is anybody in the world who has not heard the Gospel at least once. They infer that all other soul-winning works besides foreign missions, are second-rate and unworthy, but they are wrong.

Do you want to know why some people should hear the Gospel twice before others hear it once? Here are some reasons:

(1) Because very few people are ever saved when they hear the Gospel only once. If Peter and others had just preached the Gospel once in Jerusalem and then gone out to various parts of Judaea and preached once, and then gone to Samaria and preached it to every individual one time, etc., there would have been very few people saved. God's plan for soul winning is for persistent, repeated effort.

Suppose that all evangelists in the world should set out to preach only once in any given town, and so make sure that any lost sinner only heard the Gospel once. The truth is that there would be very few, if any, saved. That simply is not God's plan. It sounds very smart, but it is not in the Bible, and it is not good sense.

(2) Some people ought to hear the Gospel twice before others hear it once because we are commanded to begin where God has put us. The apostles were to preach the Gospel "beginning at Jerusalem". They had an obligation in Jerusalem that they did not have at Rome. The Gadarene demoniac was to go to his own home and people and preach to them. He had an obligation there by the direct command of Jesus Christ which he did not have elsewhere. It was not left to him to invent some smart theories, but to obey. If we obey, we will preach the Gospel again and again to the ones to whom the Lord Jesus sends us.

(3) Some people ought to hear the Gospel twice before others hear it once because of that clear leading of the Spirit. In my early ministry I became greatly concerned about a young woman who attended revival services in which I was engaged. She had been such a scoffer in the community and had so much influence for evil that I became deeply burdened for her. After I had spoken to her again and again, I spent almost one whole night in prayer for her. The next day, on three different occasions, I talked to her earnestly about her soul, as I had spoken to her a number of times before. On the last occasion she broke into tears and surrendered to Christ. good reason that one person should hear the Gospel twice good reason that one person should hear the Gospel twice before someone else heard it once.

I think that, rather unconsciously, good men have used this false slogan because that makes it seem more important to give money for the causes that they represent, instead of to causes somebody else promotes. Well, it may be a good money-raising slogan, but it is unscriptural and is a false appeal for the missionary enterprise.

—JOHN R. RICE, *The Sword of the Lord.*



English Bible Course

TWENTY-FIRST LECTURE
in the
ENGLISH BIBLE COURSE
TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

By Dr. C. D. Cole
March 22nd, 1956

GRACE UNITES
Ephesians 2:11-22

TONIGHT we are to be occupied with grace in its power to unite people in fellowship and service who otherwise would never in the world get together in the service of Jesus Christ. The Ephesian Church was composed both of Jews and Gentiles, the majority being of Gentile descent. The middle wall of partition had been broken down and there was no longer enmity between Jew and Gentile. Both having been reconciled to God by the death of Christ, they are reconciled to each other as they meet in Jesus Christ. Prior to the gospel era the enmity between Jews and Gentiles was mutually and increasingly bitter. The gulf was so wide and deep that it seemed impossible for it ever to be closed. Oh, in some instances, renegade Jews would adopt the ways of the Gentiles and in some cases Gentiles would become proselytes to the Jewish synagogue, but such occasional incidents left the gulf unchanged. Politically, the Jews were insignificant. But their religion gave them power and influence. With their Bible and a Messianic hope they felt themselves superior to the Gentiles whom they thought and spoke of as dogs, nicknaming them the uncircumcision, vile and unclean. And the Gentiles would respond with mutual enmity and bitterness. And about three years after this epistle was written, this enmity culminated in the Jewish war against the Romans, resulting in the most terrible suffering that has ever been recorded in human history.

Laws of Segregation

The occasion for this mutual enmity was God's choice of Abraham and his seed to be a separate and peculiar people. By the very fact that God chose Abraham and Israel put up a partition between them and the pagan nations. And the Mosaic legislation called for further separation. For almost two thousand years the Jews had been a distinct and separate people, the only people on earth with a divine revelation and with a Messianic hope. One of the Puritans says that the foundation for this partition wall was laid in the times of Abraham when circumcision was first instituted, and that the quarrel began there and then. And that the wall was made higher by the Mosaic legislation, and built still higher through the ages of the prophets until Jesus Christ came to abolish and break down this partition wall between

Jew and Gentile. The laws of segregation given to the Jews were primarily for their protection against the corruptions of heathen idolatry. But they turned this protection to an occasion for pride as though the choice of them was based on their worthiness and their superiority over the Gentiles. The Jews did not see the grace of God in His dealings with them. What should have humbled them made them proud, arrogant and hateful toward the Gentiles. Moses in delivering his farewell lecture to Israel just before they entered the promised land as recorded in the ninth chapter of Deuteronomy gives these words of caution: "Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven . . . Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee." More light is shed on this matter by the parable of the householder and his vineyard as told by the Saviour. He told of a householder who planted a vineyard and fenced it in and digged a winepress in it and built a tower and went into the far country leaving it in the care of husbandmen. And when time for the fruit drew near he sent his servants to receive his returns. These servants were rejected and mistreated. He sent other servants with the same results. And then finally he sent his son and he was killed and cast out of the vineyard. The lord of the vineyard destroyed the husbandmen and gave the vineyard into the care of others. And our Lord in making the application said that the kingdom of God would be taken from Israel and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And back in Isaiah five we read of this same vineyard which is said to be the house of Israel. The Lord asks, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" And He goes on to say that the vineyard brought forth only wild grapes, that He would take away the hedge and break down the wall. And all this is said by way of prediction of Israel's failure and in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah who would break down the fence and this wall of partition. All this shows that external privileges and blessings will not cure the wickedness of the human heart. The Jews with all their religious institutions and privileges were exactly like the Gentiles by nature — children of wrath. God Himself must circumcise the human heart if He is to have anybody who will love Him. For external privileges and advantages and opportunities make no change in human nature.

Thus far in the epistle to the Ephesians the apostle has been using the pronouns "you" and "we", sometimes addressing the Gentiles and sometimes the Jews, without speaking of their differences. But now the enmity is introduced for the specific purpose of showing how the two distinct and warring classes of humanity are brought together in one body. Their unity is a miracle of grace, and is attributed to the death of Christ which abolished the law of separation.

I.

The Middle Wall of Partition (11, 12)

Now in verses eleven and twelve, we have the religious conditions of the Gentiles described while the wall of separation is standing. He calls upon the Gentiles to remember that in time past they were Gentiles in the

flesh, without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. To summarize, the Gentiles were afar off while the Jews were nigh. This does not distinguish between them as to their nature but as to their external privileges and opportunities. Apart from an inward work of grace, the Jews with all their external blessings were no better than the Gentiles. The Mosaic legislation with all its institutions had isolated the Jews from all the pagan races and had kept within the chosen race the written revelation of God. The Jews were the only people on earth for nearly two thousand years with a revelation, a written revelation, a special revelation, from God. But the choice of the Jews was only the means to an end, something the Jews never did understand. With the coming of Christ, the need of these Mosaic institutions ceased. Their purpose had been served, and, as types, had been fulfilled in Christ. Christ was the true Priest, the true Sacrifice. His people were the true Israel of God. He and His were the true Temple. Jesus Christ came to found a kingdom in which descent from Abraham conferred no special privileges.

The List of Gentile Miseries

Paul makes an extended statement of the condition of the Gentiles prior to the coming of Christ. They are described as being Gentiles in the flesh. Now this does not refer to what they were by nature as unregenerate for in that respect they differed nothing from the Jews who were nigh. It rather means that the Gentiles were without the physical mark of an Israelite and they were nicknamed the Uncircumcision by the Jews, the natural Jews who had nothing but handmade circumcision in the flesh. And the natural Jew without heart circumcision had a circumcision in the flesh that availed nothing. In the past, the Gentiles were without Christ. That had not been the condition of the Jews externally speaking. Abraham, the father of the Hebrews, saw Christ's day and was glad. The Jews in the wilderness drank of that Rock: and that Rock was Christ. But the Gentiles had no contact with Christ, knew nothing of any Messiah. They were without Christ. They were also aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The scholars tell us that the word "alien" in the original points to a lapse from a former unity of fellowship. Universalism characterized the first gospel message that was ever recorded in the Word of God and delivered to man. In Genesis three fifteen it is written that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. No indication of any limitation in the work of the seed of the woman. The first race probation ended in the sin of Adam, resulting in the fall and ruin of the human race. The second race probation ended with the flood, and there was a new beginning with Noah. And the third race probation ended at the tower of Babel, and after that the circle was narrowed and God chose Abraham and his seed through which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Jews and Gentiles stood apart from Abraham to Christ. They never met until they met in Jesus Christ. The Gentiles were outside the pale of religious instructions provided for the Jews. They were also strangers from the covenants of promise. The promise was the promise of the Messiah. The covenant had been repeated to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to their descendants. And for that reason, they are called covenants of promise. But the promise was the promise of a Messiah. And the Gentiles were strangers to such a promise. In Galatians three

fourteen we read, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." And that covenant of promise made to Abraham was the covenant of which Jesus Christ became the surety and the fulfiller. Paul in Galatians says that the law, coming in four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul this covenant of promise that was made to Abraham that all the nations of the earth should be blessed through his seed, whose seed was Christ. The picture gets darker as we read that the Gentiles were without hope. Having no revelation from God, they could have no objective hope. Hope is something that has to be supported by faith and faith has to be grounded on the Word of God. And a people who do not have the Word of God can have neither faith nor hope. Oh, many of the heathen desired better things, but they had no assured hope of anything better. Mommson in his "History of Rome" says that in the days of Alexander the Great, it was a current saying that the best of all things was not to be born, and the next best was to die. In the Roman catacombs where millions of Christians dead were buried, there were inscriptions of hope of a resurrection and eternal glory on their tombs. But, no inscription of hope was ever found on the tombs of the heathen dead. Gentiles were without hope from Abraham to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Grecian philosophers would even advise suicide and the historians taught contempt for mankind. It is said that in Athens, in the times of Socrates, when a criminal was condemned to die, he would be allowed to spend the last few hours in gross sensual indulgence. So that the only sentiment the heathen knew was to, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." That is the condition of a people without a written revelation from God. Oh, how we ought to cherish this Book and hug it to our bosoms as the greatest of all prizes revealing to us a Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. But there is still another item in the list of miseries of the Gentiles. They were without God in the world. In the Greek, they are called atheists. And yet they had a multiplicity of gods. But those who have many gods do not have any God, no real true God. Paul teaches us that the heathen gods were idols and that an idol is nothing. And those who have many gods were atheists, without any God. This picture in the second chapter of Ephesians is even darker than that given of human nature in Romans one, and in Psalms fourteen and fifty-three.

II.

The Wall of Partition Broken Down (13-19)

Now in verses thirteen to nineteen, we have an altogether different picture. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Let the modernists talk as sweetly as they will about Jesus Christ, but there is no salvation in Christ apart from the shedding of His blood. It is not Christ in a manger, or Christ as the miracle worker, or Christ on a throne, that brings salvation, but the Christ of the cross — not just any cross, but Christ who died vicariously on a cross. Oh, they tell us, that the preposition means "in behalf of", or "for the benefit of others". Yes! but how could Christ's death be in my behalf or for my credit if it were not in my room and in my stead? Yes, we are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Christ was on the cross to satisfy divine justice that cannot be dispensed with in salvation. Someone, maybe it was Adolph Monod, said "Save the law first, and then you

can talk about saving me." God's law is saved in the salvation of sinners, and His law would not be saved if somebody did not bear the penalty of a broken law. By His blood, Christ effected a double reconciliation. He reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God, and also to one another. All in Christ are friends not enemies. If we love Him, we will love His people. John said that one of the evidences that he knew that he had passed from death unto life was that he loved the brethren. Friends in Christ Jesus. Christ made peace by His death on the cross. By His death on the cross, He satisfied the law and abolished it as a way of life. In the Colossian letter Paul says that He took the law that was against us, out of the way, nailing it to His cross. He abolished the law of commandments by suffering the penalty they imposed against His people. On the cross, He bare the sins of many and now lives to make intercession for them. I believe it was R. W. Dale in answering the question why Christ had so little to say about His death, replied, "Christ did not come to preach the gospel. He came primarily that we might have a gospel to preach." He did preach the gospel, but this does not have reference to His preaching the gospel while He was on earth. Christ made peace and then came and preached peace to both Jews and Gentiles during His earthly ministry. His ministry was almost entirely limited to the Jews. He said while He was on earth, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And when He sent the twelve out to preach He said, "Go rather, or only, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But after His death, when He had made a gospel to be preached, He came back to this world long enough to commission His church to preach the gospel to every creature and to make disciples of all nations. The ministry of the church is Christ's ministry. And for our encouragement He has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Christ abolished the law as a covenant of works by meeting its condition, and He abolished the ceremonial law by fulfilling its types and shadows. It was the ceremonial law primarily that constituted that partition wall between Jews and Gentiles. In the temple, there was a court for the Gentiles. And Josephus tells us of an inscription that warned Gentiles not to go beyond that wall. But when Jesus Christ died on the cross, that partition wall came down. And when He died upon Calvary, the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy place was rent in twain from top to bottom, indicating that peace had been made for any sinner who comes to Him through Jesus Christ. Nobody is shut out in this day of grace who comes to God through Jesus Christ. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." To trust the Lord Jesus Christ is to find ourselves in the presence of the Father.

Figures of Unity

Now to illustrate this unity between Jew and Gentile, the apostle uses a series of figures. The first figure is that of marriage by which two individuals become one. The Jew and Gentile are made one new man in Christ—that He might make of the twain one new man in Himself. The next figure is that of a commonwealth. He says, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints." The saints under the New Covenant are what the Jews were under the Old Covenant. They are a separated and a consecrated people, separated from the world and consecrated to God. The saints

under the New Covenant constitute a spiritual kingdom in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in Christ Jesus. Another figure the apostle employs is that of a household or family. God's people since the coming of Christ are a holy family in which there are no fleshly distinctions. There are no such class distinctions as Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, master and slave, at the Father's table. In the Father's house, one is Master and all ye are brethren. The greatest is the one who voluntarily makes himself a servant of all. There is no discriminating legislation in the Father's house.

III.

The One Building (20-22)

Now in verses twenty to twenty-two, the figure is changed again, and we have the one building, or the one temple. He says, "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." The old temple at Jerusalem is forever gone. It will never return under the favour of God. But there is a better temple, and the chief corner stone in that temple is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets in their preaching. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is the only foundation and in this foundation, He is the chief corner stone. And here we have the idea of unity between Jew and Gentile. The corner stone holds the two walls together, so that Jew and Gentile are one in the temple of God. The temple of God is composed of all classes united in Christ by the grace of God. Now in all these figures the apostle has the church in mind. As an institution the church is represented as a new man. Jew and Gentile joined together as the bride of Christ. The church is a commonwealth with all citizens united in Christ. It is also a household or a family on earth. And it is also the temple of God. Now in all these figures we have the church as an abstract institution, just as we speak of two individuals made one in marriage, or as we speak of a commonwealth, or a family, or a temple. Now when any of these institutions employed as figures of the church becomes concrete and operative, it has to be in a particular husband and wife, a particular commonwealth, like the commonwealth of *Kentucky*, one particular family, or some particular temple. When we speak of a husband and wife being one, we do not mean that all the husbands are shaped into one big husband and that all the wives formed into one big wife. When we speak of a commonwealth, we do not make all the nations into one big commonwealth. When we speak of the household or the family, we do not mold all the families into one big family. Each particular family is the whole family. Each particular church is the whole church. In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul said, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place." But that could not be said if the church is one big universal something with members scattered over all the earth. The whole church could not come together on earth. When we say the whole church does something, it must be the whole church located on the corner of Jarvis and Gerrard, or the whole church in some other location. If we want to use scriptural language and talk about what the whole church as an institution is doing over the world, we say "all the churches are doing thus and so." So speaking abstractly, we may say that the church is a temple. But speaking concretely, each par-

ticular church is a temple. The only temple that God has in this gospel age is the church made up of individual, born-again members, indwelt individually and collectively by the Holy Spirit.

The Inner Temple

Verse twenty-one is rendered in the American Standard Version like this: "In whom each several building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." Each church is a spiritual building of living stones, growing into an holy temple in the Lord. There are two words for temple in the Greek New Testament. And the word used here is not the word that includes all the buildings of the temple, scattered over the temple, mountain, including courts, porticos, treasury, barracks, sanctuary and all. The word in our text is the word which means the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, the dwelling-place of God. So each particular church is a little sanctuary where God dwells in the person of the Holy Spirit. And so in verse twenty-two we read that the Ephesian was such a church. "In whom ye also . . ." You Ephesians are builded together for an habitation, not a part of an habitation, for an habitation of God, through the Spirit. In first Corinthians three sixteen Paul says to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The only way we can give glory to God through the church as an institution is to be faithful and loyal to the church as concrete and operative in the local assembly to which we may be fortunate enough to belong. I do not know of any other way to give glory to God through the church except to be a faithful member of some particular temple, indwelt by the Holy Ghost.

The Editor's Corner

The Annual Letter:

The announcement on the back page reminds our readers that this is your last opportunity to send your gift to THE GOSPEL WITNESS if you would have it reach us before the end of the fiscal year. If you have not already responded, send along the letter to-day! THE GOSPEL WITNESS offering here in Jarvis Street was a very large one, and showed no decrease over last year, so that we have much for which to praise God.

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

For some weeks now we have not mentioned Dr. Shields' book, *The Doctrines of Grace* in these pages. Despite our silence on this volume, there has been a good, steady sale that is gratifying. If you have not received a copy of this fine work, send \$2.50, and we will mail a copy to you.

Seminary Prospectus

Any young people who feel called to the Lord's service should write for the forthcoming Seminary Prospectus. It contains a detailed description of the courses offered in Toronto Baptist Seminary, and other necessary details. Write to-day to The Registrar, 337 Jarvis St., Toronto 2, Ontario.

CONTROVERSY

MANY religious persons have a dread of controversy, and wish truth to be stated without reference to those who hold the opposite errors. Controversy and a bad spirit are, in their estimation, synonymous terms, and strenuously to oppose what is wrong is considered as contrary to Christian meekness. Those who hold this opinion seem to overlook what every page of the New Testament lays before us. In all the history of our Lord Jesus Christ, we never find him out of controversy. From the moment he entered on the discharge of his office in the synagogue of Nazareth, until he expired on the cross, it was an uninterrupted scene of controversy. Nor did he, with all the heavenly meekness which in him shone so brightly, treat error and truth without a reference to those who held them, or study to avoid giving its proper appellation to those corruptions in doctrine or practice that endangered the interests of immortal souls. His censures were not confined to doctrines, but included the abettors of false principles themselves.

And as to the apostles, their epistles are generally controversial. Most of them were directly written for the express purpose of vindicating truth and opposing error, and the authors of heresies do not escape with an abstract condemnation of their false doctrine. Paul again and again most indignantly denounces the conduct of opposers of the gospel, and by name points out those against whom he cautions his brethren. When Hymenaeus and Alexander erred concerning the faith, and when he delivered them unto Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme, he did not compliment them as amiable and learned persons. Even the apostle, who treats most of love, and who possessed so much of that spirit which was eminently manifested in the divine Master, does not avoid controversy; nor in controversy does he study to avoid severity of censure on the opposers of the truth.

In the examples of opposing error left on record for our imitation, we perceive nothing of that frigid spirit of indifference which smiles on the corrupters of the Word of God, and shuns to call heresy by its proper name. With what holy indignation do the apostles denounce the subtle machinations of the enemies of the gospel! In vain shall we look among those faithful servants of the Lord for anything to justify that trembling reserve which fears to say decidedly that truth is truth, or that error is error. In what style, indeed, should perversions of the truth of God be censured? Ought they to be treated as mere matters of opinion on which we may innocently and safely differ? Or ought they to be met in a tone of solemn, strong, and decided disapprobation? Paul warned Christians against men who arose from among themselves, "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them," and instead of complimenting false teachers in his day, denounced an angel from heaven on the supposition of his preaching another gospel. And if an apostle was withstood to the face when he was to be blamed, are the writings of those who subvert the gospel to be passed without rebuke?

While a spirit of lukewarmness and indifference to truth is advancing under the mask of charity and liberality, there is a loud call on all Christians to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel," to present a firm and united phalanx of opposition to error under every name, from whatever

quarter it may approach, and not to "stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up; to make their land desolate." (Jer. xviii. 15), "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Should believers become unfaithful to their trust, and be seduced to abandon their protest against false doctrines, they may

gain the approbation of the world; but what will this avail when compared with the favour of God? But if with prayer to God, in the use of the appointed means, they contend earnestly for the truth, then they may expect the gracious fulfilment of that blessed promise, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."

—HALDANE

RELIGION IN RUSSIA

Each passing-day seems to bring forth new and conflicting reports about the state of religion in the Soviet Union. One article recently commended itself to us by reason of its careful analysis. It appeared in "The Globe and Mail" of March 26 in the column ON THE RECORD by columnist Dorothy Thompson. This column is released by Bell Syndicate Inc.

—Editor, THE GOSPEL WITNESS

New York:—A delegation of the National Council of Churches (Protestant) has recently returned from the Soviet Union and some of its members are reporting their findings.

Charles Coolidge Parlin in the Chicago Daily News Service declares that religion is not dead in Russia, but that the church lives and carries on its work. Church members even outnumber the Communist Party, he reports, with the Orthodox Church alone numbering 50,000,000 to the Communist Party's 6,000,000.

I do not take issue with Mr. Parlin's facts and figures, but I believe one can draw very misleading conclusions from them.

Before the revolution, and with the exception of a few Protestant sects and the Moslems of the East, all Russians, almost without exception, were Orthodox Christians. Even when they questioned certain orthodox dogmas and practices, as did Leo Tolstoy and Peter Kropotkin, they shared with Dostoevsky the conviction that the social regeneration of Russia would come through the application of the teachings of Christ. If then, today, Russian orthodoxy embraces only some 22 per cent of the Russian population, as Mr. Parlin reports, there has been a tremendous falling away.

But far more important than the numbers of enrolled believers is their status. What do they count for? How widespread is their influence? My own research into this question indicated that it is practically nil.

* * *

Russia is organized in a caste system. Even the base of this pyramidal hierarchy is not wide. Six or seven million Communists are less than 4 per cent of the estimated population, but they are the only ones who count. Their number is designedly limited. It is hard to join the Communist Party and not difficult to be dropped out of it. Thus less than 4 per cent direct not only Russian political and social life but all industry, commerce, education, art, and culture. And they are all, and by compulsion, atheist.

Suppose the churches are crowded. What does it mean?

Before the revolution there were 600 churches in Moscow, which was then a far smaller city than it is today. Now there are 50 churches, the rest having been razed, turned into museums or put to other uses. There are enough believing Christians among 7,000,000 Muscovites

to support 50 churches and even pay their priests relatively well. But the church exists by having come to terms with the atheistic regime, confining itself exclusively to matters not of this world or to such teachings as the regime approves. The Baptists, for instance, impose a ban on tobacco and alcohol, and since tobacco is expensive and communism itself is fighting alcoholism, it welcomes co-operation in such matters.

But a Christian criticism of social and political actions does not exist. No churchman, in the name of Christ, has condemned the mercilessness of Soviet justice, the slave labor camps, nor dared to challenge the official atheism.

* * *

In early revolutionary days the church was cruelly persecuted as the ally of capitalism and exploitation, and God and Christ openly, officially and foully blasphemed. The church, in those days, produced tens of thousands of Christian martyrs. Beside the shrine of the Iberian virgin a sign proclaimed "Religion Is the Opiate of the People".

Such persecution has ended. Today the regime, having effectively broken the power of the church, has no aversion to whatever "opiate" comfort it may furnish the dumb, driven masses.

But the end of the persecution is not a victory for Christianity. It registers, instead, a victory for atheistic communism, that today can tolerate the church because it has broken the sword of its militancy and reduced it to effective impotence.

The day that any churchman dares say to the secular power, "In the name of God desist!" I will believe in a Christian revival in the Soviet Union.

But I fear that something worse has happened to the church than persecution. That is accommodation. And if such articles as Mr. Parlin's (though I am sure that was not his purpose) awaken the comfortable belief that Christianity and communism are compatible and can co-exist as equals, a serious blow will be dealt to those who believe that Christianity is more than keeping churches open — or even filled — but is a belief and a way of life, that permeate every attitude toward the meaning of life and the functions of society.

(Released by Bell Syndicate Inc.)

—The Globe and Mail

The Spiritual Implications of the Resurrection

ONE of the best substantiated events in human history is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. No other event of that day in which he lived has the eyewitness testimony of so many trustworthy persons, so that the careful investigator is forced to accept this stupendous occurrence as an historical fact. Down through the ages there echoes and re-echoes the angelic voice heard by the perplexed women at the empty tomb: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

The Bible clearly teaches that the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead has certain definite implications to the believer. We are told that we are declared just upon the basis of His return from the tomb in triumph. Indeed, Paul states that our faith is groundless, and our hope for eternity is baseless if it can be shown that the Son of God never emerged from Joseph's cavern.

In Paul's epistle to the Colossians, the great apostle sets forth for the believer certain spiritual implications of the resurrection of Christ. There he says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. 3:1, 2). The resurrection, he says, should draw the saint's eye Godward, and cause him to live in another sphere that is unknown to the unbeliever.

What does Paul mean by prefacing his teaching by the words: "If ye then be risen with Christ?" He is clearly declaring that the spiritual attitude which he is about to describe is possible only to those who are saved. Often in the Word of God the regeneration of the believer is pictured as a resurrection. For instance in Ephesians we are told that "even when we were dead in sins, (he) hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Thus here in Colossians the apostle desires to make it very clear that spiritual blessings are available only to those who have been resurrected from their sins. It would be futile to exhort a sinner to set his mind upon things above for his mind naturally has found a lower level.

On the basis of the believer's identification with Christ in His resurrection, we are told to "seek those things which are above". What a sad commentary even upon renewed human nature! We must be urged to seek those things that are associated with the One to Whom we owe everything! Even small children are more grateful to earthly benefactors than are we to the One Who has rescued us from the pit of hell.

We need to remind ourselves continually that our position in Christ is secure and eternally unchangeable if we are saved. At the same time we are apt to be living at a poor dying rate that "heart religion" is at a low ebb. As an antidote to this malady, Paul points us to the fact that since we are raised with Christ, we should seek the things that are above, that our experimental condition may conform more closely with our exalted position.

This exhortation could have many practical applications and probably some have already arisen in the mind of the reader. Does the contemplation of our association

with the risen, glorified Christ, not serve to curb the power of sin in our lives? Does this thought not cause us to desire to walk apart from the beggarly elements of the world? Is this not the highest scriptural grounds upon which to plead the truth of separation from worldliness?

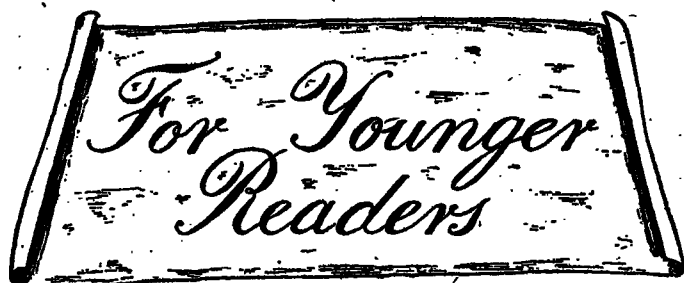
Recognizing that the heart is the source of the trouble, Paul further urges "set your affections on things above". If the mind alone contemplates these elevating thoughts, there may be little change in conduct or motive. The apostle therefore probes to the very depths of the problem and lays his finger upon the fly in the ointment — man's heart. He knows that the Biblical description of the heart of man, regenerate and unregenerate, is that it is deceitful and desperately wicked. On earth or the thought of earthly things there is no help for this pressing ill — "Set your affections on things above".

No man will ever rise above the level of the things that occupy his affections. If his inner being is continually dwelling upon base thoughts and desires, his whole life will be dragged down to that level. If he could soar on eagle's wings, then his affections must be on those things that are far above himself. The Psalmist, knowing this, declared, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help". A view of the plains and valleys of earth about could not help his spirit; if he were to be blessed his eyes must be upon higher things. Whenever we think of the resurrection of Christ we rejoice to recall that it is an historical fact, and we will strenuously oppose any who would deny this. At the same time we know full well that this spiritual implication arises out of the historical foundation and makes it incumbent upon every believer in the light of the resurrection to live upon a higher level.

A QUESTIONABLE INGREDIENT OF POPULARITY

"One-third voice and personal presence, one-third selection of sensational topics, and one-third heresy," according to the *Boston Journal*, are the ingredients for making "a popular preacher". We are very much afraid that this is true in certain regions; and we are quite sure that some young preachers think so. The last third is the easiest ingredient to obtain, and so they make it secure. Any pretender can be heterodox: you need neither study, nor think, nor pray in order to surpass all others in this line. Notoriety can be gained at once by just being singular, and setting up to know better than those around you. Everybody will talk about you at once, and you can impress yourself upon their memories by saying something very cutting and impudent, and as nearly blasphemous as you dare to make it. But is this a noble ambition? Can this be the course of a man of God? We think not. Perish the popularity which comes by any doctrine but the truth, or by any means but that of solemn, earnest well-doing! Empty sensationalism perishes like the green herb, and heresy dies like a noxious weed; but the faithful preacher of the word shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

—C. H. SPURGEON



THE RAVEN OF WINSLADE QUARRY

Winslade is a small town in England, famous for its stone quarries. Some years ago an incident occurred there which strikingly illustrates the providence of God. The men were at work in the lower part of the quarry. Directly above was a great mass of over-hanging rock. Dinner-time came; but just as they were getting ready for it a raven flew down, picked up the little parcel which contained the dinner of one of the miners and flew away with it. The man of course did not want to lose his dinner, so he ran after the bird, thinking that she would soon have to stop and lay down her heavy burden, and then he would get his dinner again.

His companions wished to see the fun, and they joined in the chase. The bird was stronger than they thought, and led them a long way off before she alighted. But at last she flew down the side of a steep and dangerous precipice and laid the bundle on a projecting rock. She seemed to feel she was safe there, and so she was, for no one was willing to risk his life by attempting to go down that perilous place. Then the men gave up the chase and went back to the quarry. On reaching the spot they found to their surprise that a great mass of rock had fallen down just where they would have been eating their dinner. It would have crushed them to death if the raven had not come down and taken them away in time to save them. Thus God made use of that bird to save the lives of those men. Here we see the wonderful working of God's providence.

—*The Life of Our Lord* by Newton.

BRAVE CHARLIE

If we have courage to refuse to do what is wrong, we shall be rewarded for it, either here or hereafter.

Two little boys were walking along a village street one day, when they stopped before the garden connected with a gentleman's house, and gazed with admiration on the many beautiful flowers that were growing there. Presently the smaller of the two boys exclaimed; "O, how I wish I had one or two of those beautiful roses to take home to my sick sister! Every day she says she wished she could see some flowers again."

"Then, why don't you take some of them, you little goose," said the other boy. "Here, I am taller than you, and I can reach over the fence. I'll get some for both of us."

"No, no, Tim," said the little boy, seizing his arm; "I wouldn't steal even a flower, if I never had one in the world; but I'll go in and ask the lady for a rose for Ellen."

"Well, you'll only get sent away for your pains," said the older boy; "for my part, I shall help myself."

But just as Tim was reaching over the fence, and had seized a branch of the beautiful roses, the gardener spied him, and dropping a basket that was in his hand, he rushed after the boy and caught him. He told him that if he ever found him doing that again, he would see that the boy was punished for taking things that did not belong to him.

In the meantime little Charlie had gone up the steps and rung the door-bell. The door was opened immediately by a kind-looking lady.

"Please, Ma'am, will you give me a rose or two for my sick sister?" asked Charlie.

"Yes, indeed, my little man," said the lady. "I have been sitting at the window, and I have heard your conversation with the boy who wished you to steal some of my roses, and I'm very glad to see that you would not steal 'even a flower'. Now come with me, and I will cut you a beautiful bunch of roses." Then she asked him about his mother and sister, and told him to come and get some flowers whenever his sister wanted them.

After this she went to see his sick sister and mother, and helped them in many ways. She kept up her interest in Charlie, and when he had done going to school she got him a good position and remained his friend for life.

If we do right, God will surely reward and bless us.

—*The Light of the World*.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 20 Second Quarter Lesson 2 April 8, 1956

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

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Lesson Text: Luke 16:19-31.

Golden Text: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."—Luke 16:31.

The parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son present the Gospel in the form of an appeal. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, if indeed it be a parable, contains a solemn warning for all who do not obey the Gospel, and we must not forget that the Gospel is a command, as well as an invitation (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; 17:30). Christ lifted the veil and gave to His followers a glimpse of the life beyond the grave, the comfort of the blessed and the anguish of the lost.

People dare not trifle with God's ordinances. Urge pupils to close with God's offer of mercy while they may (Isa. 55:6, 7; John 3:36). The solemn truths herein disclosed show the necessity of the death of Christ. He alone could save us from eternal death. The language used in Scripture to describe hell and the condition of the lost may be figurative, but if the figure be terrible, what about the reality?

The rich man lived in selfish ease and luxury, although this was not the reason for his condemnation. He was justifying himself, and trusting in the high esteem in which men held him. God was not in all his thoughts (Psa. 10:4). On the other hand, Lazarus trusted in the Lord; his name means "God is my help".

God cares for His own; He giveth His beloved sleep (Psa. 127:2; 116:15). Angels were called to convey Lazarus to the unseen world of the dead. The rich man was not so honoured; the record merely states: "The rich man also died, and was buried."

The place to which the dead were escorted is called in the Old Testament Sheol, and in the New Testament, Hades

(Greek for "hell", verse 23). Before the resurrection of Christ this place was divided into two sections, separated by "a great gulf". The saints were in one section, called Paradise, or Abraham's Bosom, whereas the wicked dead were in the other section. After His death our Lord descended into Hades (Eph. 4:8-10), and "took captivity captive" as He ascended into heaven, when He carried with Him the spirits of the just. Since His ascension, Paradise is in heaven (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:1-4), and those who die in the Lord go immediately into His presence (2 Cor. 5:8).

The anguish and hopelessness of the former rich man are vividly portrayed. He was conscious, retained full possession of the just. Since His ascension, Paradise is in heaven (Luke tense pain of some sort. His prayer for mercy was too late. He should have sought the Lord when he had the opportunity. His prayer for his brothers was also too late. Moreover, they were rejecting the means of light which was open to them — the Old Testament Scriptures.

What a sad commentary upon the darkness of men's souls we find in verse 31! Many today are like the evil brothers; they will not believe, even although Christ has risen from the dead to prove His claim as the Son of God and as the Saviour of men.

The eternal destiny of men is determined by their attitude to Christ while they are in this life. Urge the scholars to accept Christ to-day and to live for Him, and then they will be assured of living with Christ for ever in eternal blessedness.

Daily Bible Readings

- April 2—In Paradise with Christ Luke 23:39-43
- April 3—To be with Christ is Far Better Phil. 1:12-26
- April 4—Present with the Lord 2 Cor. 5:1-10
- April 5—Life and Immortality 2 Tim. 1:3-12
- April 6—Power of Death Destroyed Heb. 2:10-18
- April 7—The Keys of Death Rev. 1:9-16
- April 8—The New Heaven Rev. 21:1-8

Suggested Hymns

What though the accuser roar!
 For ever with the Lord!
 In the land of fadeless day.
 There's a land that is fairer than day.
 By Jordan's stormy banks I stand.
 Hark, hark, my soul!

TRYING TO BELIEVE

IT IS a common thing to hear an anxious enquirer say, "I will try to believe." Now, this means, "I do not believe what God says, and I intend to remain an unbeliever, unless I get something more than his bare word to convince me." Trying to believe generally means persevering in giving God the lie. It is a sort of hard-hearted confession of present unbelief, and a cunning excuse for abiding in it. It insinuates that God is asking of us more than he ought, and we are generously doing our best to oblige him; or else that what he has to say is so like a falsehood that we shall require a deal of explanation before we can accept it. Ask your own brother how he would like to hear you say to him, "I will try to believe you." You use no earthly friend in a manner so insulting.

—Canon Hoare met with a man who said he was trying to believe, and he pictured him as lying at the bottom of a deep pit. The Lord Jesus was at the top, and the man was trying to climb up to him. "You will never reach him," said the canon. Month after month the man was still *trying*, but he had come no further; and he would never have come further if he had not altered his method, and just trusted Jesus to lift him out from where he was. If this man could have climbed to Christ by his own trying he would have been out of the pit, and needed no Saviour. We set Jesus aside when we think of doing anything in our own strength; ay, even when we talk of trying to believe in him. True faith comes by

a conviction of the truth, and not by an effort of the will: it is therefore to be gained by yielding up the mind rather than by exercising any mental strength. A man does not try to recline, nor make an effort to fall, nor labour to learn. We mistake believing when we talk of it as some great and difficult achievement at which all must try and try again. No, dear heart, believe without trying. May the Lord win thy confidence at once!

If a man really wishes to believe anything, he hears about it, and when he is convinced that it is true he believes it. Thus faith cometh by hearing, not by trying. We hear the gospel; we know it is true; we believe it, and live. We hear of Jesus; we are sure he can save us; we trust him, and he saves us. What is there to *try* at in this?
 —C. H. SPURGEON

The Keystone of the Arch

It is no exaggeration to say that the whole fabric of Christianity, and all Christ's worth as a witness to God, stand or fall with the fact of His resurrection. If you pull out that keystone, down comes the arch. There may still be fair carving on some of the fallen fragments, but it is no longer an arch that spans the great gulf, and has a firm pier on the other side. Strike away the resurrection and you fatally damage the witness of Jesus. You cannot strike the supernatural out of Christianity, and keep the natural. The two are so inextricably woven together that to wrench away the one lacerates the other, and makes it bleed, even to death. If Christ be not risen we have nothing to preach, and you have nothing to believe. Our preaching and your faith are alike vain: ye are yet in your sins. Grace and peace come from faith in the "first begotten from the dead".

—ALEXANDER MACLAREN

All sinners out of Christ are under the power of Satan. They belong unto that kingdom whereof he is the prince and ruler. However men may flatter themselves that they are free, as the Jews of old did, yet if they are not freed by an interest in the death of Christ, they are in bondage unto this beastly-tyrant, and as he works effectually in them here, he will razingly inflict vengeance on them hereafter.
 —JOHN OWEN

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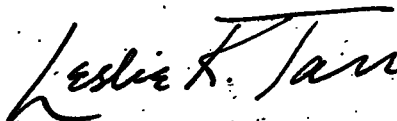
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LESLIE K. TARR, EDITOR.

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