

# The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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## A Needed Reformation

A. W. Tozer

**A** GREAT deal can be learned about people by observing whom and what they imitate.

The weak, for instance, imitate the strong; never the reverse. The poor imitate the rich. The self-assured are imitated by the timid and uncertain, the genuine is imitated by the counterfeit, and people all tend to imitate what they admire.

By this definition power today lies with the world, not with the church, for it is the world that initiates and the church that imitates what she has initiated. By this definition the church admires the world. The church is uncertain and looks to the world for assurance. A weak church is aping a strong world to the amusement of intelligent sinners and to her own everlasting shame.

Should any reader be inclined to dispute these conclusions I ask him to take a look around. Look into almost any evangelical publication, browse through our bookstores, attend our youth gatherings, drop in on one of our summer conferences or glance at the church page of any of our big city newspapers. The page that looks most like the theatrical page is the one devoted to the churches, usually appearing on Saturday. And the similarity is not accidental, but organic.

This servile imitation of the world is for the most part practiced by those churches that claim for themselves a superior degree of spirituality and boldly declare their adherence to the letter of the Word. In fact, neither the old-line ritualistic churches nor those that are openly modernistic have been guilty of such flagrant world-worship as the gospel churches have.

The arguments brought forward in defense of this gross sellout are so thin as to need no refutation. They are but a lame effort to excuse a procedure that has been adopted from weakness and uncertainty, never from vision or spiritual enlightenment.

Once the prophet, the apostle, the reformer, saw a vision or heard a voice, or in later times had an encounter with God through the Holy Scriptures and went out firm and sure to declare the Word of the Lord. Now we watch the world to get our next cue and when we have been tipped off as to what our latest "burden of the Word of

the Lord" shall be we rush out and breathlessly declare the expected message as if we had been with Moses on Mount Sinai. It takes a war, an election, race tensions or an outbreak of juvenile crime to afford subject matter for our modern prophets. Not the Word of the Lord, but *Life* and *Time* and the roving radio commentator set the pace and determine our preachment. The world always moves first and the church comes meekly after, trying pitifully to look and sound like her model and at the same time maintain a weak religious testimony by inserting a dutiful commercial now and then to the effect that everybody ought to accept Jesus and be born again.

Secularized fundamentalism is a horrible thing, a very horrible thing, much worse in my opinion than honest modernism or outright atheism. It is all a kind of heart heterodoxy existing along with creedal orthodoxy. Its true master may be discovered by noting whom it admires and imitates. The test is, *Whom do these Christians want to be like? Who excites them and makes their eyes shine with pleasure? Whom do they go forth to see? Whose techniques do they borrow?* Never the meek soul, never the godly saint, never the self-effacing cross-carrying follower of Jesus. Always the big wheel, the celebrity, the star, the VIP—provided of course that these persons have given a "testimony" in favor of Christ somewhere in the midst of the fleshly, vain world of artificial lights and synthetic sounds which they inhabit.

The sad thing about all this is its effect upon a new generation of Christians. Whole companies of young people are growing up who have known nothing else but the degenerate brand of Christianity now passing for the religion of Christ. They are the innocent victims of a condition which they did not help to create. Not they but a spiritually emasculated leadership must answer for their plight.

What is the remedy? It is simple. A radical return to New Testament Christianity both in message and in method. A bold repudiation of the world and a taking up of the cross. Such a return on any wide scale will mean a reformation of vast proportion. Some that are now

high will be brought low and many of the humble will be exalted. It will mean a moral revolution. How many are willing to pay the price?

—*The Alliance Weekly*

### APING THE WORLD

This week's front page article, "A Needed Reformation"—(reprinted from *The Alliance Weekly*) should be read by every believer. It points out a great weakness in evangelical ranks — a weakness that will leave in its trail spiritually-dwarfed infants, and sinners who have been entertained but not converted. The servants of the living God have been called, not to entertain sinners on the road to the lake of fire, but to pull them out of the fire.

Just today we read that some evangelical film organization has given some "Christian Oscars" (!!) to various evangelical film producers, actors and actresses. This is but one example of an increasing tendency that is playing havoc with gospel churches. Dr. Tozer has sounded a much-needed note. May other voices be raised to call the churches back to the scriptural pattern, and to a dependence upon the Spirit of God!

### CONFORMITY OF CREED AND CONDUCT

IT IS impossible to overemphasize the importance of a proper belief about the great truths of the Christian gospel. Let others despise doctrine if they will but we prefer to have scriptural views about all subjects upon which God has spoken. We are not enamoured with the slogan that declares that one belief is as good as another. Since only one can be true, we desire supremely to find that one and to propagate it with all the energy which the Lord gives us.

Furthermore, we will vigorously defend scriptural teaching. Should any arise who, by their declaration, actions and writings, indicate that they are enemies of the Christian faith, the Christian must not hesitate as to the course which he should take. Only one course lies open — speaking up for the Lord who bought you and protest the betrayal of the faith by those who are nominally its representatives. The believer must speak against those modern religious teachers who from "Christian" pulpits seek to undermine the Christian gospel.

At the same time, evangelicals must not tramp underfoot common ethics and morals. In our zeal for the gospel, we must never act with an utter disregard of the full truth. Some teacher of error may be entirely wrong and it may be our duty to expose him but, in so doing, we must be careful to represent him correctly. The end does not justify the means in these matters any more than it does in any realm of life.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS cannot be accused of dealing softly with teachers of error nor shall we ever skirt these issues. Our weapons, however, have been and shall be the facts. If these are not sufficient, we shall say nothing. Any Christian may disagree with our exposing error but no one will be able to complain of a lack of facts to prove our contention.

Our conduct will conform to our creed.

## The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields  
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### VOLUME 35; NUMBER 1

The numbers which appear beneath the masthead on the front page of THE GOSPEL WITNESS probably pass unnoticed by our readers. To those who are associated with the paper, however, they represent current history. With this issue, THE GOSPEL WITNESS begins its thirty-fifth year of publication and so is designed Volume 35; Number 1.

As we enter this thirty-fifth year in the printed ministry, we pause to praise God for His faithfulness and blessing upon the paper. His care during the thirty-three years that Dr. Shields was editor of THE GOSPEL WITNESS causes us to look to the future with anticipation of even greater blessings.

### PERFECTLY SATISFIED!

Seeing God we shall be satisfied. With all lesser joys the eye is not satisfied with seeing, but to look on Him will be enough. Enough for mind and heart, wearied and perplexed with partial knowledge and imperfect love; enough for eager desires, which thirst, after all draughts from other streams; enough for will, chafing against lower lords and yet longing authoritative control; enough for all my being — to see God. Here we can rest after all wanderings, and say, "I travel no further; here will I dwell for ever — *I shall be satisfied.*"

—ALEXANDER MACLAREN

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## The Salvation of the Religious

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday evening, September 16th, 1923  
(Stenographically Reported)

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

—Romans 10:1-4.

THE Apostle Paul was a model preacher. If ever a man clearly apprehended the character of his commission, and the purpose of his being put into the ministry, it was the Apostle to the Gentiles. And he tells us in this chapter what his master passion is, what his deepest desire, and his unceasing prayer. *He is anxious that somebody should be saved.* I suppose the Apostle Paul never preached without a clear recognition of that fact, that people were by nature the children of wrath, and that they all needed to be saved. I am afraid there is a good deal of preaching to-day that does not even recognize that men need salvation. It is assumed that people will grow out of sin just as they grow out of the measles, and other childhood diseases. We are all being evolved to a higher state; and some time or another we, or if not we ourselves, our successors, will arrive! In this view sin is not a matter to be greatly concerned about, nor is it a power from which we need to be delivered. Not so did the apostolic preachers view the problems of life. Paul said that he desired above all things that his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, might be saved. Now that is the church's task. That is every preacher's business: no matter how often he preaches; no matter where or to whom he preaches; he should so preach that his hearers may be saved. And so I pass that verse by this evening, with the simple remark that I take my stand there to-night as always. I have no other object in addressing you this evening than to seek by the blessing of God the salvation of somebody here. That is the one thing we desire for you; that is the one thing we have been praying for in this service — that somebody may be saved, not entertained, not merely instructed; but that they should be saved.

And another simple observation: The Apostle Paul recognized that there were a great many religious people, who were indeed exceedingly religious, but who were not saved; for he is speaking to a class of people who "have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." He is not now speaking particularly to the "lewd fellows of the baser sort" — those who are openly profligate, or flagrantly wicked; he is speaking to the respectable religious folk, who are religiously zealous, but who are not saved. He says he is anxious that these religious people

should be saved. I think we need to recognize that fact to-day, that there are thousands upon thousands of religious people who are not saved. They may be members of churches; they may be busily engaged in the erection of churches, in the maintenance of churches; they may be liberal givers to the cause of missions; they may religiously observe the ordinances of the church; they may busily engage themselves from night until morning in various forms of religious activities — and yet not be saved. That was characteristic of the people concerning whom the Apostle Paul wrote. They attended the temple; they were faithful in attendance upon the synagogues; they read the law; they observed, externally at least, the requirements of the law; they were exceedingly zealous for the faith of their fathers; and they lived outwardly circumspect lives. But notwithstanding all that they were not saved. Now if you are a church member this evening, do not say, "The preacher is preaching an evangelistic sermon to-night, and he is not talking to me." I am talking to you whether you are a member of this church or of any other church. I want you to recognize at the outset that tremendous fact, that there is a world of difference between being religious and being saved. You may say your prayers; you may read your Bible — you may do all these things, and yet not be saved. Well, I pass by that verse. I read it merely as an introduction. I thought it would be a better introduction than any I could give you, to give you the exact words of Scripture.

There you have the authority of the inspired Apostle for these two principles: First, that the preacher should desire the salvation of his hearers; and that he should recognize when he begins that there are many religious people who need salvation, as well as people who are not religious at all.

### II.

WHEREIN, THEN, LAY THEIR CHIEF DEFECT? Let us take the very words of the text itself: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness". They did not know what righteousness really meant. By that he did not mean that they were devoid of ethical sense. He did not mean that they were thieves and murderers, that they were bad people generally, and ought to be put in gaol. He

did not mean that they did not conform to the recognized moral standards of the day. They were, eminently, respectable members of society. But he says they did not know anything about God's righteousness: they were ignorant of God's righteousness. And that is true of every one of us unless God by His Spirit has revealed to us what righteousness really is. Who knows what God is like? Who knows what are the fashions of the new Jerusalem? How are you going to get a coat to wear up there? I remember a Jew's coming to my house some years ago asking, as they often do, "Have you got any old cloths?" And I told him I had not any that would be of any use to him. But he insisted that if I had anything at all he would take it. I had one or two long coats that I did not know what to do with. Some tramps had come to the door asking me for a coat, but I thought they would not look very well in a long coat. But this Jew insisted he would take anything. So I brought one down. He put it on; it came down to his heels. He was a fine figure, although not particularly big; but when he put that coat on, he walked up and down, and said, "This will do for me when I go to Jerusalem." "Are you going to Jerusalem?" I enquired. He replied, "I am going to start next week." I expect he is still in Toronto; but he said he wanted a coat he could wear in Jerusalem. Well now, we all need a coat that we can wear in the New Jerusalem; but who knows what the styles will be up there? I promised to go to a certain small city down south for a couple of weeks, and the date was set for my going; but the Pastor sent me a telegram a few days ago saying he thought it would be wise to postpone the mission for a week because they had a "style-show" on, whatever that may be. What do you know about the styles where God dwells? What do any of us know about the righteousness of God, about the standards of conduct which obtain where God is supreme? That is just what the Apostle Paul says about these people. He says, "You are pretty well dressed. Among your fellows you rank as being quite respectable. But you are entirely out-of-fashion so far as the Heavenly City is concerned. You have not a thing that is fit to wear when you get up there; and you do not know it. 'All our righteousness are as filthy rags'; and you would be ashamed of yourself even if you could get past the gates into the City."

Men and women are "ignorant of God's righteousness" because "they have not liked to retain God in their knowledge". Remember the scripture so declares: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." The knowledge of God passed from them; they were blinded; and from their spiritual memory the likeness of God faded away. Now that is the great truth, that there is not a man — be he university president, or professor, whatever he may be — there is not a man on earth who knows what righteousness means until God the Holy Ghost teaches him. He may strut around and think he is full measure; but he is "ignorant of God's righteousness" And if once we can apprehend that truth, it will save us from a great deal of worry. We shall not be disturbed by some of the books that are written, because we shall know that they are written by one who is an ignoramus. He does not know any better. He is talking about religion, and he thinks he is an authority in the realm of religion; but the old Book says he is darkening counsel by words without wisdom. "They have a zeal of God, but not according

to knowledge." "Being ignorant of God's righteousness", "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge", and therefore they cannot find out what God is like. So when a man discusses matters of religion on the natural plane, you can afford to disregard his judgment. He is discussing matters which belong to a realm into which he has never entered, and the glory of it he has never yet beheld. "Ignorant of God's righteousness": that is the difficulty with a great many religious people. There are multitudes of religious people, observers of ordinances; people who say their prayers; people who just go back and forth to church; who yet have never seen God, and they do not know what it is to be measured by the divine standard.

Now what follows? "Being ignorant of God's righteousness", they naturally go about to establish their own. If you have heard a great deal about a man whom you have never seen, you immediately begin to form some conception as to what he is like. Some public man, for instance, you wonder whether he is light or dark, whether he is short or tall; and you draw a picture of him for yourself, and you measure him by that mental image which you have made of him. Somebody told me during the past week that they had formed a picture of Dr. Norris. They had heard of him as being a great fighter, described by all sorts of epithets. And I suppose they expected to see somebody walk on this platform with a big shaggy mane, coming up like a lion from the swelling of the Jordan; they did not expect to see such a mild sort of person as he turned out to be. But you know that principle. You have again and again formed in your mind an image of somebody whom you have not seen. And then you have measured everything that he or she has said or done by the standard which you yourself have set up; and you have been unconscious of the fact.

Now the Scripture tells us that that is just exactly what men do with God. Not liking to retain God in their knowledge, having no knowledge of what He is like, they form an image of God for themselves. They try to imagine what God is, what He is like; and the Scripture says that they have "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man" — they go farther down the scale — "and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." But the highest standard they know is their own standard; and therefore God is brought down to the human plane and judged by human standards. Men have erected a standard of righteousness which is merely the equivalent of their conception of what God ought to require of men. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness" — setting up a standard for themselves, they measure themselves by their own standard and think God ought to be satisfied with them.

## II.

NOW IN WHAT DID THEIR FAILURE CONSIST? In this: that they thought of God as One Who was concerned with the externals of life. They had no conception whatever of the spiritual quality of the law. They conformed to its outward requirement; they paid tithes; they said their prayers; they observed the ordinances of the temple, "touching the righteousness which is in the law" — that is outwardly, they were — "blameless"; but they had no conception of a God Who looked not at the outward appearance but at the heart; no thought of God as a consuming fire; no knowledge whatever of His holiness.

There is the difficulty with all of us. We have measured God by our own standards; and having erected our own standards and conformed to them, we have concluded that we are full measure and ought therefore to pass through the gates into the City — "Ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish our own righteousness." I wonder what would happen if you were to take your gas bill and go down to the office and say, "I have called to speak to you about my gas bill." "Yes, sir, what about it?" "Well, I do not think I burned as much as that." "What makes you think so?" "My wife says she has been as careful as she can be. She never leaves the gas burning when it ought to be turned out. She is very economical. And then we have had no extra company this last week. We have not done any extra washing. We have not burned any more gas than usual. My wife and I have just been counting it up and we have come to the conclusion that that bill is too high." And the man behind the desk looks at you and smiles. He has heard it all before. And if he is a wise man he says, "What do you know about it? What makes you think you have not burned it?" "Well, we just think so." "Have you any sort of gas meter in your house by which this thing is measured?" "Well, we do not think the bill ought to be as high as that." "But down there in your cellar there is a little machine which registers all the gas that is burned, in spite of all your thinking." Some other man thinks his electric light bill is too high. But you see they are judging by their own notion of what the bill ought to be; and when you go down to the office they will say, "We are very sorry, but if this company had to do business on what people think they ought to pay we should be bankrupt in a month. And that is why we have put a metre in your house, to tell you what you have used and what you must pay." And people come into the presence of God and say: "I think I ought to be acceptable. I do not think I owe as much as I am told." But, my dear friend, there is another standard than yours. God's meter has recorded what you owe, and you may dispute your bill as much as you like but it will not pass with Him. Going about to establish your own righteousness and refusing to acknowledge the requirements of God's law will never bring you to salvation. And that, I say, is the mistake that we all have made, and some are making still.

Our brother prayed that the message this evening might be simple, that it might be very direct and very plain; I was praying the same thing, and said "Amen" to his petition. My heart's desire and prayer to God for every unsaved man here this evening, for every religious professor who has not been a partaker of the grace of life, is that he or she might be saved. That is why I am speaking in this fashion.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." There is the charge God has made against the unsaved—that he or she has not accepted the judgment of God upon his life. That is what we shall have to do before we can come into right relationship to Him.

Let us quote the next verse: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." What does that mean? It means this: that the Lord Jesus Christ was the only, and is still the only perfect exemplification of the righteousness of the law that this world has ever seen. Now, when that unconverted man

tells me that he is just as righteous as some members of this church, and that he therefore sees no necessity whatever for his coming to Christ, I answer him in this way: "I am not prepared to argue the point with you. I am prepared to admit all that. You may measure yourself by the very best man who ever lived; and even if you have attained to his moral stature, and if touching the righteousness which is in the law, so far as it is possible for a man to exemplify that righteousness, you are absolutely blameless,—you are still infinitely short measure." We have come short of the glory of God. And is it a startling thing to say? I put it plainly: no man did ever come into the presence of God in peace who was not as righteous as Jesus is. No man will ever dwell in God's presence who is not just as good as Jesus is — not as good as the worthiest of saints; you must be full measure and attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ or you will never get to heaven at all. That is a high standard. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate" — to escape the consequences of sin? to be saved from hell? to be saved to heaven? No, much more than that — "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son." In the beginning He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." But the image and likeness of God was destroyed by sin. "And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." And from then until now no one did ever pass that flaming sword and come in peace into the presence of the Holy One who was not in measure equal to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is by Him we have to measure ourselves, my friend. And when you stand beside Jesus Christ you will discover that your righteousness and God's righteousness are worlds apart; for listen: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." And yet as I speak thus I am perfectly aware that no one will see that truth unless the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the heart. Brother Brownlee read to you this evening that "when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." And then the Scripture defines what sin is. What is sin? Getting drunk, stealing something, committing some crime? O no. "Of sin, because they believe not on me." That is the sin that comprehends all other sins — the rejection of Christ. "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." As though Jesus had said, "I am the only standard of righteousness the world has ever seen. I am God's Pattern-Man by Whom every man must be measured. And when I go back to the Father and ye see Me no more, the world will once again be without a standard of righteousness." And so even as I speak these simple words, if you really want to be saved, if those of us who are Christians want others to be saved, let us just pray that the Holy Spirit will make it plain. Do you see it now? — self-righteousness. I am not condemning you. I am not scolding you. We have all been in that class; we have all sought to establish our own righteousness, until God the Holy Spirit let the light of heaven fall upon us and we discovered that we have come short of the glory of God.

Now "Christ is the end of the law" in this sense, that the law does not require any man to be a better man than the Lord Jesus is. The law will be perfectly satisfied with the righteousness of Christ: "Christ is the end of the

law for righteousness". The law makes no higher demand upon any one than that he or she shall conform to the righteousness of Christ. Somebody will say, "I think not. How can there be a higher demand than that?" There could not be, my friend; nor can there be a lowering of the standard by the Holy One: it will be that or nothing. "Well," you say, "if that is so, I cannot see who is going to be saved." Nor do I. All that I see is, if that be true — and it is the teaching of God's Word — nobody can be saved by his own righteousness; there is absolutely no chance of salvation on that ground. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness."

"Christ is the end of the law" in another respect, in that He has rendered complete satisfaction to the law in our behalf. He has paid our debt. I know it is an old figure. Somebody said to me some years ago, "When you talk about Jesus paying the debt of the sinner, you use a mechanical term. You make one think of a scale where people are weighed." He said, "That is a very mechanical view of the atonement." I said, "Perhaps it is, but it is the view of Scripture." "Christ is the end of the law" in the sense that when you have paid the bill that has been worrying you a long time, you have got the receipt and you have said, "Well, there is the end of that." And were you not glad? The Lord Jesus had paid the uttermost farthing of the sinner's indebtedness. He cried, "It is finished" ere He gave up the ghost. He is the end of the law in this respect, that His righteousness, that perfect righteousness of His is reckoned to our account; and when the sinner is saved, he stands not in his own righteousness but in the righteousness of another. Some man says, "Well, sir, that is an immoral doctrine; the idea of a man being saved on the ground of what somebody else did for him." Do you think it is? That is how people talk in the realm of religion; but the majority of people are willing to have all sorts of things imputed to them in any other realm, and are glad of it. As a matter of fact, no man liveth unto himself, and the truth is we are saved only as the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is reckoned to our account.

"To every one that believeth." What does that mean? It is the old, old story of faith. I have thought about it a thousand times, but I have not been able to define it. Faith is the gift of God. We know what it is but we cannot tell you. We try; but the Spirit of God has to work within the heart and enable the man to rest upon Christ; and until he does it, the soul does not really believe. Faith is the first cry of the new-born soul. It is the first cry of a soul begotten of the Spirit of God. What is faith? It is submission to Christ. It means to accept His judgment, to accept His account. Down there at the office when you disputed that account, and the clerk said, "I am sorry, but that is how the meter reads, sir, and that is the amount you will have to pay." You disputed it for some time until at last you said, "Well, I cannot prove after all that the meter is not correct. I suppose I had better pay it." And at last you submitted. You said, "Very well, then, I accept it as my obligation." That is the beginning of faith — when we accept God's judgment upon our lives as being absolutely according to truth and cease to dispute it.

### III.

Now, will you do that? Will you begin there? If you will, I know what you will say — "I admit I am a sinner." Well, praise God if you have got as far as that!

That is one step in the right direction. Up to this time you said, "I am no sinner. I am a religious man. I am a member of the church." O yes, going about to establish your own righteousness; but you are short measure when measured by Christ. Will you just accept it and say, "If that is what God requires, I have to acknowledge that I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all." Will you then take the other step? — admit the inadequacy of your own righteousness. That means repentance. Will you admit, recognize, and acknowledge the sufficiency of the righteousness of Jesus? It simply means to admit that that bill is correct, and that when Jesus put over on the other side of the book His perfect righteousness and marked it as balanced and paid. You say, "Praise the Lord! There is nothing in God's book against me. I must surely be a Christian." Do you believe that? Then if you do, that is the meaning of the text. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." God asks nothing more of any man than that Christ should stand in his room and stead. Down into the manger He came for you; down into Nazareth He went for you, being subject to His parents, fulfilling the law all through the thirty years He lived for you; and at last He went up to the Cross and offered His life's blood — a record of perfect service, an absolutely flawless righteousness. He laid down His life for you; he was laid in the grave for you; and when He came up out of the grave, the prison door was thrown open, the debt was paid, and you came forth into newness of life; and when He ascended into the glory into the Father's presence, He was a pledge and promise that you should also dwell with God.

What is the righteousness of Jesus? It is His seamless robe covering all our defects, giving us standing before God. But what if into the soldier who wore the seamless robe, the Spirit of Christ could have come; and what if his spare and inadequate figure could then have been filled out until at last the robe should fit him just as perfectly as it fitted Jesus? Why, my friends, that is the gospel. You and I crucified the Saviour, and we got His seamless robe, and as we put it on and God looks upon us, He says, "Thou art all fair. . . there is no spot in thee." He looks upon us in the face of His Anointed; He sees us in Christ, clothed with His righteousness. And then He gives us His Spirit, and the process of sanctification goes on until "we all come at last in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And when we get to Heaven we shall be just like Jesus. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and 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." "They shall be without fault before the throne of God." May He help us just to put our trust in Him. Let us ask Him so to do.

It is utterly impossible that any soul not washed in the blood of Christ, not sanctified by His Spirit and grace, should stand in the sight of God. None can serve Him here unless their conscience be purged from dead works by the blood of Christ; nor can they come to Him hereafter unless they are washed from all their defilements.

—JOHN OWEN



## A UNITED CHURCH OF CEYLON?

**T**HE modern mania for church union at any price has spread to Ceylon where even the Baptists appear to have caught the virus. The plan there is that the Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans and Baptists should come together to form a United Church of Ceylon.

It is interesting to observe the procedure followed in these union attempts. One would think that those who were interested would sit around the conference table with open Bibles before them in order to see there the divine blueprint. Not so. Rather those who are taking part bargain and barter on the basis of their denominational creeds and practices which are usually far removed from the Word of God. The Methodists trade this tenet; the Presbyterians forfeit another; the Baptists surrender everything; and the Anglicans gain all.

For instance there arises the question of baptism. Most scholars will declare that New Testament baptism was the *immersion* of a *believer* in water, upon declaration of personal faith. In Ceylon, however, this is not sufficient, for some denominations have other practices for which there is no scriptural warrant but which stem from later tradition. How is the problem to be solved? After the Ceylon Baptists expressed some concern about this matter a *compromise* was effected. The November issue of the Baptist *Missionary Herald* tells the story — "It was therefore agreed that the section in the Scheme on Baptism should be re-written, emphasizing the facts that neither those dedicated in infancy nor those baptized as infants shall be regarded as full members of the church, that confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ must be a factor in the process of Christian initiation, and regarding believers' baptism as the norm towards which the elements of the services of Christian initiation should point."

What nonsense! How could any reader of the Word of God submit to such a compromise? It is simply a whitewashing of the whole question which should be repugnant to any Christian who has convictions. Here is the rest of the wording as agreed upon by the Ceylonese churchmen:—

(1) Baptism is a sign and seal of engrafting into Christ and entrance into the covenant of grace. In Him we receive the new birth, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Those who are baptized are by this sacrament solemnly admitted into the fellowship of the Church and engaged to be the Lord's.

(2) The grace of Christ conferred in Baptism IS APPROPRIATED UNTO SALVATION BY REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

In sponsored baptism in infancy, the sponsors, whether parents or god-parents, together with the whole congregation, undertake in the name of the Church to bring up the child in the fear and nurture of the Lord; the child being baptized into the repenting and believing life of the Church.

In believers' baptism the candidate himself, led by God's grace to repentance and faith, bears witness to these and in the sacrament responds to the action of God. So he enters consciously into the repenting and believing life of the Church in which the event of baptism takes place.

(3) Full Christian initiation is a process which is concluded only when the initiate participates for the first time in Holy Communion. By coming to the Holy Communion the initiate declares his resolve, sustained by his union with Christ to persevere within this realm of life, which is pledged to him from his baptism, and in which the bene-

fits of the divine forgiveness and the powers of the age to come are at work.

(4) Baptism shall be administered with water by immersion or sprinkling in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

(5) A person may receive either sponsored baptism in infancy or believers' baptism. Where parents do not wish their children to receive sponsored baptism they shall bring them to a service of dedication. By such a service the Church recognizes the place of the child within the Christian fellowship and emphasizes the duty of the parents and of the Church to bring up children so dedicated in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

(6) The full service of Initiation for believers shall include the following elements:—

(i) Declaration of Christ's commission to the Church to baptize.

(ii) CONFESSION TO GOD BY THE CANDIDATE OF HIS SIN.

(iii) WITNESS BEFORE THE CONGREGATION OF HIS BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOUR.

(iv) Assent by the candidate to the Apostle's Creed.

(v) Baptism of the candidate with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

(vi) Presentation of the candidate to the Bishop by the Presbyter, the Bishop then laying his hands upon the candidate's head with the prayer that he receives power by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(vii) WELCOMING OF THE CANDIDATE INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CONGREGATION BY THE PRESBYTER, WHO WILL GIVE HIM THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

But (vi) and (vii) can also constitute a separate service of confirmation to be held in the case of those who are admitted to communicant membership of the Church after they have received believers' baptism.

If this plan of union is accepted, the Baptist leaders have sold out their cause. Inherent in this declaration is the heresy of baptismal regeneration, the notion of sacramental grace, the false practice of infant sprinkling, and the fiction of apostolic succession. It is our hope that Bible-believing Baptists in Ceylon will decisively reject this overture and that they will rededicate themselves to the task of evangelizing Ceylon in a New Testament manner with a New Testament message.

The *Bulletin of the Baptist Revival Fellowship* (England) concludes its discussion of the matter with some searching words that we pass along to our readers:

We may be perfectly sure the episcopal organizations have not the least intention of yielding on the matter of what is called the historic episcopacy. They have their eyes on Rome because once they surrender to the teaching of the Scriptures on this issue any subsequent discussions with the Vatican will be made more difficult. Nevertheless, we must stand our ground at all costs; for the course of events is clear. The Methodists and Presbyterians and even the Congregationalists will not find insuperable difficulties in lining up with a united Protestant Church. The awkward squad are the Baptists! If we surrender, the United Church will come into existence. Every future Baptist minister will be obliged to be ordained by a Bishop of the Church of England and every baptized believer will be compelled to submit to a form of Confirmation.

Having thus liquidated nonconformity, as it is called, the new Protestant Church will address itself to the task of union with Rome and some form of accommodation in words will be discovered that will enable Rome to welcome the prodigals back. With so called Christendom thus united the Pope with his added legions will seek an accommodation with the great pagan and heathen religions. To inject Christian ideals, morals, philosophy and perhaps worship into the great historic religions of the east will appear to be a more congenial task than attempting to make them Christian. So the world will be finally brought into one great religious organization and every man and woman who stands aside will find that in contrast, Bunyan, in Bedford gaol, had a picnic.

Fantastic? It will be in the minds of those whose understanding of events is after they have happened. God, however, always enlightens His servants ahead of events and that is why they are misunderstood, despised and rejected. We earnestly hope that every Baptist who believes God has given us a revelation of truth in His Word which cannot and must not be bartered in compromise for the sake of an external artificial unity, will give themselves to prayer concerning what we feel to be a grievous and far reaching peril. There is certainly no time to be lost.

## Twentieth Century Superstition

**A**N ARTICLE in *The Star Weekly* of April 7 informs us that the Roman Catholic Church is contemplating the creation of another saint. A Canadian Indian maiden, Kateri Tekakwitha, is the candidate for this honour. Born 300 years ago, she is said to have been converted to Christianity and to have suffered great hardship because of her faith.

### Expensive Real Estate

The Roman Church is anxious to preserve the earth in which her remains were buried! The article in the Toronto weekly states — "The earth there, rubbed by her bones, has deep significance to Roman Catholics. A few shovelfuls are reverently removed, and carried ceremoniously to the Jesuit Mission, St. Francis Xavier, at Caughnawaga. There it is placed in minute quantities in tiny packages. For fifteen cents, to help finance Kateri's 'cause', a 'package' can be purchased by an incurably sick pilgrim. The sufferer hopes that, by prayer and by rubbing the soil which once encased Kateri's bones, he or she may be miraculously delivered from the ailment."

What next? During the Middle Ages the Roman Church foisted some unusual relics upon people — including spurious pieces of the cross, a piece of Noah's ark, some soot from the furnace in which the three Hebrews were said to have been placed, and others equally fantastic. D'Aubigne in his History of the Reformation tells us that "in Wurtemberg, a vender of indulgences was seen selling his wares, and having his head adorned with a large feather, plucked from the wing of the archangel Michael." Apparently the Church is now running out of such novel and startling ideas and has come to the place where she must peddle such *earthly* things as common soil.

Not only is the earth valuable but we are told that her bones are even more valuable. The copyright Star article informs us further:

Her skull and other bones of the upper half of her skeleton were carried away in 1756 by a pious party of Christian Iroquois, to a place in their newly established mission at St. Regis, near Cornwall. A fire more than 100 years ago levelled the mission and destroyed the bones.

### Practised Heroic Virtues

The bones in Father Bechard's possession must remain sealed in their casket until the Pope announces that Kateri's cause has achieved "beatification", the second of the three stages leading to sainthood. Then, with great ceremony, the casket will be opened. The most prominent bones will be removed and carried to Rome, to be ceremoniously deposited in St. Peter's cathedral. Other bones will be distributed to other congregations throughout the continent, so that her miracle cures may be more widely distributed.

Miracles can be achieved, the faithful believe, by authorized clergy rubbing specially prepared cloth on the bones. Small pieces of this cloth can be obtained by people incurably ill, on which to rub their hands while they pray for deliverance from their physical torment.

Yes, in this twentieth century there are enough superstitious people about that the deceiver of the ages can foist such delusions upon them. This mockery is passed off upon men in the name of Christianity; we dare to say that the original Iroquois Indian religion did not have as many superstitions as does the Roman Church which tried to convert the Indians.

The quotations in the above article dealing with the story of Kateri Tekakwitha are taken from copyright article "Sainthood For a Mohawk Maiden?" in *The Star Weekly* (Toronto) on April 7, 1956. (Quoted by permission).

## SHALL WE REPRINT "WHITHER BOUND?"

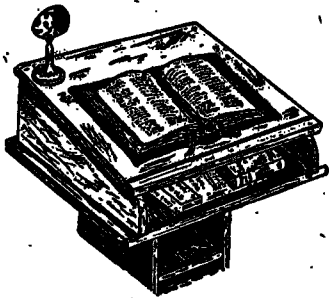
The little booklet, "The Canadian Council of Churches — Whither Bound?" has had a great reception. Christians have been alerted to the menace of creeping modernism in Canada and many have written to express their appreciation of this handy pamphlet which conclusively demonstrates the program of the Canadian Council of Churches. Just last week we received a letter from British Guiana in South America, informing us that "Whither Bound?" had found its way there and had caused a Christian to be aroused to the issues of the hour.

Ten thousand copies have been printed and distributed. Your gifts have enabled us to do this. Now we are faced with the need of having the booklet reprinted if it is to be spread even further. Let us hear from you — telling us whether we should proceed to have another five thousand printed. Write today!

"When he dieth, he shall carry nothing away." Let us see to it that not in utter nakedness do we go hence, but clothed with that immortal robe, and rich in those possessions that cannot be taken away from us, which they have who have lived on earth as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Let us pierce, for the foundation of our life's house, beneath the shifting sands of time down to the Rock of Ages, and build there.

—ALEXANDER MACLAREN





## English Bible Course

TWENTY-THIRD LECTURE  
in the  
ENGLISH BIBLE COURSE  
TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY  
By Dr. C. D. Cole  
April 12th, 1956  
**THE GREAT UNITIES**  
Ephesians 4:1-16

**I** FEEL I should say a word by way of expressing appreciation for the liberty that I have enjoyed in this place. My own doctrinal convictions have been so nearly like you have been used to, that it has enabled me to have a feeling of liberty that I cannot have in every place.

Now I may put emphasis on certain truths beyond what some of you would, particularly with reference to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think if I do that, it is safer to put the emphasis where I do than to put the emphasis where most people do. For if we can get the members of our church to appreciate the body to which they belong as members of the church, and see that if they honour the Lord and work in His kingdom, they will have to do it through the local body, a particular church of Jesus Christ.

It is one's judgment that we have distinguished between doctrinal and practical in religion to the confusion of values. There are those who tell us that they want the practical in religion and have little or no concern for what they think of as a doctrine. I have heard many people say that they did not like doctrinal preaching. On the other hand, there are those who regale their hearers with what we might call high doctrine, but have little place for the practical. Such persons usually ride a doctrinal hobby. And that is one of the easiest things in the world for a preacher to do, to ride some doctrinal hobby, and just play on certain strings of the violin of truth all his days.

Now doctrine must not be divorced from practice. There is no real distinction, for doctrine is practical. Who could tell us of any doctrine of this Book that is not practical! Why even baptism is a most practical doctrine. Baptism is a sign that one is dead to sin and alive unto God through faith in Christ. Baptism has a sanctifying influence for it reminds us that we are crucified unto the world and the world unto us. Baptism is a promise to walk in the newness of life that we have by faith in Jesus Christ. Yes, my friends, all scripture is practical for it is all "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Doctrine simply means teaching. So when a person says that he does not like doctrine he is actually saying that he does not want to be taught. He

is a child that refuses the milk of God's Word that he may grow thereby.

It might be better to distinguish between teaching and exhortation. That was Paul's style. He teaches and then enforces his teaching with admonition, or warning, or exhortation, as may fit the case. A very vital part of the Great Commission is to teach baptized believers to observe or practice all that God has commanded in His Word.

### Unity of Faith and Purity of Life

Now in this fourth chapter of Ephesians the apostle is exhorting to unity and purity. Teaching and exhortation are interwoven. In the first half, he appeals for unity of faith in the body of Christ. And in the second half, he appeals for purity of life on the part of the individual members of the body. Now let us bear in mind that Paul is writing to a particular church or churches, and everything he says has application only to some particular church. He could not be writing to some invisible universal church. If such a church were in existence, nobody could write a letter to it. Paul tells us that he had the care of all the churches, not the care of one universal church. And he exercises his care for the churches by writing letters of instruction to them and in exhorting them to live lives in keeping with their profession of faith. Who would know how to care for an invisible universal church? I would know how to write a letter to the Roman Catholic hierarchy for it is a visible and universal institution with headquarters at Rome, with a visible head. But I would not know how to write a letter to an invisible universal church. Dr. Carroll says that the idea of a universal invisible church held by some Baptists, was borrowed from pedo-Baptist confessions of faith in Reformation times, and that pedo-Baptists devised it to offset the equally erroneous idea of the Romanist visible universal church. Paul uses several metaphors for the church, but not one of them can lend any support to the universal invisible idea. It may be superfluous to remind this congregation that the term "universal church" is nowhere found in the New Testament. All metaphors of the church may be used abstractly but never to distinguish between local and universal. Take the metaphor of the human body to which the church of Jesus Christ is so often likened. Do we ever distinguish between a local human body and a universal human body? The New Testament speaks of the whole body but it is always a particular human body. In first Corinthians twelve twelve we read, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." In verse fourteen of the same chapter, Paul says, "For the body is not one member; but many." And in verse seventeen, "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?" Here he speaks of the whole body, but he is not thinking of all human bodies as constituting the whole body. If we wish to think of all the redeemed in the aggregate to the end of the age, we can then speak of the church as the prospective body of Jesus Christ. But even then, it will be visible. In heaven there will be one whole church, but here on earth there are many whole churches. In fact, every church is a whole church, and not a part of something else. Our church here at Gerrard and Jarvis, is a whole church and not a part of some bigger church. No association or convention is a church. No denomination is a church. I believe in associations and conventions, but they are not churches. They are

agencies of the churches for co-operative missionary endeavour. The churches represent the kingdom of God on earth and are interdependent, while each church remains autonomous, subject only to Christ as its head. To whom must this church give an account except to Jesus Christ? To ask that question, is to answer it. For all of us know that as a church we are accountable to nobody but—the Lord Jesus Christ as the head of the church.

Now the main theme of the passage before us is unity in the body of Christ at Ephesus. Analysis of the passage shows three things — first: the appeal to unity; second: the basic facts of unity; and third: the means of maintaining unity.

### I.

#### An Appeal to Unity (1-3)

In verses one to three, we have an exhortation to unity with a prescription for keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The apostle again speaks of himself as the prisoner of the Lord, and exhorts the Ephesians to live worthy of their Christian vocation, manifesting lowliness and meekness and longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He is appealing for unity in a local particular body of Jesus Christ, and his appeal to the church at Ephesus is his appeal to our church in this place tonight and always. Every ingredient in this prescription for unity may be pondered to profit.

We are now dealing with the social life among the members. The virtues exhorted to, if practised, will make any church a happy society. I think we have that sort of society here, but we have that society because these virtues are manifest among us. And to eliminate these virtues, we would no longer be a happy, united society in the once delivered faith.

#### Humility and Meekness

Lowliness and meekness are coupled, while longsuffering and forbearance go together. Lowliness is a state of mind. It is humility. Humility is a feeling of dependence as a creature, and of unworthiness as a sinner, before God. Humility is the opposite of pride and self-importance. Meekness is humility in its natural expression. Meekness is the opposite to self-assertion and rude striving with others. Meekness is the spirit of humility in its reaction to the providences of God and to the provocations of men. The meek man does not arraign God nor avenge himself on men. David, when under the chastening hand of God, said, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it." Eli, when told by Samuel of the judgment of God upon his house, replied, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." The meek man giveth the soft answer that turneth away wrath. Humility renounces personal merit and meekness surrenders personal claims. There is only one thing we are told to contend for in the Word of God, and that is the once delivered faith. Blessed contribution will these graces make towards the unity and peace in the body of Christ — lowliness and meekness. Moses was a mighty man and yet we are told that he was very meek. And Milton speaks of the invincible might of meekness. If you want to be a mighty man, be a meek man.

#### Patience and Forbearance

But more is needed than humility and meekness. Division can arise in a church from impatience and resent-

fulness. And so we must have longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Longsuffering is an inward feeling in the face of provocation, and forbearance is its outward manifestation. We will have to be patient and forbearing with one another in love. Otherwise, we will break up into groups and sects and cliques, hating and devouring one another. And that is the picture which many a church of Jesus Christ presents today. Paul says that love suffereth long and is kind. Keep the two together — suffereth long and is kind. Love puts up with a lot, for it is not easily provoked. Love beareth all things. In forbearance, we do not strike back, we hold back. Every church needs two bears in it—bear and forbear.

Now here are the virtues we are to seek after in our social life as members of the body of Christ. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."

### II.

#### The Basic Facts of Unity (4-6)

In verses four to six, we have the basic facts of unity. This section is not an exhortation, but a declaration. It gives us the facts upon which the preceding exhortation is based. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." We have here what seems to be seven great unities. Dr. Carroll finds two more in the context, making nine which he sets forth somewhat as follows: first, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all; second, one Lord who is Jesus Christ; third, one bond of peace, which is Christ's atonement by which He made peace for both Jew and Gentile, thus uniting them in the bond of peace; fourth, one Spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of unity; fifth, one calling, meaning the inheritance to which we are called and for which we hope; sixth, one body, which is the church; seventh, one act of faith, by which we have access into the grace of justification; and eighth, one baptism, pre-requisite of church membership; ninth, one system of faith, which is the church creed.

#### Some Baptist Distinctives

Time will not allow discussion of all nine unities. We will discuss what we might think of as Baptist distinctives. The one body, which is the church, has already been discussed. One God and Father over all, is God in spiritual relationship to His church, and not God in natural relationship to the universe. God is the Father over all in sovereignty. He is the Son through all in providence. He is the Holy Spirit in all indwelling and energizing all the saints. Now the one faith in verse five refers to one act of faith by which we have entrance into the grace of justification, or by which we enter the door of salvation. This one act of faith lasts for a lifetime. Faith being the gift of God, and the work of the Spirit in the human soul, is not something that is repeatedly lost and found and lost again. It is not like something we pick up and then put down and then pick up again. Saving faith is a permanent living reality in the human soul. And the kind of faith which saves is implicit trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. We are saved by faith in what Christ has already done, and not by what we expect to do. And people who believe

in salvation by works are always expecting to be saved by what they are yet to do, for they will not admit that they have done enough yet for salvation. But Jesus Christ provided salvation nearly twenty centuries ago when He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and cried from the cross, "It is finished". Now there is one baptism. Others have pointed out that this cannot refer to modes of baptism, for modes of baptism had never been heard of when Paul wrote this epistle. It means one act of baptism by which one declares his faith in Christ and identifies himself with the people of God. In New Testament times those who were baptized were voluntary agents, submitting themselves to the ordinance for the purpose of making a solemn and outward profession of their faith in Christ. Baptism was their oath of allegiance to one Lord. Baptism is a sign or symbol of the way in which we are saved. Sin is washed away in baptism in the same sense in which we eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood in the Lord's Supper. Peter tells us that salvation of Noah and his family in the ark was a figure of salvation by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The ark for a time was surrounded by water, waters from above, and waters from beneath. But the ark survived its trial and those in it were saved and safely brought to land. And so Jesus Christ sustained for a while the deluge of divine wrath but He survived the trial and rose triumphantly from the grave that we might have everlasting life. Now Peter says baptism is a like figure, that is, it is another sign or symbol of the same thing, salvation by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. The resemblance of baptism to the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is most striking. And in Romans six and Colossians two, baptism is introduced as a sign of our being dead and buried and risen through our legal union with Jesus Christ. Baptism says in symbol that He died our death that we might live His life. Baptism is the external sign of our faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ. Here is trinity in unity again, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism", one act of baptism expressing one act of faith in the one Lord. Baptists have always believed and practiced the baptism of infants. Did you know that? In fact, we are about the only people who baptize infants exclusively. But we baptize spiritual infants, those who are sons of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, those who have been born from above. We do not wait until one grows up before we baptize him. We ascertain the best we can first of all whether or not he is a real believer and had an experience of grace, a birth from above. And when we do that, we baptize that person without delay. Baptism is the first and immediate duty of every believer. In New Testament times believers were baptized without delay. Now baptism was originally meant to be the boundary of visible Christianity, but the so-called baptism of physical babies and other unbelievers has flooded professing Christianity with unregenerate people. This has resulted in state churches and now the World Council with its new Bible as its propaganda is pressing for an ecumenical church which violates these great unities of the Ephesian epistle.

### III.

#### The Means of Maintaining Unity (7-16)

Now let us notice in verses seven to sixteen the means of maintaining this unity. "But unto every one of us is

given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Every living member of the body of Christ has a gift or endowment for service. He is able to render some service in the body. Most of us may be one talent Christians but we are responsible to use what God-given ability we have and count it as a grace given us from God. We fail not because we are lacking in talent, but we fail because we do not half try in the service of Jesus Christ. This is not grace in salvation because saving grace is the same for every believer. But the gifts for service are not the same in degree. Everyone has a gift. Everyone has an endowment for service in the body of Christ but there are some who have special gifts. And so the apostle says, "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." This is a quotation from Psalm sixty-eight, verse eighteen. This Psalm is strongly Messianic. It has been called the Titan among the Psalms. This sixty-eighth Psalm celebrates the victories of Jehovah in the life of Israel culminating in the placing of the ark of God on mount Zion. The preceding verses of this Psalm describe Jehovah as the leader of Israel through the former ages. The deliverance from bondage, the sojourn in the wilderness, the scenes at Sinai, the occupancy of Canaan, and the wars of the judges, all appear in the Psalm as so many stages in the march of Jehovah which always had Zion for its goal. Zion was a hill in Jerusalem, a stronghold of the Jebusites. David conquered it and placed the ark of God on the summit of it, and established his throne there, and reigned over Israel and blessed them. And all this was prophetic of the victories of Christ in the life of the new Israel of God. Jehovah of both testaments is the same Jesus, for the name Jesus means "Jehovah saves". So just as David rose from deep humiliation to high dominion as a king of Israel, so Jesus Christ, David's son and Lord, descended into the lower parts of the earth to win victories over His enemies and then ascend to highest sovereignty. If He went up, then He had been down. Because His original place as God and Creator was in heaven, He had to descend before He could ascend back up to where He was before. He came down into the depths of humiliation down to the meagre cradle, down to the arms of an obscure virgin, down to the despised village of Nazareth with its carpenter bench, down to the contradiction of sinners against Himself, down to bloody Gethsemane, down to the cross and the grave. But while He was down here He conquered His enemies, and gained the right to go up. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." In His humiliation, He destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil. He spoiled principalities and powers making a show of them openly. He conquered Satan. He triumphed over death and Hades and the grave because he could not be holden of death. He led captivity captive. These captives may either be the enemies of His people, Satan and sin and death, or they may be His people from His throne. And all the spiritual blessings we have come to us day by day from His pierced hands. Just as a conqueror gets gifts to bestow, so Christ in His resurrection and ascension got gifts to bestow on His church. The spoils of victory are for His people. "All things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." And that is because He came down and won victories in His humiliation and has ascended to highest

sovereignty, ruling from His throne, and pouring out unspeakable blessings upon His people.

#### Public Gifts to Fit the Saints for Service

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Now let me interpret that verse by paraphrasing it. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the purpose of equipping or fitting the saints unto work of service, unto the building up or edifying of the body of Christ." The thought is that the public gifts are to be used in fitting all the saints for the work of edifying the body of Christ. The public ministry is to prepare all the members for service, and that service is the building up of the body, the church. If I may borrow from Mr. Pourret or Dr. Dubarry, it was for the purpose of "convert culture", spiritual edification, growth in grace and in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

#### Spiritual Body Building

Now this passage does not deal with missions or the duties of the church to the outside world, but to the mutual edification of the members of the body. It is not building up in the sense of increasing the numbers, but holding up in the sense of developing the members. It is implied, taken for granted, that there will be new members coming in who will need edifying and developing and building up in the most holy faith. We speak of body building in the physical sense of developing the body of a child to manhood, or of developing the potential powers of the human body. We call that body building. And that is what this passage is talking about, spiritual body building of the church of Jesus Christ. And so our scripture deals with spiritual development of all the members of the body of Christ. And He gives us the goal. The goal is that every member of the church may be mature or a full-grown man. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Now the word "perfect" here does not mean sinlessness. The idea is maturity or full growth in opposition to infancy and childhood. Every member of the body is to become a well informed Christian with the Word of Christ dwelling in him richly in all wisdom. The church is to have a creed and the larger the creed the better, covering all the Word of God. And each member is to be brought up to that creed in faith and in life. That is our task as public ministers and as private members.

Now the positive will be made plainer here when we look at the negative. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." This shows that it is the individuals who are the concern of the apostle. Children of faith are at the mercy of false teachers. The helplessness of immature believers is illustrated by the thought of a man in a boat who does not know how to manage boats driven to and fro by the waves caused by the wind. I would be such a man in a boat. I do not know how to manage a boat. I do not know the ways of the deep. I am just a landlubber. And a child in grace is helpless before these false teachers who are expert in tricks of the trade. Another figure to

represent the helplessness of a spiritual infant before false teachers is that of a greenhorn gambling with experts who have loaded dice. What would any of us do in a game of chance with card sharks or other experts in gambling? These are the figures the apostle uses to show how helpless children of grace are who do not grow up and become full grown men in the things of Christ. About five years before this epistle was written, Paul addressed the leaders of this Ephesian church, at Miletus, urging them to feed the church of God which He had purchased with His own blood, and warning them that after he was gone, false teachers like wolves would enter not sparing the flock, and also that men from their own midst would rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. And here he is repeating the warning. He wants the members of the body of Christ at Ephesus to deal truthfully with one another in love, that they may grow up in all things in relation to Christ as the head of the body.

And in verse sixteen we have a vivid and beautiful description of a well organized and thoroughly instructed church under the figure of head and body. Christ is the head and the church is the body fitly framed and knit together receiving strength from the head which reacheth all parts of the body through every point of contact of the members. In this way the church builds itself up in love. Each individual member must have vital connection with Christ through faith. There must also be living articulation running through the whole body for the development of the whole church. This is one of the most beautiful pictures of a church of Jesus Christ to be found anywhere. It is another description of the particular church under the figure of the human body. This is the ideal church, every member alive and co-operating with one another and drawing strength for growth and development from Christ who is the head. I do wish some of our modern hymnwriters who see this truth would put it in verse and set it to music so we could sing it to the praise of the body of Christ. Most of our hymns confound the church with the kingdom, and it is something that is vague and airy. About the best thing I can find in our hymnbook is that hymn by Fawcett,

"Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.

"Before our Father's throne  
We pour our ardent prayers;  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
Our comforts and our cares.

"We share our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear;  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear.

"When we asunder part  
It gives us inward pain;  
But we shall still be joined in heart,  
And hope to meet again."

#### SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The pastor preached at both regular services on the past Lord's Day. In the morning his subject was, "The Excellency of Holy Scripture", and in the evening he spoke on, "The Ascension of Jesus Christ". The blessing of the Lord rested upon the proclamation of His Word as four responded to the gospel invitation for salvation.

## TWIN THREATS – CRITICISM AND PRAISE

**T**HE minister of the Lord Jesus Christ must learn to become oblivious to both the carping criticism and the fawning praise of men. His great desire is to hear the "Well done" of his Master both here and hereafter and he will therefore place little premium upon the changing emotions of changeable people. His whole race will be run with eyes upon the author and finisher of our faith who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Indeed the true servant of God may find that he must sometimes disregard the judgments and advice of Christians who have been influenced by considerations of expediency rather than by the Word of God. At this point he must be firm for although he is *servant* to the least of the saints, no mortal is his *Master*. Only a false humility would prompt him to yield for a moment to any desire or criticism that is manifestly unscriptural.

Whenever the servant of God does give way before every passing current and is shaken by every breeze of opinion, his usefulness will quickly diminish and he will become the helpless pawn in the hands of carnal Christians. His own life will be one of frustration as in his heart he desires to obey God while in his conduct he is pulled hither and yon. The cause of the gospel too will suffer and the spiritual welfare of even the trouble-makers will be jeopardized.

The prophet of the Lord will pay little heed to unjust criticism or empty praise. Men, *even Christians*, are fickle by nature and they can easily pass back and forth from these two extremes of censure and commendation. The voice that loudly flattered today may be bitingly sarcastic tomorrow. The one who today is moved by empty flattery will be likewise shaken by tomorrow's criticism. Who wants to build a life and a ministry upon such shifting sand?

Just today this fact was again impressed upon us as we read the Word of God. In the fourteenth chapter of Acts there is the account of the preaching of Barnabas and Paul in Lystra and Derbe. After the preaching, Paul was used of the Lord to heal a cripple. Immediately the citizens were so impressed that they enthusiastically exclaimed, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." The priest of the city joined the celebration and praise and prepared to make an animal sacrifice to solemnize this auspicious advent. Only after considerable explanation did the apostles persuade their newfound admirers that they were ordinary mortals.

Other lesser spirits might have let such excessive praise swell their heads but Paul and Barnabas paid no heed to it and went on with the Lord's work. In a very short time they were given confirmation of their wisdom in not yielding to the popular acclaim for the scriptural account proceeds to tell us that some Jewish agitators came to Lystra to stir up opposition to Paul. What was the result? Those who had before sought to worship Paul as a god now stoned him, dragged him out of the city and left him for dead!

The Scripture tells us that he was not actually dead but rose up and left the city for other parts. The Bible nowhere suggests that the great apostle was surprised at this strange and sudden change of temperament in the people of Lystra. He had learned to pay small heed

to men's threats and to have little enthusiasm about their commendations.

Let it ever be recalled that we are "the stewards of the mysteries of God" and not merely some public opinion experts who gauge the popular mind and guide our lives thereby. Happy will be that steward who labours with a desire to please God alone!

## PERFECTION OF WISDOM

The plan of human redemption, with Christ as the great keystone in the mystic arch, is the culmination and perfection of God's infinite mercy, wisdom and love. To bring it to the attention of man, to vitalize it and make it a reality to him, all the providences of God have been directed for 6,000 years. From the hour that the smoking blood of man's first offering rose from the sacrificial altar down through the ages to the tragedy of Calvary, every act of worship, every command of God, and every providence were so many sign-boards pointing to that last and supreme act in God's wonderful plan. Calvary has been the focal point upon which all the powers of darkness have hurled their darts, and it has been the glorious prism that has caught the light of heaven and sent its refracted rays into the thick darkness of earth. To make a world, to create a system, to swing into space this mighty canvas, was the work of a word.

But the plan of man's redemption required the highest effort of the divine mind. It vacated the throne of the Son in heaven and brought the "mighty God" to earth to dwell among men. In the fullness of time, God sent Him forth and yonder He lies, the infant of Mary in Bethlehem's manger. For thirty and three years He walks the earthly way "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "He is despised and rejected of men." They plot for His destruction. The last night of His life has come and He is betrayed into the hands of His enemies. A mock trial is hurriedly had, and He is adjudged to die upon the cruel cross. The awful hour for His death has come and hellish malice nails Him to the shameful tree. Between heaven and earth He hangs, suffering, bleeding, praying, dying. His head has fallen upon His breast. He is dead. They take Him down and now earth's darkest night has come — the Lord of life and glory lies silent in the grave. The fiends of darkness now rise up and hope begins to bloom in hell, for the Sun of Righteousness has been eclipsed! Ah, wait! Sing not too fast, ye legions of the pit! The dark night will pass away and there will dawn a victorious morning. The morning has dawned. The fallen Conqueror breaks the bands of death and puts the grave beneath His feet. Before a gazing world He ascends on high, leading captivity captive, and gives gifts to men. And now again He is on His throne, where He reigns and loves and waits, to give salvation to any one who will only dare to trust Him.

—G. W. TRUETT

Prayerless work will soon slacken, and never bear fruit; idle prayer is worse than idle. You cannot part them if you would. How much of the busy occupation which is called "Christian work" is detected to be spurious by this simple test! How much so-called prayer is reduced by it to mere noise, no better than the blaring trumpet or the hollow drum!

—ALEXANDER MACLAREN

## OF WHAT CAN WE BOAST?

*Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. Jeremiah 9:23, 24.*

**E**ACH Christian has some peculiar talent or ability which has been given him in order that he may employ it in the service of the Lord. Contrary to that fiction which is called apostolic succession, there is no select, inner caste that has a monopoly upon these gifts, for the Lord has made all believers to be priests before Him. It is blessedly true that no two saints have exactly the same endowments but as all the gifts are viewed it will be seen that they complement each other in a marvellous manner.

Sometimes Christians may be tempted to complain that they do not have very many abilities or that someone else has some that have been denied them. The regrettable fact is that we are so proud at heart that none of us can be entrusted with too much. Very little is required to turn our heads and cause us to become the very embodiment of conceit.

Indeed our pride may prompt us to boast of some endowments which we do not possess. We have all met some Christian who has deceived himself into thinking that he can sing while actually he has not one iota of musical appreciation or ability. Or there is some other good soul who imagines that she is eminently fitted for some specialized sphere of service whereas she has no aptitude whatever in that direction. It may be perfectly obvious to everyone else that these individuals have mistaken their gifts but still the deluded ones persevere in pushing themselves to the front and in boasting of that of which they have no grounds for boasting.

There is no need of our labouring this fact that it is wrong for Christians to boast of that which they have not. Even the mention of such empty boasting is sufficient to condemn it.

But do we have some grounds for glorying, even a little, in those things that are manifestly characteristic of us? Here the Word of God is decisive — "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches."

If the man who has been given wisdom cannot boast of that wisdom, of what can he boast? If the man of strength can lay no claim to applause because of his might, of what can he speak? If the rich man is refused the opportunity of boasting of his riches, what can he say? It is obvious that the Bible teaches us that we cannot even boast of that which is our greatest asset. Need we add that if this be true, we cannot glory in lesser abilities. *In short we have, in ourselves, nothing about which we can boast!*

The preacher may be mightily used of God and his ministry may be like that of the apostle Paul but, says God, he must not boast of his preaching or glory in it in some subtle manner. Some Christian may be a personal worker of the first order and may have led a

multitude of souls to the Saviour, but he has no grounds for boasting of this. In the Lord's work, there is no room for this self glory.

After laying down this principle and demolishing any ground for mortal boasting, the Lord declares that there is a glorying which is becoming to believers — "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." In this verse we have placed the emphasis where it belongs. Our glorying is not to be in anything in ourselves but is to centre in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our marvel is to be in His grace which caused us to understand and know Him.

How humbling! We are actually spiritual paupers who must point to Another and boast of Him. Even those little trinkets that we call our own are from His hand and so once more we are deprived of any occasion to glory. In short, we are shut up to the place where our boasting must be outside ourselves.

From a Roman prison, the apostle Paul wrote his testimony on this matter to the Galatian Christians. A man of deep intellect, fervent devotion and untiring zeal, he might have enumerated these gifts and with a false modesty attributed them all to God but, at the same time, take the glory to himself. No, rather he declared — "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14). He chose to renounce those very things that adorned his life in order that his whole glory might be in a crucified Saviour.

The blessing of the Lord will come upon us as we seek to come to that place where He is given the pre-eminence. A reliance upon anything else will smother the fires of devotion and service but a steadfast rejoicing in Christ will be the entrance to a lifetime of glorious service and untold blessing.

## For Younger Readers

### THE LOBO WOLF AND FAITH

By Mrs. R. V. Holman

It happened in 1905, near the small frontier village of Crowell, Texas. This unexpected meeting with a huge lobo wolf was the most terrifying experience of my life. I had just moved here with my parents in a covered wagon. Roads were a pair of ruts winding around and under the mesquite trees. Fences were few and far apart in this ranching country.

My older sister, two brothers, and I walked the two



miles from our home to school over a narrow, winding cow trail. Much of the path was through an old, dry lake, rank with tall dried sunflowers and underbrush.

On this particular day, Father had given me money to buy a gallon of sorghum molasses on the way home from school. Since the stores were out of the way, the other children were told to come directly home so they could do the various chores before nightfall.

The sun was making long shadows across the trail by the time I had made my purchase and gotten out of town on the long trail. While hurrying along through the dense underbrush higher than my head, I was startled by a big wolf suddenly appearing in the path ahead of me. At first I was too frightened to move, then, turning around, I sped back toward town. But before I had gone far, the monster was before me in the path again. Losing no time, I raced back toward home. As before, the wolf kept appearing and disappearing in the path, no matter which way I went. My steps were getting slower and my breath was almost all out of me. The wolf was coming closer each time until I could have reached out and touched him. I knew that he was closing in for the kill.

Then I remembered that God was the only One who could help me now. But I was only a small girl and did not know how best to reach Him the fastest. Silently I called upon Him for help. Without thinking what I was doing, a song came faltering and slow from my lips. "Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly." It was a prayer. As the words came tumbling out, "Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of Thy wings," my voice became firmer as my faith was restored. I was no longer afraid, for I knew that God was with me. As my faith grew stronger, my steps were firmer until I marched triumphantly from the shadows out onto the open prairie.

It was dusk when I finally reached home still carrying the heavy bucket of molasses. My parents were worried because I was so late, but they scoffed at my tale about the wolf. They said it was probably a big dog trying to make friends with me.

But the next week, President Theodore Roosevelt and a party came out our way hunting coyotes. Everyone but me was surprised when the hunting party reported killing several coyotes and *one big lobo wolf*. This part of the country was far from the usual haunts of the big timber wolf.

Mother read the news and, without a word, reached for me. As she drew me to her and held me close, I was happy, for we knew that God had protected me from danger.

—The Sunday School Times

## Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 20      Second Quarter      Lesson 5      April 29, 1956

### JESUS HEALS THE BLIND MAN AT JERICHO

Lesson Text: Luke 18:31-43.

Golden Text: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."—John 9:25.

#### I. The Blindness of the Disciples: verses 31-34.

Parallel Passages: Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34.

As the Saviour travelled toward Jerusalem for the last time, His face was "steadfastly set" (Luke 9:51). The disciples following their Master, marvelled at His expression and

attitude and watched Him with wondering awe. They were afraid. Seeing their amazement and fear, the Lord took them aside privately and began to explain what was about to take place in Jerusalem.

That Jesus Christ is God is evident from the fact that He possessed the Divine attribute of omniscience. He rehearsed to the disciples the details of His coming Passion — the betrayal, the arrest, the unjust trial, the cruel mocking, scourging and buffeting, the part to be played by the Jewish religious leaders and the Gentile civil leaders, His death and His resurrection. Many prophecies were about to be fulfilled (Luke 22:37).

This was at least the third time that our Saviour had sought to enlighten His disciples concerning His death and resurrection (Luke 9:27, 44, 45), but their minds were blind to the truth, since their hearts and wills were opposed (Matt. 13:13). They could not understand, because they would not. Other things being equal, people believe what they want to believe, since faith is the exercise of the will, and not merely the assent of the mind. The teaching of the cross is ever unwelcome to the natural and to the carnal mind (Matt. 16:21-23; 1 Cor. 1:23, 24). Moreover, their minds were engrossed with their own selfish ambitions: as they walked along they were talking about who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 20:20-23; Mark 10:30-40). No wonder they did not comprehend the meaning of the Saviour's reference to His sacrifice, suffering and death! Unless the Lord by His Holy Spirit enlightens the minds and hearts of the scholars, they will not comprehend the Word of God as we teach it (2 Cor. 4:4).

#### II. The Blindness of Bartimaeus: verses 35-43.

Parallel Passages: Matt. 20:30-34; Mark 10:46-52.

All of the three records of this event, as told by Matthew, Mark and Luke, must be studied and compared in order to understand the circumstances surrounding the healing of Bartimaeus. Matthew and Mark state that the miracle took place as Christ and His disciples were departing from Jericho (Matt. 20:29; Mark 10:46), whereas Luke says "as he was come nigh unto Jericho" (verse 35). It has been suggested that Christ performed this miracle as He left the old city of Jericho and as He approached the new city of Jericho, some distance away, built by Herod the Great. Again, Matthew mentions two blind men, but Mark and Luke mention just one, Bartimaeus, probably the more conspicuous of the two (verse 35; Matt. 20:30; Mark 10:46).

Helpless and hopeless, the blind man sat by the highway, begging. His name, Bartimaeus, means "son of the blind". To his question as to the meaning of the multitudes, the answer was given, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by". What an opportunity for help and healing was offered to all in Jericho that day; as Jesus of Nazareth, the kind Saviour and the Lord God, passed by! Similarly, although the Lord is not with us in the flesh, He is present in the Spirit, passing by, waiting to be gracious to all who will call upon Him (Isa. 30:18; Rom. 10:13).

Blind Bartimaeus refused to be discouraged from lifting his voice to the Christ in prayer for mercy. His was an earnest importunate prayer which indicated true faith (Matt. 15:22-28; Luke 18:1).

By sovereign power Christ gave immediate and full sight to the blind eyes. The gift of physical sight was but typical of the spiritual vision which came when he exercised faith in the Son of God (John 9:35, 38; Acts 16:30, 31). The first one whom Bartimaeus saw was his Saviour, and he immediately followed Him. No wonder the people joined in songs of praise to God!

#### Daily Bible Readings

April 23—Salvation in Jericho .....	Luke 19:1-10
April 24—The Man Born Blind .....	John 9:1-11
April 25—"Now I See" .....	John 9:24-41
April 26—Eyes That Are Blind .....	John 12:35-41
April 27—Minds That Are Blind .....	2 Cor. 4:1-6
April 28—The Light of the World .....	John 12:44-50
April 29—The Blind See .....	Luke 7:19-23

#### Suggested Hymns

The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin.  
 What means this eager, anxious throng?  
 Once I was blind, I could not see.  
 Come, every soul by sin oppressed.  
 Come to the Saviour, make no delay.  
 Out of my bondage, sorrow and night.

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