

# The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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## CONVICTION AND CHARITY

**I**S THE unwavering advocacy of scriptural truth consistent with the exercise of Christian love? Or, must we minimize those precious truths or "distinctives" which are not held by all evangelicals? Many Christians today operate on the assumption that there is some small core of indispensable truths, which they call "the fundamentals"; these, they maintain, we must hold at all costs. There are other equally precious and indispensable scriptural truths which are dear to Baptists but we are told that we should not stress these lest we offend some beloved brother. Underlying this whole stand is the feeling that the positive, aggressive presentation of all of Biblical truth involves a breach of Christian love.

Let it first of all be granted that there is an unlovely spirit which can be and has been sometimes coupled with orthodoxy. Does it follow that these two *must* be in partnership? One would think so if we were prone to judge by some *very* orthodox publications. Regularly we receive at the office a paper which is Baptist to the core and we find ourselves in agreement with much of its contents but a bitter, vindictive spirit permeates it so that one is repulsed and finds it difficult to distinguish between the truth and the bitter spirit. It must be candidly confessed that this type of spirit has done irreparable harm to any gospel-cause with which it has been connected. Those Baptists who bitterly advocate our cherished and scriptural convictions do no favour whatever to the work of the Lord but rather prejudice good Christians against the whole counsel of God.

Let us go back to our original question.—Is a bitter spirit inevitably associated with an insistence upon a full New Testament position? Definitely not! It is evident that the apostolic Christians were unswerving in their convictions and in their declaration of the whole counsel of God but it is equally evident that they were motivated by a Saviour's love for sinners. It is indeed entirely possible and very necessary to be as firm as a rock in setting forth all the Word of God and, at the same time, to have a heart full of love toward those who differ with us. We can regard no Christian as an implacable enemy simply because he does not accept all that we are persuaded is taught in the New Testament. We may not be able to have church fellowship with him but from the depths of our souls, let us regard him as a brother *and seek to win him to a full scriptural understanding.*

Just as we would avoid the bitter spirit in proclaiming the truth, so would we steer clear of that evangelical school which prides itself upon imagined "charity" and "tolerance". These brethren have arbitrarily chosen several Biblical truths and invite men to fellowship on the basis of these. If you agree with them, they are full of love toward you but if you kindly but firmly insist upon the *whole* counsel of God, watch out for them! Some Baptists go so much out of their way to agree with every conceivable type of looseness that it appears as though they are displaying gullibility rather than love. True Christian charity is not such a cheap sentimentality that it will prompt us to entertain favourably anything and everything. True Christian love will never crucify cherished, scriptural convictions in order to court the favour of men, whether those men be unbelievers or beloved brethren.

From a purely practical, though spiritual, viewpoint, we will never win others to the Baptist position if we so despise that position before them that we are willing to condone by our silence their own loose views on scriptural subjects. Let men see that we are firm in our convictions and that we advocate them out of hearts that burn with love for God, for His truth and for the souls of men. Both ingredients are essential — unswerving conviction and Christian love!

## ARE YOU IN A RUT?

**A** RUT is simply an elongated, shallow grave. Despite the shallowness, however, the occupants of this crevice may find it difficult to rise above it — not that they necessarily love the rut but because habit, pride and a varied assortment of factors demand that they remain. These ruts are to be found in all realms of life — social, political, economic and even religious.

The individual Christian may easily find himself at just such a spiritual standstill and in a dead routine; as a result, he is the witting or unwitting inhabitant of a religious rut. This predicament may be the portion not only of those who are confirmed ritualists although they are the prize examples of a religion which consists in nothing more or less than a series of monotonous motions and lifeless exercises. It is unfortunately possible for a born again child of God to become so listless and mechanical that his spiritual life is as powerless and meaningless as that of the most devoted Romanist.

Prayers can become a routine and as deadly formal as the most staid printed "prayer" in the Book of Prayer. The reading of the Word of God may be a *habit* that is actually of no benefit to the soul. The attendance at the place of worship may be motivated by an inordinate pride in the old church or out of force of habit alone. The expressed concern for the souls of men may simply be so much humbug. The oft-repeated love for the brethren of like precious faith may be openly contradicted by back biting, carping criticism and petty jealousy. Brother, if this is the case, you are in a rut! Get out of it before the sides cave in and it becomes a grave, marking the resting place of a spiritual castaway who has been disqualified for service.

Churches, too, can become the dignified travellers in a religious rut. Let us not dismiss this consideration by thinking of some modernist church, some formalist church or any other. This malady can attack good, Bible-believing, evangelical churches. How easy it is for a church to become settled, comfortable, relatively respectable and complacent. How easy it is to become self-satisfied with the past and both to glory in its triumphs and to justify its mistakes. Paul included both in his determination to *forget* "those things which are behind." His present desire was to reach to the things that were before and to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Any other course is apt to lead to a spiritual rut.

Both individual Christians and churches may find themselves in such a rut if they forget their great mission and begin to major on minors and minor on majors. This is a sure sign that a wilderness experience is coming up. The writer of the book of Proverbs analyzed this condition when he declared that "where there is no vision, the people perish." Could this not refer to the loss of vision on the part of the people of God? Once allow our passion for souls and our concern for the work of God to be eclipsed by other considerations, however vital, and we are in a religious rut. It was only when Peter took his eyes off the Lord and became concerned with the wind and the waves that he began to sink. He had sense enough to cry out — "Lord, save me." Likewise, Lord, save us from religious ruts!

## The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields  
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CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS:  
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S.S. Lesson and Exchanges

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16

Address Correspondence:

**THE GOSPEL WITNESS**

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2 - Canada

Telephone WAlnut 1-7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

## The Editor's Corner

### Booklet on "A Bible Church"

From several quarters we have received encouragement to reprint the articles "A Bible Church — Its Nature and Work" in booklet form. One brother even took the trouble of carefully analyzing the articles and of suggesting several improvements. It is our hope that the booklet will soon be ready for the press and that it will be the means of blessing to many Christians.

### A Hobby Horse?

Some readers will be concluding that the subject of the church is a favourite hobby horse of the Editor. It is true that we have been led especially to stress this truth in recent months for there is a crying need among evangelicals; we do trust, however, that we shall never emphasize one aspect of divine truth at the expense of all others.

### Our Subscription Campaign

We have noted with gratitude that each day's mail brings in some new subscriptions. It is especially gratifying to see that many pastors are subscribing to THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Numbers of subscriptions have come in from ministers of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the General Association of Regular Baptists.

If the Lord were to help us, by his grace, until we got up to the doorstep of heaven, we should never be able to get in unless he gave us the grace to take the last step!

—C. H. SPURGEON

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## DARE TO BE A DANIEL!

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 18th, 1925

(Stenographically Reported)

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

—Daniel 6:10.

**T**HERE is not one of us who is not tempted, on certain occasions, to a display of moral cowardice. The Apostle Paul, I fancy, was naturally a very courageous man; yet in his epistle to the Ephesians he exhorted the Ephesians to pray that grace might be given to him that he might open his mouth boldly. The Apostle Peter was a man of great natural force, a man of impulse, a man to whom the initiative in any enterprise was quite natural, and when endued with power from on high, he became a mighty warrior, and, like Stephen, his enemies were not able to withstand the wisdom with which he spake; yet the Apostle Peter showed the white feather on more than one occasion. Such was the contrast between his behaviour when clothed with divine power, and his conduct when bereft of that power, that it is said of his enemies, "when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Peter learned to be bold by keeping company with Christ.

It is popular in our-day to suppose that if we keep company with Christ, if we live in fellowship with Him, we shall have nothing but honeyed words for everybody. I do not know how many times I have been recommended to read the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians! If it is at all helpful to my friends, from this forward they may know that I can repeat it without reading it at all; and at any time of the day or night can sit down and "meditate it through", as the old lady said. I believe there is no quality more necessary in the work of the Lord at this hour than the quality of boldness: I believe there is nothing ministers need more than to learn fearlessness to declare the whole counsel of God; and there is nothing the people in the pew need to learn more thoroughly than the same lesson; — for they, too, are witnesses, we are all witnesses. The reason you did not bear witness for Christ to several scores of people last week was not because you had not opportunities, nor altogether because you did not want to do it: but only because you were afraid. It occurred to you on the street car, in business, and in your social relations, on many occasions, "This is a good opportunity for me to tell to all around, what a dear Saviour I have found" — but you did not do it; and you did not do it because you were a coward. That is plain speech, but if I said anything else you would know I was not telling the truth, because you know exactly that is what you are. That is what we all are, apart from the grace and the power of the Holy Spirit.

I thought it might be profitable for us once again to look at this heroic figure of Old Testament times, that we might learn how Daniel became courageous.

### I.

And I want, first of all, to remark that the man or woman who gives first place to God in his or her life will need courage, because the mere fact that God is put first will be certain to incite others to anger. There never was a more gracious Personality than that of our Lord: He spoke gracious words; He went about doing good — healing the sick, cleansing the leper, raising the dead. You will search His record in vain to find one single instance where He did anything but good, or showed anything but kindness to the men about Him; and yet from the beginning of human history until now there never lived a man who was so intensely hated as the Lord Jesus Christ, because He was the perfect incarnation of divine holiness; and the whiteness of His perfect life threw every other life into shadow by contrast. They hated Him because His very loyalty to God, and to the truth of God, and to the Word of God, constituted a condemnation of themselves.

Now, my brethren and sisters, in the measure in which, by God's grace and by the power of His indwelling Spirit, we are enabled to approximate the glorious character of our Lord, just in that measure will our lives be a condemnation of the world about us, — and just in that measure will the world hate us. It is a most pitiable thing, it is nothing less than a tragedy, that so many churches, made up, professedly, of redeemed, regenerated, men and women in whose hearts Christ dwells by faith — I say it is a tragedy that so many churches thus constituted should be on good terms with the world, the flesh, and the devil and fail utterly to condemn the life that is about them. Daniel served his God, and served his king; but just because he served God he was hated of his fellows. That does not mean, of course, that we are to attribute our unpopularity to our loyalty to principle, when, in so many cases, it may be due to our sheer unloveliness of character. The blessing of God is pronounced upon those who are hated of all men — not for their own sakes, but for His Name's sake: it is when our relationship to God, to Christ, to His Word, to His gospel, to His purposes of grace in the world, — when our relationship to Him calls down the wrath of men upon our heads, at the same time we are the recipients of Heaven's benedictions.

I want you young converts to remember that principle.

When you trusted in Jesus Christ a little while ago, some of you, you imagined that all the wrinkles of life would now be smoothed out, and that all the roads would be levelled and paved, and that all difficulties would be removed; yet scarcely had you received Christ into your life when you found your difficulties multiplied, and your enemies increased, and all life seemed to go awry from the moment you put Jesus Christ in the centre. Of course! — the moment Christ became the centre of your life, in relation to the world you became eccentric, you bumped into everybody.

And that is ever so, dear friends. And the church ought to have the same experience — sent not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to exemplify the principles of the life of Christ. We shall find the same principle operating in our social relations, in our business connections, in the place where we work, everywhere, we shall be going against the tides. They will call us narrow-minded, and bigotted, and old-fashioned, and fanatical — and you are fortunate if you are able to retain a reputation for simple sanity if you follow the Lord! A dear lady told me the other day — I do not know whether I told you about it, but I think it is good enough to pass on — a dear lady told me that she was in a certain home-visiting, and another visitor was there. Somehow they stumbled upon the subject of Jarvis Street and its Pastor; and this visitor from out of town said, "Whatever has happened to that man? I hear he has become perfectly insane"! Well, that is a fine reputation to have! A very great authority told the Apostle Paul that he was a bit mad.

I think I will tell you the sequel of that story, just for your encouragement when people throw names at you. We read to-night the Lord Jesus said, "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Were you ever called names for Christ's sake? Well, my friend said to this lady, "Will you come to church with me next Sunday morning? Are you going to be in town?" The good lady was a Methodist. She came to church; and the Lord met her, and gave her a great blessing through the message of the "insane" preacher. She went away back into the country and she told her Methodist pastor that she never had had such a blessing in her life; she had been lifted into the heavenlies. The first Sunday he could find the time, that minister got into his motor car and motored down, and spent a day in this place. I did not meet him; but he went back and said, "We are going to throw out a hundred things we have had in this place, and put Jesus Christ first."

Now, my friends, you must expect if you will put Christ first as Daniel did, that wherever you go you will incite the anger of people; and you will need His grace to behave yourselves wisely in the circumstances.

## II.

If it be so that He enables us in some measure to follow Him, that following in itself will render our position impregnable. Here were the princes, and governors, and all the important people of the province of Babylon; and they sought to find occasion against Daniel. They turned their microscopes on his record, and tried to find fault with him; but they could find none. That is evermore true. The first and the great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." People do not know very much about our relation to God; that is a secret matter, that is a matter between your soul and God. But if you

are rightly related to God, as Daniel was, it will express itself in your record, in your relation to your neighbour. They may look for occasion to charge you with faithlessness; but in the measure in which we are true to God, we shall be true in every relationship of life. To put Christ in the centre means to bring us into right relationship to His laws everywhere.

So you need not be afraid if you follow Daniel's example in this respect. It will do you no real harm; but in the office you will be a better bookkeeper, a better office hand, a better workman in the shop. I really think I can go through a building, almost any place where men are working, as a rule, and pick out the Christians without asking whether they are Christians or not. The true man, the man who loves God with all His heart, hates a piece of poor work. Just in the measure in which he serves God, his work will be superior to the work of other men; he will put conscience into all his labour, so that even the works of his hands will be a testimony to the religion of his heart. Hence they found occasion against Daniel only in one direction, and that was concerning the law of his God. Oh, I have seen that repeated: "Mr. So-and-So is a very decent sort of man. I would not charge him with insincerity or with irregularity of life in any particular direction; but he is religiously extreme, you know, just extreme on one point. He is an amiable gentleman in every respect except religiously, and religiously he is a crank, there is no living with him at all!"

Blessed be the man or woman whose loyalty to Jesus Christ is really made an occasion of criticism by the enemy! So was it in Daniel's case. Is it so in ours? Can they say of us — can they say of us that we do really love the Lord Jesus Christ? Can they say of us that we do really love His Holy Word, that we are really seeking to do His will as we understand it? If they can say that of us, we shall surely get into trouble; but never mind about that if that be all they can say about us, that we are religious extremists. Oh, I wonder if we can be too extreme in that matter? What ought we to do with the truth? Believe it? Can you be extreme in believing the truth? Can you believe the truth too tenaciously? Is it possible for us to be extravagant in our devotion to the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever? They will say all that about you; but their occasion of fault-finding will be in your relationship to your God, if you are true to Him. And that is a point distinctly in the favour of the loyal Christian, because then the Devil attacks him in his strongest point.

We all have our weak points, and we do not like his majesty attacking us there; but if it be so that our loyalty to Christ is made the occasion of attack, then all

We all have our weak points, and we do not like his majesty attacking us there; but if it be so that our loyalty to Christ is made the occasion of attack, then all hell cannot hurt us. Look at this man! Long custom had developed in him the habit of prayer. As we read this story Daniel suddenly emerges as a hero. But Daniel was not made a hero in an hour. When they secured the passing of that decree forbidding anyone to ask any petition of any god for thirty days save only of the king, Daniel had no difficulty in adjusting his life to that new situation for it had been adjusted to that from his youth. When he knew the writing was signed, he did not hold a special prayer meeting; he did not develop a new habit and say, "Now, I have to pray especially on this occa-

sion." What did he do? He just did what he had done "aforetime". And that long practice of kneeling upon his knees and praying with open windows toward Jerusalem three times a day made him a match for all his enemies; and when at last the crisis of life came, there was in Daniel a character that had been developed by God's grace so that he stood like a veritable Gibraltar against the storm. He did not change his habits; he did not adjust himself in any respect to his enemies' requirements: he simply heard that the writing was signed, and paid no attention to it, but went to his house, and, his windows being open, he got down on his knees and prayed out loud three times a day as he had always done.

My friends, it is what you are always doing that is going to make a man of you in Christ — not what you do occasionally. And that is true of the church. I get out of patience with some of my brethren, I frankly say; for every little while they say, "Let us have a special week of prayer." Why do you not have fifty-two weeks of prayer? It is very well to have a special day of prayer when you can, but why can't we win the victory by going on in our regular work as we have done "aforetime"?

You young men, would you not like to be heroes? Would you not like to win a victory for God? I never grow weary of that story of David. It is good for the boys, and for the men too. I love to see that young chap, just a stripling, "a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance". I never read the story but I have a hearty laugh. When the news is brought to Saul, and Saul looks in amazement at him and says, "You cannot do it; but, however, if you will, we will dress you up for the occasion." And then you can see him putting on Saul's armour, and he looks like a little boy dressed up in his father's boots! — just rattling around in the things. There is the big sword by his side, and he cannot handle it at all. As he moves about he says, "I cannot go in these." "Oh, but you must, you are going against a mighty man of war!" I think David said, "Ah, take these things off; let me be myself, and I will show you, by God's grace, what I can do." So they took off all the trappings, and he went down to the brook and picked up the stones, five of them. Why five? Someone asked me why I never preached on the four stones that David did not use. Well, I think they stand for his modesty: he was a better shot than he thought, of surer aim.

But do you know how the victory was won? That victory was not won on that occasion, on that day. When David put that smooth stone into the sling, and with such calm assurance said to the vain-glorious champion of the Philistines, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" — when he said that, he knew God. This was the one who said, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over"; this is the one who said, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God"; this is the one who said, "Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly; salvation belongeth to the Lord, His blessing is upon His people." David had the victory in his heart when he took the field. When did he win it? Back there in the quiet places of life, back there as he kept his father's sheep, back there when he fought with the lion and the bear, back there as he laid

up a store of experience, and accumulated, shall I say, a store of faith for the great crisis of his life. And when at last the great crisis came, all that David had to do was to do as he had done "aforetime", — and down came the giant before him.

And now that all Babylon was risen up against Daniel, against this man of God, all that he had to do was just keep up his daily habit of communion with God, and victory was his. Do you not see, my dear friends, that it is your duty and mine to be getting ready all the time for the crises of life? For it works both ways. The man that is suddenly overwhelmed with temptation, the man who is prone in the dust, humbled, disgraced, dishonoured, did not fall all at once. He was falling a long time before anyone knew anything about it; and when at last he came crashing down, it was only just the last push of the enemy. So contrariwise, when God leads us on to victory it is the cumulative power of steadfast faith that issues at last in that irresistible stroke before which the giants of Philistia fall. Let us cultivate the habit of daily, hourly, communion with God; and as we do it we may be sure that there is nothing that can harm us if we be followers of that which is good.

And so, my brethren and sisters, if there is someone here to-night who has not begun after that fashion, if you have not bowed your knee for the first time saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," begin it now. I am always afraid of the sermon that has no place of beginning for poor sinners:

"There is a place where Jesus sheds  
The oil of gladness o'er our heads,  
A place than all besides more sweet;  
It is the blood-stained mercy-seat."

That is where we all begin; and that is where we continue ever more, — kneeling upon our knees praying to God as we have done "aforetime".

### III.

There are some lions, you know, back there — and they are going to eat you up! Did you ever hear the lions growl? I frankly say I have been hearing the growling of some lions for a long time. Oh, how they bellow! But there is another Lion; we sing about Him here:

"For the Lion of Judah shall break every chain,  
And give us the victory again and again."

It is a great thing to learn not to be afraid of human lions, for they are always waiting for the trusting soul. How many of you here want a revival? How many preachers or ministerial students are here this evening, raise your hands? How many have the ministry in view? Don't be afraid. Yes, there are several. I would like to tell you how to have a revival, a real revival. I heard our young Brother McGinlay talk about the Hebrew children in the furnace the other night in Hamilton. It was a great message; I enjoyed it greatly, all the more because I have preached from it so often myself. But the same principles apply here. Poor Daniel! He had a hard time of it, did he not? He did not have half as hard a time of it as the king! Daniel was cast into the lions' den; but there is nothing to suggest that he was uncomfortable for half a minute. But the poor king who had been tricked into the passing of that decree went to his house and could not sleep, could not sleep at all. I want to say to the friends who are so busy often in opposition to this place, and to its ministry, that it does not disturb our

peace for a moment — not a bit of it. Somebody said to me the other day, "Well, you are fighting; you are contending for the faith. You do a great deal of fighting." "Yes," I said, "but all outside the church. We do not have any inside. We did have one battle, and we have not had any since. It is all outside. We are quite comfortable here, quite happy, and confident that God will give us the victory, too." There is no doubt about that; but I do sympathize with that poor king! And sometimes I sympathize with our friends the enemy, because they do get themselves into a great pickle, beyond any doubt. There is no question about that.

And then this king came around in the morning to see what was left of Daniel. Oh, you know, there is a great deal of real humour in the Bible. I believe if I could not see the funny side of things, I could not live. And sometimes I think the Bible is the most humorous Book in the world. I love to read that story of those important men, the members of the Sanhedrin. You remember how they arrested the preachers and put them in jail; and went home to sleep, saying, "We will attend to you in the morning." So in the morning they came with all their robes of office, and made their way to the council chamber and sat down; and then they commanded that the prisoners be brought. Presently the officers came back — but no prisoners. "Why have you not brought them?" "Oh," they said, "we found the prison all right, and the door was still on its hinges, and the wardens and soldiers were outside keeping the prisoners just as you left them last night; but when we got inside we could not find the prisoners: they were gone." And while they were wondering what had happened, someone came and said, "You know those men you put in prison last night? Well, they are down in the temple preaching the same old gospel they were preaching yesterday." And so they sent the officers and said, "Bring them without violence. You had better be careful for they got out of the prison somehow. Something happened."

I never read this story without feeling that there is a touch of humor in it, — the king's distress through the long night, waiting for the break of day; his coming eagerly to the lions' den; and there is Prime Minister Daniel just as comfortable as he would have been in his office, not a bit hurt at all. And the king said, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest?" — occasionally? No! — "is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" "Oh," Daniel said, "that was very easy; He is the Lord of hosts, but He did not send His whole army; He just sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths. So, thank you, your Majesty, I am quite well this morning. They could not hurt me at all; I have enjoyed the night; I have been sitting talking with the angel while you could not sleep; I have learned more this night in the lions' den than I could have learned in fifty years in the palace." Is it not wonderful? But that is what happens: as we put our trust in Him, His angels will keep us company all the way.

But there is one sad feature of it, a very sad feature: then the king ordered that Daniel's enemies should be cast to the lions. And it is said that the lions had the mastery of them ere ever they had come to the bottom of the den. The lions had a good meal after all — but the menu was changed! It was not Daniel they ate up; it was his enemies. That is always happening; that is God's way of adjusting the balance. Haman is for ever building a gallows for Mordecai — and Mordecai never gets hanged on it: Haman saves Mordecai the trouble of

building one; the furnace is heated for the children of God, but it is His enemies that are burnt in the furnace; the lions are there to eat up God's prophet, but it is the enemies of God that suffer at last. No, dear friends, we have nothing to fear. We are never afraid of this glorious old Book; we are not afraid that God's cause will ever be defeated: "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." God, in His own time, will uncover everything; and He will justify those who have put their trust in Christ.

I hope you will have a good sleep to-night, all of you; I hope you will be comfortable as you rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. And I hope those of you who have not put your trust in Christ will not sleep at all until you yield yourselves wholly to Him. What a mighty Saviour we have! Would you not like Him to be your Saviour? Would you not like to trust Him, and have all the record of the past blotted out, and to be brought into such relationship to Him as Daniel was, and begin this lifelong habit of daily communion with Him, and become at once the care of His angels? Then He will lead you all the way through life, and bring you at last in triumph into the city.

How many are there here to-night who will dare to be a Daniel? Do you know Daniel did not know he was daring anything? That is the beauty of it. He did not know he was a hero; he never thought of it; he just went on about his work, doing as he had always done. Let us begin to-night; let us put our hearts, our lives, wholly at the disposal of Jesus Christ. As we do that, we have God's Word for it that we shall never be defeated, we shall never be confounded. Will you come to-night?

#### SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

Dr. Slade, the pastor, preached at both services on the past Lord's Day. In the morning he spoke on "The Saviour's Parting Words", and in the evening his subject was "Christian Baptism". At the conclusion of the evening service an open air meeting was held at the rear of the church, facing Allan Gardens. Through song, message and brief testimonies, the gospel was presented to many who otherwise would not attend a service.

### *Visitors to Toronto...*

You are cordially invited to attend Jarvis Street Baptist Church (corner of Jarvis and Gerrard Streets) in downtown Toronto. Our Sunday schedule is as follows:—

9:45 A.M.—Bible School for all.

11:00 A.M.—Morning Service

7:00 P.M.—Evening Service

8:30 P.M.—Outdoor Service

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*A cordial welcome awaits you.*

**LET'S BE CONSISTENT!**

## Some Implications of the Bible Teaching on the Church

**A**RE our actions always consistent with that which we profess to believe? Is it not true that we are guilty of accommodating what we call our convictions to suit the tempo of the age and the consensus of opinion? It is indeed to be feared that Christians can give an intellectual assent to the Biblical teaching upon a given subject but; at the same time, refuse to implement that teaching in daily practice; or can it be that they have not realized the far-reaching implications of that teaching in other realms of endeavour? (Since the gospel is one, each single truth must be seen in relationship to other truths and hence the believer's entire conduct will be a harmonious whole and not a series of isolated contradictions.

Most Baptists, we trust, accept the teaching of the Word of God upon the subject of the church; in fact, there is no reason for our existence as a separate group of churches if we reject this scriptural concept. It is, however, possible that we may have failed to notice the far-reaching implications of this position as it is related to other aspects of divine revelation and practical endeavour. If we steadfastly cling to the Baptist position on the church and violate that truth by our actions, we must become entangled in a hopeless and contradictory position. *If we accept the verdict of the Bible on the subject of the nature and work of the church, then let us relentlessly follow the matter to its scriptural and logical conclusion whatever be the consequences.*

As we thought on the subject of the Bible teaching on the church, we could not help but meditate further on the far-reaching effect that the acceptance of this teaching would have upon varied aspects of religious life and work. The vista of thought widened until we realized that a real acceptance of this position would drastically affect many preconceived and cherished notions that are held by some evangelicals. What a dilemma! We are forced to retain what is revered by beloved fellow believers or to accept in its entirety, with its implications, the clear verdict of Holy Writ. Let no one declare that this is not a real problem for it is; the easy way out, of course, is to stifle conviction and to proceed with the current, perhaps rationalizing the whole process by thinking that "the fundamentals" have not been affected by this conduct. Habit and cherished, though false, ideas can be terrible masters!

Of necessity, this article will be a relatively short one and may seem to be an informal and rambling discussion of the subject. It is motivated by a desire to understand something of the relationship between the scriptural teaching on the church and practical questions that must confront every individual Christian, every pastor and every church. These issues can be evaded only by some spiritual flight from reality or by some devious scheme to co-operate with the predominate evangelical spirit. We have arbitrarily chosen five topics for consideration and shall merely pass some random, though pertinent, comments on these five —

- (1) Evangelism.
- (2) Missionary societies.
- (3) Ministerial associations.
- (4) The tithe.
- (5) Relationship to other Bible-believing Baptist churches.

That surely is an interesting, thought-provoking (and provocative) list! We do not expect that all our readers will agree with us; indeed we hazard the guess that some who might have agreed with our previous articles on a Bible church will not accept what we believe to be the scriptural and logical implications of that position.

In all such discussions there must be a spirit of charity coupled with real conviction. As we deal with these topics, we intend to be very frank and to state as clearly as we can what are our profound convictions for we have no sympathy with that type of journalism which consists in an endless flow of meaningless platitudes and commonplace observations. At the same time, we are motivated by a desire to see the work of the Lord attempted according to His design in order that it may have His blessing.

### I. THE CHURCH AND EVANGELISM

The New Testament teaches that the work of evangelization has been committed to divinely-ordained bodies which are designated "churches". Individual believers, too, are responsible for this work but they, too, should have a definite relationship to a local church. Most Baptists would accept what we have said thus far.

It follows then that the scriptural type of evangelism is a local church-centred evangelism conducted by the local church. This will consist in the regular services of the church, special campaigns, the important work of Sunday School evangelism and visitation evangelism. Every Baptist church worthy of the name will be not only evangelical but also aggressively evangelistic. Again, most Baptists would shout a hearty "Amen!" to that proposition.

What of "mass evangelism"? The answer would depend upon the definition of "mass evangelism". If by "mass evangelism" is meant the large city-wide campaigns sponsored by churches of all denominations and shades of opinion; it is our firm conviction that Baptist churches cannot support them and be true to their position. First of all, it should be noted that the majority of converts from these campaigns are directed to churches where Jesus Christ is not honoured and where His Word is despised. More basic still, however, is the solemn consideration that Baptists, believing that the Lord has established New Testament churches, are consenting by their actions, to the support of bodies that are diametrically opposed to the scriptural program. Let us be consistent!

A mass evangelism that would have a scriptural war-

rant is that conducted in a city or some designated area by a group of New Testament Baptist churches. The converts, then, could be referred to the local churches where they would be baptized, taught in the things of God and utilized in the service of the Master. In taking this position, we do so not out of malice or bitterness, as some critics will be swift to accuse, but out of a desire to see the hand of the Lord in mighty blessing.

If we intellectually accept the scriptural teaching on evangelism and, by our actions, contradict it, are we not really advertising to the world and other believers, that the Lord's program is not binding upon churches and believers today? Indeed have evangelical Baptists in this land ever given the Lord an opportunity to demonstrate what He can do when His work is attempted in His power and in the way which He has directed? It is time that more heed was paid to the divine program and less to the high pressure technique which has found Baptists co-operating with a mixed multitude. Dare to be true to your heart-felt convictions!

## II. THE CHURCH AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

A Baptist church is a missionary church! If it is not missionary in outlook, it is not fulfilling its function and has sadly misinterpreted its marching orders. This does not mean that a Baptist church should be the prey of every type and kind of missionary society. If we really accept the Biblical teaching on the nature of the church, we will want to support a missionary program which issues in the establishment of Bible churches. The so-called inter-denominational, undenominational or non-denominational type of society which does not establish New Testament churches will have no appeal *if we would be scriptural and true to what we profess to believe about the church.*

We would venture to say, however, that if Baptist money were withdrawn from societies which send out missionaries to establish non-Baptistic churches, those same societies would cease to function or else would be forced to conduct a scriptural program. When we say this we do not intend to suggest that these societies have not been blessed but we do declare that the Lord has in store an indescribable blessing if we would do His work as He has outlined.

Why does Baptist work lag in Canada? Could it be that many Baptists send much more to some non-Baptistic society doing work elsewhere than they do to Baptist endeavours to evangelize this land? By no means do we discount foreign missionary labour; rather let us encourage real Baptist foreign missionary endeavour. At the same time, we have a crying responsibility before God right here in Canada. The missionary need in Canada presents to all real Baptists an opportunity to demonstrate if they are prepared to put in practice what they profess to believe.

## III. THE CHURCH AND MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Should an evangelical Baptist belong to a ministerial association? Let every pastor choose for himself — before God and His revealed Word! For ourselves, we cannot see that we could conscientiously join such an association. The usual ministerial group is composed of those who are opposed to the historic faith. No evangelical minister would consent to belong to an association of Moslem sheiks and Jewish rabbis but the same minister would belong to a group of modernists, neo-orthodox

and semi-evangelicals! Our basic objection to a ministerial association, however, is deeper still. If we are persuaded that the evangelical Baptist position is the scriptural position, then what is our ground for co-operating with those who do not espouse that position? Is it that we might gain some "advantages" such as free radio time, a religious education period in the schools or "prestige"? Perish the thought! Let's be consistent! — and, more important, **SCRIPTURAL!**

## IV. THE CHURCH AND THE TITHE

"Tithing! I'll have nothing to do with it. It's part of the Mosaic economy and I'm not under law but under grace!" With a pious, crusading air, some Christians would utter such sentiments. Their arguments, on the surface, may, at first, appear to be very spiritual and to be the correct expression of liberated souls. It is to be feared, however, that these sentiments can be the cloak for covetousness.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in speaking of the tithe, never once condemned it; He did condemn those who relied upon it or any other external ordinance as a ground of acceptance with God. Furthermore, the fact that we are under grace and not under the law in no way lessens our responsibilities but rather increases them. It is recorded that the apostolic believers were to lay in store as God had prospered them. In other words, they were to exercise *proportionate giving*. Since the tithe, too, was a type of proportionate giving, are we to suppose that in this age of *grace*, the proportion is to be less?

Perhaps most of our readers agree with us thus far. Let us then proceed to note that the tithe is to be devoted to the work of the Lord. "Amen!" declares our reader. Yes, and further, the tithe is to be directed to the work of the Lord *in the local New Testament church*. "No!" says the indignant reader, "I shall send my gift to whatever work of the Lord attracts me."

*If you accept what the Bible teaches about the church, you have accepted the proposition that the work of the gospel has been entrusted to New Testament churches.* When you declare then that the tithe should go to the work of the Lord, you consent to the fact that it goes to the local church. Let's be consistent! — and **SCRIPTURAL!**

Those other attractive, extra-church organizations that boldly appeal for and obtain thousands upon thousands of Canadian Baptist dollars are no substitutes for the local churches. We have heard Christians say something like this — "Evangelical Baptists are so dead and have done so little in Canada; but Dr. So and So from the United States broadcasts on hundreds of Canadian radio stations. *He is really doing something.*" Is he? Who told you so? Probably he did or his public relations man. Whether he is doing something or not, the point is that evangelical Baptists are hampered in their work because some of our Baptist people, who intellectually accept the scriptural teaching on the church, are more enamoured with noise than they are with a Biblical program and so they direct their tithe to every imaginable venture.

Let us repeat — if you accept what the Bible teaches about the church, you accept the proposition that the work of the Lord has been entrusted to certain, well-defined local institutions called churches and hence your labours and gifts should be devoted to that work. Do you accept this implication of the Biblical position or have you already started to rationalize your way out of it?



## V. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BIBLE-BELIEVING BAPTIST CHURCHES

Because each Baptist church is an autonomous body, are we to conclude that each church is to have the minimum of fellowship and association with other similar bodies? Let us decisively reject such a position for independence and inter-dependence are closely allied in the work of the gospel.

A lofty isolationism from sister churches is foreign to the spirit of the New Testament and is, as well, detrimental to the cause of Christ. The scriptural teaching on congregational independence cannot be used as an excuse for lack of co-operation with sister churches in gospel outreach. A true New Testament church will have fellowship with all similar churches and will not hesitate to engage in common enterprises and missionary labour. The "anti-convention" and "go it alone" spirit may sound to be bold but it is lacking in vision.

\* \* \* \*

These are a few random thoughts from the Editor's pen and will serve as an afterthought on his articles on the church. You may disagree with some of these affirmations and that is your privilege. We would ask, however, that the motive for dissent be examined. Did you disagree because Scripture taught otherwise? Or was the disagreement caused because of sentiment and expediency? Let's be consistent!

### THE BAPTIST MISSION

The mission of Baptists will not be attained by apologizing to the world for our existence, by asking pardon of other denominations for differing from them, or by begging that we may not be esteemed as bigots. We must become aggressive in spirit, positive in the advocacy of our principles.

J. M. PENDLETON

### NEW MILLION DOLLAR CANADIAN HEAD-QUARTERS FOR "JEHOVAH WITNESSES"

The sect, known as the "Jehovah Witnesses", has opened a large Canadian headquarters in North York, a Toronto suburb. For some years now, this group has been active in the work of spreading their false teaching in the dominion; apparently they have made sufficient progress to merit the erection of a million dollar headquarters on one of the main arterial highways into Toronto.

The new building is well-equipped, containing a printing plant, storage room for the sect's literature and the national administrative offices. In addition there are dormitories for the workers who are in charge of the Canadian branch.

Christians will note with dismay the opening of these headquarters, for now the sect has a Canadian centre of operations from which their literature will flood the land. This is surely cause for renewed activity on the part of evangelical Baptists.

### RESPECTABLE RELIGION

There are congregations that have got the stamp of worldliness so deep upon them that the men who want to be burdened with as little religion as may be respectable will find themselves at home there.

—ALEXANDER MACLAREN

## THE SAINT'S VALLEYS

By Andrew Bonar

**B**UNYAN somewhere says, that the days are coming when men shall talk of Antichrist as matter of history, — telling their children how that mystery of iniquity leavened Christendom, how it prevailed, how it was destroyed by the Lord's coming. Even so, the days shall come when the saints shall speak one to another of their past pilgrimages; and all shall have to tell more or less of what they met with as they journeyed, and how the Lord led them, every one, through — (1) The valley of Trouble, *Achor*, in their awakening; (2) The valley of *Berachah*, or Blessing, when they were brought to peace through the work of Christ; (3) The valley of Weeping, or *Baca*, at various stages and times; (4) The valley of *Eshcol*, where first-fruits, or earnest of glory, were given them; (5) The valley of conflict with foes, when victories were won for God in the valley of *Rephaim*; (6) The valley of *Shaveh*, or the King's Dale, where the Lord met them, as Melchizedek did Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; (7) The valley of Decision, or *Jehoshaphat*, where at last they saw Antichrist, and Satan, and every foe overwhelmed and swept away, and began their triumph with their Lord and King.

(1) **ACHOR.**—This is the spot where Achan's sin was exposed and punished before all Israel and before the Lord, — the sin that had troubled Israel and Moses; the sin that had brought woeful, fatal trouble on himself and his house; the sin that could be dealt with aright only by the stroke of justice, — death, and the consuming flame. Now, every awakened sinner opens his eyes some morning to find himself an *Achan*! Every awakened soul is taught by the Spirit somewhat of sin, and his own sin, and is made to cry 'Amen' to the judgment of God that dooms the sinner to death and hell (Josh. 7:26; Hos. 2:15).

All do not linger long in the valley, though some do. There are those, indeed, who seem to get their most memorable view of it after having got clear of it; they are made to look back and learn its lessons. But others pass slowly through, burdened with the sight and sense of sin, and guilt, and wrath.

One thing is sure: all of them do learn the lesson taught in *Achor*, viz. that sin is exceeding sinful, and deserves the eternal wrath and curse of the Holy One, whether it be sin in the heart, or sin in the life, or sin on the tongue, or sin in the form of omission, or sin in the openness of positive transgression; sin against law, or sin against love. It is always a gloomy valley; the clouds that hide the sun are ever over it.

II.—**BERACHAH.**—The Lord delights, in due time, to lead his own to a more pleasant place, where they find favour, and peace, and joy. He leads them to see the Substitute, Jesus, "made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13), that the "blessing" might come upon us. And thus they enter the valley of Blessing.

The history of King Jehoshaphet furnishes a beautiful type of the way in which the sinner becomes possessed of all the blessings of redemption. In the valley, ever afterwards called *Berachah*, that king led on his army to gather the spoil of foes, and "they were three days in gathering it, it was so much" (2 Chron. 20:25). Their

part in the matter was simply to look on and "believe in the Lord" (2 Chron. 20:20); and so they saw Him work salvation by his own arm. They found the *work done* to their hand; they gathered immense riches, and returned up the valley homewards, "blessing the Lord".

It is thus with the believing soul. Fearing, it sets itself to seek the Lord; and the Lord sends the tidings of his salvation, calling on the soul to come and see. And lo! it is done! Another, in our name and for our sake, has gone forth, has obeyed the law, has borne the burden, has given to God what we, by our sins, took away; and our part is simply to "bless the Lord" that this is done—to "bless the Lord," and say "Amen" to it all! to take it as our own, gathering the spoil which another has won for us, and so to "bless the Lord," and go homeward! Happy valley! happy soul!

This is the stage of "joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13). Not by what we have done or felt, not by prayers nor by tears, but by discovering what the Lord Jesus *has done*, we are blessed. The cloud that overhung our path is gone; the sun has burst forth. The valley of Berachah is the place for songs; every song a recognition of the Lord's gracious acts accomplished for them.

III. BACA.—God's saved ones go on their way, never forgetting *Berachah*; but, nevertheless, they have many sorrows. They oft traverse "the valley of Weeping", or Baca (Ps. 84:6). Care, trial, pain, sickness, cause them to weep. Friends and foes, corruption and temptation, the church and the world, furnish from time to time causes of sadness.

How then, do they pass through this valley? Very much by remembering the spoil gathered in *Berachah*: Their tears send them ever back to Him who has removed the curse; and He turns their sorrows into holy blessing. *Baca* becomes a well of life to them. "Lord, by these things men live" (Isa. 38:16). An old poet has sung of the matter in these strains:

"Seemed not thy spouse unkind to see thee weep?"

When one said to a friend who had lost a son, "God gave you his own Son, ere He took yours from you," that was a well dug in *Baca*. When another said to a godly widow, who had newly gazed on her husband dead, and who said, "I have lost my husband!" "You forget that you had a Husband before you had him," it was a well in *Baca*. The "Man of sorrows" meets the weeper here with his most tender sympathy.

IV.—ESHCOL.—To cheer on Israel in the desert, the Lord caused the spies to be sent into the Promised Land; and an immense cluster of the richest grapes, with figs and pomegranates, was brought to them as an earnest of what they were yet to possess (Num. 13:23). This earnest was from the valley of Eschcol.

The Lord "knows our frame". He does not forget to dry up tears, and to brighten hope by special joys arising from the glimpses of glory which He sends. The Holy Spirit himself is the true "earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. 1:14). The Spirit gives samples of the "joy of the Lord", "the new song," "the love of God," "the peace that passeth understanding"; and, by the light which He casts on the prophetic page, brings near to us the pearl-gates of new Jerusalem, the jasper walls, the golden streets, as well as the "no night there," "the throne of God and of the Lamb," "the river of the water of life," "the king-

dom, and the King," with the multitude of the saved — the happy, holy company of the redeemed.

Many such earnest do the saints find — *Eshcol-grapes* in the desert. It is thus that *hope* is nourished and *hope* is one of the soul's eagle-wings.

V. REPHAIM.—All saints do some work for their God, and fight some battles. It was thus with David when seated on the throne; he was led forth to repel invading Philistines in the *valley of Rephaim*, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Twice was he called to this conflict in the same spot (2 Sam. 5:19-25); both times he won the victory; but the circumstances were not alike on the two occasions. On the one occasion, he asked the Lord; and the Lord said, "Go up," at once. On the next occasion, he asked the Lord; and the Lord said, "Thou shalt not go up," but instead, he must go round by the mulberry-trees, and wait quietly till he heard "the sound of a going in the top of the mulberry-trees." The impatient warrior-band obeyed; and at last the appointed signal came, and they rushed on and conquered.

Memorable conflicts for the church of God! They teach us to expect foes just when all seems peace. They teach that Satan will try to find us off our guard after a former victory. They teach us to move not one step till we have consulted the Lord. They teach us to consult the Lord anew, as every occasion comes, and not to trust to old direction and old answers to prayer. Yes, *Rephaim* (the "valley of Giants", and gigantic men of old) teaches us that, thought at one time the Lord may bid us at once go forward, He may at another say, "Sit still a while;" be patient; be neither too late nor too soon.

"God waits to bless us day by day;

But we must trust Him for the time and way."

There is nothing for it but a continual leaning on the Lord for guidance, while we use his word and examine his providences.

VI. SHAVAH, or the KING'S DALE.—It was here that (Gen. xiv. 7) Abraham was met by Melchizedek, who refreshed him and his army with bread and wine so seasonably and suddenly, after the battle against the five kings. He whose name means "King of Righteousness", and who was at the same time "Prince of Peace", thus kindly thought upon faithful Abraham and his worn-out company, on their way homeward. See! they sit together on yonder grassy plot, watered by Kedron, and shaded by the Mount of Olives. Emblem of such scenes as occur still among God's Abrahams! — when they meet together, their King in the midst, enjoying sweet fellowship in ordinances, or yet more specially when they sit at the Lord's table, and realize there the future days of rest, when the feast of fat things has come.

VIII. JEHOSHAPHAT.—The prophet Joel has shown us this valley, "the valley of Decision", or of "the judgment of Jehovah!" Here the summons goes forth: "Let the nations be awakened, and come up to the *valley of Jehoshaphat*" (Joel 3:12). "Put in the sickle;" "there will I sit to judge."

What a day! His saints shall be with Him there, when He comes to judge; but to them it shall be no time of fear, for "the Lord shall be the hope of his people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain" (Joel 3:16, 17).

Happy, happy they! for it is a day that ends the sinner's rebellion; it is the day that decides the controversy

in favour of God. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of Decision" (Joel 3:14); and here the prophet repeats it: "The day of the Lord is near in *the valley of Decision.*"

In prospect of that day, shall a man remain undecided still? Do you hope to escape — peradventure to be overlooked amid those "multitudes, multitudes?" No, it cannot be; you shall not evade notice. The eye of Him who "made all things for himself" shall fix upon you; for He knows how to glorify His justice in you on that day of evil. He will require you to come forth; He will insist on your abiding by the choice you made when your unbelief said, "Away with Christ; away with grace! away with the blood of Christ! away with the obedience of Christ! away with the righteousness of Christ!"—This is

the valley of *Decision*, the valley of "Jehoshaphat," the "Lord's Judgment".

Up from this valley the saints go in triumphant procession to the city of the Great King. They have passed through all the valleys at last — Achor, and Berachah, and Baca, and Eshcol, and Rephaim, and Shaveh, and now, last of all, Jehoshaphat. They have come to their rest in the promised Kingdom.

All the rivers run into the sea, and there they help to swell the vast volume of ocean's waters; and even so shall all the wanderings of saints end in the one blessed home, where the memories of the past shall all contribute to the never ending variety and freshness of the ineffable bliss.

## The Inspired Estimate of Orthodoxy

By Principal D. A. McGregor

The address which appears below was delivered in 1878 by Principal D. A. McGregor of Toronto Baptist College (later McMaster University). We reprint it because of its relevancy in this day and to illustrate the fact that evangelical Baptists today stand upon the same truths which were dear to Principal McGregor, Senator McMaster and early Baptist worthies.

**A** LOW human estimate of orthodoxy is the present curse of Christendom. Every department of religious thought and feeling is marked by a carelessness of theological belief. The loose-reined speculation, now so prevalent in reference to fundamental doctrines, would find a much narrower limit, if there were a higher reverence for truth. Doubt may, for a time, take possession of the sincerest mind, but while it remained doubt, it would never be flung broad-cast upon the world by anyone who had any just appreciation of sound doctrine. While there is real earnestness for human salvation in the great evangelistic movement of the present day, there is yet an utter recklessness of correct belief. How many are ready to praise the liberality of him who can say, "If you are only converted I care not what church you join." Yet those who are pleased with this sentiment know full well that the fundamental doctrines held by one denomination are flatly denied by another, and that therefore the beliefs of both cannot be true. The human estimate of uncorrupted doctrine is so low, that utter indifference as to whether men hold truth or error is accounted a perfection of Christian life. How many look with careless eye upon the rending of the seamless robe of truth, into what are called its essential and non-essential parts! How many are ready to indulge in a sweet self-complacency; because they can find it in themselves to sacrifice their sincerest convictions, upon the altar of a falsely-named Christian charity! Let us turn from such grovelling valuation of correct belief and view the Inspired Estimate of Orthodoxy.

We read this estimate in the care taken to impart correct doctrinal knowledge. For thousands of years the world was undergoing a course of preparation for the reception of the truth. Language was brought to its highest degree of perfection, that it might be a vehicle fit for such a communication. Then the great Instructor appears upon the scene, commissioned to teach men defi-

nite doctrines. He bears with him the credentials which attest his divine authority. While he repeats and enforces the lessons he would impart, yet he abides so closely by the letter of the Father's commandment, that in closing his earthly ministry he can say: I have given unto them the very words which thou hast given me. Though his presence is dearer than life to his people, he tells them that there is an end to be gained by his departure, which makes it better for them that he should go away. The end in view is, that, by another course of teaching, they may be led into all the truth. He proves his estimate of his doctrine, in that he dies a martyr to the truths he proclaimed. As he is about to seal his testimony with his blood, he thus emphatically declares the great purpose of his mission: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." Another Person of the divine trinity is now commissioned to carry on the work begun. He is to lead his followers, not so much into new fields of thought, as to bring to their remembrance, and unfold to them, the truths already delivered. To guard against any possibility of change or loss, he gives a written record for all time. In this work he makes choice of the human mind as a medium, so that truth imparted through the ordinary channels of communication may be understood by all. He makes use of various minds, so that, by every style of thought, men may apprehend more closely his meaning. He so guides each chosen writer, by his own immediate influence, as to secure an unerring testimony to his people, and then pledges his presence to them forever, to guide them into all the truth revealed. This wondrous course of instruction, undertaken in order that men might know the truth, reveals the inspired estimate of a correct knowledge of divine things.

The high value attached, by the divine mind, to orthodoxy is seen in the means employed to perpetuate its

existence. The church is made the pillar and ground of truth in the world. Her glorious work is to preserve and extend the knowledge of the truth. For this purpose the gifts of the Spirit are lavished upon her. There are given unto her apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, that, thus edified, she may be strong "in the unity of the faith", unmoved by the shifting winds of false doctrine. Those who have embraced the truth are commanded to hold it fast, to keep it pure, to receive from neither man nor angel any contrary teaching. They are bidden to part with all things else, if need be, for its sake, but on no condition to part with the truth: to die for it rather than renounce it. He who thus commits the sacred trust to his people's keeping declares his excellence, in that he has given to it immutability. No other system shall supercede the form of doctrine delivered. No change shall be wrought in it. The most solemn threatenings are recorded against any who would dare to take from, or add to, its divine perfection. That the world may know the exceeding preciousness of the doctrines which Christ has taught, he contrasts them with all created things, and shows their pre-eminent value, in that he accords to them alone perpetual existence. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

The inspired estimate of orthodoxy is seen in the position assigned to it, in the scheme of redemption. All the vital interests of the Christian religion are secured to man on no other condition. Salvation is dependent upon, and effected through, belief of the truth. One of the degenerate tendencies of the age, arising, in part, out of a misapprehension of the source of power in the present evangelical movement, is to accept the fervid utterances of false doctrine, as a means through which conversion may be wrought, as if human earnestness could accomplish the work of the living word. Let the Church of God cease to dishonour the truth. Sincerity is not orthodoxy. If sincere belief were an equivalent for correct doctrine, then might the very devotees of heathenism ascend in the chariots of salvation, even to the throne of God. Earnestness has no efficacy in itself. Gospel doctrine is the only means of gospel blessing. Error may be a factor in man's creed, but it can be no factor in his salvation. The truth, the truth only, the truth rightly apprehended is that by which a soul is saved.

In the work of sanctification the same instrumentality is used. It is by the clear light of truth that the great artist photographs the divine image upon the soul. It is by the power of Christian doctrine, operating upon the heart, that we have the result of Christian character and life. Men may say, "It makes little difference what man believes providing he lives right." Such empty philosophy amounts to no more than this, that there is no necessity for a cause, so long as we have an effect. The only possibility of right life is through belief of the truth. That man may be "perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds" is a statement which receives little sanction from divine authority. The fruit of perfect deeds is not a growth from doubtful principles. "Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt." The faith which purifies the heart is not that which rests on false assumptions, not even that which dwells in "honest doubt", but that which draws its life from the uncorrupted spring. The sanctification of the Spirit is through belief of the truth.

Apart from sound doctrine, there can be no God-accepted service in life. This is not saying that a perfect knowledge of all revealed truth is necessary to any single act of Christian worship, but that the sphere of acceptable service is limited to that of apprehended truth. If the object of our worship be not the God of the Bible, but merely our mistaken notions of deity, then we bow down to a god of our creation. The object is false, and the homage rendered, however sincere and correct in itself, is nothing but idolatry. If, having a true knowledge of God, we adopt other forms of worship than those which he has enjoined, then the service is false, and however devoutly offered, can be nothing but an abomination. The human estimate of orthodoxy may be so low, that men may think lightly of having violated the perfection of the divine arrangement; but God says, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Orthodoxy is given as the only bond of Christian union. The attempt to effect harmony in the Christian world on any other basis, either by a compromise with error, or by a suppression of principle, is an unhallowed experiment, altogether foreign to the truth-loving spirit of the Gospel. Truth and error can never be made one. Such unholy wedlock of what God hath not joined together is not Christian union. It is false in name, and false in principle. The fellowship of saints is a fellowship of heart, in truth, not a sinful reticence of belief. It is not by concealing differences, but, by coming to the truth, that the church is to gain her real concord. Departure from the truth is the cause of all the schisms in Christendom. A return to the uncorrupted faith can be the only cure. He, who steadfastly opposes error, and faithfully declares all the truth, may be branded as narrow and sectarian, but he is really the true champion of Christian union. The divided Church of God cannot be one till it finds completeness "in the unity of faith". In the fact that salvation, sanctification, all acceptable service, and all real Christian union, are conditioned, for all time and for all people, upon belief of the truth, we read once more the high importance attached to orthodoxy, by Him whose estimate is infallible.

The corroborative testimony to this written estimate is given, by the Spirit, in the whole history of the church. Truth believed and proclaimed is that alone by which the divine conquests are effected. None other than the living blade is acknowledged by the hand of Him whose might alone can give success. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. How he proves the power of this weapon through all time! A few fishermen are called from their nets, and, by the simple declaration of the truth, they shake the world as conqueror never shook it before. While that truth is held uncorrupted the church advances, nor can the combined opposition of all her foes retard her progress. But when once the standards of orthodoxy are fallen, she sinks, nevertheless, into the darkness of the middle ages. Once more the Reformers lay firm hold upon the great doctrines of the Gospel. The same accounts which first shook the world are heard again. They are the very trumpet-blast of heaven summoning divine might to the conflict. The Spirit acknowledges the truth and the world trembles before his power. Through all subsequent time the same invariable testimony is given. Every awakening of Christian life and thought that marks the centuries, every conquest that the church has effected in the world, has been accomplished through the truth. Lest such results should be attributed to mere

human power; lofty genius is permitted to exhaust itself in fruitless effort, while attempting reformation by "enticing words of man's wisdom." Then the divine Spirit compels acknowledgment of the superiority of gospel doctrine, in that he sends it forth dependent on no excellency of speech, to revolutionize the world.

While the worth of orthodoxy is thus clearly attested, what more execrable daring, than that the professed ambassador from God to men should tone down the message fraught with life and death, lest it might grate too harshly upon the ears and hearts of those to whom it is delivered? What more sinful presumption than to venture change in any department of Jehovah's plan? Ye who are musicians, what think ye of the mere juvenile performer who would throw in his own variations, while attempting to render the sublimest strains of Handel or Mozart? Ye who are painters, what think ye of the raw beginner who would daub the finished works of Raphael into his own ideas of perfection? Ye who are Christians, what think ye of the finite creature that would dare to work his own ideas of improvement upon the crowning

effort of infinite skill? It is not a small thing, that men should apply the distorting rack of a biased mind to the faultless form of truth, and mar its God-given beauty. It is not a thing of little moment, that men should fail to embrace any part of truth, or, by specious argument, lead others from it. When the divine Instructor propounded the laws of the kingdom he was about to establish, he said, that he who would break one of the least of his commands, and teach men to do so, should be least in his kingdom; but that he who obeyed and taught his commands, should be accounted great. While this simple condition of divine approval and preferment is thus plainly declared, by Him who is king in Zion, if we prize the honor which cometh from above, let us strive to win it, by holding fast, and holding forth, the truth as it is in Jesus. Let us scorn the attempt to attract human attention by mere novelty of thought. Let it be ours to proclaim "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." Let it be our high ambition, as it is our highest honor, to hold taintless and intact the doctrines committed to our trust, to contend earnestly for the faith delivered once for all.

## THE HEAVENLY FIRE

By C. H. Spurgeon

*It was recently our good fortune to procure a book containing the conference addresses of C. H. Spurgeon. Each address was a feast of the first order. One was especially memorable, it was entitled, "Light. Fire. Faith. Life. Love". The article below is but one section of that utterance.*

I PLEAD with you that you gather and use in your ministry much heavenly fire. Upon this subject, you will perhaps expect me to speak guardedly; for you have seen the mischief of wild fire, and the perils of strange fire, and possibly you are anxious to know what I think of a certain "army" which abounds in fire, and blazes away most marvellously. I shall express no opinion, except that none of the supposed evils of fire are equal to those of lukewarmness. Even fanaticism is to be preferred to indifference. I had sooner risk the dangers of a tornado of religious excitement than see the air grow stagnant with a dead formality. It is far better for people to be too hot than to be lukewarm. "I would thou wert cold or hot" is Christ's word still, and it applies to preachers as well as to others. When a man is freezingly cold in the things of Christ, we know where he is; and if another is red-hot, or even at a white heat, and is thought to be too enthusiastic, we know where he is; but when a minister preaches in such a way that, at the close of his sermon, you say, "This is neither cold nor hot," you go away feeling that you have had enough, or even too much of it. There was nothing to excite you; you could almost wish to have been made angry rather than to have been lulled by such discoursing. A lukewarm sermon sickens every healthy mind.

Nor is this evil to be found in the pulpit alone. I should gravely question whether, if an angel were to take a thermometer, and go round the dissenting churches in London, he would not find a large proportion of them certainly not cold, most decidedly not hot, but between

the two. How is it with you, dear brother? Do you say, "Well, I am not the warmest of all, but then I am not the coldest of all"? Then I have a suspicion as to your temperature; but I leave the matter to your own judgment, only remarking that I have never yet met with fire that is moderately hot. Should any of you discover such an article, you will be wise to patent it, for it might be of service in many ways. The fire with which I have been acquainted has been such that I have never given it my hand without remembering its warm embrace. Fire has never yet learned moderation. I am told that it is wrong to go to extremes, and upon that ground fire is certainly guilty; for it is not only intensely hot, but it has a tendency to consume and destroy without limit. When it once commenced with this city, in the olden time, it left little of it but ashes; there was no keeping it within bounds. May God grant us grace to go to extremes in His service! May we be filled with an unrestrainable zeal for His glory! May the Lord answer us by fire, and may that fire fall first on the ministers, and then upon the people! We ask for the true Pentecostal flame, and not for sparks kindled by human passion. A live coal from off the altar is our need, and nothing can supply its place; but this we must have, or our ministry will be in vain.

Brethren, we must, first of all, take care that we have the fire burning in our own souls. I am happy to know that there are very few, if any, among you who are utterly cold; for you go to be warmed into earnestness if we set about it aright. It is very hard to warm a stone.

You may clothe a man in blankets until he is fairly warm, because there is life in him; but you cannot heat a stone in that fashion. Life always begets a measure of warmth, and the possibility of more; and as you have life, there is within you the capacity for heat. Some preachers are of such a cold nature that no known means could warm them.

The attempt to find heat in some men's sermons reminds me of Aesop's fable of the apes and the glow-worm. The apes found a glowworm shining on the bank, and straightway gathered round it to warm themselves. They placed sticks over it, and tried to make a fire; but it did not burn. It was a very pretty thing, and looked like flame; but they could not warm their cold hands with its cold light. So have I known ministers, whose light was destitute of heat; and, consequently, the poor sticks around them have never kindled into a flame, nor have frozen hearts been melted by their influence.

It is dreadful work to listen to a sermon, and feel all the while as if you were sitting out in a snowstorm, or dwelling in a house of ice, clear but cold, orderly but killing. You have said to yourself, "That was a well-divided and well-planned sermon, but I cannot make out what was the matter with it," the secret being that there was the wood, but no fire to kindle it. A great sermon without heart in it reminds one of those huge furnaces in Wales, which have been permitted to go out; they are a pitiful sight. We prefer a sermon in which there may be no vast talent, and no great depth of thought; but what there is has come fresh from the crucible, and, like molten metal, burns its way. I once knew a lad who, when he used to go home from the smithy where he worked, was roughly handled by the boys of the village, till his master suggested to him a plan of defence, which was wonderfully efficacious. He took a rod of iron, and just before he started to go home, he blew up the fire, and made the iron hot. When the boys came round him, he warned them not to touch his stick; and after once feeling it, they obeyed the admonition, and respectfully kept their distance. I do not quote the example with any commendation of the actual fact, but with this moral in view, — heat your sermon red-hot, and it will be likely to be remembered by all who come into contact with it. Everything gives way before fire.

Energy still remains an essential, whatever else in oratory may have changed since the days of old. It is said that the oft-quoted reply of Demosthenes to the question, What is the third thing? "Energy." I will not pretend but "Energy." What is the second thing? "Energy." What is the third thing? "Energy." I will not pretend to decide the classical question; but I am sure that, as a matter of fact, energy is the main thing in the human side of preaching. Like the priests at the altar, we can do nothing without fire. Brethren, speak because you believe the gospel of Jesus, speak because you feel its power, speak under the influence of the truth which you are delivering, speak with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, and the result will not be doubtful.

Let it be carefully remembered that *our flame must be kindled from on high*. Nothing is more to be despised than a mere painted fire, the simulation of earnestness. Sooner let us have an honest death than a counterfeit life. The imitation of Baxter is detestable; but to be like Baxter is seraphic. If you would be like Whitefield, I would say *be* Whitefield. Let the fire be kindled by the Holy Ghost, and not by animal passion, the desire of hon-

our, emulation of others, or the excitement of attending meetings. Let the terrible example of Nadab and Abihu for ever put away strange fire from our censers. Burn because you have been in solemn fellowship with the Lord our God.

Recollect also, that *the fire which you and I need will consume us if we truly possess it*. "Spare yourself," may be whispered by friends; but it will not be heeded when this fire is burning. We have given ourselves up to the work of God, and we cannot go back. We desire to be whole burnt offerings and complete sacrifices to God, and we dare not shun the altar. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." We can only produce life in others by the wear and tear of our own being. This is a natural and spiritual law, — that fruit can only come of the seed by its spending and being spent even to self-exhaustion.

Why are many earnest ministers worn and weary till heart and brain give way? They would be of little use if they did not run such a risk. All men, who are eminently useful, are made to feel their weakness in a supreme degree. Can the Spirit of God, even the Infinite Deity, ride in such frail chariots as these, without straining the axle, and making the whole machine to quiver, as if it would be utterly dissolved beneath its sacred burden? When God visits us with soul-saving power, it is as though devouring flame came forth from Heaven, and made its abode in our bosoms; and where this is the case, there may well be a melting away of all strength. Yet let it be so: we humbly invite the sacred burnings. Herod was eaten of worms, being cursed of God; but to be consumed by God for His own service, is to be blessed to the full. We have a choice between these two, to be eaten up by our corruptions, or by the zeal of God's house. It needs no hesitation, the choice of every man among us is to be wholly the Lord's, — ardently, passionately, vehemently the Lord's servants, let the Divine fervour cost us what it may of brain, and heart, and life. Our only hope of honour, and glory, and immortality lies in the fulfilment of our dedication unto God; as devoted things, we must be consumed with fire, or else be rejected. For us to turn aside from our life-work, and to seek distinction elsewhere, is absolute folly; a blight will be upon us, we shall not succeed in anything but the pursuit of God's glory through the teaching of the Word. "This people have I formed for Myself," saith God; "they shall shew forth My praise;" and if we will not do this, we shall do less than nothing. For this one thing we are created; and if we miss this, we shall live in vain.

## For Younger Readers

### PRAYER SAVED US FROM STARVATION

By Sabra Lee Corbin

No food in the house, the family faced with eviction, this little girl called on her Heavenly Father.

Hot. Sultry. A heavy, suffocating heat enveloped the whole city. I was ten that year, and my sister was five. We were "stage children". All our short lives had been spent in the theatre, which was our world — we knew no other.

Looking back now, through the vista of years, how sharply our three figures are etched upon my memory!

There was my mother — young, dark, spirited. There was Laurel, my sister—a tiny, blonde, angelic-looking child. And there was me, already growing too tall for child's parts.

So far we three had had our ups and downs, but never anything quite so bad as this! We lived, I recall, in a furnished room on twenty-third street, and every day we walked through that merciless heat to the agents and the managers' offices which, in those days, were confined to the Broadway area between Thirty-eighth and Forty-ninth Streets. We walked because we must save every penny. And always we received that same, bland answer, "Nothing doing today"; and always the return to that furnished room — a little wearier, a little more hopeless, a little more frightened.

There was no one to whom we could turn for help. Our friends, like ourselves, were "trouper". Some were away on the road or in summer stock, and those who remained in New York were as badly off as ourselves. We were confronted with the spectre of starvation and eviction, but I think we would have died rather than ask charity.

One day my mother, sick from the heat in the stuffy room and terrified at our meager store of funds, sent me to "do the offices" alone.

"There just might be something", she murmured

It was a very worried little girl who started out that July morning on an all-too-familiar pilgrimage. How hot it was! If you didn't pay your rent, you were disgraced. Money must come from somewhere! It must! It must!

I had walked ten blocks and now I was passing a church, the doors of which were open. It looked dim in there, dim and cool and quiet. It would be a pleasant respite from this incessant heat, the glare, the noise.

A little timidly I entered and sat upon one of the back pews, I sat there for a time, just resting, just thinking — about life and God. Why did God make things so hard for us? Why did other little girls have so much — seashore, and coolness, and real homes, and no worry, and big yards to play in? Was there a God? If there were, then what was the matter with Him? Hadn't I prayed to Him night after night to let us get work? Didn't He want to hear — or was He deaf? Didn't He care about us, we three? But — why, there had to be a God! And yet, where was He? What kind of a God was He to stand by and not give people jobs and contracts and things that you just had to have?

How curious it seems now, that such bitterness, such starkness, such anxiety should be associated with a child of ten! And yet, as I sat there, it seemed as if slowly, gently, all that bitterness, that rebellion, that anxiety seeped out of me. Very softly, I began to cry.

And that helped. Because at home, all of us in one room, you often felt like crying. Only you didn't. Because that only made things harder for your mother, and sometimes your little sister, seeing you cry, would cry, too. But here — here it was different. Here you were alone with God — and God wouldn't mind if you cried.

Suddenly the tears ceased. Alone—with God! Was I? Was I really?

I knelt.

"Oh, God, please send us some money! You can do it, God! You can do anything! Please, God, see that we get the money — today! Please! Please! Please! You know, God, we only have somewhere around two dollars, and there are three of us, and the rent's due tomorrow.

And you know how landladies are, God! So, you see, dear God, we've just got to have it today."

I went on like that, just putting the whole thing before God, talking it out with Him quite simply. Then I sat back at ease in the pew. I had a curious feeling that I had actually talked to God, that He had heard, that He was kind, that He was friendly, that He was interested. I made no conscious effort to attain this bright, calm faith. Yet now in looking back I realize that I was unwittingly obeying a great spiritual law which Jesus, Himself, had emphasized. "Believe that ye have received!" Something, some way, I had already received. Everything was beautifully taken care of.

I did not continue my journey to the managerial offices that day. Instead, I started blithely homeward. God had heard, God would not fail. The money would come, and it would come — today! Perhaps it was already at home, waiting for me!

How had it come? I didn't know. I didn't question. That there was no earthly source from which it could come made no difference.

I almost ran all the way home.

I opened the door of that stuffy room. How clearly I see it now! The scarred wall paper. The one-burner gas stove hidden behind a screen. The two folding couches that made lumpy beds at night. The threadbare carpet.

No, it was all too evident that the money hadn't come — not yet. My mother lay on the couch, a wet towel on her head, her pretty face pale and pasty from the heat, her dark eyes bright with desperation. My little sister sat on the floor, wearily playing with paper dolls.

No, no money yet. But, I told myself stubbornly, God heard me! And He's good! God wouldn't let me down. He's been there in that church and I'd talked matters over with Him — and there just wasn't anything in the world to worry about.

Wearily my mother reached for her purse and dumped its contents on the couch beside her. Pennies, Nickels, Dimes. She counted it slowly, thoughtfully. Then she looked up and tried hard to smile.

"Children," she said, "We have one dollar and seventy-eight cents. Sabra, you take your sister and go to Coney Island. You children will be out of this heat for a while, you'll get some fresh air. Here's twenty cents for carfare. Then, around six o'clock, Sabra, you buy a five-cent hamburger, one for you and one for Laurel. Start back home at eight-thirty."

"But how about you, mamma?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm all right. You go on now. Go right down to the beach and stay on the sand where it's cool."

One dollar and seventy-eight cents! All we had in the world, and no apparent source from which more could come, yet she could spend thirty cents of that slender capital that her two children could get a breath of cool, fresh air!

I took my little sister by the hand and we started off for Coney. At that time they had open street cars. These open cars were very popular and usually crowded because, no matter how hot it was, you were sure to get a stiff breeze once the car was in motion. The cars were open on both sides right down to the floor. Rows of wooden benches ran the full width of the car. It was a cheap and pleasant means of transportation.

With one hand I hung on to my sister, with the other hand I clutched my handkerchief which had thirty precious cents tied in one corner.

The first car was too crowded, and we waited for the

next. Standing there, I was tempted to tell my sister that we really had nothing to worry about any more. I wanted awfully to tell her about how I had gone into a church and told God all about us. But I didn't. Somehow I couldn't. I know now that I was obeying another great spiritual law — "Tell no man . . . pray to your Father which is in secret!"

Presently the next car came along. Except for one entire row it was full. Quickly I hoisted my little sister on board and climbed up after her. The car started. Ah, what a glorious breeze! I took off my hat to feel the wind in my hair.

It wasn't more than two minutes after we boarded the car when Laurel spoke to me. I had been so thrilled by the breeze that I had almost forgotten about her.

"Sister!" she whispered. "Sister!"

I turned to see her staring at me wide-eyed — and there in her little hand was a twenty-dollar bill!

She had found it on the floor of that car, a twenty-dollar bill folded neatly.

Think of it! The bill was not in a purse. It was on the floor of an open street car — another second, perhaps, and it would have blown away.

It didn't seem strange to me — not then. I simply closed my eyes and said, "Thank you—Father!"

## Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 20 Third Quarter Lesson 2 July 8, 1956

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

### THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD

Lesson Text: Isaiah 5:1-12, 18-23.

Golden Text: "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."—Isaiah 5:7.

#### I. Woe to the Privileged Nation: verses 1-12.

The prophecies of this chapter were probably written during the reign of King Uzziah (Isa. 6:1). Speaking through His prophets, the Lord had given the people abundant warning of the coming calamities, the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah, which actually took place under King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon about 586 B.C. Those warnings were unheeded; and the mercy of God was despised, so that at last He acted in judgment (Isa. 3:8).

Isaiah uttered by inspiration this parable concerning God the beloved Father, the Jehovah who claimed these Jews as His own. The figure of a vineyard is appropriate, since even to this day vineyards are often seen on the slopes of the hills of Palestine. It is a figure to which frequent reference is made in Scripture (Psa. 80:8; Song of Sol. 8:12; Isa. 27:2; Jer. 2:21; Matt. 21:33; John 15:1).

The vineyard had been planted by Jehovah; He was responsible for the origin of this particular plant. The nation had been chosen by Him and separated from all others, placed in favorable circumstances, planted on a fruitful hill in soil that was rich (Psa. 80:8-11).

The Divinely-ordained plant had been cultivated by the Husbandman, the ground had been "dug and trenched" that it might be properly prepared (Matt. 21:33). It had been carefully protected, with its watch-tower and defences. So had the Lord hedged His people about, that they might be preserved. He had nurtured them and done all in His power to produce an abundant harvest of good fruit (Deut. 32:6; Matt. 21:19). In spite of all the Master's gentle and persistent care, the vineyard produced only small, dry, useless grapes, indicating that the people were wilful, stubborn and lawless. Created for His glory, they brought Him only shame.

The Lord must be vindicated. The people were without excuse before Him, for He always acts in righteousness (Rom. 1:20; 2:1; 3:4, 19), and He would have saved them (Ezek. 33:11; 1 Tim. 2:4). Note the play upon words as seen in the Hebrew of verse 7: "He looked for judgment (Heb. 'misphat'), but behold oppression (Heb. 'mispat'); for righteousness (Heb. 'tsedaqua'), but behold a cry (Heb. 'tseacqua')"—that cry that attends anarchy and dissipation.

The Owner of the vineyard pronounced sentence of judgment upon it. Since the people rejected His overtures of grace, He would leave them to their own resources. His restraining hedges would be removed, and the enemy would come in to destroy them (Psa. 80:12, 13). He would cease to cultivate them, and thorns, briars and weeds would spring up to choke the plants. He would withhold showers of blessing, and the drought would stop all growth. The saddest fate which can come to a sinner is that he be allowed to have his own way (Prov. 1:24-33).

The two cardinal sins of Israel as a nation were pride and worldliness. They added field to field, as it were (Mic. 2:2), boasting of the privileges given them, instead of considering these as channels of usefulness. Pride of possessions is a common sin to-day. Their worldliness was manifest in the misuse of their riches and resources, material and spiritual. The products of the vines, the grapes, were prostituted by the people to their own selfish pleasure. Intemperance was practised. God was forgotten, His work neglected. Their eyes were upon the things of this world, rather than upon the glory of the Lord (Job 34:27; Psa. 28:5; 143:5).

#### II. Woe to the Iniquitous People: verses 18-23.

It is doubtful if any one deliberately sets out to live a life of crime. He commences with what one might call a small sin, justifying himself by a course of reasoning, so that his sin appears as a slender cord or thread like that of a spider's web (Job 8:14; Isa. 59:5). One sin leads to another, until finally the man has drawn upon himself a great load of iniquity, to which he is attached by heavy cart ropes, as it were, and he cannot, even if he would, separate himself by his own efforts from the burden and guilt. Let all beware the first sin. The Bible abounds in warnings to the sinner, but it also speaks of the power of God to liberate him from the shackles that bid him; the mercy of God seasons His justice.

It is a terrible thing to defy the living God, to challenge Him to execute the judgment which He has promised (verse 19; Jer. 17:15; 1 Pet. 3:3, 4). This sin of presumption is described in Scripture as being one of tempting God, of putting Him to the test (Deut. 6:16; 1 Cor. 10:9).

Sin destroys the moral sensibilities of its victims, so that they are unable to see the difference between good and evil. It is possible for a person to hate and reject the truth so long that he becomes hardened, his conscience is seared, and he cannot recognize or respond to the truth when it appears. His spiritual understanding is darkened, and he confuses right with wrong, light with darkness and sweetness with bitterness (Rom. 1:25). On the other hand, the one whose life is controlled by the Spirit of God will become highly sensitive to all moral issues; he will be able to distinguish the things that differ (Phil. 1:9, 10; Col. 1:9).

Those who indulge in sin are proud and self-deceived. They think that they know more than the prophets who prophesy judgment, and hence they despise the warnings given them by the prophets of the Lord. There is an adage to this effect: "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad."

The prophet utters a stern warning against corrupt judges, men who are strong to drink wine and who do not hesitate to take bribes, as they pass over the offences of the guilty, whereas they condemn the upright man (Prov. 17:15; 24:24). Doubtless this passage infers that the habit of indulging in intoxicating wines was responsible for the loss of that discrimination between right and wrong which is the primary requisite of a judge (Deut. 1:16, 17; 16:18-20).

#### Daily Bible Readings

July 2—The Vine Caused to Take Root	Psa. 80
July 3—The Vineyard Enclosed	Song of Sol. 8:6-14
July 4—The Vineyard Watered and Kept	Isa. 27
July 5—The Strange Vine	Jer. 2:20-31
July 6—The Empty Vine	Hos. 10
July 7—The Lord of the Vineyard	Luke 20:9-18
July 8—The True Vine	John 15:1-16