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"I REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD"

By Dr. T. T. Shields

IT IS instructive to consider the spiritual man's relations to the natural divisions of that element in human life which we call Time. The word Time itself is a kind of foot-rule. It is of use only to those who live in the realm of the finite and measurable. It has no wings with which to bear the flying aeons company. And yet we say time flies; but it is like a tame and domestic fowl that flits about the yard and fields. It is closely akin to the mighty pinioned aeons which cleave the air of the infinite spaces; but Time represents to us only a measurable period in human history, or in the history of things that are seen.

Yet of all our possessions Time is the most valuable. We must not speak of Time as a thief, or as an enemy. Time is our best friend. Time comes to us as Joseph came to Pharaoh, to fill our storehouses in the seven years of plenty. Our years should be esteemed as more precious than rubies, our hours come to us walking on cloth of gold, and even our minutes are of greater worth than dust of diamonds. A man may lose his gold and find more; he may lose his health and then regain it; he may even bury his friends and later form new friendships: but he who loses time suffers an irreparable loss. We may well pray therefore, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom", "for the price of wisdom is above rubies"; and time is given us in which to become wise, wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

We do well to pause to consider how we are related to this element of life called Time, the time that is past, that which now is, and that which is to come, even as did the Psalmist, "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land."

I.

What, then, is the proper attitude of the spiritually alert soul toward the past?

It is no evidence of enlightenment to ignore it or to make light of it. There is a spirit which derides the past. It regards the past as an enemy, or at best as a very immature and incompetent servant with whose services and influence one may wisely dispense. That

spirit prefers the acorn or the sapling to the oak; the unripened wheat-field to the spread table; the rough and supposed-diamond to the proved and polished jewel. That spirit mocks at conservatism in anything — in religion, in art, in letters, in commerce, in politics, or even in morals. It is ever ruthlessly radical: it would uproot the old trees before the new orchard is planted. Like Rehoboam, it retires the old men from the counsel chamber, and fills their places with youthful, ardent, spirits who have forgotten Yesterday and are eager to welcome To-morrow.

We should not be too ready to applaud that spirit. It is not Christian, it is not soundly moral, it is not even quite sane. We must "remember the days of old" to find our true place in the divine economy. The New Testament is rooted in the Old, even as the Present is ever rooted in the Past. The Decalogue is inseparable from the Past. There is not one of the ten commandments that does not demand a recognition of the primary rights and obligations of yesterday. "Thou shalt have none other gods before me" — for "he is before all things." "Remember the Sabbath day" — because "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth." "Honour thy father and thy mother" — because they were before thee yesterday. "Thou shalt not steal" that which thy neighbour made his own by hard labour yesterday.

We say therefore that the spiritually alert man is conservative of all the good of yesterday; and for him "better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof".

We do well to "remember the days of old" that we may be mindful of our debts. As we go to our houses of worship we ought not to go without entertaining some grateful thought of those men and women who planned and executed them. How few had any part in it! The same consideration should characterize our attitude to life generally. It is so true of life in all its aspects, that we are sent to reap that whereon we bestowed no labour. Other men laboured, and we are entered into their labours. That consideration enters into all the relations of life: the children in the home, the successful man of business, the Christian in the church, the citizen in the state, remember the days of old that your indebtedness to the Past may not be forgotten. And above all, remember the day of Calvary and of the resurrection glory.

We might well urge the consideration of the years of ancient times of Greece, and Rome, and Assyria, and Egypt. The speech of the day would breathe a humbler spirit if men would but remember the days of old.

We should "remember the days of old" lest we overestimate our progress. We are tempted to think we have left the past far behind. Are you quite sure you have? We sometimes turn over some of our old manuscripts. We hope we are ashamed of most of them! But occasionally we come upon one which makes us ashamed of last Sunday's sermon, because it makes it appear that the preacher has made little advance on earlier years. It is a good thing for preachers to keep old manuscripts—their perusal will do much to help them to entertain a modest estimate of their ability.

And the same is true of everybody else. "The days of old", if you could read their record, would call to many of us.—"Look back to me, for you have not yet left me very far behind."

But we must "remember the days of old" as old friends and helpers. Yesterday was a good friend to you and me. We have reason to recall its gracious ministry. So much that was good and beautiful came to us in our yesterdays.

"O there are Voices of the Past,
Links of a broken chain,
Wings which can bear me back to Times
Which cannot come again;
Yet God forbid that I should lose
The echoes that remain!"

Thus we are richer and wiser for the days of old. Sometimes, when the spirit of heaviness comes upon us, we wish that we could be little children again. It is a pity that we should ever lose the child's spirit. But no man would choose really to be a child again when he is at his best. "The days of old" have made him a man, with a man's natural capacities. When we are at our best we would not be a day younger if we could—no, not at ninety years. For the last hour has come to us as an angel of God to make our cup to run over. No, not the end of life is better than the beginning to the spiritual man.

"Time, still as he flies, adds increase to his truth
And gives to his mind what he steals from his youth."

Rightly reviewed and estimated, we shall enter each passing day and year upon our list of friends, for if their ministry be fairly judged it will be seen that it has been a good day or a good year to us all.

II.

But how are we to "remember the days of old"? Is there a special art in extracting the best that was in them for our present enrichment? The answer is that we must find God in the record of the past: "I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands." You remember another psalmist said much the same thing as is said in the verses we have quoted, only he did not at first get the right viewpoint from which to survey the past. He said, "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the

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right hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings."

It was "his infirmity" to forget God's wonders of old. Only when he traced the divine footsteps and saw the works of God in his past did he find encouragement in the retrospect. It is not what we have put into our yesterdays, but what God has put into them which makes them rich in holy memories. Have we learned thus to "consider the days of old"

But somebody says, The days of old have been full of trouble. One says he had no happy childhood; another has had but little material prosperity. Someone else has had much ill-health; and yet another has had sickness, and even bereavement, in his family. And they ask why they should think of the past. Of all people these are they who should remember the days of old. Put these two psalms from which these parallel texts are taken together. They are both the experience of troubled souls. "The enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate." That is the one, and this is the other: "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled. I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak." And yet it was then he "considered the days of old, the years of ancient times." And both these troubled souls find comfort in considering the past. The one, in this desolation of heart, and overwhelming of spirit, and dwell-

ing in darkness, finds the hands and the work of God. And the other recalls the darkness of the night, but thinking of the days of old he says, "I call to remembrance my song in the night."

So is it with us all. The days of old have not all been summer days. There is no year but has its seasons, its vicissitudes of day and night. There is a large human element, much of it our own, some of it introduced by others than ourselves, woven into the record of the days of old. And that is not free from sin, and is therefore unlikely to be free from pain and sorrow. But what of the song in the night? As you recall the day of battle, remember how the divine presence prevented an overwhelming defeat; as you consider the day of trial, remember that, —

"He knows
How to steal the bitter
From life's woes;
How to gild the teardrop
With his smile,
Make the desert garden
Bloom awhile;
When your weakness leaneth,
On His might
All seems light."

And thus as you recall the day of storm with its angry sky, think not of the clouds, but of the bow by which they are spanned, —

"Caught from the glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land."

Think not of the night, but of the song grace taught you to sing. Thus we are enabled to realize how defeat was saved from disaster; how trouble was forbidden to grow into tragedy, and darkness to deepen into despair, as we meditate on all God's works, and muse on the work of His hands.

Need we remind our readers that by this view of the past all the joys of life are equally enhanced. When the precious is separated from the vile, when all that is of moral and spiritual worth is extracted from life's common ore, and we discover from Whom it came, and trace thereon the hall-mark of the Giver, and learn that every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, all the common good of life is minted into Heaven's currency, and the light of life's best summer day is eclipsed, not by darkness, but by a superior Light — and behold Heaven is begun!

But this treasure-house of the Past is opened by the key of meditation and by the handle of musing. Ours is a God Who hideth Himself. He is found only by the earnest seeker. The hand of God in human life is not easily distinguished. If the record of some other life than our own were before us would we not study it? Then why not our own? What lessons are written there by the hand of God for our learning! Let us make of what God has done for us in the past a text book for earnest meditation. "Meditate" and "muse". Mutter it to yourself, repeat it as a school boy does his lesson; and when you have fixed the text of the record in your memory, muse upon the work of God's hands in your life — until all of life becomes to you but a beautifully woven fabric in the loom of the divine purpose perfected at last in the beauty of holiness.

III.

That view of life inevitably determines a man's atti-

tude toward the future. If all that is good in the past is of God, wisdom dictates that we should desire no future without God: "I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land." This high standard is our privilege — to substitute Christ for the calendar, and to desire no future that is not full of Christ. "For me to live is Christ."

We should so face the future. If God was in the days of old, look to see Him in the days to come; and stretch out our hands to Him. Learn to greet the morning as His messenger of mercy, and the evening as His gracious almoner. Let us wait for Him more than they who watch for the morning. Thus every day shall be a Sabbath, and all days be holy unto the Lord.

Let us also expect Him in all our experiences; and whatever comes to us, stretch out our hands to Him in confidence that whether robed in darkness or in light, He is somewhere in it.

His presence will then be to us the great desideratum — "as a thirsty land" — all whose potentialities depend upon the dew and rain and sunshine of heaven for realization. And He has promised to be as the dew unto Israel, to come down like showers upon the mown grass — and "the Lord God is a sun"! That is not an exalted standard. That is the only Christian standard. Christ is all and in all — therefore we have no thought or desire or plan in life that is not subject to Him, and we stretch out our hands unto Him.

This should be the attitude toward the future of all churches. Let our gracious Lord and Saviour be more to us than ever. May we thirst after Him as a thirsty land, and then every church will be as a garden clothed with fruitfulness and beauty. Only let praise wait for God in Zion, and every year shall be crowned with His goodness; the pastures of the Good Shepherd shall be clothed with flocks; the valleys shall be covered over with corn; they shall shout for joy, and also sing.

PLEASING THE LORD

If we feel, as we ought, that we are God's servants, that will lift us clear above the low aims and desires which meet us. How little we shall care for money, for men's praise, for getting on in the world! How the things that we fever our souls by pursuing, and fret our hearts when we lose, will cease to attract! How small and vulgar the "prizes" of life, as people call them, will appear! "The Lord liveth, before whom I stand," should be enough for us, and instead of all these motives to action drawn from the rewards of this world, we ought to "labour that, whether present or absent, we may be well-pleasing to Him."

ALEXANDER MACLAREN

SUNDAY SERVICES IN JARVIS STREET

The Lord's Day, as usual, was a day of joy and rich blessing in Jarvis Street Church. The attendance at all services was good, many summer visitors being present. In the morning the Pastor, Dr. H. C. Slade preached with great power on the theme "The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ" and in the evening gave a timely message on the important subject "Future World Events". The day's activities were brought to a close with a splendid Open Air Service. The Open Air Services, held each Sunday evening on the church grounds, facing Allan Gardens, afford a rare opportunity for proclaiming the Gospel to the unchurched of this great city. —O.L.C.

HOPE FOR CRIMINALS

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. (Prov. 28:13).

CRIME does not pay! This oft-repeated slogan conveys a truth that applies not only in the criminal world here below but also in the spiritual realm. Crimes against individuals or against society are usually punished although the detection of the criminal may require long years of intensive investigation and patient waiting. Finally, however, the culprit, who had come to imagine that his dark past was forgotten, is confronted with a charge, convicted and then sentenced for his misdeed. All of his careful endeavours to hide the past and to conceal his identity with its black event have been in vain.

Likewise the Word of God declares of our relationship to the Lord — "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." Need we mention that this verse is not confined to those who have been guilty of some particularly vile and gross crime? In the eyes of heaven, every single soul upon earth, every one who reads these words, and most especially *you*, have sinned against God and have come short of His glory. In the light of our crime against God, what course shall we follow? Where shall we flee?

The common tendency in all of us is to try to cover our sins so that they will escape notice. We may pride ourselves upon our success at hiding our transgressions from the eye of men for it is relatively easy to deceive others into thinking that we are exemplary persons. There are many devices which men have employed to hide their sins from the eyes of God for they refuse to learn the truth that "he that covereth his sins shall not prosper".

A common hiding place is that of *religion*. Indeed the common conception of religion in the popular mind seems to be that it should act as a whitewash or camouflage to hide the real person. Hence man has lost the true conception of himself as a single soul who stands *alone* before a holy God. He rather thinks of himself as a part of some great religious community or "church". This is his dubious ground of hope for the future. The Church of Rome teaches that the excess of good works and merit which the saints have acquired has been deposited to the account of the church and any struggling Catholic may have some of this deposit placed in his account if he performs certain duties. Actually, there are many non-Catholics who seem to have an idea of the same kind for they are trying to hide their sins beneath membership in some religious group.

Another popular hiding place seems to be *morality*. How difficult it is to approach and deal with one who lays claim to a "good life". If we were to judge by external appearances and the individual's own testimony, we might conclude that, at last, we had encountered the perfect mortal. A closer examination and consultation with this "good" soul's intimate acquaintance, however, would soon dispel the illusion and reveal that another sinner was simply seeking refuge beneath the guise of "goodness". The Lord Jesus once encountered some religious men who boasted of their devotion and morality and his divine assessment was, "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." (Matt. 23:27). The white coffin of morality is a poor hiding place for guilty criminals.

We could enumerate other hiding places that are much frequented by spiritual criminals who are seeking refuge from the high court of heaven but let us simply note that *there is no secure hiding place*. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." That declaration admits no exception. Some men may succeed in their attempt to hide from the criminal law of the land but there is no secure refuge in all the universe for one who is fleeing from the face of God. The psalmist truly noted that neither heaven, earth or hell could hide him from the penetrating glance of the Almighty. We may well succeed in hiding our sins from the attention of even discerning believers but never from the eyes of the Lord for "neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Is there then no ray of hope? Shall we give ourselves over to despair because we are all sinners and are unable to hide our transgressions from the Judge of all the earth? The Lord graciously gives a way of escape in the same breath in which he declares the futility of hiding our sins. He says — "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper *but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*." Our best course is to enter a plea of *guilty*. This is not some isolated thought of the Bible but lies at the very basis of the divine plan of salvation. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Divine mercy is reserved for those who acknowledge their guilt.

The gracious promise is that "*whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*." Perhaps the Lord's search warrant may, through these words, find you out at this very hour. If so, place yourself at the mercy of heaven's court and receive pardon from the hand of the Saviour who died in *your* place for *your* sins. Your sins will then be eternally covered beneath the blood of the everlasting covenant.

MISSION DOORS CLOSING IN INDIA

Christian activity in India may well receive a setback for there are reports that some of the Indian officials are becoming increasingly critical of the evangelistic work carried on in that Asiatic county. The state of Madhya Pradesh in Central India has denounced missionary endeavor as a threat to the security of the Indian state. The criticism seemed to centre around the usual charge that missionaries should engage in social service, agricultural and medical work rather than the paramount task of evangelization and teaching.

It is interesting to note that the state which lodges this complaint is predominantly *Hindu* in religion. In urging Christians to neglect the work of evangelism and concentrate on social service the Hindus reveal that they and the modernists have similar ideas about *Christian* missionary work for modernists to encourage these secondary labours to the near exclusion of evangelism and scriptural teaching.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"Lord, I Will Follow Thee."

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, October 12th, 1930

(Stenographically Reported)

"And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

"And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

"And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

"Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

"And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:57-62.

Prayer by Dr. T. I. Stockley

Oh Thou, Who art the great and bountiful Giver, we commit our heart to Thee this morning with songs of glad praise and worship. We thank Thee for the bright sunshine, and the genial air. We praise Thee for health and strength, and for all the comforts of daily life; for provision made for our daily needs; for Thy kind care exercised over us continually, by night and by day. We raise our song, O Lord, of grateful thanksgiving to Thee for those gracious gifts which Thou art continually bestowing upon us. But we thank Thee most of all for Thyself, the unveiling of Thy wondrous Person to us in Christ Jesus our Lord, and the revelation of Him within us by the power of Thy holy Spirit. We thank Thee for every taste Thou hast given to us of Thy love, and all the blessings of Thy great salvation. May these only increase our appetite and longing to know more and more of the wealth of grace which Thou hast treasured up for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to hear us this morning as we seek large blessing to rest on this great assembly. Especially do we commend to Thee the great crowd of young people gathered now for worship. We thank Thee, O Lord, for those among them who trust Thee, who serve Thee, who delight to do Thy will, to spend and be spent in Thy glad service. May their number be greatly increased; and may they continually grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Make their lives radiant and beautiful in the home, and in business, in their association with others, wherever they are. May the beauty of the Saviour's character shine forth in them, and through them.

Hear us, we pray Thee, for those who do not yet know Thee, that they may be led earnestly to seek Thy face, and to seek it now. May they know the joy of Thy great salvation without delay, and waste no bright hours of their life in the service of sin and the world. God bless the young people who do not yet trust in Thee. May many of them be led to trust in Thee this very morning.

And the dear girls and boys! We thank Thee for them, and for the many amongst them who trust Thee, and who seek to serve Thee in their homes, in school, wherever they are. Lord bless them richly. May they grow up into Christlikeness. Make them strong in doing Thy will, and resisting evil.

Fill us all with Thy grace. Give us victory over temptation, and sin, and the allurements of the world. May our lives be lives of victory, and of continual joy in the Lord.

We pray Thy blessing, O Lord, to rest on the work done in this church and congregation. We ask Thee to continually bless it with the richness of Thy blessing. May Thy dear servant, our beloved Pastor, increasingly realize Thy presence with him in his great ministry. May the power of the Lord

rest upon the messages every time he has opportunity to speak in Thy great name.

So hear our prayer this morning. Bless those who cannot be with us, — the aged and suffering, and weak — and those who are kept in their homes for legitimate causes. Lord, enrich them with Thy benediction. Speak a word of grace and comfort to those who need it, and make them to realize that the Lord is present by their side, as He is present with us here in this assembly, and more so. Grant that they and we together may rejoice in the Lord, and be glad, that we are His. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, Amen.

I DESIRE this morning to explain in the simplest way some of the things that are involved in the following of Christ. We have in these verses three instances of men who expressed their readiness to follow Christ, and whom He obviously intended to warn that they should give due consideration to the proposal. And I have taken together these verses representing three aspects of discipleship.

I.

First of all, it suggests that IMPULSE NEEDS THE REINFORCEMENT OF ENLIGHTENED DEVOTION. "As they went in the way" a certain man was attracted to Jesus, and impulsively declared that he would follow Him whithersoever He went. And our Lord, in effect, said, "But have you considered what is involved in following Me? Do you know whither I shall go; and what reception I shall be accorded in certain quarters? Are you quite sure you are ready to follow Me whithersoever I go?"

There is a discipleship which is grounded only in the emotions. There is a type of religion which is altogether and exclusively emotional. I know a certain preacher who never preaches without the recital of some deathbed anecdote. I heard him preach once in this church. And when he had announced his text, before he had said a word other than announcing his text, nearly everyone in the congregation had their handkerchiefs out. The whole congregation turned white. And when the service was over there was a certain man walking down this aisle, and he was met by a preacher who knew him. And the preacher said to this business man, "What did you think

of that?" "Well," he said, "I do not think it is fair for any man to take such advantage of one."

There is a place for the emotional appeal. Our emotions ought to be stirred as Christians. I remember a dear old man once coming in to see me an hour or so before the time of prayer meeting; and he said, "I wish you would pray for me. I am much concerned about my own state." I regarded him as a deeply spiritual man. I said, "Why, Mr. So-and-So, what is the matter?" "Oh," he said, "I have just been reading the story of the crucifixion again, and I was amazed to discover that I was able to read it with dry eyes. I always feel that that ought to break our hearts afresh, and move us profoundly, as often as we read the story of our Lord's sufferings." And so it ought. There is an attraction in the cross. There is something in the story of redeeming love that ought to stir us to the utmost depths. I have no objection whatever to the religion that must express itself in an occasional hallelujah. I am glad that we have some hymns which make it possible for us in our devotional service to pour out our hearts before God. So that I am not deprecating emotionalism in religion. By all means let us pray that we may feel the things we believe, and that we may be stirred in heart and conscience, and that our affections may be drawn out after our glorious Lord.

But there is something more than emotion in the religion of Christ. There are many who are ready to say, like this man, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest", without properly considering what is involved in that proposal. The weakness of modern evangelism has been that it is too largely emotional; it has consisted in appeals to "Come to Jesus", to "Believe in Jesus", when people have scarcely known who Jesus is, or what demands He makes upon us. They have been exhorted to believe without being sufficiently taught what they ought to believe. There is nothing more subtle than that appeal to the affectional nature, which leaves the intelligence unenlightened and untouched.

Now the religion of Christ is for the whole man. It is not for our emotional nature only. Clearly understand it is for that. I have told you, I think, a story of a Presbyterian minister, whom I knew some years ago, with whom I sat on one occasion on the platform at a great evangelistic service, where a great preacher was preaching the cross of Christ. And this Presbyterian brother sat there sobbing like a child, the tears streaming, literally, in rivulets down his cheeks. And at last, when he could stand it no longer, he turned to me, and extended his hand. Not knowing what he meant, I offered him my hand. He gripped it heartily as he whispered, "By the response of my soul to that great word, I know that I am a Christian." And he was right. We ought to weep. But we ought to do more than that. We ought properly to assume all that is required of us in the following of Jesus Christ.

I say the religion of Christ is for the whole man. It is not only for the heart; it is for the conscience; it is for a man's moral nature; it should lead him to face his record; it should lead him to consider his sin, and to repent of his sin, and to turn away from his sin.

What does it mean to follow Christ? I heard a man say once in prayer meeting here, "What is the use of people's saying they are following Christ, when they go where they know Christ never goes?" He was right. Religion is for our intelligence. God does not superimpose His will upon ours. He enlightens our judgments; He gives

us wisdom from on high. He said of Mary, that she had chosen the better part; she had a spiritual intelligence. She saw what was the better part. She deliberately chose it because it was the better part. It was not something that was thrust upon her. And so when God, the Holy Ghost, comes in quickening grace to the soul that is dead in trespasses and in sin, He does not merely prepare the surface of the soul; He digs deeply; He breaks up the fallow ground; He discovers — as we prayed that He might discover in the hymn we have just sung, — He discovers the hidden depths. He turns His light upon the darkest recesses of the heart. He shows us what is right, and leads us to make choice of it. I say to all of you young people, Choose the service of Christ. Yield yourselves, by all means, to the attraction of the cross. Let your hearts go out to Him Whose heart was broken for you. Let your tears flow for Him Who sweat great drops of blood for you. Let your whole heart's devotion be lavished upon Him; as Mary broke her alabaster box upon His precious Head. Give Him all there is of you, all your affectional nature. But know why you do it! Pray that He may give you spiritual enlightening; that your understandings may be opened; that all the faculties of the mind may be engaged in this surrender of yourself to Christ. For then you will find that it is a costly thing to become a Christian.

I have wearied of a kind of gospel that I have sometimes described as a Y.M.C.A. gospel. I intend no offence in saying that. But I have heard it preached for years. I have heard men say that all the successful business men — or nearly all — are Christians. "There is Mr. So-and-So, a great captain of industry. See to what prominence he has attained; and he is a Christian!" I do not say that God may not trust some devoted disciple of His with great wealth. I believe He does sometimes. I believe that some of the richest men are among the humblest of God's saints. But it requires great grace to carry a full cup. And I insist that following Jesus Christ does not always lead to material prosperity. Following Christ may require a man to give up his position, when he has not another in sight. It may mean that he will have to go out, as Abraham did, not knowing whither he go. It may mean that to follow Christ, a man will have to surrender his very livelihood, and have no supply of his needs in view at all. It costs something to follow Christ. I would not cross the street to multiply the number of nominal Christians, who are Christians on Sunday; Christians when it suits their convenience. Christians when it is popular to be so, who can cry, "Hosanna" with the multitude, but who are never able to stand alone for Christ. Our Lord Jesus never lowered His standard; He never persuaded men merely to be Christians. If salvation, or a man's acceptance of salvation depends upon my persuasion, then I must be like the salesman, and make out the best case I possibly can. But if salvation comes to the human heart as the result of an act, the sovereign act of a sovereign God, if God can save men in spite of themselves, by awakening within them, by the touch of His Spirit, a desire after Himself, then I may fearlessly declare the whole counsel of God, and get men to face all the difficulties of the situation; and believe that in spite of it all God, by His own power, will still make Christians of them.

Do not lightly profess faith in Christ. Take your religion seriously. Stop to consider what it means to be a Christian. I say you will find it costly, and you will find this principle always operative: that this world is ever

inhospitable to Christ and His principles. "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest". The Lord said, "Will you? Are you sure? Have you considered the foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head? Have you considered that I have no home; that I have no place where this world welcomes me? Have you considered that I am poorer than the foxes? Less provision is made for Me than for the birds of the air? Can you keep company with Me upon the mountain top, when every man has gone to his own house, and I must go to the Mount of Olives? Can you go? When other men take their ease, can you cross the stormy sea with Me? While other men are indulging themselves, and considering their own comfort, will you go all the way with me?" Can you do it? What sort of Christian can you be? Are you willing to go without the camp bearing His reproach? Are you willing to sacrifice every material interest — to give up place and position and prestige and everything — if only you may follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth? That is the kind of disciple Christ wants; no other.

And if you follow Him, my dear friends, you will find many doors closed against you. Many places that once welcomed you, will receive you no longer; many social circles you once entered will exclude you, if you follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. I remember a few years ago, when the battle for the Book was less acute than it is to-day, when the modern infidelity had not shown itself so clearly, and when there were multitudes of people who professed orthodoxy, and who declared their belief in the Book. Why I can speak out of my own experience on that matter. There were many churches to which then I was welcomed — or would have been, if I could have gone, for invitations were multiplied to conventions, and great assemblies everywhere. I well remember going to a certain city when there was quite a contention among the prominent families of the Baptist denomination, as to who should have the honour — if you will allow me to say it — of entertaining the Pastor of Jarvis St. Church. And I could go into that city to-day, and if those same people, whose guest I was, were to meet me on the street, I do not suppose they would even recognize me. You cannot stand for God's Book, you cannot stand for the cross, and the blood of Christ, and all the implications of the essential Deity and sovereign Lordship of Jesus Christ, and follow Him whithersoever He goeth, without paying some price. Can you do it? Will you do it? Let your impulse — a commendable impulse, a worthy desire, a spiritual emotion, which leads you to say, "I will follow Thee" — let that be reinforced by a devotion which is based upon spiritual intelligence. See what it means. Face all the facts; and in spite of them all, say: "Yes, Lord! If it means the cold mountain, and the midnight air, if it means social ostracism, if indeed it means at last for me, literally, a cross, and the last drop of my blood, I will follow Thee." No lower standard of discipleship than that is set out in the Word of God.

II.

This intelligent devotion, or devotion of the intelligence, if you like, will be attracted by a TRUE APPRAISAL OF THE VALUES OF LIFE. To another He said, "Follow me!" "But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. I have a certain filial duty to perform, and I crave your permission to do that first; and when that is done, I will follow Thee." Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of

God." But surely it is not wrong to bury the dead? No; it is right; it is eminently right. Well what is the matter with that? "Suffer me first to bury the dead, and then allow me to put some other duty of life before the duty of following Thee." Many Christians are crippled, and their lives impoverished because of their devotion to secondary services. We live in a day when the good is made the enemy of the best; and when the energies of Christian people are devoted to the doing of something that is of less value than the service which is specifically commanded. We hear a great deal about social service, as though it were a new thing under the sun. I am almost tired of the phrase. We have an organization in this city that does some good. I am not going to name it. It appeals for public support, and it gives relief to those who are in need of relief. But, if you please, they are experts! They believe in scientific charity! They believe in helping people in a scientific fashion. And it takes fifty per cent of all the public contributions to that organization to pay the salaries of its officers and employees. And they admit it. But they say, "Our business is not mainly to give out food and clothes, but, scientifically, to help people to help themselves — incidentally, to help myself to help myself, I suppose.

Now these things are good in themselves. Do you not think it is a good thing to have a gymnasium in the church? Do you not think that we ought to teach young men and women to take care of their bodies, and to develop their physical natures? Yes; it may be good — if they have nothing else to do. I will make a confession: I never was in a gymnasium in my life, except to see some other folks perform; but I managed to grow up. Somebody once asked Dr. P. S. Henson what he did for exercise. "What do I do for exercise! Why, I preach!" And if some ministers would work they would not need the gymnasium so much. Are these things not good? Yes; they are not evil. Is it not a good thing to feed the hungry? Yes. Is it not a good thing to clothe the naked? Yes. To educate the ignorant? Yes. It all has its proper place. But in the Christian view, it is a by-product; it is secondary, not primary.

What are people doing burying their dead? That is a good thing is it not? Yes; it is a very necessary thing, preventing the spread of corruption; burying it out of sight. And if you have no power to give life, then bury the dead. But if you have the power to give life, if you have the gospel of salvation, if you do know how to get down to the foundation of things, and bring a man, by God's grace into right relationship to Him, so that being in right relationship to Him he will be in right relationship to all His laws, in all realms, if you have that, go thou and preach the kingdom of God, and let the dead, who have no gospel, who can do nothing but cover up the world's corruption, let the dead bury their dead. Give yourself to primary interests, primary service, to things that are fundamentally essential, absolutely indispensable to human welfare.

That is what the church is for. "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Keep at it, teachers! They may laugh at you. Carry the Book; get the Book, this life-giving Word, into the hearts and minds of your scholars. Long after you are gone, the seed that you have sown will bear fruit to the glory of God. And other generations will arise to bless perhaps the anonymous human instrument — the nameless one — who taught that boy or girl what it was to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

III.

Then briefly, and lastly: another said, "I will follow thee, but — but — I will follow thee but — let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. I should like to go home and talk it over with my wife. I should like to consult her. And I have some grown up children too. I should like to talk the matter over with them: to hold a family council. And I have a good many other relatives and, of course, I think it is very important that we should have peace at home, and I do not want to jeopardize the peace of the family at all. You may depend upon me — yes, you may depend upon me — I will follow Thee. No doubt about that, but first — first — you will excuse me for just a little while, will you not, and I will go home, and I will tell them all about it, and bid them farewell. It may take me a week, a month, a year or so. And perhaps after a while I may get my wife to think about it. Perhaps my mother-in-law may also. It may be that the children will be interested after a time. First — first — first I will go home and attend to things, and after that I will follow Thee." That is not real discipleship — it is a kind of discipleship. A dear man I knew — I believe he is a good man — was going away to a convention. He loved the Book, and he had always preached the Book. And his wife went with him to the door as he was about to leave for the station; and this was her farewell: She said, "Now remember when the vote comes that you have left a wife and four children at home." That was her farewell to her husband. You go and bid farewell to anybody, and you are in danger of having them say, "Now do not do anything, do not take any course, that would jeopardize your family's interests. Remember your first duty is to your home." The Lord said: "I will not take second place to your wife, your husband, your father, or mother, or children, to even your life itself. If you follow Me, you will put Me first. That is the only place I will take."

I used to read those passages in Timothy, which set out the duties of a deacon, without much intelligence. Oh, I could understand what they meant, verbally. But there are some things you can learn only by experience. And in those days I did not know why it was necessary that a deacon should be one who ruled his own house well, having his children in subjection under him. I said to myself, "What in the world has that to do with the office of a deacon. A man may be a good deacon, even though his children are not as obedient as they ought to be." But I lived to see the day when certain deacons, good men, who wanted to do right, were unable to do so because their wives and families would not permit them to do so. There is a great deal of "Bringing up father" in our day. Whether you like it or not, there is a world of human nature in that. The Holy Ghost said, "Do not put any man into office in a church, who can possibly be subject to the influence of a worldly home, a worldly wife, or careless children. He may be a good man, but until he has grace and power from God, so that his house is subject to him, and he is a free man that he can follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and put Christ first, do not put him in office. That is a good plan. Half the church troubles would be prevented if that rule were observed. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Let me tell you a story: I used to know a man in London, when I was pastor there, who was never absent from

service; he was always there. And Sunday night sometimes he would be a minute or two late; not often, but sometimes. And I wondered how it was. I learned after years of acquaintance he had a wife who was a nominal Christian, who had a wide circle of friends. She was very hospitably disposed toward all her friends, and they soon found it out, and his house became a popular visiting resort on Sunday. They would come in for Sunday afternoon, and they were always made welcome. An evening meal would be prepared. There would be a lot of talk before the evening meal was made ready. And they would sit down to supper about the time they ought to be going to church. This man said to his wife, "Now my dear, I am not going to direct you as to what you should do. We are individuals, and we are each serving the Lord in our own way; but I want you to clearly understand that I will not permit these social obligations to interfere with my primary duty to Jesus Christ. If visitors come on Sunday that is all right. But you will have to understand clearly that they will not detain me." And quite frequently when the table was set just about time for supper, he would take out his watch, and say, "Now you will have to excuse me; it is a rule which I never break, that I never neglect the house of God. It is time to go, and if you will allow me, I will just slip away." And sometimes he would rise from the table after the blessing, and leave the company of guests to finish the meal. Sometimes he would rise before the meal had really begun. But he let them all know that so far as he was concerned, Christ was first. He did not do it rudely; he was not ugly about it; he was gracious to the last degree, and considerate of his wife in every respect. But he let her know, and everyone else, that Christ was first.

Only thus shall we have liberty to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Why should we follow Him? Oh, salvation does not consist in following Him. Following Christ is only the evidence that we are saved. We receive the free gift of eternal life, given to us because Christ died in our room and stead, to pay the debt we could not pay:

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him we owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

Can you young people endure that? Will you seek grace from God to realize that standard, that in your business undertakings, in your social relationship, in your family, wherever you are, you will make this the rule of life: Christ first; His service first; loyalty to Him first; obedience to Him first; His service first; His honour first; Christ first in everything; everything else relegated to a subordinate place! Only then may we enjoy the fulness of the divine power in our lives. And the Holy Ghost will not help you in anything else save this: to give the chief place to Jesus Christ. That is the end of it all. He will give you victory, and help you crown Him Lord of all.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we rejoice that we have found fellowship and communion with Thyself abundant compensation for all earthly deprivations. We thank Thee that to be with Thee is heaven whether upon earth or in the glory. To have this testimony that we pleased God is a thousandfold more advantageous than to enjoy the plaudits of men. We pray Thee to help us receive Thy word again this morning in the love of it. Make us simple followers of Jesus Christ. Help us by Thy grace to be enabled very truly to follow Thee whithersoever Thou

goest. Constrain some who have not confessed Christ, to do so this morning. If there are backsliders here, bring them back home again. If there are some of Thy dear children who would scarcely be called backsliders, but who know in their heart of hearts that Christ has been relegated to a second place instead of being given the first, may they this morning, yield everything to Him. We ask it, in His name, Amen.

WHERE JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN

The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. It has a message for every hour, and affords divine guidance in the most perplexing situation. What has the Word of God to say of the perplexing times through which we are passing? We may take it for granted that Christian leaders of all denominations are troubled over the indifference of the multitudes to the message of salvation, but it is not always clear which is the next step to take. Let us, therefore, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and listen to the directions of His Holy Word. This is what the inspired Apostle Peter wrote: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?" In that passage, the Apostle has a searching word for saint and sinner, for believer and unbeliever. On this occasion, I am concerned entirely with the first part of the statement, which has to do with those who "profess and call themselves Christians". I am thinking in particular of those who once were active, witnessing Christians, but who now have lapsed into a condition of indifference. Strange as it may seem, judgment must begin with them. They are numbered among those who have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

How came they to lapse? Why did they cease to be active witnesses for Christ? What were the first steps in their backsliding? With some, marriage and the first child made a difference. With some, growing prosperity and the cultivation of godless friendships gradually destroyed the love of God's House. With others, the cares and anxieties of this life robbed them of faith and hope. With a few, the deliberate choice of evil made spiritual fellowship with other Christians a moral impossibility. What we have to remember is that at one time, these lapsed Christians were our fellow-worshippers and our fellow-workers. They made their contribution to the prayer-life of the Church. They shared in the sacramental life of God's people, and gave what they could to the maintenance of the cause, at home and overseas. The tragedy is that we hear little about them. Perhaps being out of sight, they are out of mind. But we must begin with them. Every Church, every mission-hall, every Christian group, should begin with those who have fallen by the wayside. Judgment must begin at the House of God. The recovery and restoration of lapsed Christians will be the first sign of revival. How comforting it is to remember that our Blessed Lord is so gentle with those who have deserted Him, for He will never break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. "Return unto Me," He cries, "and I will return unto you." What can we do? How should we go about this difficult and delicate task? First, concentrated and continuous prayer on their behalf. Second, gracious and kindly visitation and the offer of any help that may be necessary to make their return a practical possibility. What can be done should be done, and done without delay.

—Dr. T. W. Riddle, in *The Christian Herald*

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TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

Although the halls and class-rooms of Toronto Baptist Seminary are now quiet, let no one suppose that the work of the Seminary has for a moment ceased. Vacations are unknown in the realm of the Spirit; He is ever engaged in His ministry of love and power.

A Seminary lives in the lives of its Faculty, students and graduates. At the present time graduates and former students who have studied with us for one, two, three or four years during the past quarter of a century are now engaged preaching and teaching the Word in all parts of the earth. A great multitude of Godly men and women, they are faithfully labouring in North America, Central America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the islands of the sea. Gathered together, they would make a mighty host of witnesses, carrying the message of light to benighted souls, strengthening believers, establishing New Testament churches, visiting from door to door, entering prisons and hospitals, speaking to all classes and conditions of men of every race. They need our prayers.

Our able President, Dr. H. C. Slade, and the devoted Trustees are prayerfully moving forward, taking steps to re-organize and consolidate the work of the Seminary in a way which will increase its efficiency and usefulness. At the same time, it goes without saying that the foundation principles of the Seminary will be steadfastly maintained, the New Testament principles which were promulgated with such power by our beloved founder, Dr. T. T. Shields.

For the members of the Faculty, the summer months are months of planning and preparation. Although they may enjoy brief seasons of rest, when minds may relax from the rigid concentration of the class-room, their thoughts and prayers are ever ascending to the Father for His direction, His wisdom and His strength for the days to come. Unusual opportunities are presented for directing the minds of promising young people to the calling of the ministry and the necessity of training in the Seminary; a school pledged to give instruction in accordance with the Word of God.

Most of the members of the student body are engaged in full-time Christian work this summer. The Seminary Quartette conducted a tour of the churches and their testimony was well received. Some of the students hold regular pastorates, others are assisting the pastors or undertaking missionary enterprises. Experience in the practical aspects of the ministry will stand them in good stead when they return to the class-room. They are now on the field, testing the principles taught in class, discovering for themselves that the truths of God's word apply to the situations of real life. They will return with determination to study with greater zeal and to devote themselves more whole-heartedly to the work of the Lord.

Prospects are good for the coming year. Some new students are already in Toronto, one of these from Ireland, who is now on a summer field. Two are on the high seas, coming to us from Australia. Both have had considerable experience in the Lord's work. These and other new students are members of the Seminary family, unaware as yet of the joys and responsibilities which shall be theirs. Pray that the Lord may bless them in all their undertakings.

There are some who are definitely waiting upon the Lord to open the way before them. It is probable that the Lord is speaking to others of whom we have no knowledge, laying His hand upon them for His service. We would urge those who desire to train for the Baptist ministry in an institution that is dedicated to the Word of God to communicate with the Registrar at once. Now is the time for decision; do not hesitate to obey the Master's call.

Young ladies who have been called into the Lord's vineyard will find the new courses at the Seminary of great practical help. Special instruction will be given in the field of visual aids, Vacation Bible Schools, and Sunday School.

We would remind the friends of the financial need of the Seminary. This ministry is worthy of your whole-hearted generous support, since it is definitely a missionary enterprise, training those who shall go forth with the Word of Life.

It may not be considered trivial if at this time we speak a word to the ladies of our churches concerning a simple, practical matter. As the fruit season is now in progress, and many will be busy canning and preserving, would you not please remember the students and their dining-room needs? Groups of women in the churches and many individuals have in the past contributed jars of fruit to help the students keep down the cost of the meals which they prepare and serve in the Seminary dining-room. Your donations of preserved or canned fruit, vegetables and pickles would be greatly appreciated.

Those who are interested in learning more about the Seminary should send their enquiries to the Registrar. Send for a copy of the Prospectus, which gives details concerning the courses of study, requirements for admission, principles of administration and such essential matters.

Address:

THE REGISTRAR,
Toronto Baptist Seminary,
337 Jarvis Street,
Toronto 2, Ontario.

—O.L.C.

REPORTING BACK

And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. (Mark 6:30).

After the twelve apostles had been sent out at the command of the Saviour, they were enabled to do many mighty works in His name. Their mission of healing and teaching was one of unqualified success so that behind them they left multitudes of people who had been healed and instructed in the things of God.

The first flush of triumph, however, did not make them feel that they were self-sufficient; it rather drove them back to the One who had given them power to accomplish these things. With one accord they made their way to the Lord Jesus and "told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught."

These earliest messengers of the Redeemer have left us an example worthy of closest imitation. The Christian will often come to the Lord during some severe trial or after some dire calamity but how seldom do we resort to Him as we should after some sweeping triumph! Let us take *everything* to the Lord in prayer.

In Tune With the Divine Energy

By Dr. T. T. Shields

In "The Gospel Witness" of exactly thirty years ago there appeared an article by Dr. Shields which we here reprint.

WE ALL must exercise a ministry of some kind. Doubtless there is a special call to the public ministry of the gospel, but every Christian has a particular call to some kind of service. "Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." The first man God ever made — and he was like God — was a working man, a gardener. Sin did not introduce work to the hands, but only sweat to the face. A godlike idler is an impossibility, for Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto: and I work." The man of the parable had only two sons, and he gave neither of them a holiday, but commanded each, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." Every creature of the heavens from suns to satellites, and every creature of the earth from the eagle in "his lonely eyrie", "in gray Beth-Feor's height", to the mineral bells which in deep mines, ring the hour of work — every creature, animate and inanimate, hears and answers the Creator's call to service. Like Lanier's "Chattahoochee":

"Out of the hills of Habersham
Down the valleys of Hall"

the mountain torrent

"Runs the rapid and leaps the fall",

and when

"The ferns and the fondling grass said, *Stay,*
And the dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed, *Abide, Abide.*

The river, having heard the universal call to service,
answers:

"But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall,

Avail: I am fain for to water the plain,

Downward the voices of Duty call—

Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,

The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn.

And a myriad of flowers mortally yearn,

And the lordly main from beyond the plain,

Calls o'er the hills of Habersham

Calls through the valleys of Hall."

And in its path from the mountain to the sea, as the Chattahoochee river sings its song of service it is joined by myriad voices who sing in perfect harmony to the accompaniment of all the ministering angels of the skies.

But what are you doing in this wonderful world of work? How can an idler be happy in a world like this? How can he sing in tune with the universe unless he sings at his work? An idle Christian is an anomaly. He is in dissonance with his own nature; he is out of harmony with all that is divine in nature and in grace: his is a rest which makes discord in the universal music.

The Christian's ministry must be one of love. We talk of faith, and virtue, and knowledge, and self-control, and patience, and godliness, and brotherliness; but these are but fragments of the whole, harmonious elements of the spectrum of the Morning Star, colours of the rainbow round about the throne, the refracted rays of the glory of the Lamb, of Heaven's white light of Love. And darkness can as easily have communion with light as an unloving nature can have concord with Christ. The man of uncommon intellectual calibre, and of unusual mental

culture, of extraordinary genius, and of phenomenally attractive personality is not *per se* the man who rings the bells of heaven, but rather the man who lives by loving.

Jesus did not call His friends, or His brethren, or His kinsmen, or His rich neighbours, when He made His supper. And that love is always to be suspected which ministers to those who can make some recompense. We do not believe the Lord Jesus could feel at home this side the gates of "Jerusalem the golden" where He could not preach the gospel to the poor, and heal the broken-hearted, and preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised. And we must bring the poor and the broken-hearted, and those who cannot invite us to supper, or in any way requite us for our toil into our churches, or we cannot be sure we are loving anybody. It is the needy, the helpless, the penniless penitent, and social outcast, the moral leper, the soul whom it is no earthly honour to know, and no temporal advantage to help, these are they whom we must love into the kingdom of God. No angel will sing in the choir of the church which is without the poor and needy in the congregation; and however stately the architecture, or intellectually brilliant the pulpit, or artistically beautiful the singing, or grand and costly the organ, God hears no music in a church which does not lovingly minister to a world which sin hath ruined, and which only love can redeem. As the human woes which all along His pathway from Bethlehem to Golgotha called forth His sympathies, and, at the expense of His own pain, perfected the Captain of our salvation, engage us in a ministry of love, by the very exercise of that ministry to human need, He will bring us to the glory of His own likeness. Nearness in character to Him is for those who drink of His cup! There is a song which only the redeemed can learn?

A ministry of love can be fully exercised only in the proclamation of a message of peace. It is well that we should instruct the ignorant, and feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and heal the sick, but that ministry to temporal and physical need must ever be subordinate and subservient to the higher and enduring interests of the soul. And these can be served only by a message from the skies: The ministry of the Lord Jesus is epitomized in this, "The Word was made flesh." And He Himself, in His great prayer reviewing and summing up His life's work, made no mention of the hungry He had fed, or the sick He had healed, but only said, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me." And when He gave the church her work, He said, "Go preach — teach." Social and beneficent, and educational adjuncts to the church's ministry are legitimate auxiliaries, but her main business is to give the Word of God to the world. And this is in harmony with the divine method from the beginning:

"The Master spake! In grand reverberation
Through space rolled the mighty music tide,
While its low, majestic undulations
The clouds of chaos slowly swept aside.

"And wheresoever in His rich creation,
Sweet music breathed—in wave, or bird or soul.
'Tis but the faint and far reverberation
Of that great tune to which the planets roll".

The church is the medium through which God will speak the word which is to recall this world from its moral aberration into harmony with "that great tune to which the planets roll". If, therefore, we are to be messengers, we must keep in touch with somebody. There can come no message from the telegraph office while the wires are down; you can get no letter from the post office when the railway is blocked with snow. People do not go to the post office when they know the office has no communication with the outside world. They wait for the whistle of the incoming train. And the world soon discovers if the church's communications are interrupted, and they will stay away from the church, as they do from the post office if the mail-bag does not come in every day. They will soon tire of carrying home sample copies of last month's papers. Stale sermons from the pulpit, stale testimonies in the prayer meetings, plagiarized addresses in Young People's meetings, and Sunday School lessons purloined from "helps" will make the church, the prayer-meeting, the Sunday School, like the post office, when the roads are blocked — they will be utterly deserted by all whose hearts are hungering for this week's, and this day's mail from heaven. But let the messages be ever so simple, if they come like flowers with the morning dew upon their petals, or like fruit wrapped in its own unborrowed bloom, their very freshness will cause them to be eagerly sought after. Even in these days of wireless messages, though no storm may break the communication, a careless operator can put his own instrument out of tune so that he cannot hear the message from afar. And though neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God, we can put ourselves so out of tune with Him that we cannot receive or transmit His messages of love to the world:

"Lord speak to me that I may speak
In living echoes of thy tone;
As thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thine erring children lost and lone".

A message must be authoritative to be of value. Even in music there is an absolute pitch. There are fixed principles of harmony, and definite standards of unison. The great masters have given us only infinite variations of the seven notes. You cannot tune an instrument or write a musical composition in utter disregard of these fixed principles. You cannot be a law unto yourself in those matters. It is equally impossible by haphazard guessing to silence the world's discords and atune its life to heavenly music. We must know the heavenly standards. Guessers are poor witnesses. Opinions have no weight as evidence. We come therefore to this, that the only message worth telling is that which can harmoniously relate the facts of human nature to the fact of the divine nature. It is self-evident that otherwise there must be discord somewhere, and that word must come — blessed be God! It has come, as a revelation.

The outstanding fact of human nature is its sinfulness; and no message which ignores this fact can be sung to the universal music. Only as this fact of sin is dealt with can human nature be atuned to the universal har-

mony: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." We must hold fast to the truth of the Deity of Christ, or the Cross becomes a mockery and every human soul a harp of broken strings, Time and Eternity a hopeless night, and the universe an everlasting battle field.

We can ourselves exercise this ministry, and receive and proclaim this message only as we are rightly related to the Divine Master. "All things were created by Him and for Him." He must be Lord of all. He must be the Lord of the physical life. When ears listened, and eyes looked, and the palate longed, a world was put out of tune in the beginning. The body must be in subjection, for the temple of God can have no agreement with idols.

But He must be Lord of the intellectual life. Faith does not dwarf but rather develops one's mental powers. To see from Christ's standpoint is to get a perspective view of all worlds. Do not be ashamed to believe what He tells you. It is wonderfully satisfying to meet someone who knows. He speaks to us when other voices are silent. He speaks of things which are higher than our thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth. We cannot see the top of the ladder He has set up upon earth. We cannot measure its height nor count its many rounds. But we can see that its foot rests upon the rock of truth down here, and we are sure that the other rests against the Throne of truth up there. What He tells me of the realm of the unseen is in harmony with all that I know in my profoundest consciousness to be true. "Therefore I esteem all his precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way."

Let us resolve that He who wore the crown of thorns for us, because He is worthy and because it is the only way by which we can know the truth at last, shall be our intellectual Pilot. He can make no mistake. Do not trouble about Genesis. Abel, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, were all historic persons to Him. The deluge of water, and the deluge of fire upon Sodom, were to Him historic events. You had better take Jesus and Genesis together; for I do not see how you can take one without the other or yield one without the other. And so of the Old Testament generally, and of all other matters. Whatever is contradictory of the teaching of Jesus you can afford to disregard, at least for the present. There are fields of knowledge enough in which to gather flowers and fruits, and in which you may be sure of His company and instruction. When you have plucked all the flowers and gathered all the fruit it will be time enough for you to part company with Him; but by that time you will hear the angels calling you to explore other worlds with Him and with them. And you will find up there that all human candles and flaming suns and stars have faded away into His clear light. Therefore make Him the Lord of your religious life and then all life will be religious. Make His will the moral dynamic of your life, His precepts your chart, His glory your object, His likeness your goal. Whatever else we stand for, especially in these days, let us stand for this, that Jesus Christ shall sit upon the throne, that He shall wield the sceptre, that He shall wear the crown. Only as we give Him in all things the pre-eminence, can we with others emerge into that holy state,

"Where from the music round about us stealing
We learn and sing that new and holy song,
And find at last beneath His trees of healing
The life for which we long."

Strange Notions of Religion

By C. H. Spurgeon

WITH how little God is satisfied, according to the notions of men! That Thrice Holy One, who, in the Scriptures, is described as requiring truth in the inward parts, and the love of all the heart and soul, and strength, is dreamed of by worldlings as a Deity who, by a sort of witchcraft, is propitiated by pious words, or clerical persons, or pecuniary gifts. While considering the vain hopes of worldlings, frailer than spiders' webs, and more illusive than the mirage, we have given the words of Watts a fresh sense, and cried—

"Great God, on what a feeble thread
Hang everlasting things!"

One would think that the gate to eternal life was by no means strait, and that to enter it required no striving. Men have strange notions as to what they must do to be saved. These ideas take forms which are absurd in essence, and sometimes ridiculous in appearance. We remember the true story of the gentleman who was thrown from his horse in the hunting-field, and was carried into a house, and found to be fatally injured. A sporting friend, finding that he must die, offered to hasten off and bring a clergyman, evidently supposing that something might be lacking which the ordained person could supply. The dying man declined the aid of the rector or vicar, for, said he, "*I attended my own parish church last Sunday.*" He evidently felt that he had taken in his full supply of religion for the week, and that it covered all the emergencies of the period.

No doubt, religion is viewed by many as a blackmail paid to avert misery, or a decent homage rendered to a superior power, or a kind of exemption-money in lieu of personal service to a mysterious Lord. It is, to such, not a part of life, much less the essence and soul of character; but a thing to be done and done with, as we observe a matter of etiquette or propriety, and then take our pleasure. What a mistake lies at the bottom of all this! True religion means the love of God, and a delight in his ways. It is not the saying nor the doing of this or that, but the being reconciled to God and his commands and ways, and the exercise and enjoyment of friendship towards him, and intercourse with him. Such a thing as unpleasant religion is impossible. How can there be such a thing as forced love, or unwilling friendship? If these things are true, they are voluntary and pleasurable. What a different affair is this from going to church, having prayers in the house, taking the sacrament at intervals, and giving a guinea to the poor-fund! These things are done by genuine Christians; but they are scarcely mentioned, and never over-valued. They are such a matter of course to the hearty believer that the idea of trusting in them never occurs to him. His trust is in another and a higher than himself, and in gifts, and deeds, and prayers, which are of more than mortal origin.

The story has often been told of the sporting lord who made no pretence to religion, nor even to morality; but, on the contrary, rather gloried in his free-thinking and his free living. His time came to enter eternity, and he was laid low by a sickness which was the forerunner of death. One of his wild companions, calling upon him,

was greatly surprised to see the parson coming out of the bedroom, and mentioned the fact to the sick man. The explanation was soon given in sporting language: "Yes," said the departing libertine, "I am trying to hedge." He feared that his speculation in free opinions and ungodliness might turn out to be a loss, and so he was speculating a little in the other direction, to save himself in some degree. He was carrying out for spiritual things what he had often tried in betting on the turf. The story did literally occur. The conduct which it sets forth has struck bolder and more honest sinners as rather a mean piece of business, and they have been heard to say that, having been in the service of the devil all their lives, they were not prepared to desert him at the last. Such a consideration has small weight with those selfish beings whose one thought is to enjoy themselves at as little risk as possible; or, if at great risk, then to discover some secret method of insurance by which the pleasure of the sin could be enjoyed, and the punishment of the sin could be escaped.

There are among us, self-contained and self-satisfied persons, who can dispense even with the minimum of religion which others concede, because they are so good without it, that it would seem superfluous to care about it. If they pay respect to its outward forms it is from deference to society, but not from any personal need for the performance. Very wonderful are these superior persons. They assert that they are quite as good as religious people, and, in some points, a great deal better. They themselves assure us that this is the case, and they ought to know. They are so excellent, that to contemplate their own virtues is, to them, far more exhilarating than the worship of God. Such worthies remind us of the eccentric nobleman, who talked to himself in his travelling carriage all the way from Brighton to London, and ended by inviting himself to dinner, as the most pleasant companion he had ever traveled with. Surely to them there can be no higher heaven than eternally to enjoy their own society! Alas! when they wake up from their present delusion, and see themselves as God sees them, this supposed paradise will darken down into the worst of hells; for of all society, the most degraded will be that of one who dared insult his Saviour by the proud pretence that his own righteousness rendered faith in the cross needless, and indeed made the redeeming death a superfluity. It would be difficult to make a table of degrees of sins; but assuredly, though self-righteousness may seem a small evil towards man, its Godward character is of the blackest. It refuses mercy, it denies truth, it depreciates grace, it dishonours the Saviour; it is, in fact, a rebel in the robes of a courtier; or, as Thomas Adams would have said, "a white devil".

From the religion which is without righteousness; and from the righteousness which is without religion, may the Lord deliver us!

Let us learn on the one hand the wretched insufficiency of a mere orthodox creed, and let us learn on the other hand the equal insufficiency of a mere creedless emotion.

—ALEXANDER MACLAREN

For Younger Readers

THE BURIED DOLL

Johnny was angry: he had quarrelled with the girl next door. She was always poking her nose into his business, anyhow. She was gawky, and her long pigtailed made her look like a Chinaman. She always spoiled his plans, and her presence annoyed him. She could not preserve his secrets, and always told her mother what he was doing. She was a mischief-making nuisance. He could not stand the sight of her, and yet his own mother was always telling him to be nice to her. And now she had betrayed him again. He would need to teach her a lesson. He hated her! and her kitten! and her books! and her sweets! and her doll! and her everything! Mary was nursing her old rag doll, and was smiling. She knew she had told tales about him, but he deserved it. He would not allow her to play with him, so it was all his fault. She told her doll so, and the doll agreed!

Johnny sat in his garden and watched her. He was talking to himself, and vowing to get equal with his enemy. How could he hurt her most? His mind wrestled with the problem, and suddenly a cunning smile appeared on his freckled face. He would steal her doll. He would need to exercise great care, for he had been found out too many times already. His mother must never know; but there was no need to be afraid. That wretched girl often left her doll around, and her mother was always telling her to be more careful with her things. He would await the opportunity to steal the doll, and everyone would think she had lost it once more. The boy made his plans, and waited a few days until the right moment came. Then one evening he saw the old rag doll lying on the garden path, and slipping through the fence, he lifted the girl's treasure and hurried to the shed at the bottom of his garden.

He had decided what to do, and the spade was already propped against the wall. Quickly he dug a hole and buried the old doll. He dragged earth over it, and then covered the grave with a piece of sacking which had been there for days. Finally he inspected his work, and seeing that everything appeared to be normal, he replaced the spade and went into the house. He was very pleased with his achievements.

When he heard her cries the following morning, he went and stood beside the fence. She had lost her doll! Had he seen it? No. When mother came to help in the search, Johnny smiled; when she asked if he had seen the doll, he again replied, "No." He watched their vain efforts, and secretly laughed. That would teach her to mind her own business! No one should tell tales about him and escape! He'd see to that. Ultimately Johnny went away. He was happy; he was very clever. . . . Not even his mother would discover his deed.

Th weeks passed by, and he forgot all about the stealing of the doll. He was contented, for the girl in the next house never interfered with him now. When her mother accused Johnny of stealing the doll, ill feeling crept into the associations of the two families. He had been closely questioned about the matter, but had persistently maintained that he knew nothing about the missing article. The matter ended; but the lady in the next house never smiled at him now. Then one day Johnny's mother called him and said, "Johnny, you stole Mary's doll and buried it behind the tool shed." The boy was dumbfounded, and

wondered who had betrayed his secret. A long time had elapsed since he had done this, and it did not seem possible that his secret could now be discovered. He was speechless as his mother took him to the back of the shed, and revealed how the buried doll had come to life. The girl's mother had filled the doll with wheat, and this had begun to grow! The shape of the doll had been faithfully reproduced in the growing plants, and once again the boy's sin had been discovered. When the "grave" was opened, vestiges of the rotting covering were still to be found, and the boy thoroughly deserved the punishment which he received. This time he realized that sin could never be hidden, and he decided to amend his ways.

—Bible Windows

GRACELESS RELIGION

SHALL I tell you of a minister who loudly preached the law and sternly pronounced the judgment of the Lord against what he considered every form of evil? He had a beautiful daughter, who was lured into forbidden ways. A more simple-minded, trustful child never blessed the fireside of any home. But she was led away. Not all at once, indeed, did she take the great leap into the terrible darkness; she traversed a gently inclined plane. Could she have spoken freely to her father, she would never have gone so far; but when she did speak to him, he received her at the point of the cold, sharp sword of the law. He did not understand her tears. He knew not that righteousness must be merciful if it would be complete. He was stern, hard, upright — a man who weighed and measured everything by law, and turned the gospel itself into redemption by arithmetic. His child left him. She soon felt the cold and the darkness, the bitter hunger and the sharp pain of those who are the servants of sin. In much suffering — such suffering as tears the heart in secret and goads the brain to madness — she turned her steps towards her father's house, and asked me on the way to plead for her. I cannot forget her woe-worn face; there were great red rings round her beautiful eyes — the eyes which should have been full of light, of young hope, and girlish merriment. She was old too soon; she had drunk of the cup of which if any woman drink she can never be young again. She came to me. The night was darkened by great rains, which fell through a keen north wind, and yet she had but little on to keep out the sharpness of the harsh night. She stammered out that she was tired and sad and penitent, and that she longed to tell her father so, and die in her mother's chair. I hastened to him — I never went so quickly anywhere in my life — to tell him that he might rise at once almost to heaven, for his child, so long lost, was at the door.

"I cannot see her, sir; no wicked person shall dwell in my sight."

"But she is penitent."

"She must prove that before I can receive her."

"Sir! do you talk so about your poor, weary, jaded child?" See her but for a moment, and you will pity her misery."

"Sir," said he, in a hard legal tone, "the way of transgressors is hard."

"Sir," said I, "I'm ashamed of you. Such hearts as yours never knew the gospel of Jesus Christ. You were never in Gethsemane — you were never on Calvary. Your poor, wronged, sinning, broken-hearted child will be in heaven, upon the breast of the living God, and you your-

self will be justly thrust down to hell!"

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven." This man was saying, "Lord, Lord," in every sermon he preached, every prayer he offered; but when his own poor child came to the door he stiffened himself, and became not merely un-Christian, but diabolical! How is it with us? Are our words Christian, and is our behaviour un-Christian? Are we keen in the formal statement of Christian truth, and yet devoid of nobleness and charity and magnanimity and grace? I want the combination of both. I would not lower the testimony one iota; I would not take one tone out of any man's voice who was speaking the Lord's testimony loudly, clearly, gently, and pathetically. But I would say to him, "That is not all. Now we must have the other side — the beautiful life, the gentle word, the hopeful view of things, as they are lying in apparent confusion around us. We must be resolute in doctrine, strong in truth, and also gentle and charitable and noble; and ere the contrite, broken-hearted man has spoken to us half his prayer, we must fall upon his neck and forgive him all his sin." There are undoubtedly some very clever sayers of the gospel, but where are the doers of the truth? Doing is the best saying. Sacrifice is the best discussion. A pure life in God the Son is the most splendid and effective eloquence.

—JOSEPH PARKER

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 20 Third Quarter Lesson 6 August 5, 1956

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

MESSIAH'S MINISTRY

Lesson Text: Isaiah 42:1-17.

Golden Text: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." —Isaiah 42:1.

I. The Master's Program for the Messiah: verses 1-4.

In general the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah ("The Anointed One") fall into two categories; those referring to Him as the glorious Son of God, the King, and those which speak of Him as the lowly Son of man, the Servant, of Jehovah. This chapter deals with His ministry on earth as God's perfect, chosen, faithful Servant, wholly devoted to the will of the Father (Psa. 40:7; Matt. 26:39; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38-40). The fact that this chapter refers to the Lord Jesus Christ is established by the quotation of verses 1-3 in Matthew's account of His ministry among men. (Matt. 12:18-21).

As the Servant of Jehovah, Christ was ever the delight of His Father's heart (Isa. 52:13-15). He was the well-beloved, the unique Son of God, ever doing that which was pleasing in His sight (John 8:29). The Holy Spirit in His fulness was given to Him (Isa. 11:2; 61:1; Luke 4:18; John 3:34).

Christ did not strive to exalt Himself, but counted it His supreme delight to advance the Father's glory (John 7:18). He withdrew from the public gaze when His miracles caused the people to gather around Him with popular acclaim (Matt. 12:15-20; John 6:15). He did not lift His voice, as did the scribes and Pharisees, so as to be noticed in the streets (Matt. 6:1, 2, 5).

The Lord Jesus Christ exercised the ministry of a perfect Servant in His relationships with others. He did not ruthlessly break any one who was as weak as a reed that is easily shaken (Matt. 11:7; Eph. 4:14), nor did He discourage the one whose lamp of testimony was smouldering or burning dimly. On the other hand, He tenderly cherished the least mark of affection and grace (Isa. 40:11; 50:4; 61:1; John 9:35-38).

Although gentle to the weak, the Saviour was strong and holy. No one must presume upon His lovingkindness (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9, 15), for in His good time He will bring judgment upon His enemies (Psa. 2:4-6; Rev. 15:2, 4; 19:11-16), at a time when truth shall be completely victorious (2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:7-12). In these days of apostasy truth is at a discount; it lies fallen in the street (Isa. 29:20, 21; 59:4-15).

Christ is represented as a faithful Servant, who will not fail or falter until the redemption which He set out to accomplish is completely fulfilled and justice reigns in the earth (Isa. 9:7; Rom. 8:23-30). He will deliver laws for which the islands, the nations of the earth, wait, for there is no such thing now as absolute justice (Isa. 51:5; 60:9; Jer. 23:5, 6).

II. The Master's Promise to the Messiah: verses 5-7.

God the Father, who has described His Son as the perfect Servant (verses 1-4), is now represented as speaking directly to Him (verses 5-7). It is as the sovereign Creator of the universe that He speaks, as the giver of life and light to men.

As the righteous Servant of Jehovah, He has been called by the God of righteousness. He alone was righteous in the full sense of the term (Isa. 53:11; Heb. 7:26; Rev. 15:4): of all others it was said "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:10-19). He alone was worthy to be the Mediator between sinful men and His holy Father. (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15). Moses acted as a mediator when he stood between the Israelites and God (Exod. 20:18-21; 32:30-32; Numb. 16:48). As Moses was used, although he was not righteous, to bring the people into covenant relationship with God (Heb. 9:19-22), so in a far greater and more glorious manner would our righteous Saviour be given by the Father as a covenant, as a personal bond of connection between the believers and God, uniting them in holy fellowship (1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 8:5-11).

Christ brought the light of salvation to Gentiles, as well as to Jews (Isa. 9:1, 2; 60:1-3; Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:78, 79), for in Him the wall of partition between them would be broken down (Gal. 3:26-28; Eph. 2:11-22).

The Lord Jesus Christ was a perfect Servant in His ministry among men (Matt. 20:28; Luke 22:27; John 13:4, 13-15).

He opened the eyes of those who were physically blind, to show that He came to give sight to those spiritually blinded by Satan (John 9:1-7; 2 Cor. 4:4). Those who were held in bitter bondage to sin and Satan would be liberated from their cruel chains (Luke 13:11-17; John 8:36). To the hopeless He brought rest and hope (Matt. 11:28-30). Those who sat in the darkness of ignorance, sin and death would bask in the sunlight of knowledge, purity and life, if they would but believe upon Him (John 8:12).

III. The Song of Praise: verses 8-17.

The Lord Jehovah alone is worthy of all praise (Isa. 44:8; 45:5); He is a jealous God, who brooks no rival (Exod. 20:5; 34:14). Although from the beginning praise was due to Him, the great act of the redemption of sinful man would inspire a new song, for this was His crowning work (Psa. 33:3; 149:1; Isa. 43:19; Rev. 5:9; 14:3). Praise would arise to Him from all quarters of the earth, from sea and land (Psa. 148:1; Isa. 44:23). People dwelling in solitary places or in cities, on mountains or on islands would unite their hearts in a great psalm of praise to the Lord.

The Lord for a time was silent, refraining from judging iniquity (Psa. 50:3; 83:1; 94:1). Sin appeared to go unpunished (Hab. 1:1-4). But God's justice would in time be vindicated. During Old Testament times the sins of men were atoned for in type only, until such time as the Messiah would take the burden upon Himself and die for the sins of men (Acts 17:30; Heb. 9:15). In the person of Christ, Jehovah would reveal Himself as the mighty Conqueror, dealing the death blow to Satan, sin and death.

Justice would, however, be tempered with mercy (Hab. 3:2). When sin had been dealt with, the Lord could be just and the justifier of those who believed in Jesus (Rom. 3:23-26). Those who formerly had walked in darkness, being spiritually blind, would be shown the new and living way which leads to the Father's presence (Eph. 2:1-6; Heb. 10:19-22). As when a road is graded, high places are lowered, low places are raised and the crooked ways made straight, so would the Messiah remove all obstacles and hindrances so that those who believed in Him should walk safely in the path of righteousness (Isa. 40:4). Those who refused to trust in Christ would be brought to confusion (Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6-8).

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