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An Anniversary: 1456—1956

THE USE OF A POWERFUL WEAPON

THIS week marks an anniversary of paramount significance. It was by that date in the year 1456 that the first printed book to be produced from moveable type was released. Since that time the world has been flooded with the productions of the printing press and no one can over estimate the far-reaching influence which this invention has had upon human history. It surely ranks with the great discoveries of all time for the printed page has influenced, for good or bad, countless millions of mortals and has been the means of toppling thrones and inciting the passions of multitudes.

Significantly the first book that was published on that red-letter day of five hundred years ago was a Bible. This Latin Bible was composed of 1,282 pages and bound in two volumes. One of the forty-one perfect copies which are still in existence is in the American congressional library and is now valued at \$350,000. Despite the fact that the first production of the newly-discovered moveable type was a Bible, it is to be feared that evangelicals have not taken advantage of the press as they should have done. Others have quickly realized the potential of this propaganda giant and have used it to telling advantage.

An Epoch-Making Book

Let us go back in our imaginations to a day in the last century and visit the library of the British Museum. There a man sits reading and writing. Those who passed by might have scoffed at this worker's activities as being a waste of time or the speculations of a lazy man. What is the man's name? It is Karl Marx. With what is he concerned? He is engaged in research for a book which he is to write. The book? — *Capital!* This volume was to shake Europe, arouse the working class, depose a Czar and be the means of establishing the Soviet state and the present world-wide menace of Communism. "The pen is mightier than the sword" is no idle cliché; it is a solemn fact.

A True Apostolic Succession

In the past, the Christian world has been immeasurably blessed through the ministry of the printed page. The

Word of God and common sense know nothing of the ecclesiastical figment of the imagination which is called "apostolic succession" but there is in a real sense a true spiritual succession through the influence of the page. Among his many writings, Luther penned his commentary on Galatians and another on Romans. In Great Britain these works were translated into the English language. Luther's work on Galatians fell into the hands of a swearing tinker who was influenced greatly by the work and was eventually converted. The tinker's name? — John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War* and other immortal works. Among his lesser known printed works was a tract "Visions of Heaven and Hell". A Cornish miner received this tract and, through that instrumentality, he was converted. The miner was Billy Bray who was mightily used of God in the work of soul-winning.

Luther's other great work was the commentary on the book of Romans. Years after the German reformer had died, his commentary was being read aloud in a meeting in England. A listener was impressed by the message and his heart was "strangely warmed". This listener was converted; his name was John Wesley, the mighty preacher whose stupendous evangelistic work was the means under God of saving England from a French Revolution.

Long years then after Martin Luther had passed beyond this life, his influence lived on in the printed page as he multiplied his work through those who were, in turn, the means of spiritual blessing to the sons of men.

Spurgeon's Use of the Press

The far-reaching effects for eternal good of the printing press were remarkably demonstrated in the life and ministry of "the Prince of the Preachers", C. H. Spurgeon. That man of God had his sermon printed weekly and they were distributed to the ends of the earth. From all parts of the world came news of souls saved through the printed page. In 1867, Mr. Spurgeon told one thrilling story about this feature of his work. He said, "I heard the day before yesterday, something which greatly cheered me. It was that, at the late meeting of believers

in Chicago, one came from the far West, who asked for a missionary to preach in a newly-formed district; and the reason he gave for the missionary was, that the people in that region had read my sermon on the Sabbath, and no less than two hundred souls had been converted to God through reading them." Two hundred souls who had not heard the spoken words of the Lord's messenger but who were reached by the Spirit through a printed message! To Spurgeon came word of the salvation of drunkards, priests, harlots, murderers and peoples of many, many lands.

Spurgeon told another story of the far-reaching and unexpected influence of his printed ministry. "At the close of one of our services, a poor woman accompanied by two of her neighbours, came to my vestry in deep distress. Her husband had fled the country; and, in her sorrow, she had gone to the house of God, and something I said in the sermon made her think that I was personally familiar with her case. Of course, I had really known nothing about her. I had made use of a general illustration which just fitted her particular case. She told me her story and a very sad one it was. I said, 'There is nothing that we can do but kneel down, and cry to the Lord for the immediate conversion of your husband.' We knelt down, and I prayed that the Lord would touch the heart of the deserter, convert his soul, and bring him back to his home. When we rose from our knees, I said to the poor woman, 'Do not fret about the matter. I feel sure your husband will come home, and that he will yet become connected with our church.' She went away, and I forgot all about her. Some months afterwards, she re-appeared, with her neighbours, and a man, whom she introduced to me as her husband. He had indeed come back, and he had returned a converted man. On making inquiry, and comparing notes, we found that, the very day on which we had prayed for his conversion, he, being at that time on a ship far away on the sea, stumbled most unexpectedly upon a stray copy of one of my sermons. He read it; the truth went to his heart; he repented, and sought the Lord; and, as soon as possible, he came back to his wife and his daily calling. He was admitted as a member of the Tabernacle, and his wife, who up to that time had not joined the church, was also received into fellowship with us."

These are only several recorded instances among hundreds which were reported to the great preacher who new the value of the printed page in the furtherance of the gospel. These testimonies from the past could be multiplied again and again if we were to examine the lives of other servants of the Lord who dared to utilize the printed page.

The Cults and the Printed Page

What of the present hour? Is it not a sad fact that the printing press is put to use by the sects and cults while Baptists have failed to grasp such a potent weapon? The "Jehovah Witnesses", for instance have progressed for three reasons: (1) organization (2) the employment of scriptural method (home visitation) to propagate an unscriptural message (3) the printed page. In Brooklyn, New York, they possess the largest religious press in the world; right here in Toronto they have erected a Canadian headquarters to house their organization. In the headquarters they have a press and a literature storage depot. One may be sure that this propagator of error would not employ the printed page if it brought no results!

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and

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Rome and the Press

The Roman Church, too, has awakened to the power of the press. Nearly every Canadian or American newspaper and magazine has carried the advertisements which are sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. These invite readers to investigate the teachings of Rome. Hundreds of thousands have replied and the Catholic Church claims thousands of converts. Again, let no one think that Rome would squander thousands upon thousands of dollars upon this method if it brought no results.

Need for Evangelical Baptist Literature

There are many good evangelical agencies which promote the printing and distribution of Christian literature. In Canada, however, there is a desperate need for the wholesale circulation of true-to-the-Bible pamphlets, booklets and books. This can, in no wise, be a substitute for the work of the local church for it is at this point that most evangelical literature falls down. A true gospel literature program will be a powerful auxiliary to the local church and must be planned to fit in with the work of that body. It is the local assembly of believers that is described as "the pillar and ground of the truth" and a literature crusade that ignores or seeks to supersede the assembly does not accomplish the minimum good for it by-passes the divinely-established institution.

On this five hundredth anniversary of the completion of the first book to issue from the modern press, let evangelical Baptists dedicate themselves to the production and distribution of a Biblical literature that will be the means of saving and instructing multitudes in our land and to the ends of the earth.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Precious Truth from an Obscure Text

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, August 19th, 1923

(Stenographically Reported)

"And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested."—1 Chronicles 4:10.

THERE is many a desert, many a wide expanse of arid sands, from which if a man turn back he may well be excused. And yet, if he will but persevere, every grain of that burning sand will prove to be of value to him in leading him at last to a fruitful oasis where palm trees flourish, where fruits abound, and where refreshing springs gush forth from the earth.

Now, there are passages of Scripture, written by inspiration, having their place in the divine record, which are not particularly interesting in many ordinary situations. Although you have tried to believe in the divine inspiration of Scripture, although you say you do, perhaps when you have come upon these long lists of names, you have said, "Well, why in the world were they all written down? Of what possible value can they be?" A deeper study of the Word of God will disclose to you that every one of them is a link in the chain of the divine purpose. There is not one of them written down that does not play its part in vindicating the Word of the Lord. But hidden away in this chapter of hard names, you find this verse which I have read to you. I remember wading through these chapters—I have gone through them many times—until a lot of these names are the names of my friends. I rather enjoy meeting them now; but I thought on first acquaintance they were most uninteresting people. And I remember one day saying, "Well, what a lot of ordinary people there were in the world in those days! All that could possibly be said of them was, that they were born, they lived a while, and they died. Nothing is recorded of any achievement to their credit—they were born, they lived, they died, and their children followed on after them."

But here is a name in the midst of this long procession of ordinary people, concerning whom God writes something. As though He looked down this period of history, and He came upon that name, and He said, "Ah, but there is a name that must be perpetuated: there is a life concerning which I have something to say." And so He writes down the name of this man Jabez; and He tells us that "his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow." And then God writes down the fact that Jabez called on the God of Israel and God gives him a title. And He says, "Jabez was more honourable than his brethren." How would you like to be called, the Honourable Mr. So-and-so? In this democratic country we do not use titles—only because we have not got them. Doctors of Divinity, and all kinds of doctors, will be so plentiful by and by that it will be a distinction

to be ordinary Mr. And after all, these titles conferred upon men by men have very little value; but when God calls a man the Honourable Jabez, he must have done something. And he is not only the Honourable, but he is the Right Honourable: "Jabez was more honourable than his brethren."

I.

Now, what wonderful thing did this man do that God singles him out from the vast crowd to write his biography? What will God tell us about this man? Was he a great statesman? Did he lead a nation out of bondage? Or, was he a great warrior? Had he many victories to his credit? Was he a great author? Did he write many books? What did he do? I think it is tremendously significant that in this wide wilderness God selects one man, and the one thing that He tells us about this man was that he was a man of prayer. As God looks over the list, He seems to say, "I remember Jabez especially, because he talked to Me every day. I heard from him continually. He called on the God of Israel. It is all recorded here; I have his prayers before Me and I will write it down for the generations to come so that they may know that the man who prays is heard in Heaven, and that God has special regard for the praying man." If Jabez had not prayed, his name would have been forgotten; we should never have heard of him. You do not read an account of a prayer-meeting in the newspapers, do you? Did you ever see on the front page of a newspaper a big head-line, saying that at a certain place, at a certain time, a company of people gathered together to pray—and they did nothing but pray? No, it is only a prayer-meeting. But God writes down here the story of a man who prayed alone. "More things are wrought by prayer, than this world dreams of." And when God opens His Book to reward His servants, it will be discovered that the honourable men, and the more honourable men—the men and women who stand in the first rank in God's estimation—are the men and women who prayed. And God can put a lot in a few words, you know. He can wrap infinity, I was going to say, in swaddling bands; He can write all that He has ever said, and will ever say—He can epitomize every word that has ever proceeded out of His mouth in one word—the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, He condenses the history of this man. He notes that which characterized him, which was the distinguishing feature of the man's life. He does not say that he was rich, or influential with

men; He does not tell us where he was born, or whether he lived long or for but a brief period. We are simply told that he was a man who established communication with the skies, and that God had a record that "Jabez called on the God of Israel." And then the wonder of all is, that God had his prayer written down. The very prayer he offered, God kept it on file, kept a record of it, and put it in this inspired volume for the instruction and inspiration of all the generations to come.

What about Jabez, then? "Jabez called on the God of Israel." He was a man to whom God was something more than an abstraction, infinitely more than an idea or an ideal. This Jabez did not worship a Blind Force; he did not bow to the First Great Cause; he did not worship Law; but a transcendent, living Personality Who had come into his family history: he called upon his father's God; he prayed to God, Who was the God of Israel. You cannot write a letter to one whose address you do not know; we cannot pray to one whom we do not know: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" I do not wonder that where evolution is preached from the pulpit, the prayer-meeting soon becomes neglected. I, at least, cannot pray to a Law, to an impersonal Force, to a vague something that operates, I do not know how. There was in this man's life a living Personality, transcending all the works of His hands: "And Jabez called on the God of Israel;" he prayed to a God who had revealed Himself. It is not true, my friend, that Abraham discovered God; it is not true that our knowledge of God is the result of our gradually pushing our way into the realm of the unknown. All that we know of God, or can know of Him, He has told us of Himself. And here was a man in this great procession of — I had almost said nonentities, who heard God speak from Heaven; and he knew God. Do you know Him? Is He a reality to you? Can you call upon the God of Israel? It is a great thing to have a family history like Jabez had. It had been handed down to him, and he knew that God had been a factor in the history of the past. I have not any doubt that as Jabez looked upon the past history, he had learned the story of Egypt, and the story of Joseph's going down into Egypt; he knew all about the ladder set up upon earth, whose top reached to Heaven; he knew about the wrestling at the ford Jabbok where the angel touched his father Jacob, and led him to prevail by clinging to him. What about your family history? Nowadays, you know, it is popular to get loose from the past. The spirit of the Athenians is everywhere prevalent: they spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

II.

But what I want specially to remind you of is that this man prayed to One Who was in covenant with His people. That is the significance of the term, "the God of Israel." "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" — the God Who makes promise to one and fulfils it to another all down through the ages. And the God Whom Jabez knew was in direct covenant with his own: so is the God we know, through Jesus Christ our Lord. No man of science has ever suggested that the material universe is haphazardly ordered or governed. If there is anything, as I have before suggested to you, that true science teaches, it is the inexorability of law — that God's laws go on and are irresistible. There is design; there is the evidence of an over-ruling hand in the affairs of nature, and in the

realm of the spirit. There is a covenant; there is a plan and purpose in which you and I are included; and it will help us to pray if we remember that God has come into covenant relationship with His people, and that we know Him now — not as the God of Israel: He was that; He is that; but we have a fuller revelation; for He said when He made promise to Abraham: "Not to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." And the promise God made to Israel finds its fulfilment in Christ. And in the New Testament you have this phrase again and again — not the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; but this later and fuller revelation, "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ" — the only God we know; the only God we can know is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. The God Jabez knew was the God Who had come to Isaac and to Israel, and Who had revealed Himself; the only God we know is the God revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ. And if you surrender — mark this! — if you surrender the great truth, for instance, of the virgin birth of Christ; if you surrender that which flows out of it — the truth of His essential Deity; if you reduce Jesus Christ to the measure of a man, and He is only a man; you make it impossible for men to pray. For we do not know God if He be only a man; the whole Christian revelation crumbles, and the Bible is of no value, and we are lost upon the road to agnosticism; we are in utter darkness; we cannot pray at all. But in Jesus we know Who God is. He is something more than a law, something more than a force: He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Men may say that we are talking about things that do not matter when we are talking about these things; but I just point out to you that these matters are fundamental to every exercise of the soul toward God. Jabez prayed because he knew God, and we can pray when we know God; but we cannot know Him unless Jesus be His Son.

And then he came with this advantage, that he knew he was going to One Who had taken thought of him: He had planned for him; He was in covenant with him. I was talking to a man recently who lived in a large city, and had four or five children. He said, "You know it takes a lot of money to raise a family in this day. To begin with," he said, "every one of them need a new pair of shoes every month." Well, some little boy comes along and he tells his mother that his shoes are worn out, or his stockings are worn out, or something else is worn out. And he discovers very often that when there was a bargain down town, mother anticipated his need, and had a new pair of shoes in the drawer waiting for him. He supposed that mother had not noticed; but she knew that his shoes were wearing out, and she knew that a good many other things were wearing out. She knew all about the stockings whether they could be darned any more or not, and whether other things could be mended. She had to think about all these things. And when the little fellow came to tell his tale of woe, and to say how urgently he needed these things, his mother said, "I know all about them. I have been watching. I have planned all that." It is a great thing to come to God, and to know Him as One Who is concerned with all the little details of life; and, literally, if we want a new pair of shoes, He knows all about it: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." I remember when I was in England talking to the High Commissioner one day about a certain gentleman whom I wanted to see; and he said: "You know it is always an advantage in this country to make an appointment so

that when you go you are expected. You are not a stranger; your name has gone before you, and the man is waiting to receive you." And in that particular case, I went; and although he was a man of great importance, he greeted me as an old friend: "O yes, I am so glad to see you. I heard from so-and-so about you. What can I do for you to-day?" And we sat down and had a pleasant chat. But had I gone as a stranger, he might have met me like an iceberg. That is the way we come into the presence of God; because the Lord Jesus has taken account of us; we are in covenant with Him, we are expected, and we are given this promise: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And when Jacob came to the God of Israel, he knew he was of Israel's seed, and he knew that the promise had been made to Abraam and to his seed. And when he came into the presence of God, he said, "Here I am." He pleaded the covenant promise — he called on the God of Israel. He knew Him as a God Who answered prayer; for He was the God of Israel, and it was by the exercise of prayer he earned his name from Jacob to Israel; his name was changed because he prevailed with God. And Jabez knew God as a God Who allowed men to prevail with Him.

III.

I have not time to go into his prayer very particularly, but just to mention it. I wish you would all study it; for it is a model prayer. What was it? What did he pray? I have told you to Whom. What did he pray for? He said, "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!" Have you seen an advertisement about a certain thing which is said to be just a real good something — that is all: it is said to be good. Now Jabez had had many things that looked like blessing; but they wore out. He had been to many storehouses, and had received things that had been recommended as of value; but he had discovered them to be valueless. Now, he comes to the great Store-keeper, and he learns what James later wrote: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." And when he wanted a blessing that was a blessing indeed, he went to the only place from which it could be received. Young people, and older people, too, that is for ever true: there is but one place where we may find a blessing indeed, and that is from God. The wise man who had had unusual opportunities of observation, and whose eyes were opened to discern the true value of things, speaks of "the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he added no sorrow with it." When you get a blessing from the Lord, it will last you for ever. When He blesses you, you are blessed indeed.

Can the church learn a lesson from that? Where are we to find blessing, my friend? How are we to find blessing? — from the hands of men, by means of music, by means of preaching, by means of human scholarship, by means of organization and wealth? I am weary of hearing of great churches and great buildings, where there are a lot of rich people, where everything can be done materially. The fact of the matter is, there is only one place where a church can get a blessing that is a blessing indeed. You can make a show of prosperity; you can build up some sort of an institution that will bulk large in the eyes of the world; but if you are going to have a blessing that is a blessing indeed, that will last from generation to generation, and stretch on into the eternities, you must get it from God Himself. There is but one way to get it, and that is by asking for it. Why

doesn't the church pray like that? It may be there are members here this morning from other churches, some strangers who dropped in, and you say, "I wish we might have a real blessing in our church — nothing spurious, but something that will enter into the lives and characters of the people, and that will last for ever." Well, this is the lesson for you: "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!" Only God can do it; and if you are going to have that blessing, you will not get it by a new preacher; you will not get it by changing the officers of your church merely: you will get it by bowing before God, and asking Him for it. That is how you will get it; there is no other way to get the vital blessing we need. This is the store where you will get first-class things. And we are entitled to the very best. I remember being in a store some years ago in a little country place. There were a lot of oranges thrown together in the window. Some of them were large, and some very small. They did not sort them out, and charge you different prices for the large size as they do now, and as they ought to have done then. A well dressed gentleman came in, and he looked at the oranges, and said, "What are the oranges?" And the store-keeper said so much a dozen. He said, "I will take a dozen, please." And then he picked them out himself. He was going to have a dozen of the largest. And the store-keeper said, "When I say so much a dozen, I mean you will have to take the little with the big, and the big with the little." "Oh," he said, "I am entitled to the best." "Well," said the store-keeper, "so is everybody else. And if you take the best, what about the rest?" And he threw the oranges back, and walked out of the door. Do you know in this storehouse there aren't any little oranges? They are all big, and they are all sweet, and they are all the best. And you are entitled to the best: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." God does not want you to travel second-class; He wants you to go first-class in everything. A friend of mine told me the other day, — and as he told you it will not hurt for me to tell it — that a friend of his had written him recently enclosing a substantial cheque, with which he and his wife were to take a trip to Europe. He said they were not to save the money, but to spend it; and he said, "We make only one condition, and that is, that you shall travel everywhere first-class." And that is what God does when He gives us His cheque: "Here is the promise. I give blessings that are blessings indeed. Travel first-class. Get the very best that I have for you." That is what He wants us to do.

"And enlarge my coast:" Now, do you think that Jabez was an ambitious man? I suppose we all want something bigger. Every young preacher dreams of a big church. And I have known a lot of men who were always wanting an opportunity. There is an opportunity wherever there is a poor sinner, in country, or village, or city — it does not make any difference. The man in business plans to enlarge his business; and that may be perfectly legitimate. Certainly it is legitimate that we bring our plans to the Lord, and say, "Lord, I want just such enlargement as Thou canst give me." If God enlarges your coast, then be thankful; if God gives you a bigger church, well, go at it and He will bless you in it; if He gives you a bigger business, you may expect that He will prosper it, and make you equal to its demands. Only let your ambitions be subject to God, and let us be ambitious in that spiritual realm to excel before Him, and thus to enlarge our coast. I think we ought to desire enlargement. I would like to see every Christian ambitious, filled with an holy ambi-

tion. Paul had an high and holy ambition; he wanted enlargement: "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." Haven't you seen the little boy just measuring himself from time to time, and proud when somebody says that he is growing up? The height of his ambition is to be a great man like the greatest man he knows, namely, his father; he just wants to be a big man. Well, that is a worthy ambition, and that is the spirit that ought to possess every Christian. While it puts father and mother some times in a difficult situation, I am sure they are always glad to see the children outgrowing their clothes; they do not want to see them stationary. Not very far from this building, I know of one who is about forty or forty-five, perhaps fifty now. He runs around with the children, wearing little short trousers. He has an old face, the face of a man; but he is just a little boy — he stopped growing, never enlarged at all. And there are a great many Christian people who must be a great grief to their Heavenly Father, because they have not grown up. They are not a bit bigger as Christians today than they were twenty-five years ago. I remember a friend of mine telling me, when I was Pastor of a certain church, about going to a certain American city. He went into a church in the morning, and a man met him at the door. "Good-morning, Sir. Are you a stranger?" "Yes, I am." "Where do you come from?" And he told him. "I used to live in that city myself." And he mentioned the church. "Why," he said, "I was a member of that church twenty or twenty-five years ago. I am so glad to see you. Now tell me about some of the people there. I suppose there have been many changes." "Yes," said this comparatively young man. "There used to be a young man there. I cannot recall his name; but I have him in my mind. I wonder if he is still living." "Well," he said, "I do not know. How shall I know?" "I cannot recall his name. Let me see: how can I describe him? O yes, I think I can. He was just a touchy sort of man, always getting into trouble, always feeling that somebody was trying to harm him. I know he was a great problem to every pastor who served that church during my time." "Oh," said this man, "do you mean Mr. So-and-so?" "That is the man." He was still the same old awkward chap that he had been twenty-five years before. You know there are some people who only need to have their portrait taken about once in a lifetime as they do not change. And there are some people in their spiritual life just like that — they have all the characteristics of the old man; they never put off the old man, and never get on much of the new. All through the years there is the same littlehess of spirit, the same poverty of desire, the same grovelling after earth. They have never learned to pray, "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast." "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown": I have often thought of that word — "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds"; and "it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown", he began to push his elbows out, and the very walls of Pharaoh's palace were too narrow for him. He wanted a larger place; and nothing would do until he had led God's people out into the wilderness where he could look yonder into the promised land. And, my friend, if we "grow up into Christ in all things," we shall be ever praying that God will enlarge our coast — enlarge our vision, enlarge our capacity to receive the things of God, enlarge our powers. Make that your ambition. Be a big man before God

and not before men. If you are a big man before God, you will probably be so little before men that nobody will notice you. But if you are really great before God, living a large life, God will honour you; you will be ranked among the honourable — among those who are more honourable than their brethren. And, you see, Jabez lived a very large life after all: "He being dead yet speaketh." He did not live in the dim and distant past, but he lived for the future — he lived for eternity because he asked God to enlarge his coast.

"That thine hand might be with me:" I cannot conceive of any greater prayer than that. I know I could talk to you for a month on that, without multiplying words. Think of it! Here is a man who prayed, "O God, I cannot do anything. I have no power at all." And he reaches up, and he says, "Lay Thine hand upon me, so that wherever I go Thine hand may be with me." If I had time I would call the roll of the men upon whom God's hand has been laid. There they are in the Book. What wonders they accomplished! That was the explanation of Joseph's career. The Lord was with Joseph; His hand was upon him, and nobody could stand against him. That was the explanation of the success of Moses; of whom I have spoken, and of Joshua, and of David, and of all the prophets — the hand of the Lord was upon them. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones." Why is it that Ezekiel is preaching to a lot of dead bones that no one else would talk to? Half of the prophets of that day would not have accepted a call to that church. They would have said, "I want a great congregation of living people, of respectable people." Why did Ezekiel go down into the valley that was full of bones? Because the hand of the Lord was with him. Why is Brother Green going out to China next month? Why have others gone to China, and to India, and elsewhere? I think in their hearts they prayed, "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me!" When the hand of the Lord is with a man there is no telling where He will set him down, or put him up. But I do know this, that when you have the hand of the Lord with you, you have everything — all power, all wealth, all prestige; you have everything that a human soul can have when the hand of the Lord is with you. Let us learn to pray great prayers like that — shall we?

"And that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me:" There is one negative; there is one thing that I do not want — "keep me from evil" that it may not be a sorrow unto me. Ponder that for yourself. I have only given you a suggestion.

IV.

There is one simple word, and I have done. What followed? If you want an example of simplicity, notice how God states a case. Listen to every word: "And God granted him that which he requested." The whole story of his life is written in that. The man prayed, and God did just as he asked him to do. Do you believe God? You members of Jarvis Street, and members of other churches, I want to talk to you for a minute or two before I close, as simply as I possibly can. I want to ask you plainly, Do you believe that God answers prayer? (yes). Let me ask it again: Do you believe that God answers prayer? (yes) Of course, you do. If there is one church in all the world that dare not doubt it; this is the church. But if that be so, why don't we pray more?

If that be so, what is the explanation of the fact that scores of churches in this City cannot maintain a prayer-meeting? Think of it. Here is a real God to Whom such a prayer as this may be offered — "Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil" — and God ready to do it, and men won't ask Him! "And God granted him that which he requested." Why did God write that down in this Book? Because He wanted men to believe in the privilege of prayer. Of course, nowadays, if you have an immanent God who is not transcendent; a man who has locked himself up in his own works; a man who can be found through a microscope, and who can be found through the telescope, and who is everywhere present — and He is everywhere present — and who is not a personality to whom we may address our petitions — if that is the sort of God He is, we can be sure that He will not answer us. There are those who are called Christians who believe only in the subjective influence of prayer, and say: "Go on praying, it will do you good. You will not get anything; God will not do anything for you; gradually you will come to accept the inevitable, gradually you will come to accept God's plan, but you will not get anything; you will become reconciled to things as they are." That is not what this Bible teaches: when a man asks God for something, God does what he asks Him to do. When Abraham prayed for Lot, fire came down from heaven. It is said "when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt." And Lot's salvation is directly attributed in Scripture to Abraham's intercession. The book of psalms is full of this great truth that when a man really prays to God, God grants him his request.

Now, if we can go away with that simple word this morning, it may revolutionize some life here. It may be there is some man or woman who has come to a very difficult position in life, and you have been saying this last week, "I do not know which way to turn. I have done everything I can. I have consulted my friends. I have asked help in every direction, but it does not come." I want you just to turn your thought in another direction this morning, and say, "Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed;" and He will do it. He will really do it, and open up a new world to you. I know a mother who, among her treasures, keeps a few letters. You could not buy them from her for all the wealth of the world, because they were written by a hand now vanished. They were expressive of the desire of one whose voice is still; and some times — I do not know how wisely — she takes those letters out, and she reads them through her tears again. They were the request of her child — a child's heart speaking to its mother. But I do not wonder she treasures them. Do you know that is just what our Father does with our letters that we send to Heaven? He does not destroy one of them. He puts them away, treasures them up; and even after He has answered them — He had answered this request — He loves to read them. The prayers of God's children make music in His ears. Is there anything lovelier than a family of children just running to and fro in their father's house, running with perfect freedom to father and to mother? Is any music in the world like the laughter of little children? I think that our Father just loves to hear the voice of His children; He loves to have us talk to Him all the time,

and write letters to Him. And one day, I think — if I may reverently say so — He was looking over His treasures, as He was inspiring somebody to write this record, and He found this: "Why here is the prayer of Jabez, who was 'more honourable than his brethren!' I remember with what gladness it came into my heart, and I answered it. I will write it down there so that men may know how much I love to hear my children pray." He keeps you waiting some times. I heard my father say many years ago that when a man with a street-organ comes to the door, the little children gather around for they just love to hear it. And if they have some pennies to give him, they do not give them to him at once, because if they do they know that he just moves on to the next block. So they stand around until he has played out his whole list, and then they hand them to him. "And so," my father said, "some times the Lord keeps us praying because He loves to hear the music of His children's prayer." And I believe He does. Shall we tell Him that we are going to talk to Him oftener?

ROMISH HOSPITALITY

"The next time someone calls to speak to you about the Bible, invite him in, give him a cup of coffee, and call the police."

This is the advice which a Spanish Roman Catholic priest gave to any of his radio listeners who were visited by evangelicals. We have been led to believe that gallantry and gracious manners characterize the Spanish people so we must conclude that Romanism, instead of elevating men, educates them to become common bores even against their own better inclinations.

Let no reader conclude that the quotation at the head of our article has been taken from some Protestant or anti-Catholic publication; it appeared originally on page 9 of the July-September issue of the United Nations News which is the official journal of the United Nations Association (London, England).

Incidents such as this clearly indicate that the Roman Church is no innocent bystander to the persecution of Christians in Spain or Colombia; rather she is the vicious instigator of these atrocities and inflames the passions of her helpless devotees.

SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The preacher at all services on Sunday was W. P. Bauman of Grace Baptist Church of North Bay. Mr. Bauman is a product of the Jarvis Street Bible School and Toronto Baptist Seminary. In addition to his pastoral work in North Bay, he teaches in the Seminary. The three messages which he brought were the means of blessing to the congregations. During the day, two young men publicly professed faith in Christ.

Alas, the grand old doctrines of the Gospel are also despoiled! Do you notice nowadays how all the great truths are being spirited away! Men use the words but they mock the ear, for they reject the sense; they hand us nuts; we crack them and we find that the worm of modern thought has eaten out the kernel.

—C. H. SPURGEON

CAN ROME BE STOPPED?

"But constitutions can be changed and non-Catholic sects may decline to such a point that the political proscription of them may become feasible and expedient. What protection would they then have against a Catholic State? The latter (i.e. the Catholic State) could logically tolerate only such religious activities as were confined to the members of the dissenting group. The Catholic State could not permit them to carry on general propaganda . . ." (p. 38, "The State and the Church", by Roman Catholic Monsignor John A. Ryan).

ON THIS continent the Church of Rome has posed as the stalwart champion of civil liberty and the supporter of political democracy. Prominent Roman Catholic radio speakers and writers would have North Americans to believe that the Church feels right at home in those countries which have been characterized by political liberalism and religious liberty; some actually paint the Roman Church as a pioneer in freedom's march! One finds it hard to hear these clerical soap box orations above the din of the persecutions in Colombia and Spain. If actions speak louder than words, then Rome is exposed as the persecutor of the ages and the enemy of liberty.

Whenever Roman persecution in Colombia or Spain is cited, the Church piously replies that she is not the instigator or perpetrator of these foul deeds. We are told that the state is responsible; of course, even if this were true, it is a dubious distinction for who can distinguish between the acts of church and state in a cleric-dominated land?

At the moment the Roman Church cannot claim the adherence of the majority of the population of Canada or the United States but one cannot help wondering what attitude the Church would adopt if she ever did come to the place of supremacy. Would political democracy become a part of past history? Would religious freedom disappear? An examination of Rome's record in the past would seem to indicate clearly that both political democracy and religious freedom would be doomed.

Lest there be some question about the matter, however, a prominent Roman Catholic representative from New York has supplied the answer. He is Monsignor John A. Ryan who is the author of the book *The State and the Church*. This book bears the imprimatur (or approval) of the appropriate church officials and hence is the voice not of Monsignor Ryan alone but is as well the authoritative declaration of the Church of Rome.

Read again these solemn words as Monsignor Ryan discusses the possibility of changing the American constitution to suit Rome's totalitarian designs:

"But constitutions can be changed and non-Catholic sects may decline to such a point that the political proscription of them may become feasible and expedient. What protection would they then have against a Catholic State? The latter (i.e. the Catholic State) could logically tolerate only such religious activities as were confined to the members of the dissenting group. The Catholic State could not permit them to carry on general propaganda . . ." (from Monsignor Ryan's book as quoted by Dr. R. T. Ketcham in *Let Rome Speak for Herself*).

No one need long be in doubt as to what Monsignor Ryan means for his words are quite clear. He is simply declaring that if and when the Church of Rome attains a

numerical superiority over all other religious bodies, the Church will change those provisions in the constitution which guarantee religious freedom to all.

The Church of Rome on this continent thus lives for the day when non-Romanist forces become so weak that they capitulate before the onslaught of the papal church. Ryan further declares that it may then be possible to proscribe these "non Catholic sects". Lest someone is doubtful about the meaning of these solemn words let us note what the dictionary says about the word proscribe (from which is derived the word "proscription"):

Proscribe—(1) to doom to destruction; to put out of the law. (2) To denounce and condemn as dangerous and not worthy of reception; to reject utterly; to interdict.

This American Roman Catholic writer, with official Church approval, then declares that if Rome becomes dominant it is possible and probably that she will declare as illegal such "non-Roman sects" as the Baptists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists, etc.! In the light of this candid confession, is it any wonder that the American people have wisely refrained from electing any Roman Catholic as president of the United States?

No Missionary Work

Monsignor Ryan further states that the most the Church could do would be to tolerate those religious activities which were confined to the members of the sect. *Missionary work would therefore be forbidden*. The inevitable result of course, would be the extinction of these undesirable "non-Catholic sects".

What of Canada?

Canada is often described as a "Protestant" country by which is meant a non-Roman Catholic country. Some might therefore feel that the prospect of Roman Catholic domination is a very remote one. Such persons need to be roused from their lethargy for *there is a distinct possibility that, in a very short time, over fifty percent of our population will be Roman Catholic*. The 1951 census actually revealed that 46.1 per cent of the population of the Dominion was Catholic (Latin rite — 43.3 per cent; Eastern rite — 2.8 per cent). As long as that figure goes no higher, the Roman Church must be relatively wary and so must pose as a *silent* supporter of religious freedom. Let no one, however, mistake this silence for consent because the avowed aim of the Church is to suppress all other religions that she might rule alone. Already the Roman Church claims the loyalty of the vast majority of Quebec's population and a majority of the New Brunswick populace. In addition, over one-third of the people in the other three Maritime provinces claim to be Romanists. The day of which Monsignor Ryan speaks could well be around the corner.

The Answer

How can we frustrate the designs of the papal church? Many answers have been suggested and many plans have been initiated in order to stop this onward march. On the one hand some call for vigorous protest and on the other, some call for a "positive" program (by which is usually meant inactivity). Some advocate great city-wide meetings to rally all non-Catholics against the common foe. Very few have dared to suggest the New Testament answer!

The big rallies succeed in gaining newspaper lineage and in making much noise and sometimes they serve to inflame non-Catholics who are anti-Roman but not pro-

Christ. It is to be feared, however, that Canadian Christians (we think especially of Baptists) have largely neglected to implement the scriptural answer. The Roman menace will diminish only as individual Roman Catholics are saved and as Christians are rooted and grounded in the truth of God and acquainted with Roman error. This gospel work can be accomplished neither by mass protest rallies nor by mass evangelistic crusades. Only as local New Testament churches carry out the great commission on the "grass roots" level will we see the Roman flood stopped. The answer to Roman Catholic expansion and impending domination in Canada is the establishment of gospel-preaching, Bible-believing churches.

Prominent Canadian Baptist Minister Decries Disunity of "The Church"

"Christians may not care to admit it, but disunity within the body of Christ is a scandal, a stumblingblock, and this makes the preaching of the cross of none effect. This continued and persistent disunity on the part of the church in a world which is on the brink of self-destruction simply because it knows not the secret of 'oneness' or peace, is no longer an 'unhappy division'. It is now both a blasphemy and a sacrilege.

"Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Protestant — all three are deeply involved in this sinful betrayal of the cause of Christ. There would seem to be no hope of a confession of sin either from Rome or from Constantinople. Both, deeming themselves to be the 'true church' cannot sin and we cannot, therefore, expect penitence from the impenitent, or contrition of heart from those whose cool arrogance is a standing scandal within Christendom." —Dr. Emlyn Davies, Yorkminster Baptist Church, Toronto.

IT IS becoming increasingly fashionable to deliver vehement harangues on the subject of the scandal of schism or the terrible sin of "disunity in the church". The World Council of Churches, on the international level, and the various national ecumenical councils annually release these self-castigating dispatches which neither they nor anyone else seem to take too seriously. Another voice has joined this ecumenical chorus; an address of Dr. Emlyn Davies, the Welsh-Canadian minister of Yorkminster Baptist Church in Toronto is reported in *The Watchman-Examiner* and reveals the Canadian Baptist to be a proponent of some sort of Oxford Group type of confessing of shortcomings on the part of the various branches of mythical "Christendom".

We would once have been surprised to see such an article in the pages of *The Watchman-Examiner* but the trend displayed in that once-honored Baptist journal in recent months leads us to expect anything from it. We cannot understand how a real Baptist could have written such a meaningless article nor how a Baptist journal could be so desperate for material that it would bother to print it. Lest some reader concludes that our stricture is too severe we would suggest that he write for the August 2 issue of *The Watchman-Examiner* (23 E. 26th St., New York 10, N.Y.) and read the article for himself. The two paragraphs which we have produced at the head of this article are indicative of the contents of the whole article.

The very fact that Baptists have anything to do with the ecumenical movement is a confession of failure or a misunderstanding of the scriptural concept of the church. Are we to believe that there is some great visible body

which can be designated *the church*? Will Baptists succumb to the equally unscriptural fiction that there is some misty, undefined body that is *the church*? The acceptance of either of these erroneous propositions must lead to grief and the final absorption of the Baptist testimony by pan-Protestant or Romanist elements.

Whenever Baptists have had such a low estimate of their position that they have conceived themselves to be one of many possible schools of thought, they have been a ready prey for ecumenicalists and "one-churchers". Let us not forfeit the scriptural position on the church which holds that a church is a local assembly of baptized believers which is an habitation of God through the Spirit. We would not be bitter toward evangelicals who differ on this matter but we would steadfastly and vigorously maintain and propagate this biblical viewpoint.

When Dr. Davies, a Baptist (!), speaks of "disunity on the part of the church" and then refers to the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Protestant branches, one finds it difficult to understand his language. It certainly is not Biblical for the Bible knows nothing of some universal monstrosity which can be described as "the church". Very wisely, Dr. Davies refrains from citing scriptural support for his dubious plea!

When Baptists cease to hold a scriptural concept of the church, there remains no reason for their existence and they might as well identify themselves with the "ecumenical church". For those who will embrace and vigorously propagate the Biblical teaching then is the promise — "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

ZEAL AND STABILITY

DAILY we become more impressed with the need for balance in the Christian life. Surely much grief is caused by an over-emphasis upon one aspect of divine truth to the utter or near exclusion of some equally necessary and balancing aspect. Not only is there need for balance in the exposition of scripture but, as well, our Christian lives and our whole approach to gospel work must be characterized by balanced thinking.

All believers are agreed that Christians have the grave responsibility of supporting, and engaging in the work of reaching men with the everlasting gospel. It is possible, however, that there may be fundamental disagreement about the basic approach to this work. As we thought along these lines, there came to mind two conflicting emphases, each of which demonstrates one aspect of the truth but does grave injustice to a balancing truth.

1. Zeal

Some would urge us to rush into the work of the Lord with a reckless, thoughtless abandon and thus build for the present alone. "Just go out and see souls saved; leave the rest to the Lord." How pious and God-honoring such a declaration sounds!

We recall meeting some young men who were students at a certain Bible institute. One of these prospective missionaries informed us that their teachers were encouraging the students to rush through a short course in order to hasten to the mission field. Why? This instructor was persuaded that the Lord's return was so near that genuine, consecrated preparation for service was a waste of time!

Not for one moment would we discount the need for greater zeal in the work of the Lord for it is painfully evident that many Christians are sweetly oblivious and unconcerned about the plight of never-dying souls about them. But, does it necessarily follow that the Lord is pleased with sloppy workmanship and shoddy workmen.

True zeal will not result in haphazard work built upon some superficial foundation. The very fact that believers work in the light of the Saviour's second coming should be a mighty incentive to zeal and to good work that will stand the test of eternity.

2. Stability

At the opposite extreme stand those who belittle zealots and all others who would attempt anything for the Lord. They pride themselves upon the imagined fact that they build thoroughly, teach their people and exercise a solid ministry. Hence they scoff at excessive zeal and dismiss it with some reference to doing everything decently and in order.

Once more there is an important truth contained in these sentiments for there is a need today for stability and permanence in gospel work. But does it necessarily follow that spiritual stability must be accompanied by laziness, carping criticism and a suspicion of any who are attempting to do the work of the Lord?

3. The Balance

Zeal and stability are two necessary balancing traits in the spiritual life and happy is the believer who is zealous as though each day were his last but who builds so solidly and faithfully that if necessary the work could endure for the ages of time and eternity.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CERTIFIED BY OUR LORD

By Canon Liddon

FOR Christians it will be enough to know that our Lord Jesus Christ has set the seal of his infallible sanction on the whole of the Old Testament. He found the Hebrew canon just as we have it in our hands to-day, and he treated it as an authority which was above discussion — nay, more, he went out of his way, if we may reverently speak thus, to sanction not a few portions of it which our modern scepticism too eagerly rejects. When he would warn his hearers against the danger of spiritual relapse, he bade them remember Lot's wife. When he would point out how worldly engagements may blind the soul to a coming judgment, he reminds them how men ate, and drank, and married, and were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. When he would put his finger on a fact in past Jewish history, which, by its admitted reality, would warrant belief in his own resurrection, he points to Jonah, three days and three nights in the whale's belly. When, standing on the Mount of Olives, with the Holy City at his feet, he would quote a prophecy, the fulfilment of which would mark for his followers that its impending doom had at last arrived, he desires them to flee to the mountains, when they "shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place."

Are we to suppose that, in these and other references to the Old Testament, our Lord was only using what are called *ad hominem* arguments, or talking down to the level of popular ignorance which he did not himself share? Not to point out the inconsistency of this supposition with his character as a perfectly sincere religious teacher, it may be observed that, in the Sermon on the Mount, he carefully marks off those features of the popular Jewish religion which he rejects in a manner which makes it certain that, had he not himself believed in the historic truth of the events and the persons to which he thus refers, he must have said so. But did he then share a popular belief which our higher knowledge has shown to be popular ignorance? and was he mistaken as to the worth of those Scriptures to which he so often and so confidently appealed? There are those who profess to bear the Christian name, and who do not shrink from saying as much as this; but they will find it difficult to persuade mankind that, *if he could be mistaken on a matter of such strictly religious importance as this, he can be safely trusted about anything else. Yes, the trustworthiness of the Old Testament is, in fact, inseparable from the trustworthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, if we believe that he is the true Light of the world, we shall resolutely close our ears against any suggestions of the falsehood of those Hebrew Scriptures which have received the stamp of his divine authority.*

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

—JOHN WESLEY

Profitable Reading

By C. H. Spurgeon

I AM afraid that this is a magazine-reading age, a newspaper-reading age, a periodical-reading age, but not so much a Bible-reading age as it ought to be. In Puritanic times men used to have a scant supply of other literature, but they found a library enough in the one Book, the Bible. And how they did read the Bible! How little of Scripture there is in modern sermons compared with the sermons of those masters of theology, the Puritanic divines! Almost every sentence of theirs seems to cast side-lights upon a text of Scripture; not only the one they are preaching about, but many others as well are set in a new light as the discourse proceeds. They introduce blended lights from other passages which are parallel or semi-parallel thereunto, and thus they educate their readers to compare spiritual things with spiritual. I would to God that we ministers kept more closely to the grand old Book! We should be instructive preachers if we did so, even if we were ignorant of "modern thought", and were not "abreast of the times". I warrant you we should be leagues ahead of our times if we kept closely to the Word of God. As for you who have not to preach, the best food for you is the Word of God itself. Sermons and books are well enough, but streams that run for a long distance above ground gradually gather for themselves somewhat of the soil through which they flow, and they lose the cool freshness with which they started from the spring head. Truth is sweetest where it breaks from the smitten Rock, for at its first gush it has lost none of its heavenliness and vitality. It is always best to drink at the well and not from the tank. You shall find that reading the Word of God for yourselves, reading it rather than notes upon it, is the surest way of growing in grace. Drink of the unadulterated milk of the Word of God, and not of the skim milk; or the milk and water of man's word.

Much apparent Bible reading is not Bible reading at all. The verses pass under the eye, and the sentences glide over the mind, but there is no true reading. An old preacher used to say, the Word has mighty free course among many nowadays, for it goes in at one of their ears and out at the other; so it seems to be with some readers — they can read a very great deal, because they do not read anything. The eye glances, but the mind never rests. The soul does not light upon the truth and stay there. It flits over the landscape as a bird might do, but it builds no nest therein, and finds no rest for the sole of its foot. Such reading is not reading. Understanding the meaning is the essence of true reading. Reading has a kernel to it, and the mere shell is little worth. In prayer there is such a thing as praying in prayer. So in praise there is a praising in song, an inward fire of intense devotion which is the life of the hallelujah. It is so in fasting; there is a fasting which is not fasting, and there is an inward fasting, a fasting of the soul, which is the soul of fasting. It is even so with the reading of the Scriptures. There is an interior reading, a kernel reading — a true and living reading of the Word. This is the soul of reading; and, if it be not there, the reading is a mechanical exercise, and profits nothing.

Certainly, the benefit of reading must come to the

soul by the way of the understanding. When the high priest went into the holy place he always lit the golden candlestick before he kindled the incense upon the brazen altar, as if to show that the mind must have illumination before the affections can properly rise towards their divine object. There must be knowledge of God before there can be love to God: there must be a knowledge of divine things, as they are revealed, before there can be an enjoyment of them. We must try to make out, as far as our finite mind can grasp it, what God means by this and what he means by that; otherwise we may kiss the Book and have no love to its contents, we may reverence the letter and yet really have no devotion towards the Lord who speaks to us in these words. You will never get comfort to your soul out of what you do not understand, nor find guidance for your life out of what you do not comprehend, nor can any practical bearing upon your character come out of that which is not understood by you.

When we come to the study of Holy Scripture we should try to have our mind well awake to it. We are not always fit, it seems to me, to read the Bible. At times it were well for us to stop before we open the volume. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." You have just come in from careful thought and anxiety about your worldly business, and you cannot immediately take that book and enter into its heavenly mysteries. As you ask a blessing over your meat before you fall to, so it would be a good rule for you to ask a blessing on the Word before you partake of its heavenly food. Pray the Lord to strengthen your eyes before you dare to look into the eternal light of Scripture. As the priests washed their feet at the laver before they went to their holy work, so it were well to wash the soul's eyes with which you look upon God's Word, to wash even the fingers, if I may so speak — the mental fingers with which you will turn from page to page — that with a holy book you may deal after a holy fashion. Say to your soul — "Come, soul, wake up; thou art not now about to read the newspaper; there art not now perusing the pages of a human poet, to be dazzled by his flashing poetry; thou art coming very near to God, who sits in the Word like a crowned monarch in his halls. Wake up, my glory; wake up all that is within me. Though just now I may not be praising and glorifying God, I am about to consider that which should lead me so to do, and therefore it is an act of devotion. So be on the stir, my soul; be on the stir, and bow not sleepily before the awful throne of the Eternal." Scripture reading is our spiritual mealtime. Sound the gong and call in every faculty to the Lord's own table to feast upon the precious meat which is now to be partaken of; or, rather, ring the church-bell as for worship, for the studying of the Holy Scripture ought to be as solemn a deed as when we sing the hymns upon the Sabbath day in the courts of the Lord's house.

To understand what you read, you will need to meditate upon it. Some passages of Scripture lie clear before us — blessed shallows in which the lambs may wade; but there are deeps in which our mind might rather drown herself than swim with pleasure, if she came there with-

out caution. There are texts of Scripture which are made and constructed on purpose to make us think. By this means, among others, our heavenly Father would educate us for heaven — by making us think our way into divine mysteries. Hence he puts the Word in a somewhat involved form to compel us to meditate upon it before we reach the sweetness of it. He might, you know, have explained it to us so that we might catch the thought in a minute, but he does not please to do so in every case. Many of the veils which are cast over Scripture are not meant to hide the meaning from the diligent, but to compel the mind to be active, for oftentimes the diligence of the heart in seeking to know the divine mind does the heart more good than the knowledge itself. Meditation and careful thought exercise us and strengthen the soul for the reception of the yet more lofty truths. I have heard that the mothers in the Belearic isles, in the old times, who wanted to bring their boys up to be good slingers, would put their dinners up above them where they could not get at them until they threw a stone and fetched them down; our Lord wishes us to be good slingers, and he puts up some precious truth in a lofty place where we cannot get it down except by slinging at it; and, at last, we hit the mark and find food for our souls. Then have we the double benefit of learning the art of meditation and partaking of the sweet truth which it has brought within our reach. We must meditate. These grapes will yield no wine till we tread upon them. These olives must be put under the wheel, and pressed again and again, that the oil may flow therefrom. In a dish of nuts, you may know which nut has been eaten, because there is a little hole which the insect has punctured through the shell — just a little hole, and then inside there is the living thing eating up the kernel. Well, it is a grand thing to bore through the shell of the letter, and then to live inside feeding upon the kernel. I would wish to be such a little worm as that, living within and upon the Word of God, having bored my way through the shell, and having reached the innermost mystery of the blessed gospel. The Word of God is always most precious to the man who most lives upon it. As I sat under a wide-spreading beech, I was pleased to mark with prying curiosity the singular habits of that most wonderful of trees, which seems to have an intelligence about it which other trees have not. I wondered and admired the beech, but I thought to myself, I do not think half as much of this beech-tree as yonder squirrel does. I see him leap from bough to bough, and I feel sure that he dearly values the old beech-tree, because he has his home somewhere inside it in a hollow place, these branches are his shelter, and those beech-nuts are his food. He lives upon the tree. It is his world, his playground, his granary, his home; indeed, it is everything to him, and it is not so to me, for I find my rest and food elsewhere. With God's Word it is well for us to be like squirrels, living in it and living on it. Let us exercise our minds by leaping from bough to bough of it, and find our rest and food in it, and make it our all in all. There are hiding places in it; comfort and protection are there. We shall be the people that get the profit out of it if we make it to be our food, our medicine, our treasury, our armory, our rest, our delight. May the Holy Ghost lead us to do this, and make the Word thus precious to our souls.

Use all means and helps towards the understanding of the Scriptures. When Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch whether he understood the prophecy of Isaiah he replied,

"How can I, unless some man should guide me?" Then Philip went up and opened to him the Word of the Lord. Some, under the pretense of being taught of the Spirit of God, refuse to be instructed by books or by living men. This is no honoring of the Spirit of God; it is a disrespect to him, for if he gives to some of his servants more light than to others — and it is clear he does — then they are bound to give that light to others, and to use it for the good of the church. But if the other part of the church refuse to receive that light, to what end did the Spirit of God give it? This would imply that there is a mistake somewhere in the economy of gifts and graces, which is managed by the Holy Spirit. It cannot be so. The Lord Jesus Christ pleases to give more knowledge of his Word and more insight into it to some of his servants than to others, and it is ours joyfully to accept the knowledge which he gives in such ways as he chooses to give it. It would be most wicked of us to say, "We will not have the heavenly treasure which exists in earthen vessels. If God will give us the heavenly treasure out of his own hand, but not through the earthen vessel, we will have it; but we think we are too wise, too heavenly-minded, too spiritual altogether to care for jewels when they are placed in earthen pots. We will not hear anybody, and we will not read anything except *the Book* itself, neither will we accept any light, except that which comes in through a crack in our own roof. We will not see by another man's candle, we would sooner remain in the dark." Do not let us fall into such folly. Let the light come from God, and though a child shall bring it, we will joyfully accept it.

In reading we ought to seek out the spiritual teaching of the word. Our Lord says, "Have ye not read?" Then, again, "Have ye not read?" and then he says, "If ye had known what this meaneth," and the meaning is something very spiritual. The text he quoted was, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" — a text out of the prophet Hosea. Now the scribes and Pharisees were all for the letter — the sacrifice, the killing of the bullock, and so on. They overlooked the spiritual meaning of the passage, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" — namely, that God prefers that we should care for our fellow-creatures rather than that we should observe any ceremonial of his law, so as to cause hunger or thirst, and thereby death, to any of the creatures that his hands have made. They ought to have passed beyond the outward into the spiritual, and all our readings ought to do the same.

This should be the case when we read the historical passages, "Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?" This was a piece of history, and they ought so to have read it as to have found spiritual instruction in it. I have sometimes found even a greater depth of spirituality in the histories than I have in the Psalms. When you reach the inner and spiritual meaning of a history you are often surprised at the wondrous clearness — the realistic force — with which the teaching comes home to your soul. Some of the most marvelous mysteries of revelation are better understood by being set before our eyes in the histories than they are by the verbal declaration of them. When we have the statement to explain the illustration, the illustration expands and vivifies the statement. For instance, when our Lord himself would ex-

plain to us what faith was, he sent us to the history of the brazen serpent; and who that has ever read the story of the brazen serpent has not felt that he has had a better idea of faith through the picture of the dying snake-bitten persons looking to the serpent of brass and living, than from any description which even Paul has given us, wondrously as he defines and describes.

Just the same thing is true with regard to all the ceremonial precepts, because the Saviour goes on to say, "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?" There is not a single precept in the old law but has an inner sense and meaning; therefore do not turn away from Leviticus, or say, "I cannot read these chapters in the Books of Exodus and Numbers. They are all about the tribes and their standards, the stations in the wilderness and the halts of the march, the tabernacle and furniture, or about golden knops and bowls, and boards, and sockets, and precious stones, and blue and scarlet and fine linen." No, but look for the inner meaning. Make thorough search; for as in a king's treasure that which is the most closely locked up and the hardest to come at is the choicest jewel of the treasure, so is it with the Holy Scriptures.

Did you ever go to the British Museum Library? There are many books of reference there which the reader is allowed to take down when he pleases. There are other books for which he must write a ticket, and he cannot get them without the ticket; but they have certain choice books which you will not see without a special order, and then there is an unlocking of doors, and an opening of cases, and there is a watcher with you while you make your inspection. You are scarcely allowed to put your eye on the manuscript, for fear you should blot a letter out by glancing at it; it is such a precious treasure; there is not another copy of it in all the world, and so you cannot get at it easily. Just so, there are choice and precious doctrines of God's Word which are locked up in such cases as Leviticus or Solomon's Song, and you cannot get at them without a deal of unlocking of doors; and the Holy Spirit himself must be with you, or else you will never come at the priceless treasure. The higher truths are as choicely hidden away as the precious regalia of princes; therefore search as well as read. Do not be satisfied with a ceremonial precept till you reach its spiritual meaning, for that is true reading. You have not read till you understand the spirit of the matter.

You will get a thousand helps out of that wondrous book if you do but read it; for, understanding the words more, you will prize it more, and, as you get older, the Book will grow with your growth, and turn out to be a gray-beard's manual of devotion just as it was aforetime a child's sweet story book. Yes, it will always be a new book — just as new a Bible as if it was printed yesterday, and nobody had ever seen a word of it till now; and yet it will be a deal more precious for all the memories which cluster round it. As we turn over its pages how sweetly do we recollect passages in our history which will never be forgotten to all eternity, but will stand forever intertwined with gracious promises. The Lord teach us to read his book of life which he has opened before us here below, so that we may read our titles clear in that other book of love which we have not seen as yet, but which will be opened at the last great day.

DOUBTING CASTLE KNOWS NO SOUND OF PRAYER

Doubt is a serious handicap to prayer, as the Scriptures plainly show. The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8 counsels men to pray, "lifting up holy hands, without anger and doubting". The Greek word translated "doubting" is *dialogismos* which signifies primarily the act of reasoning or deliberating. This may, of course, be a legitimate occupation, as may be seen from the use of this word in some passages, for example, Luke 2:35, to denote the inward thoughts of the heart: "(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." In other passages it denotes the process of carrying on a debate or controversy with another face to face. Thus, it is used in reference to the scribes and Pharisees as they questioned the authority of our Lord. It is said that our Saviour "knew their thoughts" (Luke 6:8) and "perceived their reasonings" (Luke 5:22), while as yet they had not given voice to their rebellious intentions.

When Christ appeared to His disciples after the resurrection, we are told that they were terrified, thinking that they beheld a spirit. He then said to them: "Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart?" (Luke 24:38). There are many to-day who refuse to believe the Word of God; many who quibble over the truth and question the testimony of the Lord instead of accepting what He has said. Such doubting must ever be a barrier to true prayer for "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6).

We must be on our guard lest at any time we allow to remain in our hearts any doubt as to God's wisdom or as to God's love in His dealings with us. The true attitude of the child of God is one of confidence; we are to come to Him in faith, "nothing doubting" (James 1:6), that is, not having a critical spirit.

This word *dialogismos* is used again in Philippians 2:14, where we are commanded to do all things "without murmurings and disputings". Bishop Lightfoot describes doubting as "intellectual rebellion against God". Questioning the supreme authority of our Lord in His Word and in His providential dealings with us leads directly to hesitancy in obeying His commands and finally to open disobedience. Someone has said that a Christian may enquire of the Lord concerning His will by asking "When?" or "How?" but never "Why?"

May the Lord grant us deliverance from all doubting and may He enable us to come to Him in confidence, trusting Him to do that which is best.

—O.L.C.

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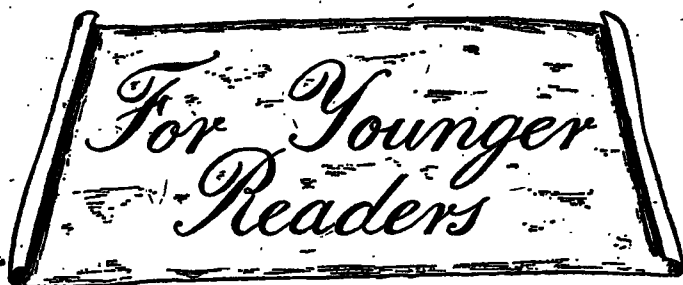
CONCERNING THE DOOM OF THE WICKED

IS IT possible to speak too terribly concerning the misery of the finally impenitent? We think not. Take the words of the Lord Jesus as your guide, and you will feel that no language can fitly convey his sense of the awful condition of a soul which has been judged, and finally condemned. Preachers who carry the utterances of their loving Lord no further than they fairly should be, but express themselves in sincerely alarming language, are now held up to ridicule as tinctured with the mediaeval spirit, as Dantesque in their descriptions, etc. Now we believe that the delineations of both the old preachers and the great Italian poet were the grim but truthful enlargement of the figures of Holy Scripture, and that they were based upon a reverent awe of divine justice, infinitely more to be desired than the proud infallibility of the present boastful age.

At any rate, those men were not concerned to win the popular favour, but wished, in their rough way, to paint sin in hideous colours, that men might flee from it from dread of its consequences. He is not the most loving who is afraid to speak a dreadful truth, but he who will hazard his own name for tenderness in order to be really tender. There is a worm which dieth not, and a fire which never can be quenched. The modern thinkers, with their velvet mouths, do not mention such a thing, but dote upon "a larger hope", for which there is not a grain of support in Holy Scripture. The Lord himself shall judge who are his own servants; those who warn men in saddest tones of terror, or those who flatter them with their own pleasing dreams.

—C. H. SPURGEON

A man can be of any color, poorly dressed and without legs, and yet walk with God.



"TAKE ME WITH YOU" . . .

A group of fishermen were lounging round their boat at a Scottish village one wild and stormy day many years ago. They had given up all thoughts of any profit that day, when an active lad with a fine, open face approached them.

"I want a boat," said he. "Come, Phil, which shall we take?" addressing his companion, who was as strongly built and active as he.

"This looks about our sort," replied Phil.

"You surely won't venture out today," said the oldest of the fishermen. "This is no day for pleasure boating." "Yes, we will," responded the leader of the two boys. "If you fellows are afraid to go out, we are not." And, indeed, he looked as if he feared nothing.

"You shall not have my boat," said the old fisherman. "It would be murder to give it to you."

"Why should not the boys have a turn, if they wish it?" growled a man from the back. "It's not so rough as it was. They can have my boat if they are so minded."

"Not so rough!" exclaimed the old fisherman. "Why, it's going to blow harder than ever. Let me beg of you, my lads, not to go."

"I shall go," said the boy resolutely.

"Then," said the old man, "take me with you. This is no day for boys to be out on the sea; but, if you must go, you should have an experienced man with you. Take me with you."

Something in the pathetic tones of the old man's voice touched the lad more than all he had previously said. He hesitated. Then he said abruptly to his companion: "Perhaps, after all, Phil, we had better wait until tomorrow," and then walked away again.

Years afterward, that lad had risen to one of the highest positions in the land, and had become Archbishop of York.

He addressed a gathering of men and urged them to take Christ with them in their voyage on the stormy sea of life. And, to press home the lesson, he told the story I have related.

Jesus Christ stands before us and pleads with you and me, "Take me with you." Before us stretch the stormy seas of life, across which we must sail. But to make a safe passage, and to reach the port of heaven, we need him on board. So listen to his voice and accept his loving offer when he says: "Take me with you."

—H. D. Lampen, in *Lily of the Valley*

HONESTY THE BEST POLICY

The story is told of a Duke of Buccleuch who bought a cow from a farmer near where he lived. The cow was to be sent to his residence the next morning. It happened that the Duke was out walking when he saw a lad trying to drive the cow and not succeeding. The boy did not know the Duke, and called "Hie man, come here and give me a hand with this beast."

The Duke walked on, while the boy still kept on calling to him. At last he cried. "Come here, man, and help us, and I'll give you half I get." The Duke lent a hand, and as they walked, he asked, "What do you expect to get for this job?" "I don't know," said the boy, "but I'm sure of something, for the folk up there at the big house are good to all bodies."

When they got near the house, the Duke slipped in by another way. Calling a servant, he gave him a sovereign, saying, "Give that to the boy who brought the cow." The Duke returned to the avenue where the boy soon rejoined him. "How much did you get?" asked the Duke. "A shilling," said the boy, "and there's half of it to you." "But surely you got more than a shilling." "No," said the boy, "that's what I got, and do you not think it's plenty?" "I do not," said the Duke. "There must be some mistake; and as I am well acquainted with the Duke, if you return, I think, I can get you more."

They went back, and the Duke ordered all the servants to be assembled. "Now," said the Duke, "point me out the

person who gave you the shilling." "It was that chap there with the apron," pointing to the butler.

The butler fell on his knees and tried to make an apology, but the Duke indignantly ordered him to give the boy the sovereign, and quit his service instantly. "You have lost," said the Duke, "your money, your situation and your character, by your covetousness; learn henceforth that honesty is the best policy."

The boy by this time recognized that his assistant was the Duke, and the Duke was so delighted with the worth and honesty of the boy that he ordered him to be sent to school and provided for at his own expense.

—Selected

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 20 Third Quarter Lesson 9 August 26, 1956

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

THE OFFER OF MERCY TO ALL

Lesson Text: Isaiah 55:1-13.

Golden Text: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."—Isaiah 55:6.

God's offer of mercy is possible because Christ died for the sins of men. Therefore, this study is an appropriate one to follow the study of Isaiah 53.

We rather marvel that such a call should be necessary. The human heart does not fathom its own need. "Make a product that the world needs, and the world will make a path to your door" was the motto of a famous manufacturer. When a possible cure for cancer is announced, thousands of sufferers rush to the spot. It is a sad commentary on human nature, that although Christ has the cure for the world's ills, an urgent invitation must be extended to sin-sick humanity; and even then, the invitation is almost universally scorned or neglected (Heb. 2:1-3).

How simple, yet how potent is God's offer of mercy: "Ho!" "Come", "Buy and eat" (Rev. 3:18)! The terms are within the comprehension of the smallest child, and yet, how few embrace them! The Gospel call is an appeal to the reason (Isa. 1:18), to the conscience and to the will. The Lord waits outside the door of the heart, tenderly, patiently pleading for admission (Rev. 3:20).

God's offer of mercy is universal, world-wide (Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 2:10). God's call is to every one that is thirsty; whosoever will may come (John 3:16; Rev. 22:17). The world and its people issue invitations to those who are worthy, wealthy or congenial (Luke 14:12-14), but the Lord calls to Himself all who feel their need of His love and His salvation (Matt. 11:28-30).

Observe the metaphors suggested in the terms of the invitation. Christ is the Way to the Father's throne (John 10:9; 14:6; Heb. 10:19-22), and as the Way, He calls men and women to take the necessary steps and come to Him. When Eliezar sought to win Rebekah as a bride for Isaac, her parents asked her the question, "Wilt thou go with this man?" (Gen. 24:58). Rebekah could not become the bride of Isaac without leaving her own land, people, desires and plans. "Come" suggests the necessity for decision, movement and action.

Christ is the Water of life, in that He alone can give refreshment, satisfaction and abundant life (John 7:37-39; 10:10). All who are thirsty are invited to come to Him and partake of the living water which He gives (Jer. 2:13; John 4:13, 14; Rev. 21:6; 22:17). Thirst is one of the most agonizing of natural needs (John 19:28). The soul that is athirst for Christ is in dire need of the water of life (Psa. 42:1, 2; 63:1; 143:6, 7; Isa. 44:3; Matt. 5:6).

Christ is also the Bread of life (John 6:33, 48, 51). Water and bread are two essentials of life. Christ alone can give the nourishment which will satisfy spiritual hunger. Let us taste and see that the Lord is good. Wine is the token of

natural joy. In Christ alone can be found deep, lasting joy. Milk is the token of the food which sustains even the smallest child (1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12). Souls must feed and grow on the Word of God (1 Pet. 2:2).

These commodities — water, bread, wine and milk — are offered freely. A traveller may find that the money of his native land is of no value in a foreign land. The coinage of the world is not acceptable in the heavenly realm (1 Pet. 1:18-21). If we would have everlasting life, we must accept it as a free gift from the Saviour (John 3:36; Rom. 3:24; 6:23; 11:6); we cannot earn it or pay for it.

The prophet marvelled at the foolishness of the men of his day, who constantly laboured, but in vain, since their energies were expended in the wrong direction. Similarly, men in our own day restlessly struggle to gain that which can give no permanent satisfaction, for gain, for gold, for position, for fame or pleasure (John 6:27). The Lord calls to them to cease their foolish quest and to learn wisdom, taking the steps which will give them His own gifts of abundant life, joy and peace.

With all who will obey the Gospel invitation and accept His offer of mercy the Lord will make a sure and everlasting covenant (Psa. 89:1, 28, 49), even as He did with David (2 Sam. 7:8; Acts 13:34). The Gospel is the New Covenant, the promise of eternal peace with God (Heb. 9:15-22), and Christ is the Mediator, so that this covenant cannot fail.

The invitation is urgent; it must be accepted ere the opportunity be withdrawn (Gen. 6:3; 7:16; Prov. 29:1). The Lord may not always be found (John 7:34; Heb. 3:13); He may not always be near (Prov. 27:1; Matt. 5:25; 2 Cor. 6:1, 2). The one who persistently hardens his heart against the Lord's offer of mercy may find the doors closed against him (Matt. 25:10-12; Luke 13:25). There is a boundary line between God's mercy and His wrath.

The Gospel call is conditional. If one would travel to the Heavenly City, he must leave the City of Destruction. The sinner must forsake his sinful ways, thoughts and desires. He must repent and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38). One who leaves the far country and travels toward home may always be sure of a welcome from the Heavenly Father (Luke 15:20).

Who would not give up his own thoughts and plans for the marvellous thoughts and purposes of God? How infinitely high and holy are the thoughts of our God (2 Sam. 7:19; Psa. 92:5)!

God's offer of mercy is conveyed through His Word. The refreshing rains, the moisture and the dew, sent by the Father, water the seed, so that it comes to fruition (Deut. 32:2). The Word of God is of divine origin, and it has power, when energized by the Holy Spirit; to cause the truth to mature in the heart (1 Pet. 1:23). This is the Word which we must proclaim in all its purity (Eccl. 11:6; Isa. 32:20).

What are the results for those who accept the Lord's offer? Joy, peace, victory and glory. So great will be the joy of the awakened soul that all nature will seem to be renewed in his eyes. Thorns, briars and thistles, evidences of the curse in nature because of man's sin (Gen. 3:17, 18), will no longer be in control, for the Lord will ransom us from the curse (Gal. 3:13; Rev. 22:3). Above all, a new name, the name of the Lord, the name of glory and true renown, will be given to us (Rev. 2:17; 3:12). We shall be forever a witness, a token, a sign of the mercy and greatness of our God (Eph. 2:4-7; 2 Thess. 1:10-12).

Daily Bible Readings

Aug. 20—The Call to the Sinful	John 4:1-26
Aug. 21—The Call to the Hungry	John 6:35-58
Aug. 22—The Call to the Thirsty	John 7:32-39
Aug. 23—The Call to Life Abundant	John 10:1-15
Aug. 24—The Call of the Saviour	Rev. 3:14-22
Aug. 25—The Call to the Fountain	Rev. 21:1-3
Aug. 26—The Call of the Spirit and the Bride	Rev. 22:13-21

Suggested Hymns

O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found.
Come, ye sinners, poor and needy.
Jesus the water of life has given.
I heard the voice of Jesus say.
Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts.
"Whosoever heareth!"

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