

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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School of the Prophets

TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY on Monday, September 24, will commence its 28th year of training Christian Young People for more effective service. This school is by no means just provincial, for students continue to come from various parts of the globe.

To give the readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS a better insight into this missionary enterprise let us introduce you to some of our students.

The head boy comes from Wales. His former service in the Welsh Guards will suggest something of his physical dimensions. Those who have heard Mr. Reed preach will know what a fiery message he can deliver.

Another senior student and one who is meticulous in all his studies is Mr. Pourret, whose home is in Nîmes, France, and who represents the French Bible Mission in our midst.

Then there is Mr. Dencha of Ethiopia who, in a quiet and unassuming way, prepares himself for future service in his own land.

England is well represented by two students, Messrs. Davies and Tyson, but Ireland will have the best representation numerically at Registration, with Messrs. McCombe, Stewart, and Valleley.

Of course the parent church of our school is also to send us students, so Miss Margaret Eddy and Mr. Edwin Fry will wrestle with the studies in our halls. Jarvis Street Baptist Church has been the agency, under God, which has provided a large portion of the financial support of the school in its history. Thus it is fitting that more of its members should benefit from Seminary instruction.

Among the freshman this year will be Messrs. Gamelin, Thomas, Dalton and Green, and a special note may be added about these.

Mr. Gamelin comes to us from Montreal with a very interesting testimony. Earlier in his life he spent five years in the Roman Catholic Seminary in Valleyfield, Quebec, and two years as a lay brother in a monastery attached to the congregation of Oblates. Since that time Brother Gamelin has been soundly converted and learned that salvation "is of faith, that it might be by grace." He has a burning interest in the perishing souls of his fellow French Canadians.

Mr. Thomas is coming from Oakland, California, where he has been a student at Western Baptist Bible College.

Mr. Dalton comes to us from Sydney, Australia, to which country he emigrated from England five years ago. If a personal word may be allowed, I should like to remark that in this student's enrolment we have another reference back to the glorious fellowship of some Christians serving in the Royal Navy, during and after the recent World War. Rev. B. R. Oatley-Willis, a graduate of Toronto Baptist Seminary and now pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Harriston, in earlier days led this writer to the Lord, while serving aboard H.M.S. *Indomitable*. Mr. Oatley-Willis was also a factor in the conversion of Able Seaman Dalton, in leading him to Rev. Norman Day's Gospel Mission in Portsmouth, England. Mr. Day is now pastor at The Fundamental Baptist Church, Fort William. So the faithful witness of a past decade is still bearing fruit.

Mr. Green of New Zealand has already had experience in the Lord's work, in helping contact untouched Aboriginal tribes in Australia and in Child Evangelism in the same country.

Other students must not be offended at the failure of recognition. Perhaps it is the old maxim again being demonstrated that: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country"!

Should any prospective students still be seeking Divine Guidance in the matter of their theological training, we would suggest that they send a request by special delivery, for our prospectus. Registration of students is on Monday, September 24 at 2.30 p.m. At this time we plan to enter one of the finest years in the history of the Seminary. Prospective students note that here we have a school justified by an *Alumni* serving the Lord faithfully in the four corners of the earth. Note secondly that here we have a school soundly evangelical and yet one delivered from the anti-intellectualism of some Bible Schools. Note thirdly that here we have a Baptist School. We believe that those destined for the Baptist Ministry should not receive their formal theological training from inter-denominational or undenominational schools, but from institutions where Baptist distinctives are clearly set forth. We do this, not in any narrow sectarian spirit, but with the conviction that the Baptist position is the

nearest approximation to the New Testament pattern.

We would remind our readers of the Seminary's great need for prayer, for advertising by its friends, and for gifts and bequests. In recent years it has cost the institution \$2,000.00 to train one student for one year. Here is a real mission cause worthy of your support.

G. ADAMS, Registrar

THE WEEK-END IN JARVIS STREET

A large number gathered for prayer on Saturday evening and the presence of the Lord was manifest, as earnestly the people sought His face. After this fine preparation, the blessings of Sunday were not unexpected.

The visiting preacher for the day was Mr. Norman Porter, member of Parliament for Northern Ireland. As Mr. Porter is a faithful and fearless leader of the evangelical testimony in the British Isles, he spoke from experience when he delivered a powerful sermon in the morning on the subject "Why Contend for the Faith?" In the evening his message was one of inspiration for all. He preached on the all-important truth of the text: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name given among men, whereby we must be saved." While exposing with forceful argument and apt illustration the false view of salvation by works or by the mediation of the Virgin Mary, as set forth in the Roman Catholic system, Mr. Porter gave a gracious Gospel invitation appealing especially to Roman Catholics.

THE BIBLE

Within the two boards of the poor man's Bible is a greater wealth of happiness, of honor, of pleasure, of true peace, than Australia hides in the gold of all her mines. That, for example, could not buy the pardon of any of the thousand criminals of a country, which, weary of their crimes, once cast on her distant shores; but here is what satisfies a justice stricter than man's and procures the forgiveness of sins of which the stoutest heart may tremble to think.

—GUTHRIE

REMEMBER THE SEMINARY IN YOUR WILL

We suggest that our friends should remember Toronto Baptist Seminary in their wills. The proper form for this is: "I give, devise and bequeath the sum of _____ to Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada, associated with Jarvis St. Baptist Church." We are laying foundations for the future, and we are determined to make it as impossible as it is within human power to do, that not one dollar given to Toronto Baptist Seminary shall be used for anything but the propagation of the gospel. No amount would be too large, and certainly no amount would be too small. We earnestly solicit the gifts of those who believe in ministerial and missionary education.

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields
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PATIENCE WITH CHILDREN

In planting beans the old practice was to put three in each hill: one for the worm, one for the crow, and one to live and produce the crop. In teaching children, we must give line upon line, and precept upon precept, repeating the truth which we would inculcate, till it becomes impossible for the child to forget it. We may well give the lesson once, expecting the child's frail memory to lose it, twice reckoning that the devil, like an ill bird will steal it, thrice, hoping that it will take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward to the glory of God.

—SPURGEON

THE CROWNING DAY OF RECKONING

The word of God teaches us plainly that there is future retribution; if it does not teach that it does not teach anything. If it tells us about the glory of heaven, and the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare, it tells us also about the torments of hell; it tells about the rich man lifting up his face in torment and crying for water. Now some people say, "Oh, you are just trying to scare us, you say such things just to alarm us." I would consider myself an unfaithful servant if I did not so warn you. The blood of your soul would be required at my hands if I did not so warn you. Christ says, "How shall you escape the damnation of hell?" No one spoke of the judgment as Christ did; none knew it as well as he.

—MOODY

The fire in our heart should melt the lead in our feet.

—R. G. LEE

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

The Loveliest Chapter in the Bible

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto; Sunday Morning, April 3rd, 1938

(Stenographically Reported)

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14:1-3.

I THINK it would not be an exaggeration to say that this chapter is at least one of the loveliest chapters in the Bible. It is familiar ground to most of us. We come to it as to a well-worn path.

There is always danger in our assuming familiarity with the Word of the Infinite. There is always danger of our taking for granted that we know what a certain Scripture means; that we know all that it can teach us. The woman at the well of Samaria said to the Stranger, whom she met there: "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?" She was speaking to One who was greater, and who said to her: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Our Lord, Himself, is the Subject of the Book, and every word of it is as an ever-springing well, whose freshness and fullness abide, to which we come again and again. Do not avoid the well-worn passages of Scripture, nor assume for a moment that those Scriptures with which you are most familiar can now safely be laid aside.

I shall not try to say anything new, but merely remind you of a few things which we all know; and if we are reminded of them, and appropriate them, they will become increasingly precious to our souls.

I.

Our Lord Jesus entered into sympathetic relationship with all to whom He ministered. He is described as a High Priest who is touched "with the feeling of our infirmities". He was, Himself, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." *He knew that all of women born are exposed, and subject, to trouble of one sort or another.* There is not a man or a woman here this morning who has not had his or her share, and even the children have had their share of trouble already. Surely it is a world of trouble! One would be hard put to it to discover a spot on this old earth to-day to which one could fly with any assurance that he would escape the universal distress. Therefore, the Book that recognizes that trouble is a part of our lives, and that comes to minister to us in our trouble, is a Book which none of us can afford to ignore: "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

I know that there are people who endeavour to persuade themselves that trouble may be evaded by its denial, and so they endeavour to ignore it, and to say that all trouble is an illusion of the mortal mind, and that what we ought to do is to force ourselves to smile, and to persuade ourselves that there is no trouble in the world. I have never been able to do it. And I do not think you have been able to do it. There may be some here this morning who, temporarily at least, enjoy a singular immunity — if so, I congratulate you — but the majority of us, I expect, are finding that life has its hard places. It is full of difficulties, beset with problems. In other words, we are full of troubles; we cannot wholly escape them: troubles sometimes occasioned by the externals of life, troubles that are due to our circumstances, troubles sometimes due to our friends. There are people who seem bent upon making trouble, as though there were not trouble enough in this old world. They seek to add to it, and to multiply the troubles of their fellows. Perhaps you know some of them. There may be some mother here this morning, and most of the members of her family cooperate in family affairs. But perhaps one member — perhaps a husband, perhaps some rebellious child — makes mother to say, "Oh, if it were not for that one great difficulty, I could get on; but it is always present with me!" The world is full of it — trouble in your family; trouble in business; trouble in the circle of your immediate acquaintances. There are troubles and troupers, circumstances and people who give us no end of occasion for worry. That is not a new thing.

Perhaps some of you will say, "Well, I did not want to say anything about it. I try to keep these things to myself, and to look pleasant. But after all, I am glad the Pastor recognizes that we have our burdens to bear, and our troubles to face." Oh, yes; my dear friends; and sometimes it gets into our bodies. You cannot be quite so happy when you have a toothache, or a headache, as you can when you are physically well. Most of us enjoy tolerably good health. You have heard of the woman who met her Rector, and he said to her, "Well, Mrs. So-and-So, I am sorry, but we have not seen your husband at church for some weeks." "No; he just does not feel like going to church." "Well," said the Rector, "has he been caught by this new 'Ism' that is going the rounds?" He referred to some new religious cult that was besetting some people. "No," she said, "It is not exactly that." Then he

named a number of other 'Isms' that were afflicting people. "No," said the simple soul, "it is far worse than that." "Well, what is it?" "It is Rheumatism!" It is, however, true that "we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." There are some people who do not do much else than groan, and some who may groan quite justly — they have so many aches and pains. But that is not the only kind of trouble, though that is bad enough. Do you remember a man who went into the presence of a great king, and he said: "Now, I had not been before-time sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart."

Oh, if we could keep our troubles out of our hearts, they would be endurable! But when they get into the heart, and it is real heart trouble, real sorrow of heart, then indeed the sun does go out of the sky, and we have trouble indeed.

That is the kind of trouble perhaps someone here has this morning. Someone would say, "Pastor, I do not care about physical ills. I go about my work even when I do not feel like it, and I am not so troubled about my circumstances. I understand what the wise man said: 'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.'" But oh, I have so much trouble of heart that I cannot rise above it!"

II.

Well, those of you who are troubled, hear the voice of the One who knew more about trouble than you have ever known, or ever shall know. He says there is a cure for heart trouble, and He bids us not allow our hearts to be troubled. Are you equal to that? "Let not your heart be troubled". Is there any way by which we can banish trouble from our hearts, or lock our hearts against it? Can we so keep our hearts with all diligence, knowing that out of them are the issues of life, that trouble, real trouble, shall never find entrance there? Yes; there is a cure for heart trouble. What is it? Said this Man of Nazareth: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And if you learn to believe in Him, as you may believe, and ought to believe, it will cure even heart trouble. It will banish it from your heart. It will be garrisoned by "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." Faith is a cure for heart trouble. What sort of faith? He said: "Ye believe in God." He spoke to people who believed in God: not in a god, not in one of many gods, but in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of heaven and earth, the Maker of heaven and earth, and all that is therein: "Ye believe in God." Somebody says, "I do believe in such a God. I believe that somehow at some time this world, and all other worlds were made by divine power. I believe in God, but I do not know Him. I do not know who He is. He is a remote Personality, of whom I can form no conception." There are people who say, "Yes, I believe in God in that sense, an Infinite Power, an Infinite Wisdom, some Thing, some Body, by whose will all things that are, came into being. But I do not know who He is." Some of you believe in King George. All of you believe in him, I trust. I do. Thank God for him! But some of you have never seen him. You say, "I believe there is such a person. I know there is such a person, and I know where he lives." But even if you were to go to London, you might find it very difficult, perhaps impossible, to get into his presence, and really address him, and ask any favour at his hand.

Thus do people believe in God — as Someone apart from themselves. But said the Lord Jesus: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." What He meant to say was: "The God whom you do not know, of whose existence you have heard, in whose reality you believe, but whom you have never seen — that God I Am."

You remember how the Apostle Paul went to Athens, the city of Grecian learning and culture, and he addressed a number of the philosophers there, and said to them: "As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." While we have not a full report of his address, I am sure that Paul in declaring the unknown God, declared that He was none other than Jesus Himself.

That is a truism, a mere commonplace; but I wish, dear friends, that we could learn to conceive of God, to picture Him to our own imaginations, in terms of His self-disclosure in the Person of Jesus Christ, and all that I believe of God who made the earth and the heavens, the content of that faith, that faith in its entirety, I transfer to, and repose in, the Person of Jesus Christ. I remember that this God is Jesus. Now I know who He is, and I know what He is like, and I can understand His language for He speaks out of human experience, and out of a full experience of all human trouble.

I have told you of the little girl who came to her father with a broken dolly, while he was busy reading his newspaper. She came crying to him, and he in his pre-occupation said, "Run to your mother". So she left the important man in his easy chair, with his newspaper, and she ran to her mother saying daddy did not care. She had told daddy that her dolly was broken, and "Daddy did not care!" "Oh," said mother, "Daddy cares, but he is a very busy man, and you must not interrupt him." "I know," she sobbed, "but he might have said, 'Oh!'" What a foolish father, to allow that little girl to think of him as being shut-out of her life, or to imagine that any care or trouble which she might have, did not penetrate his spirit!

Not so does our gracious God treat us when we come to Him with our troubles. It may be a very little thing, but He cares, and He will listen to you when you cry. The mothers came with their little children to Jesus. A mother with a babe in her arms, a potential joy and a potential trouble too, came to Jesus. Mothers had heard Him speak, and I suppose, motherlike, they thought, "Ah, I just wish He would take this little darling of mine into His arms! I should like to feel that He had held it in His arms!" And when they came His disciples said, "Do not bother the Master. You cannot come near Him. He is too busy." And Jesus heard them, and over the heads of the disciples He said to the mother: "Come along." And to the disciples He said, "Don't you do that again. Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." When you mothers have trouble with the children, when they are sick, and even when they are naughty, and when they are a real anxiety to you, remember that in the days of His flesh, there were mothers with troubled hearts, who put their children into the arms of God, and He took them up in His arms, and blessed them, and said, "I am always ready to receive them. Suffer the little children to come to Me."

That is the sort of God we have, the God that is revealed in Jesus. And we can touch Him; we can come

where He is; we can address Him. We can receive from Him all that we need, forgiveness of sin, and all that will follow after. It is all in the gift of Him, whose hands were wounded, and we may come to Him: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. And as you really know Me, for what I am, you will not be troubled."

Sometimes people come to me with their troubles, and sometimes they have paid me the compliment of saying, "Well, Pastor, I feel better now that I have talked with you, and I know you will do the best you can." Yes; the best we can! We cannot do everything, but He whom we are commanded to trust, will do the best He can, and His best, though it involve the creation of a new world—that would be possible, when He does His best.

Oh, let us believe Him, and go home from this place this morning saying, "My Saviour, my Friend, my Helper, my Comforter, my Companion, to whom I talk every day, is God. I have seen Him in Jesus Christ. He came from a Far Country, and He told a wonderful story." I have heard people tell wonderful stories when they were away from home, of the wonderful things they had at home.

III.

How many people have been deceived in this country by some gentleman of pleasant address, who has palmed himself off as the heir of some vast estate, the son of a nobleman, or of some rich man! And on the strength of his profession he has played upon the sympathies of people and won their confidence, and defrauded them. But here was One, very humble, who had but one robe, and who had not where to lay His head. He said, in effect, "I am the Son of Someone who is very rich, and in the country from which I come My Father has a great house, and in that house there are many mansions." There is a proverbial phrase which is sometimes used to describe rich men, that "a man is rich beyond the dreams of avarice", so rich that you cannot count his riches. But let me tell you that the One in whom ye believe is all that. When Eliezer came to Rebekah, he said, "I have come representing my master's son, and my master is very rich. He has silver, and gold, and cattle, and sheep, and menservants, and maidservants. My master is very rich, and unto Isaac hath he given all that he had." Oh, that is true of Jesus! *He has been appointed "Heir of all things," and in His Father's house are "many mansions"*. A great house, with room for everybody! So said the Lord Jesus.

And then He said: "If it were not so, I would have told you." Have you ever tried to imagine what heaven is like? Have you ever dreamed about another world than this? Poor Clarence Darrow said, "There is not any other world. There is nothing beyond death at all." You and I do not believe that. Sometimes in our trouble we have tried to imagine what it would be like in Austria to-day. Poor Austria! People by the hundred, by the thousand, according to reports, men and women of prominence have committed suicide: They have ended life. They said, "Better to die than to live under this tyrant, Hitler." And I am not surprised.

IV.

But oh, sometimes dear friends, our troubles have been almost more than we can bear. You have said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove, that I could fly away from it all!" But you would not know where to fly. And so we have dreamed of something beyond the grave. And have we exaggerated? No! We may learn something from the

silences of Scripture. Jesus said, "If it were not so, I would have told you. If there were not many mansions, if there were not another world, if this instinctive immortality which is in you by divine implantation, which makes men dream of something better — if it were not so, I would have told you. I would not have allowed you to be self-deluded. I go to prepare a place for you." And that is what He has gone for. That is why Jesus is not here, visible to our eyes: *He has gone to prepare a place for you.*

I heard Russell Conwell, in one of his lectures, say that he did not believe there could be any prouder moment in any man's life than when having set his heart upon someone, he had used his utmost powers to prepare a place to receive that someone. I remember a man I met in the West once. I saw him in church, and he looked a forlorn creature. I said after to him: "What was the matter with you? You looked so gloomy in church." He said, "I have been in this western city now for I do not know how long, and I cannot find employment. I said, "You are in the wrong place. I shall write to some people in your behalf." I did so, and secured a good position for him. He got back to the city where I lived, before I did. And in a very little while he went right to the top of the establishment. He had somebody across the sea. One day he came to me and said, "She is coming out. Would it be all right for us to be married in your home?" I said, "Certainly." Then I asked him if he had everything ready for her. He said, "Yes; I have the house all furnished, and I have not said a word to her about it." I said to him, "Bring her here, and I shall marry you, and then you can tell her your secret." She came in due time, and he brought her to me. I made her acquaintance, and they were married. We had dinner together in my home. Then he said, "Now I am going to take you somewhere." Motor cars were not common in those days. But the house he had was not very far away from where I lived, and they got ready and went out. My wife and I watched them from the window. He was a fine big fellow, and he was the proudest man in the country. She did not know where she was going, but in due course he took her to a house, and took out a key and opened the door and they walked in. She said after, "I wondered where I was going." She asked whose house they were in. "Ours, my dear. This is our house." "And this is what you have been doing?" "Yes. It was hard to wait. I was often impatient, often tempted to send for you earlier, but I did not want you to come until it was all ready."

Oh, the divine Bridegroom did better than that! He has gone to prepare a place for us through the rent veil of His flesh. He opened a door into the Father's presence. The key to that shut door was His cross. He prepared a place of infinite and everlasting felicity, and then He said: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Are you interested in many mansions? I am. We were at the graveside yesterday. We laid away the body of a dear brother in the Lord. It will not seem like Jarvis Street without him about. I have known him for twenty-five years. He has gone to be with Christ, and you and I may have to go pretty soon. None of us knows. But what a blessing to know that this Helper of troubled people is here now, to live with us here, and then to receive us hereafter, that we may dwell with Him for ever.

I have been talking out of my own heart. I am glad, whether you are or not. I am happy in the assurance

that I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies. It is an old-fashioned doctrine, but I rather think that in a little while there will be many folks who will begin to think of mansions in the sky, if this old world goes on as it is going.

Are you ready? Do you believe in Christ? Are your sins washed away? Are you a child of God, and an heir of glory? Have you Someone to stand by you all the time? Then you ought to be happy this morning.

Let us abandon trouble, and put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us ask Him to help us:

O Lord, we thank Thee for such a Saviour. Help us, who love Thee, to trust Thee more. Bless us every one with Thy full salvation, for Thy name's sake, Amen.

News From the Churches

MITCHELL SQUARE

Pastor Ivan Stewart arrived from Ireland early in the summer, and while waiting for the Seminary Classes to commence, has taken charge of the work at Mitchell Square. He reports as follows:

"It has been my privilege since coming fresh and green from Ireland to minister to the people of Mitchell Square Baptist Church during these summer months. They have been tolerant with my mistakes, they have been sympathetic with my sermons, they have encouraged and enlightened my every endeavour. We have laughed and cried together: in short and altogether they have endeared themselves to my heart and made me feel completely at home. Naturally, as an Irishman I have found differences of temperament, outlook and method. Where these have been important I have learned to adapt myself, and so we have been teaching one another. Although there were these differences in conditions, there was something which I found had not varied, which was not different from what I had been accustomed; that is, the basic unchanging central message of the Bible, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that He was buried and rose again the third day, and is now seated at God's hand, alive for evermore to make intercession for us. It may be clothed in new thought-forms and ideas, but wherever the gospel is preached it makes brothers the world over.

"So it is with joy that I can report steadily increasing numbers gathering for our morning and evening worship. The prayer service, especially, has been a delight, with happy thankful prayers arising spontaneously in an atmosphere to which one and all have contributed for our better understanding of God's word. It has been an inspiration to see our former friends, who are so necessarily busy with harvesting, responding so gallantly in an effort to be present.

"Then the children's meetings on Fridays in which we have spent many a jolly hour, puzzling our brains over quizzes, exploring the Bible and listening to stories. We feel sure that these young lives are being enriched for future days, and that many will come to know God in a personal way through Christ. Through our Sunday School and Bible Class of which Mr. A. H. Shelswell and Mr. Robinson are devoted leaders, many young people are being reached with the good news of God's saving grace.

"During the month of August it was an exciting and stimulating adventure for me to conduct the mid-week gospel broadcast for Pastor R. D. Guthrie, Bethel Baptists Church, Orillia. This was a new experience for me, but I was glad of the opportunity and, I trust, made full use of it. That it has paid off is best illustrated by the deepened interest of outsiders in the Square Church, manifested by their appearance at the services.

"General visitation work has brought me many new friends and enabled me to demonstrate how practical the Bible is in meeting the deepest needs and aspirations of men and women, and how intimately God is interested in us. Speaking with a young man in hospital who had been injured in an accident, I was thrilled by the way he drank in, as though hearing it for the first time, the message of God's love and redemption in Christ. It gave him something to depend upon, something to sustain him during the weary weeks of confinement.

"In conclusion I should like to thank all who gave of their time and talents to vary our services and make them more interesting, all who gave me hospitality, and all who contributed in any way to make my work easier and my stay more pleasurable. You have all been promoting the kingdom of God upon earth. For the present I can but echo with the Psalmist, 'The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad,' and for the future with Paul, ". . . We pray that our God . . . will fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and ye in Him according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ' "

OWEN SOUND

Pastor Reginald Brown writes as follows:

"The work here in Owen Sound has been progressing under the hand of the Lord most favorably. In the past four months two fine young couples have professed faith in Jesus Christ, and since their conversion have manifested a marked growth in the grace and knowledge of the Saviour.

"One Sunday when brother Tarr was with us for a week of Special Meetings we had the joy of baptizing six, on profession of their faith in Christ. We are also making plans for another week of Special Meetings during the month of November. We trust that this little account of our work here in Owen Sound will serve to show that your prayers on our behalf have not been in vain."

LIKE HIDDEN GOLD

The truths of the Bible are like gold in the soil. Whole generations walk over it, and know not what treasures are hidden beneath. So centuries of men pass over the Scriptures, and know not what riches lie under the feet of their interpretation. Sometimes when they discover them, they call them new truths. One might as well call gold, newly dug, new gold.

The Bible, without a spiritual life to interpret it, is like a trellis on which no vine grows — bare, angular and in the way. The Bible with a spiritual life, is like a trellis covered with a luxuriant vine — beautiful, odorous, and heavy with purple clusters shining through the leaves.—BEECHER.

FOR EVER WITH THE LORD

A Sermon by C. H. Spurgeon

Delivered on Sunday morning, October 12, 1873, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

"To be with Christ; which is far better."—Philippians 1:23

THE apostle was confined in the guard-room of the Praetorium. It is very probable that he had a soldier chained to his right hand, and another to his left, and it is very possible that this position suggested to him the expression, "I am in a strait betwixt two." He was literally held by two forces, and he was mentally in the same condition, exercised with two strong desires, influenced by two master passions, and he did not know to which he should yield. He says, "Between the two I am in perplexity," or, as some render it, "I am straitened by the pressure of the two things." Picture yourself sitting in a gloomy dungeon, a captive in the hands of the cruel tyrant Nero, and under the supervision of the infamous praefect Tigellinus, the most detestable of all Nero's satellites. Conceive yourself as expecting soon to be taken out to death — perhaps to such a horrible death as the refined cruelty of the monster had often devised — as, for instance, to be smeared over with bituminous matter and burned in the despot's garden, to adorn a holiday. What would be your feelings? If you were not a Christian I should expect you to tremble with the fear of death, and even if you were a believer, I should not marvel if the flesh shrunk from the prospect. Paul was an utter stranger to any feeling of the kind. He had not the slightest dread of martyrdom. He calls his expected death a departure, a loosing of the cable which holds his ship to the shore, and a putting forth upon the main ocean. So far from being afraid to die, he stands fully prepared, he waits patiently, and even anticipates joyfully the hour when his change shall come. On the other hand, I can readily imagine that amidst the miseries of a wretched prison, subject to frequent insults from a rude soldiery, you might be seized with a desire to escape from life. Good men have felt the power of that feeling. Elijah said, "Let me die: I am no better than my fathers." Job sighed to be hidden in the grave, and often times under far less afflictions than those which vexed the apostle, good men have said, "Would God this life were at an end, and these miseries over; I am a-weary; I am a-weary; when will death release me?" I see nothing of that feeling in the apostle; he is not restive under the chain; there is not a trace of impatience about him. He admits, and joyfully admits it, that to be with Christ is far better; but upon consideration he sees reasons for his remaining here, and therefore he cheerfully submits to whatever may be the Lord's will. He does not choose. His mind is so wrapt up with God, and free from self, that he cannot choose. What a blessed state of heart to be in! One might be willing to wear Paul's chain on the wrist to enjoy Paul's liberty of mind. He is a freeman whom the Lord makes free, and such a man Nero himself cannot enslave. He may confine him in the military prison, but his soul walks at liberty through the earth, yea, and climbs among the stars. Paul, instead of being either weary of life or afraid of death, sits down and coolly considers his own case, as calmly indeed as if it had been the case of some one else. Do you observe how

he weighs it? He says, to depart and to be with Christ is, in itself considered, far better, he therefore desires it; but looking round upon the numerous churches which he had formed, which in their feebleness and exposure to many perils needed his care, he says, on the other hand, "To abide in the flesh is more needful for you." He holds the balance with unquivering hand, and the scales quietly vibrate in equilibrium: one rises and then the other, gently swaying his heart by turns. He is in a strait, a blessed strait betwixt two, and he does not say that he knew not which of two things to avoid, or which to deprecate, but his mind was in such a condition that either to live or to die seemed equally desirable, and he says, "What I shall choose I wot not." It is a poor choice, to choose to live in a dungeon, and an equally poor business, as men judge it, to choose to die, but the apostle regards both of them as choice things, so choice that he does not know which to select. He deliberates as coolly and calmly as if he were not at all concerned about it; and indeed it is fair to say he was not at all concerned about it, he was moved by a higher concern than any which had to do with himself; for his main object was the glory of God. He desired the glory of God when he wished to be with Christ, he desired the same when he was willing to remain with Christ's people, and to labour on.

His mind, as we have seen, hung in an equilibrium between two things, but he is clear enough upon one matter, namely, that considering his own interests only, it would greatly increase his happiness to depart and to be with Christ. He had said the same before, when he declared that, "To die is gain." He had no doubt that to be loosed from the body and suffered to fly away to Jesus, would be a great boon to him. Of that assurance we will now speak.

The first thing to which I shall call your attention is THE APOSTLE'S CERTAINTY CONCERNING THE DISEMBODIED STATE:—"Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Now, the apostle was an eminently conscientious man. At the time when he was a Jewish teacher, whatever else he might not be, he was very conscientious — he verily thought that he did God service in persecuting the Christians; and throughout the whole of his subsequent career, in every incident of his history we mark him as pre-eminently a man guided by conscience. If he believed a thing to be right, he attended to it; and if anything struck him as being wrong, he could not be persuaded to countenance it. He would not do or say that which he did not fully believe to be right and true. It is a grand thing to meet with a witness of this order, for his testimony can be relied on. What such a man affirms we may be quite certain is correct, so far as he knows.

And withal, the apostle was eminently cool. He was a man of well-balanced reason. I should think that logic

greatly preponderated amongst his faculties. John has a warm and glowing heart, and one does not wonder that he is rather a warm lover of Jesus than a systematic unfold of doctrine; Peter is impulsive, and when he writes he writes with force, but it is not the force of reasoning. Paul is calm, collected; you never find him excited beyond the bounds of reason. He is as orderly, correct, and argumentative as a Grecian sage. He is enthusiastic to a white heat, but withal he still holds himself well in hand. The courses of his imagination can outstrip the wind, but he always holds the reins with a strong hand, and knows how to turn them, or to make them stand still at his pleasure. It is a great thing to receive the testimony of a man who is both conscientious to tell what he believes to be true, and calm and logical to form a clear judgment as to what is really fact.

Now this man, Paul, was convinced that there is a future state for believers, he was quite sure about it, and he believed it to be a future conscious state, which commenced the moment they died, and was beyond measure full of blessedness. He did not believe in purgatorial fires through which believers' souls must pass; much less did he believe the modern and detestable heresy which some have broached, that like the body the soul of the saint dies until the resurrection; but he was wont to speak of being "absent from the body and present with the Lord," and here he speaks about departing not to sleep or to lie in the cold shade of oblivion till the trumpet should arouse him, but to depart and immediately to be with Christ, which is far better. What had made this very conscientious and very collected man come to this conclusion? I suppose he would have replied first, that he had been converted by a sight of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the road to Damascus, while desperately set against the religion of Jesus, the Lord himself had appeared to him, so that he had seen Jesus with his own eyes, and had heard him speak. About that sight and sound he had no question: he was sure that he had seen the Lord Jesus and heard his voice. He was so certain of this that he was led to give up his position in society, which was a very elevated one, to lose his repute, which he greatly valued, to be rejected by his countrymen whom he loved with more than ordinary patriotism, and to run continual risk of death for the sake of the truth to which he was a witness. He was content to be made the offscouring of all things for the love of that once despised Saviour who, out of the windows of heaven, had looked down upon him in mercy. Now, he was quite sure that Jesus Christ came from somewhere, and went back to some place or other. He felt sure that there must be a place where the man Jesus Christ dwelt, and he felt quite certain that wherever that might be it would be a place of happiness and glory. Recollecting the prayer of the Lord Jesus, which John had recorded, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," he was quite certain that as soon as saints died they would be where their glorious Lord Jesus was, and would share his honours.

Remember, also, that this judicious and truthful witness tells us that he had on other occasions distinct evidence of the disembodied state. He informs us that he was caught up into the third heaven, and there heard things which it was not lawful for a man to utter. He observes that he does not understand how he went there, but of the fact he is quite sure. His body was here on earth still alive, and yet his spirit was caught away into heaven;

the question with him was, whether he was in the body or out of the body, and I dare say his metaphysical mind often tried to untie that knot. His soul must have remained in the body to keep the body alive, and if so, how could it go up to heaven? And yet into heaven he was quite clear that he had entered. At last the apostle came to the conclusion that whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, but God knew. This, however, he was sure of, that he had been caught up into paradise, or the third heaven, and therefore there was a paradise; he had heard words which it was not possible for him to utter, therefore there was a place where glorious words were to be heard, and glorious words to be said; and he was quite sure, not merely as a matter of belief, but as a matter of observation, that there was a place into which disembodied spirits go, where they are with Jesus, their Lord, which is far better. It is clear that it would not be far better for a saint to die and sleep till the resurrection than it would be to work on here. It would be evidently by far a better thing for saints to continue in life till Christ came, than to lie dormant in oblivion; yet he says it is far better for them to depart, and the ground of his judgment lies in the fact that there is a place of real happiness, of intense joy, where it is far better for the disembodied spirit to be than for it to remain here in the body. About this Paul expressed no sort of doubt. There was such a state; it was a state of great joy, so that even to him who was one of the greatest apostles, the most useful of the saints, and the most honoured with his Master's blessing — even to him to depart and to be with Christ, would be far better.

I want you also to notice that he does not express any sort of doubt about his own entrance into a state of felicity as soon as he should depart. He does not say, as I am afraid some here would have done, "It would be far better, certainly, for me to die if I were sure I should then be with Christ." Oh, no; he had risen above such hesitation. Dear brethren, it is a wretched state to be in to be saying, "It would be sweet for me to depart if, indeed, these glories were for me." He had got beyond all doubt as to whether eternal bliss would be his; he was sure of that, and why are we not sure, too? Why do we hesitate where he spoke so confidently? Had Paul something to ground his confidence upon which we have not? Do you suppose that Paul reckoned he should be saved because of his abundant labours, his earnest ministry, and his great successes? Far from it; know ye not what he himself said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? As for anything that he had ever done, he declared that he trusted to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. Now, where Paul built we build, if we build aright; our hope is founded upon the righteousness of Christ, upon the grace of God, upon the promise of our heavenly Father. Well, I dare to say it, he, the chief of the apostles, had not a solitary grain of advantage over any one of us as to the basis and essence of his hope. Mercy, grace, atoning blood, the precious promise; these alone he built on, for other foundation can no man lay. If Paul was sure of eternal bliss, I would be sure of it too; nay, I am; are you, beloved? Are you equally as sure of being with Christ as Paul was? You should be, for you have the same reason for certainty as the apostle had, if indeed you are believing in the Lord Jesus. God is not a God of perhappes, and ifs, and buts,

but he is a God of shalls and wills, of faithful truth and everlasting verities. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of"—what? Paul, the apostle? No, but "of God's elect"? Of all of them, of any one of them whom you shall please to select, however humble, however obscure; they are all safe in Jesus. He is made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, and we may, each one of us, cry, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day." So much, then, concerning the apostle's certainty as to the disembodied state, its happiness, and his own possession of it before long.

II.

It is very interesting to notice THE APOSTLE'S IDEA OF THAT STATE. He says, "To be with Christ." It is a one-sided idea, and it is almost a one-worded description of it. "To be with Christ." I have no doubt Paul had as enlarged ideas as to what the state of disembodied spirits would be as the most intelligent and best read Christian that ever lived. I have no doubt he would have said, "Yes, there is fellowship among the saints: we shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: it will be certainly as true in heaven as it is on earth that we have fellowship one with another." I have no doubt, he believed that heaven was a place of a far clearer knowledge than any we possess below; he said so once — "Here I know in part, but there shall I know even as I am known." Some Christians have entertained the idea that they shall gaze upon the various works of God in distant parts of his universe, and enjoy infinite happiness in beholding the manifold wisdom of God — very possible, and if it will conduce to their happiness — very probable. Perhaps Paul believed all that, but we do not know whether he did or not. Here it is plain that he gives us only one idea. He was a man of great mind and much information, but here he gives us only one idea — for my part, one that perfectly satisfies me, and I think one which charms and fills to overflowing the heart of every believer. He describes the disembodied state as "to be with Christ". A very exclusive idea! No, a very inclusive idea — for it takes in all the heaven which the largest mind can conceive. It does seem to omit a great many things, but, I dare say Paul felt that they were such trifles that it did not matter about forgetting them.

Being with Christ is so great a thing that he mentioned it alone. I think he did this first, because his love was so concentrated upon Christ that he could think of nothing else, in connection with going away to heaven. There is a wife here, perhaps and her husband has accepted an appointment in India. He has been long away, and the years of his forced absence have been weary to her. She has had loving messages from him and kind letters, but often has she sighed, and her heart has looked out of the windows towards the east, yearning for his return; but now she has received a letter entreating her to go out to her husband, and without hesitation she has resolved to go. Now, if you ask her what she is going to India for, the reply will be, "I am going to my husband." But she has a brother there. Yes, she will see him, but she does not tell you that; her great thought is that she is going to her husband. She has many old friends and

companions there, but she is not drawn to the far-off land by desire for their company; she crosses the sea for the sake of her beloved. But her husband has a handsome estate there, and he is wealthy, and has a well-furnished house and many servants. Yes, but she never says, "I am going out to see my husband's home," or anything of that kind. She is going to her husband. That is the all-absorbing object. There may be other inducements to make the voyage but to be with her beloved is the master object of her journey. She is going to the man she loves with all her soul, and she is longing for the country, whatever that country may be, because he is there. It is so with the Christian, only enhanced in a tenfold degree. He does not say, "I am going to the songs of angels; and to the everlasting *chorales* of the sanctified," but, "I am going to be with Jesus." It would argue unchastity to Christ if that were not the first and highest thought. To come back to the figure — and it is one which Christ himself would approve of, for he continually uses the metaphor of marriage in relation to himself and the soul — if that woman did regard as the first thing in that journey out to the East, the sight of some other person, or the mere enjoyment of wealth and possessions, it would argue that she had little love to her husband, that she was not such a wife as she ought to be. And if it could be so that the Christian should have some higher thought than being with Christ, or some other desire worth mentioning in the same day with it, it would look as if he had not presented himself as a chaste virgin to Christ, to be his and his alone. I see, therefore, why Paul calls the disembodied state a being with Christ, because his love was all with his Lord.

And, no doubt, there was this further reason amongst others — he was persuaded that heaven could not be heaven if Christ was not there. Oh, to think of heaven without Christ! It is the same thing as thinking of hell. Heaven without Christ! It is day without the sun; existing without life, feasting without food, seeing without light. It involves a contradiction in terms. Heaven without Christ! Absurd. It is the sea without water, the earth without its fields, the heavens without their stars. There cannot be heaven without Christ. He is the sum total of bliss; the fountain from which heaven flows, the element of which heaven is composed. Christ is heaven and heaven is Christ. You shall change the words and make no difference in the sense. To be where Jesus is is the highest imaginable bliss, and bliss away from Jesus is inconceivable to the child of God. If you were invited to a marriage feast, and you were yourself to be the bride, and yet the bridegroom were not there — do not tell me about feasting. In vain they ring the bells till the church tower rocks and reels, in vain the dishes smoke and the red wine sparkles, in vain the guests shout and make merry: if the bride looks around her and sees no bridegroom, the dainties mock her sorrow and the merriment insults her misery. Such would a Christless heaven be to the saints. If you could gather together all conceivable joys, and Christ were absent, there would be no heaven to his beloved ones. Hence it is that heaven is to be where Christ is.

To dwell with Christ, to feel his love,
Is the full heaven enjoyed above;
And the sweet expectation now,
Is the young dawn of heaven below.

And, beloved; just to be with Christ is heaven — that bare thing. Excuse my using such words; I only want

to make the sense the stronger. That bare thing, just to be with Christ is all the heaven a believer wants. The angels may be there or not, as they will, and the golden crowns and harps present or absent as may be, but if I am to be where Jesus is, I will find angels in his eyes, and crowns in every lock of his hair; to me the golden streets shall be my fellowship with him, and the harpings of the harpers shall be the sound of his voice. Only to be near him, to be with him — this is all we want. The apostle does not say, "to be in heaven, which is far better;" no, but, "to be with Christ; which is far better," and he adds no description; he leaves the thoughts just as they are, in all their majestic simplicity. "To be with Christ; which is far better."

But what is it to be with Christ, beloved? In some sense we are with Christ now, for he comes to us. We are no strangers to him. Even while we are in this body we have communion with Jesus; and yet it must be true that a higher fellowship is to come, for the apostle says, that while we are present in the body we are absent from the Lord. There is a sense in which, so long as we are here, we are absent from the Lord; and one great saint used to say upon his birthday that he had been so many years in banishment from the Lord: to abide in this lowland country, so far from the ivory palaces, is a banishment at the very best. All that we can see of Christ here is through a glass darkly; face to face is true nearness to him, and that we have not reached as yet.

What will it be, then, to be with Christ? Excuse me if I say it will be, first of all, exactly what it says, namely, to be with him. I must repeat that word — it is heaven only to be with him. It is not merely what comes out of being with him his company itself is heaven. Why, even to have seen Jesus in his flesh was a privilege:

"I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he took little children like lambs to his fold,
I should like to have been with him then.

I wish that his hands had been placed on my head,
That his arms had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen his kind look when
he said,

'Let the little ones come unto me.'

I think I should have found a little heaven in gazing on that blessed form. But our text speaks of a different sort of being with him, for there were people near him here, in body who were a long way off from him in spirit. The text speaks of being with him in the spirit when the soul shall have shaken itself loose of the flesh and blood, and left all its slough behind it, and gone right away, to bask in the glory of Jesus; to participate in the nature of Jesus; and, best of all, to abide near to his person, with the God-man Mediator, who is Lord of all.

Still, there will flow out of that nearness the following things among many others. We shall enjoy, first of all, a clearer vision of him. Oh, we have not seen him yet! Our views of him are too dim to be worth calling sights. The eyes of faith have looked through a telescope and seen him at a distance, and it has been a ravishing vision; but when the eyes of the soul shall really see him — him, and not another, him for ourselves, and not another for us, oh, the sight! Is not the thought of it a burning coal of joy? The sight of his very flesh will charm us; his wounds still fresh, the dear memorials of his pas-

sion still apparent. The perception of his soul will also delight us, for our soul will commune with his soul, and this is the soul of communion. The sight of his Godhead, so far as created spirit can see it, will also ravish us with joy.

And then we shall have a brighter knowledge of him. Here we know in part — we know the names of his offices, we know what he has wrought, we know what he is working for us; but there those offices will shine in their splendour, and we shall see all that he did for us in its real weight and value; we shall comprehend then the height and depth, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, as we do not know it at this hour.

And with that will come a more intimate intercourse. Our soul will lean her head on Jesus' bosom, our heart will get into his heart and hide herself in his wounds. What must it be to speak to him as our soul will speak to him, as our spirit nature will commune with his inmost nature, his spirit speaking to our spirits, without a veil between! We shall not see him looking down from the windows, but we shall rest in his arms, in a far more intimate intercourse than any we can enjoy this side the grave. To-day I see him through the grating of my prison-windows, and my heart is ready to leap out of my body; what will it be when his left hand shall be under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me?

And then, beloved, when we shall be with him it will be unbroken fellowship. There will be no sin to blind our eyes to his charms, or to entice us away from his love. Blessed be God; there will be no Monday mornings to recall us to the world, but our sacred Sabbath will last on for ever. Doubts, backslidings, and spiritual chills will then be gone for ever. No more shall we cry, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" but we shall hold him, and never let him go. There will be no need even for the spirit to fall asleep, and so suspend its joy; it will find its true rest in constant communion with Jesus. It is possible to live in fellowship with Jesus here always; possible, but, oh, how few ever reach it! but there we shall all have reached it, the very lowest amongst us, and we shall be with the Lord for ever.

And then we shall have a sight of his glory and though I put this after a sight of himself, yet, remember, our Lord thinks much of it. He prayed, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory." We have seen something of his shame, and have been partakers in the reproach that is poured upon his gospel; but we shall see him then with silver sandals on the feet that once were mired by the clay of earth, and a crown of gold upon the once thorn-pierced brow. We shall see him when his hands shall gleam as with gold rings set with beryl, and look no more like a malefactor's hand nailed to the cruel wood. Then shall we say —

His body's like bright ivory
With sapphires overlaid,
His limbs like marble pillars
In golden sockets stayed.

Then looking on his face we shall understand Solomon's Song, when he said, "His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his voice is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely." One would wish to leap right away out of this body to behold him in his glory.

And then, beloved, we shall share in the glory too,

for his joy will be our joy, his honour will be our honour. Our spirits which wrestled hard here below, and had to strive against a thousand outward enemies, and inward doubts and fears, will then be all light, and joyous, and glad, full of the life of God, and beaming with ecstatic bliss. The Lord grant us to know this in due season, and so we shall if, indeed, we are believers in Jesus. So you see Paul's one idea was that he should be with Jesus; that was all; he cared little for anything else.

III.

Very briefly, let us consider THE APOSTLE'S ESTIMATE OF THIS DISEMBODED STATE. He says, "To be with Christ; which is far better." Now, the Greek has a triple comparative. We would not say "far more better" in our language, but that would be a fair translation. We will therefore read, "It is far rather preferable," or it is much better to be with Christ away from the body, than it would be to abide here. Now, you must recollect that Paul does not claim for the disembodied state that it is the highest condition of a believer, or the ultimate crown of his hopes. It is a state of perfection so far as it goes; the spirit is perfect but the entire manhood is not perfect while the body is left to moulder in the tomb. One half of the saint is left behind in the grave; corruption, earth, and worse have seized upon it, and the grand concluding day of our manifestation can only come when the redemption of the body is fully achieved. The fulness of our glory is the resurrection, for then the body will be united to our spirit, and perfected with it. At present the saints who are with Jesus are without their bodies, and are pure spirits; their humanity is in that respect maimed; only half their manhood is with Jesus; yet even for that half of the manhood to be with Christ is far better than for the whole of their being to be here in the best possible condition. Now, the apostle does not say, that to be with Christ is far better than to be here, and to be rich, young, healthy, strong, famous, great, or learned: Paul never thinks of putting those petty things into contrast with being with Christ. He had got above all that. There was he sitting chained in the dungeon, the poorest man in the emperor's dominions, and often, I have no doubt—for he was getting on to be "such an one as Paul the aged," and wrote particularly about an old cloak he had left at Troas — often he felt rheumatic pains shooting through him; and he did not find this life to have many attractions of wealth or ease, though he might have had them if he had chosen them as his portion. He had given them all up, and counted them as insignificant trifles, not to be mentioned at all, for Jesus' sake. He is not speaking of the low joys of this world; he is far above such considerations; but he does mean that to be with Christ is infinitely superior to all the joys of Christians. Anything that the most of Christians know about Christ and heavenly joys and heavenly things is very poor compared with being with Christ. But he meant more than that; he meant that the highest joys which the best taught believer can here possess are inferior to being with Christ. For, let me say, Paul was no obscure believer; he was a leader among the followers of Christ. Could he not say, "Thanks be unto God, who always maketh us to triumph in every place"? He knew the graces of the Holy Spirit, he had them abundantly; he was head and shoulders above the tallest Christian here; he had the highest experience of any man out of heaven, and it was that which he contrasted with being with Christ, and he said that the most that we could get here of

heavenly things was not to be compared with being with Christ. That was far, far, far better. And truly, brethren, so it is. Thanks be to God for all the mercies of the pilgrimage, for all the dropping manna and the following stream; but oh, the wilderness with all its manna, is nothing compared with the land that floweth with milk and honey. Let the road be paved with mercy, it is not so sweet as the Father's house of the many mansions to which it leads. It is true that in the battle our head is covered, the wings of angels oft protect us, and the Spirit of God himself nerves our arm to use the sword; but who shall say that the victory is not better than the battle? The warrior who has won the most of victory will tell you that the gladdest day will be when the sword rattles back into the scabbard, and the victory is won for ever. Oh, the wooing of Christ and the soul, this is very sweet; the rapturous joys we have had in the love-making between Christ and us, we would not exchange with emperors and kings, even if they offered us their crowns; but the marriage day will be better far, the glorious consummation of our soul's highest desire, when we shall be with our Wellbeloved where he is. Far better, said the apostle, and he meant it; far better it is.

He did not say — and I want you to notice this again — though he might have said it, "We shall be better in condition; no poverty there, no sickness there;" he did not say, "We shall be better in character;" he might have said it: there will be no sin, no depravity, no infirmity, no temptation there. He did not say, "We shall be better in employment;" though surely it will be better to wait on the Master, close at his hand, than to be here amongst sinners and often amongst cold-hearted saints. He did not say, "We shall have better society there," though, truth to tell, it will be better to be with the perfect than with the imperfect. Neither did he say we should see fairer sights there, though we shall see the city that hath foundations of jasper, whose light is the light of the Lamb's own presence. But he did say, "To be with Christ." He summed it up there. The bare being with Christ would be far better. And so it will be. Our spirit longs for it.

Yet mark you, for all that, he said he felt a pull the other way. He had a twitch towards stopping on earth, as well as a pull towards going to heaven, for he said, "To abide in the flesh is more needful for you." How I love Paul for thinking of the churches here when he had got heaven before him. Anthony Farindon says it is like a poor beggar woman outside the door, and she carries a squalling child, and some one says, "You may come in and feast, but you must leave the babe outside;" and she is very hungry, and she wants the feast; but she does not like to leave the babe, and so she is in a strait betwixt two. Or, he says again, it is like a wife who has children at home, five or six little ones, and her husband is on a journey, and suddenly there comes a letter which says that he wants her, and she must go to him, but she may do as she thinks best. She desires to go to her husband, but who will take care of the last little babe, and who is to see to all the rest? and so she is in a strait betwixt two. She loves him and she loves them. So stood the apostle, and oh! it is blessed to think of a man having such a love for Christ that for Christ's sake he loves poor souls well enough to be willing to stop out of heaven awhile. "Oh," says he, "it is all gain for me to go to heaven; for me to die is far better; yet there are some poor sinners who need to be called, some poor trembling

saints to be comforted, and I do not know which is the best;" and the apostle stands puzzled; he does not know which it shall be. There we leave him. May we get into the same blessed embarrassment ourselves.

The last word shall be this. Concerning our beloved friends gone from us, we do not sorrow as those who are without hope; what is more, we do not sorrow at all. If we chance to sorrow, it is for ourselves, that we have lost their present company, but as for them it is far better with them; and if the lifting of our little finger could bring them back again, dear as they are to us, we would not be so cruel as to subject them again to the troubles of this stormy sea of life. They are safe landed. We will go to them, we would not have them return to us.

Then, with regard to ourselves, if we have believed in Jesus we are on our journey home, and all fear of death is now annihilated. You notice the apostle does not say anything at all about death, he did not think it worth mentioning; in fact, there is no such thing to a Christian. I have heard of people being afraid of the pains of death. There are no pains of death: the pain is in life. Death is the end of pain. It is all over. Put the saddle on the right horse. Do not blame death for what he does not do. It is life that brings pain: death to the believer ends all evil. Death is the gate of endless joy, and shall we dread to enter there? No, blessed be God, we will not.

And this points us to the fountain of bliss while we are here, for if heaven is to be with Christ, then the nearer we get to Christ here, the more we shall participate in that which makes the joy of heaven. If we want to taste heaven's blessed dainties while here below, let us walk in unbroken fellowship with him — so we shall get two heavens, a little heaven below, and a boundless heaven above, when our turn shall come to go home. Oh, I wish you were all on the way to being with Christ. If you do not go to be with Christ, where can you go? Answer that question, and go to Jesus now by humble faith, that afterwards he may say, "Come; ye did come on earth, now come again, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world."

HIS BLOOD MAKES ALL MEN BROTHERS

The blood of Jesus Christ makes all nations akin. Then look not for your relations in your own house or in your own sphere. Christ's blood is stronger for relationship than blood of father or mother. Look above you. All there are yours. Go down to the bottom of society. All below you are judgment-day brothers; God's eternity is on them and you alike.—BEECHER.

THE ONLY GOSPEL — THAT OF HIS BLOOD

Be assured that any religion which makes light of the blood is of its father, the devil. No matter how eloquent a man is, if he preaches against the blood he is doing the devil's work. Do not listen to him. Do not believe him. If an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel, I would not believe it. "Christ's blood shed for the pardon of our sins," — that is the gospel that Paul preached, and Peter preached, and that God has always honored in the salvation of men's souls.

—MOODY

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"Prepare Thy Work Without"

Dr. T. T. Shields

VOLUMES of wise counsel are often condensed into a single sentence in the Proverbs of Solomon.

A statesman, or a military commander, is never wise to disregard the information supplied by Secret Service agents. In the Book of Proverbs the wise man often takes a reconnaissance flight over the enemy's territory, and then gives us information to his subtle devices, and of his plans for our undoing; or he performs an autopsy on the career of one who has utterly failed, and points out the reasons for his failure. Sometimes he gives us a clear photograph of the road to success, and of the sign-posts pointing in that direction.

When the king of Syria said to his servants, "Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O King: but Elisha, the prophet, that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." Just such a service as Elisha rendered the king of Israel, who by taking Elisha's advice "saved himself there, not once nor twice", the Proverbs of Solomon would render to any one of us who would give heed to their wisdom.

The proverb we have quoted at the head of this article gives wise counsel for us all:

The farmer must recognize that he gets his living from the field. He is therefore admonished to give his first attention to that which is indispensable to his sustenance. He is to prepare his work "without and make it for for (himself) in the field". When thus he has thoroughly cultivated his farm, and made it profitably productive, he may then build his house.

What lessons are wrapped up in these simple words! They counsel the man of affairs to *put the interests of his business before the comforts of his home*—not merely "business as usual", but business first. He needs machinery for the farm, or for the factory. He may require enlargement to take care of a growing business. When his business becomes like a growing child, constantly needing new shoes, new clothes, and more food, he must "plough" his profits back into his business. He will provide himself with a more comfortable house by and by. Undiscerning neighbours will, perhaps, wonder that a man with such a prosperous business should restrict himself to the plainest of living, and the narrowest of quarters. What he is really doing is carrying out the principle of the proverb, preparing his "work without", making it fit for himself in the "field" and he leaves the building of his house till "afterwards".

The principle may be applied in many directions. For example, it means that *the wise and conscientious person will always put duty before pleasure*. Every normal person is subject to certain moral obligations; as, for example, to be regular and faithful in his daily occupation, whatever it may be — it is his duty to be there, and to do his best. It may be, however, that pleasure will call in another direction. It may be perfectly innocent and harmless pleasure. It may be *good or better*. But this wise man will say, "Duty is best; and where duty calls, or danger, I must never be wanting there." Such an one becomes strictly conscientious in the discharge of his duty. He is not averse to pleasure. He knows it is legitimate that he should have some relaxation, and find mental and physical rest in some form of recreation; but he will insist that that must wait until duty is fully done.

The principle applies to people in all walks of life. A woman is a *housewife*. She is the mother of several children; but she is endowed with an attractive personality. People of all sorts find her socially desirable, and if they are going to have a social gathering of any kind, whether an afternoon tea, or an evening party, they immediately think of Mrs. Agreeable as the first of their guests.

In due course their invitation reaches her. If she is a faithful housewife, and a real mother, notwithstanding the lure of the invitation, she subordinates all such considerations to her primary duty to her house, and to her children. Consistent with faithfulness, and thoroughness, and dutifulness at home, she will be glad to go. But where the interests of the children are concerned, and even her obligation, perhaps, to her husband, if such social demands conflict with what she will regard as her primary duty, she will politely say, "No."

The children of such a woman will never be burned to death in their beds, while their mother is at the movies. Nor will they be wandering the streets, like neglected waifs, while she is attending a missionary meeting, called to provide something for people in Africa.

The principle applies to *ministers of the gospel, very especially*. We knew a man who, in many ways, was a very good man. He was a country pastor. He had several children. He kept a cow, and several pigs, and a lot of chickens. As the requirements of the children made considerable demands upon his wife, he did the family washing, and a good many other things. By the time he had looked after the cow, and the pigs, and the chickens, and had done the family washing, and some other things, he had no time left to visit his parishioners, and very little time to prepare for his Sunday duties.

Now his "field" was the work of the pastorate. The work "without" was the work of shepherding his people, and being prepared to feed them on the Lord's day. But because he looked after his "house" first, the "field" was soon grown over with weeds. The fences were down, and the barns in ruins, metaphorically; and it became necessary, therefore, for the people to find another occupant for the "house". Ministers need to study how much time and thought and energy they can rightly devote to their personal affairs.

The principle may even apply to a *minister's physical condition*. Many a man, not feeling quite up to the mark, drags himself off to his work in the morning because he must. He cannot afford to nurse a sore toe, or give up when he has a headache. Neither can the minister. He has a duty to discharge toward his people, and toward all the interests of the church which sustains him; and he must often preach when he does not feel like it, and attend to other "work without" when he would, perhaps, much rather be at home in an easy chair with a book.

The proverb means that whoever is wise will rate the *value of personal discipline above that of easy relaxation*. Everybody needs a "house". It is not sinful to furnish it with a bed to sleep in, or an easy chair to rest in, or a dining room in which to eat; but the discipline which comes from the practice of subordinating all these matters to the primary duties of life, whatever they may be, is the discipline that produces character, stability, a symmetrically-balanced life; and in the end, a man so disciplined will build a far better house than one who drifts into a condition of *laissez faire*, which leaves the "work without", and the cultivation of the field to look after itself.

For Younger Readers

HERO OF THE FLOOD

(Founded on Fact)

By Amelia O. Stott

McTamba lived in a small village built of mud huts, on the banks of an African lake which looked like an inland sea. The surrounding country was low lying, and when the tropical rains came the lake often overflowed its banks and swept everything away. Still the people clung to their flimsy huts though their losses were so great.

On a certain day each year the people all turned out to watch a canoe race in which the boys of the village took part, and the best and most skillful paddler was rewarded, and a feast given in his honor.

McTamba was very good at paddling his canoe, and he could swim like a fish. Unfortunately, on a certain race day, he met with a terrible accident. A crocodile, cleverly hidden in the tall reeds near the lakeside, attacked and sank his canoe, and if the men on the bank had not succeeded in making the crocodile drop its prey, poor McTamba would have perished. As it was, he was badly mauled and his legs almost bitten off.

"Call the witch doctor," cried the men on the bank, and McTamba's father was quite distracted by all the shouting and excitement.

"Take him at once to the white man's healing place at Behini," said another, and having heard wonderful stories of marvelous cures there, the father decided this was the best thing to do. McTamba was his only son, and he apparently was very seriously injured so it seemed the only hope of his life.

What a terrible journey of suffering it was to the distant hospital! McTamba was a very brave boy, and he tried to stifle his cries and groans as they carried him in a rough hammock through the dense jungle country. The hospital was reached at last after ten days of traveling which caused the poor boy untold agony. Parched with fever, his wounds poisoned with the filthy stuff people had applied in their ignorance, the boy was in a very bad condition. The mission doctor was one who was seldom unsuccessful, for his faith in God and his skill were great, but now he felt that it would be no easy task to save McTamba's life.

Anxious weeks followed before the boy began to improve and take interest in the things around him. He heard a lot in the hospital which astonished him, for it seemed too wonderful to be true. How could the great God these white people worshipped love a poor little African boy so as to die for his sins? Indeed it was almost impossible to believe except that McTamba was surprised at the loving-kindness everyone received, as if they belonged to some great African chief's family.

"I mean to worship the white man's God when I come home," McTamba said to his father.

"But, my son, I have heard that the followers of this Lord Jesus must never fight with their enemies, and they give up many of our customs. Our people will not permit us to do that without persecuting us and burning down our hut."

McTamba knew this to be a fact; and he had always hoped to be a brave fighter and make others admire his spirit. And his father was honored as an exceptionally fearless warrior.

When at last McTamba was able to go home he resolved by God's help to be a good soldier of the Lord Jesus, although he knew the cost would not be light.

Very soon the village people were treating him and his family as if they were lepers, despising and shunning them as outcasts. The other boys were forbidden to speak to McTamba, and as time went on things went from bad to worse. The boy's resolve, however, did not weaken, and his father was so grateful to the white man for healing his only son and saving his life that he did not oppose McTamba, but allowed him to follow his new faith.

Of course it was very difficult to endure the persecution of the villagers, but there was no other place for them to go, as his father would not leave his ancestral property, even though it consisted only of a mud hut and a garden plot.

About a year after McTamba's return home an abnormal rainy season caused the lake to overflow its banks in a flood of unusual depth. A village across the waters was "drowned" and the people sent out a cry for help on their African drums. The squalls of wind were so tremendous that the lake was lashed into huge waves and no canoe or boat could be launched.

Suddenly McTamba said to his father, "I will try to go across with food. The Lord Jesus will protect me, and if it be not His will, then I am not afraid to perish." In vain his father tried to dissuade him. McTamba was determined, and the villagers looked on, certain he was going to his death. "O Lord Jesus, help me now," he cried. "Perhaps our people will believe in Thy power if Thou dost enable me to get through."

It seemed impossible that the canoe could stay afloat, and it was soon lost to view. The hours passed slowly. When McTamba had been gone long enough for the people to expect his return they scanned the distance for a sight of him. Suddenly his father gave a great shout of joy. There was a whole fleet of canoes coming toward them. The people had been saved by McTamba's courage. He had taken them food, and the women and children had been willing to be paddled away to safety.

"Tell us why you risked your life to help us," they asked. Now the people in McTamba's own village, admiring his great courage, were suddenly his friends again.

"It was all through the power of the Lord Jesus," the boy said. "If you will hear His word and believe in Him, you will be braver than ever before because He can hear you and strengthen your spirit."

And so the villages by that African lakeside became willing to hear and to receive the Christian Gospel.

—Sunday School Times

SEMINARY OPENING, SEPTEMBER 24

On Monday, September 24th, the new Term of Toronto Baptist Seminary commences, with Faculty and Students gathering together for a day of dedication and Christian fellowship. Registration commences at 2.30 p.m. We expect a fine enrollment of new students and returning students. It is not too late for others to make application. If you feel called to the Baptist ministry or missionary service, please communicate at once with The Registrar, Toronto Baptist Seminary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

—O.L.C.

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 20 Third Quarter Lesson 13 September 23, 1956

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

AN APOSTATE ATTEMPT TO DESTROY GOD'S WORD

Lesson Text: Jeremiah 36:1-4, 20-26.

Golden Text: "The word of the Lord endureth for ever."

—1 Peter 1:25.

I. The Word of God and the Inspired Prophet: verses 1-4.

Most of the prophecies which Jeremiah uttered are contained in chapters 1-34, and the historical fulfilment of many of them may be found in chapters 37-43. As a preface to this historical section Jeremiah records the incident of the roll, which emphasizes the infallibility of the word of God.

Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, the last kings of Judah (Jer. 1:1). Of these kings, Josiah alone did that which was right in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 22:1, 2; 23:25). He was the only one of these kings who honoured the prophets of the Lord and who had respect for the law of the Lord (2 Kings 22:8-20). Consequently, the task of Jeremiah was exceedingly difficult while the other kings reigned, since he was compelled to sound solemn warnings to sinful people who were encouraged in their sins by the monarch in power. The incident before us is illustrative of the general attitude of antagonism toward the word of God in Jeremiah's day, and alas, in our own day as well.

The prophet was commanded to record the word of the Lord as given unto him up to that time. Some of the prophecies had already been committed to writing (Jer. 30:2), but these and others were now to be written together on a roll for public proclamation. Books in Old Testament times were in the form of scrolls, made by fastening together pieces of parchment, the name given to the prepared skins of animals (Ezra 6:2; Ezek. 2:9; Zech. 5:1). The scroll would be read by gradually unrolling it by means of two rollers, one of which was at the beginning and the other at the end of the roll. Teachers of junior classes could easily make a scroll of paper, using two rounded sticks and fastening the paper to the sticks, one at each end. A portion of Scripture could be copied on the paper to demonstrate the method of reading. In Jewish synagogues the Old Testament Law is still read from scrolls, beautifully decorated.

The purpose of this collection of prophecies was three-fold:

(1) That all the people might hear once and for all the Lord's appraisal of their sin, and His answer in impending judgment (Jer. 26:2-6; 27:1-11; 32:26-35). (2) That they might repent. The recital of their sin should produce true repentance (verse 7; Jer. 31:3, 18, 19; 33:3). (3) That through their repentance the Lord might have opportunity righteously to forgive their sin (Jer. 31:31-34).

These prophecies of Jeremiah, as indeed all the books of Scripture, were written by divine inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16). The Holy Spirit inspired the prophet to remember perfectly and to record accurately all the words of the Lord (verses 6, 11, 18; John 14:26; 16:13; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Baruch, the devoted scribe (Jer. 32:12-16; 43:3, 6; 45:1, 2), acted as secretary and amanuensis, writing what was dictated to him (verse 18; Rom. 16:22; 1 Pet. 5:12).

II. The Word of God and the Incensed King: verses 20-26.

Owing to the fact that Jeremiah was in prison (Jer. 32:2; 35:1), and hence not at liberty to read the scroll to the people of Judah assembled for the feast, Baruch was commissioned to perform this task (verses 6-10). The reading had an immediate effect in that it stirred Micaiah, one of the princes, and through his testimony the rest of the princes insisted that Baruch read the scroll in their hearing. Their interest seemed to be genuine, and found expression in their question regarding the actual writing of the roll, and their concern for the safety of the author and of his secretary (verses 11-19).

But the nobles were intent upon the political aspects of the prophecy, rather than upon its spiritual content. Although they showed some fear of God, to their minds the threat of

invasion by the Babylonians, as predicted by the prophet, must be reported to the king, whereas it should have been taken to the Lord in prayer (2 Kings 19:14-19).

These princes had probably on previous occasions observed King Jehoiakim's proud attitude toward the prophet of the Lord and his message. Accordingly, before reporting the matter to their sovereign, they had hidden the scroll in one of the smaller rooms of the palace. The king, however, demanded that it be brought and read aloud to him in its entirety. He utterly rejected the message. We must take heed how we hear the word of God (Mark 4:24; Luke 8:18), for once it has been committed to us, we must bear the responsibility of its contents.

Picture the scene in the royal winter audience chamber. Before Jehoiakim the fire was burning in the hearth, which would be in the form of a vessel of brass containing burning charcoal. Jehudi, the king's servant, would read three or four pages, unrolling the next section with one hand. Ordinarily, the reader would roll the finished portion with his other hand, but the rebellious, stubborn and impious king cut it off with his penknife and threw it into the blazing fire. Then several more sections would be read and then they, too, would be severed and burned. Thus the whole scroll was destroyed, piece by piece. The contemptuous words of the king (verse 29) matched his contemptuous deed. Most of the king's attendants looked on in silence, but three of the princes, influenced probably by Micaiah (verse 12, 25), interceded. Although their protest seemed to be ineffectual, they had cleared their own consciences. We may not be able to keep back the flood of iniquity, but we must do all in our power to keep the tide from coming into our own lives and the lives of those for whom we are responsible.

The king performed this impious deed without fear and without shame. He was stirred to unrighteous anger and thought to get rid of the 'unwelcome' message by destroying the instrument (Luke 4:28, 29; Acts 7:54-59). This is ever the practice of unbelieving scoffers.

As King Jehoiakim cut in pieces the sacred record, so do the modernists of our day attempt to rob men of the word of God, saying that the Bible is not the word of God, but that it contains the word of God, and they themselves are the judges as to what portions are inspired and profitable. We must withdraw from all such leaders who dishonour the Son of God (1 John 4:1; 2 John 9-11).

Nor was Jehoiakim the last to burn copies of the word of God. This has been done on many occasions in history. In April, 1942, THE GOSPEL WITNESS published a report of a communiqué from the late Cardinal Villeneuve of Quebec containing these words: "They will recall that this sort of literature (the New Testament) can neither be read, kept, nor given to others in good conscience, and that the best thing to do if we are insulted by having these writings sent to us is to throw them in the fire."

Such treatment of the word of God will not prevent its fulfilment, for it is living and eternal (Psa. 119:89; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; John 12:48; 1 Pet. 1:25).

The king not merely despised the word of God, but he also desired to dishonour the prophet who had been the human instrument for conveying that word (2 Chron. 36:16; John 13:20). The Lord providentially hid Jeremiah and Baruch from the wrathful king.

The impending judgment was not stopped by the unbelieving monarch's foolish action, but rather intensified, so far as he and his family were concerned. None of his seed would succeed him on the throne (verse 30). He had successors, but not of his posterity except his son Jeconiah or Coniah, whose brief reign of three months is counted as nothing (2 Chron. 36:9; Jer. 22:30). The prophecy of death with dishonour for Jeconiah was fulfilled when he was carried off by Nebuchadnezzar toward Babylon and died on the road (2 Chron. 36:6; Jer. 22:18, 19).

Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 17—Jeremiah Rescued from His Enemies .. Jer. 38:7-13
 Sept. 18—Baruch Comforted for His Faithfulness .. Jer. 45
 Sept. 19—How Love I Thy Law! Psa. 119:97-112
 Sept. 20—Josiah Loved the Law of God 2 Kings 22:8-20
 Sept. 21—Search the Scriptures John 5:36-47
 Sept. 22—The Christian and the Modernist 2 John
 Sept. 23—The Word of God and the Modernist 2 Tim. 3

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