

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 35, No. 23

130-Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 20th, 1956

Whole Number 1791

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"Underneath Are the Everlasting Arms"

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, June 14th, 1936

(Stenographically Reported)

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them."—Deut. 33:27.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We draw near to Thee, O Lord, this morning with grateful hearts. We thank Thee for what Thou art; for all Thou hast shown Thyself to be, for what we ourselves have already experienced of Thy grace. We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thy grace meets us at the point of our utmost need. We thank Thee that Thou dost help us even to pray, for the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

We come this morning desiring really to worship Thee, to bring to Thee the adoration of our hearts. We are here as those who are helpless, apart from Thee. We thank Thee for the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world. We thank Thee for His Word, which tells us that having seen Him we have seen the Father. We delight to think of Thee, O Lord our God, as Thou hast unveiled Thy glory to our view in the face of Jesus Christ.

Look upon us this morning. Help us, by Thy gracious Spirit, that we may really come into Thy presence, that we may lay our requests before Thee. May our praises be acceptable to Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Thou knowest how weak we are, how prone to wander, and how deeply those of us who are Thy children feel that proneness to wander from Thee. We thank Thee that we have an High Priest, Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, we have One Who knows how to have compassion upon those who are out of the way.

It may be there are some here this morning who, because of the difficulties of life, the burdens they bear, the conflicts they wage, the labour to which the hours of every day are given — all these things, perhaps, make it difficult, sometimes, to come where Thou art. We deplore our unworthiness, the littleness of our faith, the fact that when we ought to be mature men and women in Christ, so many of us are still but babes. When we ought to be going on unto perfection many still have need to be taught the first principles of the gospel of grace. Oh, we beseech Thee to make us better scholars in the school of Christ! Help us to make more rapid

advancement in the things of God. Make us grow up, we pray, Thee, into Christ in all things.

Look, we beseech Thee, upon this company of boys and girls, and of little children this morning. We thank Thee once again, O Lord, for the unveiling of Thy face, showing us that God is One Who loves the children. We pray that every teacher here may have a like spirit, and may learn to love these little ones for Thy sake; that they may be inspired to labour for them if perhaps they may lead them to the Saviour's feet.

Impress us continually, O Lord, with the perils with which these children are surrounded, the pitfalls which the enemy has dugged for them. Oh, may we not be unmindful of these things! that we may give ourselves with greater zeal to the work of teaching them the things of God in an endeavour to bring them into the safety of Thy salvation.

Bless us this morning. Help us that we may find our salvation in the fullest, in a complete sense, in the Person of Him Who died for us, and Who rose again.

If there are any here this morning who face some peculiar burden, some unique experience of which they imagine no one has knowledge, we pray that Thou wouldst meet such this morning, that this service may be a cause of comfort and uplift and inspiration. Bless us as we leave this place. May we find ourselves better equipped to meet the exigencies of life. Oh, make it a time of separation for some here this morning, that they may cast themselves upon Christ, and find in Him eternal life!

Hear us, we pray Thee, for all the interests of Thy church the world around, for all missionaries and ministers, workers and witnesses of every sort, that this may be a day of real spiritual progress.

We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

THERE is no one here this morning who is so strong, or whose life is so sequestered, as never to require any sort of refuge. Sometimes when people are surprised

by a heavy storm, perhaps, in the midst of a summer's day, you see them running for refuge from the rain.

I remember during the War preaching in London, and as I was wending my way to the Tabernacle where I was to preach, the siren sounded the warning that the enemy had crossed the channel, and that his airships had been sighted over England, and might be expected in London. Everyone was on the move. Nobody walked, everybody trotted along, hastening to the underground railway station, and to other places where they might find a refuge from the threatened danger. I suppose there was a time when some of us here thought less of that sort of thing than we do to-day. In early life people are scarcely conscious of their need, or not so conscious as they become when their experience of the disabilities of life has become longer and larger. But most of us have learned ere this, I dare say, that there are experiences when we are urgently in need of some refuge.

This text which I have read is part of the blessing pronounced by Moses upon one of the tribes, ere he laid down his task, and surrendered his trust of leadership to another. To Asher, among other things, he said: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

And this same promise is given to all who believe. It is a word applicable to us to-day, a word that has in no sense become obsolete. It is God's word to every one of us, that He is, Himself, our Refuge, and "underneath are the everlasting arms".

I.

WE ARE ALL IN NEED OF REFUGE from the vengeance of the law. Every one of us knows that he or she has violated it. We must acknowledge the truth that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and that for that sin we must meet the consequences. There is a scripture which speaks of a day wherein the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding places. There are people, conscious of the need of some refuge, some hiding-place from the storm, who have made for themselves a refuge of lies. In what false security a great many people rest; To what flimsy protection do they trust, very often! But everywhere there is a recognition of that fact that we need a hiding place, a refuge from the storm, when the blast of the terrible ones is like a storm against the walls.

And we need, too, a refuge from the shame of sin, not merely from its consequences. What if a man were publicly convicted of some outrageous offence, not only against the law of the land, but against the moral law, a thief, a liar, a murderer, a debauchee, or something of the sort! And what if there be no consequence at all in the sense of punishment! What if he could be saved from it, and yet the guilt of it all remain on him! How he must walk among his fellows with bowed head, ashamed to appear anywhere, as one who, while abroad, deserves to be in confinement and under some form of punishment. After all, dear friends, is not that part of the penalty of sin? Our first parents were ashamed and they hid themselves. There is such a thing as the shame of sin, when we fear to come where God is. Why is it, I wonder, that the very name of God is so repugnant to many people? Why is it that they can speak any other name but His without reserve, without apology, and yet afraid even to mention the name of God? It is because there is a sense of responsibility to Him, a sense of having of-

The Gospel Witness

and

Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields
(Editor 1922 - 1955)

Published every Thursday for the propagation of the Evangelical principles of the Protestant Reformation and in defence of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

\$3.00 Per Year. Postpaid to any address. 10c Per Single Copy.

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fended Him, because we smart under the shame of it. Surely we need a refuge, a hiding-place.

And what disabilities flow from that fact! What a lot of cripples we are! How impotent to do the things that ought to be done! From what a sense of shortcoming do we all continually labour! That is a most significant scripture which says: "All have sinned." That is the active, positive, aggressive, aspect of sin. And we have "come short of the glory of God". We are short measure, short in our duty, short in everything. And because of that we are unable to meet the obligations of life, unable to do the day's task. When a man has done a full day's work, when his work has been well done, and he knows that it has been well done, he is not ashamed of the labour of his hands, and at the end of the day he puts down his task for the evening rest. But he does it with a sense of satisfaction, with a feeling that at last he has done a good day's work. But if he has purloined the time of his employer, if he has shirked, if he has neglected his duty, if he knows that instead of a full day's work he has done but a half day's work — the hours have passed and the task is unfinished, when it ought to have been completed — how unwilling he is to meet the master's eye! How ready to escape from his presence! Never does he come with buoyant step into the presence of the one to whom he is responsible, if there is a sense of dereliction of duty. And yet, dear friends, we labour under it all the time, do we not? Never a day in which we do not need to ask for forgiveness. Oh, what refuge we need, every one of us! And I say because of that, trouble, all all sorts of trouble, comes. We complain sometimes because it does come. We think that we are rather ill-treated sometimes; and yet everything short of hell

itself is mercy for every one of us. I do not mean to say that specific troubles are always to be traced to specific sins, but trouble of all kinds is the result of sin itself somewhere, in ourselves or in others. And how we need a refuge of strength, a "present help in time of trouble"!

I wonder do you have any trouble? or do you enjoy a singular immunity? Have you escaped the common lot of humankind? I remember one whom I used to know quite well, who was accustomed to "whistle to keep up courage", metaphorically, of course, for though she boasted that she never had any difficulties, never met any contrary winds, never had any trouble of any kind, and nobody had any right to have any trouble, that was not true, and she knew it, and she did have trouble. She was not a Christian Scientist, yet she endeavoured to practice the principle, and to say that "every day in every way I am getting better and better" — but she was not. She had plenty of trouble although she tried to ignore and to deny it.

It is well that we should put on a cheerful courage, and not spend too much of our time in groaning and moaning, but sometimes in every situation in life we have, frankly, to face the fact that "man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward". There are all kinds of difficulties, all kinds of enemies to deal with, and we need some hiding-place, some place of refuge. I do! Oh, it is fine to pose as a strong man, to try to represent yourself to others as one who never bends his shoulders, or shirks the lifting of any load, but you have to admit, if you are truthful, that sometimes the battle is a little too severe for you. You cannot stand up against the temptations; you cannot carry the load without bending your back a little.

II.

We need a refuge. Let us look at the fact very simply, and I am studiously simple this morning. THE TEXT SAYS THAT GOD HIMSELF IS OUR REFUGE. How can I state simply that God is the One we all need?

I have read reports of various denominations in their annual meetings, the United Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the various synods, and Baptist churches too, and in many instances one might suppose that refuge and deliverance were to be found in some amendment of denominational programme. They find fault with everything, nearly, and well they may, for in this world everything is faulty. But when they come to prescribe a remedy it seems to me that most of them prescribe everything but God — new methods of doing things, new programmes, some new emphasis somewhere. Scarcely do we hear a word to suggest that what people need above everything else is God Himself.

Moses did not promise Asher that as one of the tribes of Israel they would be welded into a great nation that would have a marvellously perfect judicial system, that their laws would be superior to the laws of all other people; nor did he even lay special emphasis upon the circumstances which should be theirs when they inherited the land of promise. There was something more that they all needed. He said: "You shall be distinguished from other people by this fact, that you shall have God Himself for your refuge."

I wonder how many of us do actually believe such a truth as that? not as a theory, but how many of us do actually depend in any true sense upon a personal, living, and ever-present God? What a marvellous truth this is, after all, that all the qualities of Deity are to be fashioned into a house of refuge for us!

Often do I call your attention to that principle, for it inheres in the very system of grace which is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ, that which men call the attributes of God, that which we attribute to God as belonging to His Person — to use a stronger word, the very qualities of His nature, His goodness, His mercy, His truth, His righteousness, His justice, His love, His faithfulness, His power, His grace — all of it together, like the material gathered, may I reverently say it for the sake of simplicity, the material gathered in a vacant lot. There is wood, iron, mortar, all kinds of fixtures, all the material necessary to frame a house that shall be a shelter from the storm, that will provide comfort and even luxury. And then some master hand comes, and some master mind presides, and each part is fitted into a splendid residence at last, into which one can enter and find shelter from the fiercest storm that blows.

Now the truth of the text is that these elements in the character of God — even the severer aspects of the divine character, the justice that we fear so much, the righteousness that fills us with alarm, His truth that never varies, and then that great word that comprehends everything: His dreadful holiness—every power that He possesses is ours, fashioned into a refuge so that we may hide ourselves in God Himself. It is well that we should sing as we did just now:

"Jesus lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly."

And then one quality is specifically mentioned. He is spoken of as the "eternal God". I wonder if Moses was thinking of himself just then? He was an old man. He had been the father of Israel for forty years, and, oh, how they had had to depend upon him! They had been like a nation of little children. They had cried to him, and against him. They had tried him in every possible way. And now the Lord has told him that his day is done. He said: "Moses, I am going to put you to bed up in the mountain. You shall go to sleep there." And he did.

And I suppose Moses was like other men when they grow old. I heard of a man who was superintendent of a lumber yard, and the company for whom he worked had provided him a comfortable house just adjacent to the lumber yard. He could look over the whole yard from his window. At last he reached the time when the company pensioned him, and relieved him of his duty. A friend told me he was a guest of that pensioned superintendent on one occasion. And he said, he hurried through his luncheon, as he had been accustomed to do, and then asked to be excused. And he went upstairs. His wife said: "He has gone up to look out over the yard. He cannot understand that it can go on without him. Every day he hurries through his lunch. He has no longer any authority, or any obligation out there, but he goes up there to the window and he looks out to see the men working, and to see that everything is going on all right. He finds it very difficult to believe that they could carry on out there without him."

I wonder if Moses felt a little bit like that. He knew how petulant they had been, how trying, and Joshua, while not a very young man, must have seemed to him young. And perhaps he said: "I wonder how Joshua will manage when I am gone? I wonder how the rest of them will manage?" And then perhaps he found comfort in the reflection that though he was to retire, the Lord would still be there. And so to Asher he said: "Asher, I shall be done in a little while, but never mind, the

eternal God will be thy refuge. He never grows old. He never grows weak. He does not know what it is to feel any disability at all. He is a refuge that will never wear out. He is always the same. From everlasting to everlasting He is God."

What a blessing that is! When children lose their parents, the wife loses her husband, the husband his wife, people who have been depended upon are removed, what remains? The eternal God remains. He is always with us, and any blessing you ever received may be repeated. Sometimes you go to a store to buy certain things. The storekeeper will say of something: "That is a very difficult thing to match. If I were you I would get a little more, because when you need to replenish your supply it may be that you will not be able to get it." But you know, the blessings of God are all standard. He may have blessed you a thousand times, but the eternal God is thy refuge, and His supplies of grace are inexhaustible, and if this morning you think back over the years to a time when God came especially near and enriched you in an unusual way, and you are inclined to say: "Oh, that it were with me" as did Job "as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon me!" You say: "I wish I could have that experience over again!" Well, in relation to man you cannot, but in relation to God you can: "The eternal God is thy refuge."

III.

Now just a word. I wish I had time to nurse this simple figure with you. How graciously tender it is: "UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS." Sometimes we think of God, perhaps, as a great King, Who commissions His soldiers to take care of us; as a Banker, perhaps, Who puts His resources at our command; as Someone Who is at the head of something. But ours is a personal God, and there are some things He does Himself. There are some ministries for which God has no deputies at all. How disposed we are to get someone else to do things! But there are some things that we have to do ourselves. There are some things that God is pleased to do Himself. There are mothers, who are able to afford it, who employ nurses to take care of their children. But real mothers say: "No, thank you; I would rather look after the children myself", for after all, no one can look after a child like its own mother. And our heavenly Father does not find deputies, archangels, to look after us: He says: "No, no! I will look after My children Myself." "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

That is what theologians call an anthropomorphism. Can you boys and girls spell that word? It is a big one, but I will tell you what it means. It means a figure in which God represents Himself as having human qualities, arms, eyes, ears, a tongue, a mouth. God represents Himself as like unto ourselves in order that we may understand Him. And while, of course, there is a sense in which He infinitely transcends all human qualities, yet He would have us understand that "underneath are the everlasting arms".

I suppose mothers grow tired carrying their children, and so they have these go-carts. I do not know why they call them by that name. Sometimes they stay instead of going. But mothers have something on wheels into which they put that precious little burden, and so relieve themselves of its weight. I confess I rather like to see a woman with her child in her arms, sometimes. Under-

neath are the mother's arms. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels" but He says: "I am not going to put you in a chariot: I am just going to carry you. I carried them and bore them all the days of old".

And so, I would remind you that God's care of His children is intensely personal. When a mother is distressed with all her family duties, and at last the doctor comes and says, "You must get away somewhere for a rest," she looks about and says: "But I cannot get away." She cannot get away. Those arms of hers are always full and busy, because her ministry is such an intensely personal one.

So, my dear friends, our God is never an absentee God. He is a very present help. He is always there. His arms are always about us. And how beautifully safe, how blessedly safe we are, held in the everlasting arms!

I suppose, perhaps, Moses wanted to carry forward that idea of the eternity of God. Strong as he seemed to be — though so far past the century mark — yet he thought of his weakening powers, his gradually diminishing strength, and he said: "I commend you to One Who is eternal, Whose arms are everlasting." What a blessing that is, dear friends! How tenderly He holds His children! Well, how can we think of the everlasting arms! We sang just now:

"But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee."

There is a story in the Scriptures of the days of the Lord Jesus when they brought to Him, not children, but little children. They were so young, they could not come themselves. They were like some of the beginners, they had to be brought, and they brought those children to Jesus that He might put His arms about them and bless them. That is what the mothers wanted to do, not to baptize them. He did not baptize them. That is all nonsense. I will tell you what He did: He took them up in His arms. I have seen some men try to pick up a baby. Isn't it funny? Oh, they could lift a big stone, or something like that. But the most awkward thing in the world is to see some man pick up a child. But I am sure no mother ever took up her own child more dexterously. No mother feared that that little child would fall when He, when He Who was the eternal God, Himself, took the little children into His arms. And I rather think He held them tightly. Oh, dare I say it — He cuddled them to His breast, and rejoiced in the sense of having one of His children close to Him. He took them up in His arms and blessed them. And that is what He wants to do with every one of us, men and women, for the oldest of you is only a little child, after all, before God. Let us come to Him that He may take us up in His arms, then no matter what happens evermore underneath are the everlasting arms.

Shall we sing an old-fashioned hymn this morning? I have not heard it for a long time myself:

"Safe in the arms of Jesus."

We never do much for truth or goodness by getting angry about it.

The Banner of Truth in the Far East

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."—Psalm 60:4.

ON NOVEMBER 14th, 1949, a group of Christian leaders, representing the International Council of Christian Churches, left United States by plane for Bangkok, Siam, to attend a conference called as a testimony against communistic and modernistic domination in the work of the Lord in the Far East. Among those leaders were Dr. Carl McIntire, Rev. W. O. Garman, Rev. A. Donald Moffat, Dr. J. G. Holdcroft and our own Dr. T. T. Shields. They circled the globe, visiting many countries. Their aim was to expose the anti-Christian character of the World Council of Churches, to intercede with governments that evangelical missionaries might be free to enter the Eastern countries, to warn Bible-believing Christians of the dangerous influences in their midst and to encourage the true believers who were determined to stand by the Book.

The Conference, which lasted from December 4-11, 1949, was a great success. As a branch of the International Council, a Far Eastern Council was organized, with Rev. Antonio Ormeo, Rev. Timothy Tow and Mr. Quek Chiang among the leaders. "Since that time the Council has continued to raise a testimony of separation unto Christ from the false gods of modernism and unbelief.

The FECCC has stood firm in a day when the World Council and its affiliates have continually compromised with communism, false religions, and national error throughout Asia. Meeting in Karuizawa, Japan in July, 1953, the FECCC again made clear its stand against the godless communist aggression which threatens the peace of the world, and warned the Church against many types of unbelief in its midst. The unbelief of nominal Christianity, as found in the WCC, is as great a threat, if not a greater threat, to the Gospel of Christ than that which comes from outside.

Perhaps the best evaluation of the work of the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches comes from a quarter from which it would be least expected—a report contained in the modernist *Christian Century* concerning the Karuizawa meetings: "Throughout the sessions, one could sense an urgency, a zeal, a drive lacking in most Far Eastern Christian gatherings. It was a spirit, indeed, such as is to be found in the letters of Paul—bold, sweeping condemnation of all that could be conceived as contrary to the Gospel. The quality of the nationals who participated was high, and they took prominent places of leadership. It was obvious that while Americans were at the center of things, the nationals were not just coming along for a ride, and no one could charge that they were puppets for 'The McIntire Clan'."

There is a real urgency—an urgency which the modernists cannot imitate because they have no message to give nor have they the strength of God to fill them with zeal. Timothy Tow, Siang Hui, vice-president, and Quek Kiok Chiang, secretary, in writing to the various churches throughout the Far East, requesting them to come to the Third General Assembly in Singapore, again affirm this urgency: "It is now time for us to think more of the Assembly and pray more earnestly for strength, courage,

guidance and blessing from the Almighty. God has called us together for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." We ask all of our readers to join with us in prayer for these coming meetings that God may use us all as an India Bible Christian Council, Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches and International Council of Christian Churches for His honour and glory."

—Biblical Witness

From August 5-12, 1956, the Third Assembly of the Far Eastern Council met in Jubilee Church, Singapore. Dr. Carl McIntire, the indefatigable and efficient President of the International Council, has described the Conference in a series of letters, published in the *Christian Beacon*, Letter No. 9, which follows, contains a reference to the former visit of Dr. Shields and the others to the Far East, and gives a general account of the meetings.

Singapore to Hong Kong
Cathay Pacific Airways, Ltd.
August 15, 1956, 1.45 a.m.

Beloved:

When we get into a plane it's almost second nature to start writing a letter home. Our 12 days in Singapore were packed full of joy and constant activity. I wish every friend and enemy of the International Council of Christian Churches could have witnessed what God hath wrought. He alone is bringing great glory to the name of His Son.

Last night 140 attended the farewell dinner. All of us from other lands were the guests of the Jubilee Church. Timothy Tow was toastmaster. Mrs. McIntire spoke—a three-point message on the ICC: (1) what God hath wrought; (2) what God would have us do; and (3) warning signals.

A letter was read from the Jubilee session reporting their unanimous action in joining the ICC. This represents a tremendous development. This church is the largest Chinese Presbyterian Church here and it takes the lead in many things. A favorable reaction to the Third Assembly of the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches has been felt in many places.

The whole conference was supported by much prayer and careful planning months ahead. Arrangements were patterned after the Philadelphia Congress of the ICC in many ways.

Mr. Tow and Mr. Quek worked constantly for weeks, and they saw the fruit of six years of faithful witness. It was at Christmas, 1949, that Dr. T. T. Shields, Mr. Arje Kok, Mrs. McIntire, and I came here after the "Battle of Bangkok," and Quek was led of the Lord to join hand and heart with Timothy.

All incoming brethren were met by delegations at the airport. Cars had special stickers. Banners were outside and inside Jubilee and Life Churches. A hymnbook with printed cover and 46 songs in Chinese and English was prepared. A daily paper, *The Reformation Reporter*, was edited—2,000 copies in Chinese and 900 in English. One hundred and sixty came as delegates and observers. This did not include the general congregation. The

church was filled every night with people from many churches. The press had been briefed and prepared in advance. All the Chinese papers gave full daily reports with pictures. The *Times*, English speaking, carried an interview with me at the top right of the first page, Sunday, August 5. Very few people in town did not know the FECCC was on hand.

Everything was done in two languages, Chinese and English, and the days were filled completely. A moving prayer meeting, each in his own tongue, started at 8.15 and was well attended. From nine to ten o'clock we had a Bible message and devotional meeting. Business was from ten to 11.15 and this consisted of resolutions and discussion of plans. Eighteen resolutions were adopted. They dealt with the various problems from Japan to India and Australia to Manila. At 11.15 every day a message dealing with some aspect of the Twentieth Century Reformation was presented. These were excellent—historical, factual, and most informative. The speakers had carefully prepared these dissertations. One felt as if he had really been to a conference when the day was half over!

Most of our foreign delegates stayed in three centers, and the local brethren provided private cars to transport all back and forth. Men here took their vacations just at this time so as to help.

The afternoon sessions opened at three o'clock and the evening at 7.45.

Tow and Quek rented the Victoria Memorial Hall, the central and finest meeting place in the city, for the opening Rally. They arranged for a Reception in its marble corridor in the afternoon with 200 invited guests. Seven hundred came to the Rally, and a youth choir of 87, all in white, sang, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God", and "Faith of Our Fathers." I spoke on, "Redeeming the Evangelical Message."

One elder was so impressed that he invited us to his home for dinner. He served 50 a 15-course Chinese dinner on the front porch of his lovely home. He welcomed us and explained his agreement with our stand for the Faith.

The enemies, of course, were at work, and they may have kept some pastors away. A notice was sent out that I had been put out of my church. The manager of the pension, Happy Home, was told by Dean Wood of the Cathedral that he should not have a man like me staying in his house. The manager told us when we left that he wanted me to know he was one with us in believing in the full inspiration of the Bible.

At our place also stayed Bishop and Mrs. D. A. Thompson of England, the Rev. J. A. Scarrow of New Zealand, and Mr. Andrew H. Lennox of Australia. Scarrow, on his way to the Assembly, wrote a poem which became the theme song of the Assembly. It reads:

*All Scripture, Lord, as Thou hast said,
Through holy men, inspired to write,
Is given to Thy Church on earth
To furnish fallen men with light.*

*We meet to pledge with solemn vow
Thy written Word shall ever stay,
Nor shall we wrest one smallest part,
Nor add thereto nor take away.*

*The Word made flesh was virgin-born;
Eternal Son of God is He—
Two natures, God and man in one,
Redeemer through His blood to be.*

*Born of Thy Spirit, Lord, we praise
One only God, and Three in One;
Oh, Abba Father, hear our praise—
Thou lovest the world and gave Thy Son.*

*We therefore strive, contending all,
Not in our strength; the battle's Thine;
Oh, speed the promised day of Christ,
That blessed day, that glorious time.
(Tune: "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts")*

The three main delegations were from Free China, the Philippines, and Singapore.

The Rev. A. Ormeo headed the Filipino group. He was re-elected president of the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches. He is the man; God has given him a peculiar anointing. He makes friends instantly. In his pre-Assembly evangelistic meeting some 24 souls came to Christ and were directed into true churches.

Dr. A. B. Dodd led the delegation from Taipei. He is greatly beloved and honored. His heart is in China for Christ.

I must stop. I'll write another word about Singapore. This gives you some idea of the nature and spirit of the meeting. The next meeting will be in Ceylon in 1960.

God has raised up in the Far East a movement for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

In Him,

CARL MCINTIRE

Two of the Resolutions passed at this Assembly are as follows:

Invitation

There are many mission agencies, church organizations, Bible societies, and local churches scattered throughout the Far East, which are true to the Faith, fundamental in their doctrines, standing in the stream of historic Christianity, and which are not organically connected or in fellowship with any modernistic organizations.

However, these mission agencies, church organizations, Bible societies, and local churches are existing and working without fellowship with other likeminded groups.

We believe it is not good for brethren to live and work independent of others, but that they need the fellowship of God's people. They need to work in unison with others of like mind for the glory of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the defense of our historic Faith.

We believe that the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches does meet this need. We, therefore, invite all such mission agencies, church organizations, Bible Societies, and local churches in the Far East to affiliate themselves with the FAR EASTERN COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

"Come with us and we will do thee good."

Bringing the Gospel to Every Creature

WHEREAS, the noble and selfless devotion to Christ of the five young men who laid down their lives in the jungles of Ecuador to bring the priceless Gospel of salvation to the wild, unreached Auca Indians is a heroic ex-

ample to those who love Christ and His Word around the world; and

WHEREAS, the modernist leaders of our day have again demonstrated their spiritual blindness and complete lack of interest in such evangelistic efforts by their callous criticism of the courageous and determined attempt of these young missionaries to evangelize the primitive people who, like all men, are created in the image of God, though fallen into deep, sinful darkness; and this modernist blindness is revealed in such statements as that of the *Christian Century's* article belittling the heroic evangelistic effort of these young men; and

WHEREAS, there are yet millions of people populating thousands of islands off the coast of Southeast Asia who have as yet never been reached with the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Be it therefore resolved, that as we, the delegates to the Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches, return to our home countries, we do so with renewed determination, prayerfully and faithfully, to present the need of these unreached multitudes to our own churches and young people, that God may lead many of them to go out like the apostles of old in selfless devotion to give these lost ones an opportunity to hear the Gospel and be saved.

Let us pray for the world-wide testimony of the International Council, of which Dr. H. C. Slade, Pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, is one of the Vice-Presidents.

—O.L.C.

SUNDAY SERVICES AT JARVIS STREET

There was an excellent attendance at all services last Lord's Day, especially at the evening hour, when Dr. H. C. Slade preached a message with the key-note of triumph on the great word of Scripture, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Revival" was the timely subject of the morning sermon. It is an inspiring sight to see the Sunday School scholars in such large numbers sharing in the hour of morning worship.

—O.L.C.

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.

L. K. TARR RETURNS TO THE WEST

When Mr. Tarr came to Toronto Baptist Seminary four years ago for theological training, it was with the thought that as soon as he completed his course he would return to the west, and enter upon some missionary enterprise in his native province of Manitoba.

During the last year, in addition to his Seminary course, he undertook the onerous task of editing THE GOSPEL WITNESS. The many readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS will be the best judges of the fine quality of the work done in that department. A year or so before his passing, Dr. Shields recognized in Mr. Tarr a young man with an extraordinary journalistic gift. The Board of Directors of THE GOSPEL WITNESS pay high tribute to Mr. Tarr for the character of the work accomplished during his brief incumbency of the editorship of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. The whole GOSPEL WITNESS family we are sure will wish him Godspeed in his new sphere of labour.

Mr. Tarr in his resignation writes as follows:

Toronto, Ontario
September 5, 1956.

Dr. H. C. Slade,
Pastor, Jarvis Street Baptist Church,
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Dr. Slade:

It is with regret that I submit my resignation from the editorship of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and from the Faculty of Toronto Baptist Seminary. I leave it to the judgment of yourself and the Deacons as to whether this resignation should take effect in September of this year, or in May, 1957.

Allow me to express my sincere thanks for the kindness which has been shown me and my family by you and the people of the church. I am sure that both of us would agree that our personal relationship has been an amicable one; for myself, I have been grateful for the liberty which has been accorded me in the editing of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. I am especially mindful of the financial assistance which was given me during two hospitalizations, and the knowledge that prayer ascended on my behalf. The frequent words of appreciation which I have received from you, the Deacons, and the church family about my work with THE GOSPEL WITNESS are thankfully recalled.

I trust that you, Jarvis Street Church, and all its departments shall enjoy in full the blessing of the Lord,

Sincerely, in Christ

LESLIE K. TARR

Whenever a man debates about the truth, and loses his temper, he has also lost his cause. I have heard of one, who knew little of true religion, who watched a missionary and a Brahmin disputing, and he decided that the missionary was in the right; when he was asked why he thought so, he said, "Because he kept cool, and the other man flew into a passion." Although that may not always be a good test of the truth of the matter in question, it certainly is a good test of how the dispute is going.—C. H. SPURGEON

Beginning to Understand

By Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

(Report of Sermon preached on Sunday morning, 8th November, 1953, in Westminster Chapel, London)

Note: This fine sermon is number five in a series of studies on Psalm 73 entitled "A Soul's Conflict."—O.L.C.

Psalm lxxiii, 16-20

WE RETURN to our study of how this Psalmist recovered himself when he was on the point of turning his back upon God and of saying things about the godly life which would have been an offence to all God's people. What saved him was that he went "to the sanctuary of God". There he discovered certain vital things. The first was that all our thinking must be spiritual and not merely rational. He found also that he had been guilty of thinking in a partial manner and of ignoring certain vital facts without which no right judgment can ever be formed.

The process did not stop at that point however. His thinking not only had to be put right in general but also in certain particular respects. We proceed now to consider these.

As we saw hurriedly last time, he discovered that his thinking about the ungodly had been most defective. Here he was in the temple. But what was the origin of the temple? That made him consider the whole history of God's people and all the enemies and opposition they had had to encounter and to overcome. And always the story was that God had delivered His people and routed their enemies. The history and the story of the Christian Church should do the same for us. Lord Macaulay once said, "No man who is correctly informed as to the past will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present". If that is true in general, it is particularly true in the realm of the Christian faith. It is our ignorance of Church history, and particularly of the history recorded in the Bible, that so frequently causes us to stumble and to despair.

What then is the teaching of the Bible in this respect? The first thing we find is that it gives us the actual history. We can never remind ourselves too frequently of stories such as that of the Flood, of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians and Belshazzar. They all teach the same thing: But towering above them all is the great fact of the Resurrection which shows God triumphing finally over the Devil and all his powers. The continuing victory is seen everywhere in the Acts of the Apostles, and a grand view of the End is given in the Book of Revelation.

The actual history of the Christian Church since the days of the Apostles continues the same story. We know what has happened to all powers that have attempted to exterminate the Christian Church, such as the Jews, Romans, etc. Likewise we know the epic stories of all the martyrs and early confessors, the Waldensian Church, the early Protestants, the Puritans and the Covenanters. Indeed, this very century in which we live has provided yet further evidence.

The Bible, however, does not merely record history. It helps us to understand the meaning of history. It teaches certain principles very clearly. The first is that everything, even the evil powers, are under God's hand. As the Psalmist puts it here in verse 18: "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places". They are not free agents. Nothing happens apart from God. "The Lord reigneth." "By Me kings reign." It is of vital importance that we should grasp the biblical doctrine of Providence. It can be defined as "That continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator upholds all His creatures, is operative in all that transpires in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end". God is over all and as we read in Psalm lxxvi, 10: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." In connection with this we have to remember God's permissive will. It is beyond our understanding, but it is clearly taught that He suffers certain things to happen for His own purposes.

Another thing we see clearly here is that the whole position of the ungodly is precarious and dangerous. They are in "slippery places". All they have is but temporary. The Psalmist suddenly saw clearly what Moses saw when he "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season". Age and decay, death and judgment, are certain. The most terrible thing about sin is that it blinds men to the realization of this. Their pomp and glory is but for a season. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth tremble."

The Psalmist saw this so clearly in the sanctuary of God that he not only ceased to be envious of the ungodly, but gives the impression that he even began to feel sorry for them as he realized the truth about their position. There is perhaps no better test of our profession of the Christian faith than just this. Do we feel sorry for the ungodly in their blindness? Have we even a sense of compassion for them as we see them as sheep without a shepherd? Thus the thinking of the Psalmist was put right with respect to the ungodly.

Now we proceed to consider the next step and to show how this man's thinking was put right also about God Himself. We have seen how his thinking about God had gone seriously wrong because he had started in the wrong way about the ungodly, and thus had got into the position of questioning and querying even God. He says: "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency" — "I have been trying to obey God but it doesn't really seem to pay. Is God what He says He is?" Now that is a terrible thing to think; and that is, particularly, the thing on which we must now concentrate. This man shows us how his thinking was put right about God. In a sense he has already said it.

"Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places". The moment he utters that word "THOU" one feels that the whole position is beginning to change.

What was it that was adjusted when he began thinking truly about God? I think the first thing he saw now truly and rightly was the character of God; because, after all, the thing that this man had been beginning to doubt was the very character of God Himself. Many of these Psalmists with strange and remarkable honesty confess that they were tempted along that line. For instance, in the seventy-seventh Psalm you find the same thing expressed very definitely. The Psalmist asks: "Will the Lord cast off for ever and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever; doth His promise fail for evermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious?" That is the type of question, and, as I pointed out at the very beginning, some of the greatest saints have sometimes been tempted to ask these questions when things have gone against them. Well this man in that way had been asking these questions: Does God care, and if He does care why does He not stop these things? Is it that He cannot do it? How often have people asked these questions. How often did people say in the last world war: Why does God permit a man like Hitler to live? Why doesn't He strike him down; if He is God and has this power why doesn't He strike him? The question arises, can God perhaps not do it? Or have we been mistaken in our ideas about God, have we been wrong in our ideas about His mercy and compassion and goodness? Those are the questions that arise acutely. Why does He not demolish these people who are opposed to Him and His people? Now this man had been assailed by such questions; and here he finds his answer. At once he is put right on these questions by remembering the greatness and the power of God — "THOU hast set them in slippery places". There is nothing outside the control of God. Many a Psalm such as the fiftieth expresses it. It is indeed the great theme of the Bible. There is no limit to the power of God. He is eternal in all His powers and in all His attributes. "He spake and it was done." He created everything out of nothing. He suspends the universe in space. Read certain great chapters of the Book of Job and you will find it expressed in a most amazing manner. For instance read the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Job, and there are many other chapters in the Bible that proclaim exactly the same thing.

"In the beginning God." This is a fundamental postulate; the Bible asserts it everywhere. Whatever the explanation may be of all that is happening in the world, it is not that God is not capable of stopping it. It is not that He cannot arrest these things, because God by definition is illimitable. He is absolute, He is the everlasting, Eternal God to Whom everything on earth is but as nothing. He owns everything, He governs, He controls everything; all things are under His hands. "The Lord reigneth." Now that is the first thing about which this man was put right and that very clearly.

But he was also put right on the second question about the righteousness and the justice of God, because that is the order in which these things arise. If God has the power, why doesn't He exercise it? If God has the ability to destroy all His enemies, why does He allow them to do the things they do? Why are the ungodly allowed to flourish; what about the justice and righteousness of God? The answer is given by the statement made by Abraham of old: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth

do right?" (Genesis xviii, 25.) It is as fundamental a postulate as that concerning the greatness and the might and the majesty of God. God is eternally just and right. God cannot change. God cannot (I say it with reverence, it is a part of the truth concerning the holiness of God to say it)—God cannot be unjust. It is impossible. James put it like this. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." "He is the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning." If it were possible for any change or modification to take place in God He would no longer be God. God, as He has revealed to us, is, from everlasting to everlasting, always, ever the same; never any difference, never any modification. So Abraham is obviously right when he says: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" He can do no other. So let us realize that, so that, when we are tempted of the devil or by our own predicament or any position which the devil may use to query the righteousness of God, we may realize that what we are really saying is that it is possible for God to vary and to change. But that is impossible. He cannot, because God is God, and, because of what He is, there can never be any variation in His justice or righteousness, there can never be any question of injustice or unrighteousness.

But we must go beyond that. The Psalmist went beyond that and came to the point at which he discovered that the Covenant of God, and the promises of God, are ever faithful and ever sure. In other words God is not only just and right, but God has committed Himself to man, He has given certain promises. Therefore the next great doctrine of the Bible is that the promises of God are always certain and sure; what He hath promised, He will most surely and certainly perform. You will remember that word of Paul the Apostle to Titus; he refers to "God Who cannot lie". (Titus 1, 2). And He cannot lie, again for the same reason. When God gives a promise, that promise is certain to be kept. All His promises are absolute promises, and whatever He has said, He is certainly going to do — "For His mercies are endure, ever faithful ever sure." Now that was all important to this Psalmist, because as one of God's people he knew about the Covenant. He knew the promises God had made to His people, and how He had pledged Himself to them. He had told them that they were His peculiar people and that He would take a special interest in them, that He loved them and was concerned about their prosperity and happiness, and that He was going to bless them until eventually He received them unto Himself. Very well, the Psalmist had been tempted to ask, if that is so, why am I like this? But now in the sanctuary of God he finds that he was all wrong and that God works indirectly as well as directly. He saw that in the sanctuary of God: if you read the verses that follow you will find how he elaborates all that. He says: "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee, Thou hast holden me by my right hand; Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory". He sees it all and so when he came to write his Psalm he began by saying: "Surely God is good to Israel". — God is always good to Israel. He never breaks a promise. These are what we must always regard as fundamental postulates in all our relationships to God, and we must never be tempted to question or query anything along that particular line.

The Psalmist was put right in his thinking about God.

first of all, with regard to the character of God. Well then, if that is so, we are still confronted by our main question. If I now know that God has all power and that nothing can limit it, that He is always just and righteous, that He is always faithful to His covenant and promises, I therefore ask: Why then is it that the ungodly are allowed to flourish and prosper in this way, and why is it that the godly are so frequently to be found in a state of suffering? Now here is the heart of this question which has always troubled mankind and which is probably being asked by millions of people in different parts of the world at this moment: Why does God permit this kind of thing? The Psalmist discovered the answer in the House of God. He puts it in a very interesting and charming manner. You will find the same thing in several Psalms; it is an idea indeed that is to be found in many places in the Scriptures. The answer is given here in words which, if you like, we may describe as a very daring anthropomorphism. The Psalmist says that the explanation is this, that God for the time being seems to be asleep. "When Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image" he says in verse 20. Now that is an anthropomorphism. In other words, the Psalmist, in order to convey what he had discovered in the sanctuary of God, has to put it in human terms. That is because of the limit of our thinking and our language. God cannot sleep, but He appears to be as one sleeping. It is not that He has not the power, but He is for the time being asleep. It is not that he has forgotten to be gracious; He is asleep — that is the argument. A similar statement is found in the next Psalm in the twenty-second verse, where, having described the desolation of the Church and the way in which the enemy has come into the Church and has reduced it almost to shambles, the Psalmist ends by a prayer. He says: "Arise, O God, plead Thine own cause," etc. It seems as if he turns to God and says: "God, why don't you awake, arise, O God." It is the same idea. In the forty-fourth Psalm in the twenty-third verse you get it more explicitly: "Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever." Here is a man in desperation, he sees the desolation produced by the enemy, he sees the success of the ungodly and the suffering of the godly; he is now right in his doctrine, so turning to God he says: "Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord?" Why don't you assert yourself? That is the idea, and that is the idea which we must now apply in detail.

Why does God thus appear to be asleep? Before I come to the spiritual answer to this question, may I indicate the gross inconsistency that is to be found in the argument of people who glibly speak like this about God. There are so many people who say: If God is God, and if God has the power, and if God is merciful and gracious, why did He not destroy a man like Hitler at the beginning of his regime, why did He not wipe him out, and all his forces, and thereby save suffering, why did He not intervene earlier, why did He not assert Himself? That is the argument they put forward, and yet they are generally the very self-same people who are loudest in their claim for what they call the free-will of man. If you begin to preach to them about the doctrines of salvation, if you should mention terms like "predestination" and "the elect", they say: I maintain I have a free will, I have a right to do what I like with my own life. Yet they are the people who say God should exert His power and His might over other people. You cannot have it both ways. If you want God to assert Himself like this,

He must do it all along the line, not just in what you choose. There is an utter inconsistency in the argument. When such people are thinking about others they say: God should control them; but when they think of themselves they say: "It is very wrong of God to control me, I am a free man, I must be allowed to do whatever I like, I am a free person, I must have my liberty." Ah yes, but the other man must not have liberty. Let us leave it at that; but it is important.

But more seriously from our standpoint, why is it, do you think, that God does appear to be asleep, why is that God does allow the ungodly to flourish like this? There are certain very definite answers in the Scriptures to that question. Here are some of them. There is no doubt at all that one of the reasons is this: that God permits these things in order that sin may be revealed for what it really is, that He may allow it to manifest itself and show itself in all its ugliness. If you want a classical statement of that you will find it in the second half of the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans where he traces the decline and fall in the history of mankind. Paul was writing about the civilization, of society, as it was in his own day. He describes the terrible ugliness and foulness of life; he gives us that horrible list of sins, those sexual perversions and all those other things that were destroying life at that time. And he says that the real explanation of that is that mankind, having substituted the creature for the Creator, man having rebelled against God's holy law, "God has given them over to a reprobate mind", He has withdrawn the restraining power. He has allowed sin to develop into what it really is; and there it is. Surely that is something of which we need to be reminded today. There is a great deal of attention being paid at this moment to the moral condition of this country, and very rightly. Why is this necessary? I suggest the answer is still precisely the same. Our fathers and forefathers increasingly turned their backs upon God. They queried the authority of the Scriptures — it was done even in pulpits — and man became the authority. What man thinks about the Bible, what man thinks about God, what man thinks about morality became the rule. Man put himself in the position of authority and turned down the authority of God; and we today are reaping the consequences of that. God, as it were, turns to mankind and says: Very well, I will just allow you to see what your views and your philosophies lead to. Today we are beginning to see what sin really is, it is revealing itself in its ugliness; we are seeing it in all its utter horror and foulness and malignity. There is no question but that God, in order to teach mankind the exceeding sinfulness of sin, sometimes withholds His restraining power, and allows the ungodly to have their fling. He gives them rope and the whole thing appears in its true colours. It was ignored by the philosophers and the psychologists attempted to explain it away, but we are seeing it for what it is — this horrible foul perversion and lust. It is there in the heart of the educated as well as the illiterate.

That is one reason. But it is not the only reason, for there is no doubt that God permits this kind of thing also partly as the punishment of sin. Again, if you read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans you will find that point comes out also. In other words God withdraws His restraining power sometimes in order that people may reap some of the consequences of their own sins, and thereby He punishes sin. We are all one by nature in

this that we want the pleasure of sin without the consequences, we desire to be able to sin and not to suffer for it. But you cannot, for "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked", and God has so made man, and so made life, that there are always effects that follow causes. If you sin, you will suffer, and sometimes God allows the world to get into a state of godlessness as part of its punishment. I do not hesitate to assert that that is the only real explanation of the two world wars. It is partly God meting out punishment to mankind for all its defiance of Him during the last hundred years, it is part of the punishment. God allows things to develop in order that mankind may reap the consequences of that which it has sown. If you "sow the wind" you may well "reap the whirlwind"; and we have experienced that in our own life-time.

What is the next thing? I believe that God allows the evil and the evil-doers to have this fling and this rope and this licence, as it were, in order to make their overthrow more complete and sure. Biblical history is really but an exposition of this principle. God seems to be asleep and the enemy rises, he blasphemes the Name of God. Think of it in the case of Assyria. They set themselves against the God of Israel, and God allowed it all to happen; they inflated themselves almost into the heavens and said: "Nothing can stop us". Then God suddenly pricked the bubble and the whole thing collapsed, and the final discomfiture was greater than ever. It is when the great big bully has made his final boast that he is always brought down. If God had brought him down at the beginning it would not have seemed so wonderful. So God allows evil and evil powers to do astounding things to the world, so much so that even the godly begin to ask: Can God ever stop this? Then, when the end has almost come, God arises and down they go. The discomfiture of the enemy is greater then and more complete.

Then again God allows it in order to display His own greatness and glory over all this great and mighty enemy. God arises and without a word He demolishes him, and all who see it turn to this Almighty, glorious God. All this is put in a very great phrase at the end of the twelfth chapter of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. A king called Herod seated upon a throne made a great oration to certain people, and after he had delivered his oration the people cried out saying, "It is the voice of a god and not of man." Then God we are told sent an angel and smote this man. "And he was consumed of worms and gave up the ghost. But the word of God grew and multiplied." You see the contrast, the pomp and the greatness were demolished: but the word of the God Whom the foolish king was trying to destroy grew and multiplied, and so God's glory was manifested.

The last explanation I would put forward is this: That there is no doubt at all that God sometimes permits the ungodly to flourish for the sake of disciplining His own people. I am sorry to have to say that, but I must say it. We need to be disciplined. How often did God raise up enemies against the Children of Israel in order to discipline them. They, His own people, had become slack and were forgetting God. He pleaded with them, He sent them prophets but they paid no attention, so he raised up Assyria, he raised up the Chaldeans to chastise, to correct His own people. And I do not hesitate to assert that many of the things we have had to endure in this country have been partly because we, God's people, have needed to be disciplined. It was, alas, the Church her-

self that undermined the faith of the people in the Word of God, and it is not surprising that things are as they are. Maybe we shall have to endure much more in order that we ourselves may be humbled and brought low and brought to realize that we are God's people and that we must rely upon Him and Him alone.

There, it seems to me, are some of the answers given in the Scriptures as to why it is that God seems at times to be asleep.

But that does not exhaust what the Psalmist learned about God's ways. The next thing he describes is what happens when God does awake. He has been put right about the character of God, and sees that the explanation is that God seems to be asleep, and then he ends with this — the things that happen when God does awake. "How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image." What is he saying? The first thing he says is that God does awake. "When Thou awakest." It is going to happen. O, no, God is not permanently asleep. When it does come . . . ! There is a limit to what God allows the ungodly, there is an end to the latitude and the apparent licence that He gives to His enemies. He certainly allows them to do a lot, but there is an end to it, there is a limit. "My Spirit will not always strive with man." "How long is this to go on?" someone asks God early in history. The answer was: "Until the iniquity of the Amorites is full". There is a limit. "My Spirit will not always strive," and a day is coming when it will not. God does awake. God will awake.

What happens when He does awake? This man says very clearly what is going to happen to these successful ungodly people when God does awake. He says: "As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord when Thou awakest Thou shalt despise their image". What a picture! That ungodly man that seemed so great and marvellous, when God arises, vanishes like a dream. It is as if it had but been a phantom, an image, an appearance, and had never been a reality. The ungodly that seemed to be so powerful, so self-sufficient and almost indestructible, when God arises, are gone like a flash. The Bible is full of this. Read the fortieth chapter of Isaiah and you will see there that God says that to Him the nations are but "a drop in a bucket" and as "the small dust of the balance". These great nations with their atomic bombs and their hydrogen bombs, these mighty nations! But a drop in a bucket, and the small dust of the balance. And not only that. Listen to the sarcasm and the derision. All the nations of the earth "are as grasshoppers", even Great Britain, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Ah, there have been other great empires and nations and commonwealths before, but they have all gone because they were not submissive to God. All the nations of the earth are but as grasshoppers — when God awaketh.

Let me give you one other example; it is one of the most notable in history. You have read of Alexander the Great, one of the greatest generals of all time, a great monarch and a mighty warrior. He conquered almost the whole earth. "Alexander the Great" he was called. Do you know what the Scriptures call him? Read your Bible right through and you will never find the name of Alexander the Great. It is not mentioned. But Alexander the Great does come into the Scriptures, and you will find the way in which God refers to him in the

eighth chapter of the Prophet Daniel. As Walter Luthi has pointed out, he who to the world is Alexander the Great is to God "a he-goat". That is it. When God arises—Alexander the Great—a he-goat—a grasshopper. That is what happens when God rises, to nations, to empires, to individuals, to all. "When Thou arisest": and He has arisen. Read the history recorded in the Bible and you will find that God does arise, and has arisen, and His enemies have been scattered.

The final message, however, that comes to us out of all this is that these great events of history which have already happened are but a pale adumbration and a mighty warning of that which is to happen. The world is Godless, it is Christless; it ridicules the grace of God and the Saviour of the world and especially the holy Blood of His Cross. The world is arrogant and prides itself on its sin. But this is what is going to happen. The Apostle Paul, who had been greatly persecuted, writing his second letter to the Thessalonians, says: "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord: and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day". O yes; this is as certain as the fact that this is 1953 and as certain as the fact that we are alive at this moment. The Lord will come riding upon the clouds of heaven and all His enemies will be scattered and routed, Satan and hell and all opposed to God will be cast into the lake of fire and go to "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord". That is the end of the ungodly. That is the power and the glory of the God Whom we love and Whom we adore and serve. If you do not understand what is happening, put it into that context. God is God, God is holy and just. He will keep His promise; what He has promised He will certainly perform. He is permitting these things for His own end. A day is coming when He will arise and scatter His enemies, and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ will stretch "from shore to shore" and all men shall confess in heaven and earth and under the earth that He is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Thank God that His promises are ever sure. God grant that we all may see and know and understand God's ways and be rid, once and for ever, of all sinful doubt and unworthy questioning. —*The Westminster Record*

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And Yet It Was Not Consumed

A Commentary on Jeremiah 36 by the late Rév. Alexander Smellie, D.D.

IT WAS winter in Jerusalem. In the southern wing of of King Jehoiakim's palace a fire of charcoal was kindled. It burned in its brazier, and kept the cold away; just as long afterwards, in the chill of a raw morning in March or April, the servants of the high-priest, and Peter among them, were glad of the fire at which they stood and warmed themselves. But round both those fires what sorrowful and sinister associations gather!

Jeremiah, the prophet of God, had none of the comforts of the palace. He was *shut up*, a prisoner whom his enemies watched; although he was not so fettered that he could not, when danger threatened, make good his escape. Meanwhile, his Lord was with him, and no iron bars could cage his spirit.

So, first, we see God and the prophet.

We were taken into Jeremiah's workshop. A disciple was with him — Baruch, the son of Neriah. He was what in later days Tertius or Titus or Luke was to Paul, his secretary and amanuensis, setting down on a roll of parchment the words he dictated. Immeasurably important these words were. They had a divine origin. They were God's words, given directly to the prophet. They came from afar, and Jeremiah uttered them as he received them from the Lord whose ambassador he was. They carried such solemn significance, too. God's delight is to speak not judgments but mercies and compassions and restorations, the love which bears and forbears and forgives. But sometimes the sins of men leave him no choice, and perforce he must be the Judge. So it was now. *Against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations*, the message was pronounced which Jehovah taught Jeremiah, and Jeremiah Baruch. Yet, even here, there were relentings of God's gracious heart. *It may be*, he said with a wistful yearning, *the house of Israel will hear, and will return.*

No doubt, Jeremiah had a special inspiration which we are not permitted to share. But, none the less, we must resemble him if we would convey to our fellows any authentic word of the Lord. It is essential that we should listen before we speak, and that what we do speak should first come to us from God Himself. It is indispensable that we declare the stern things of the heavenly oracles as faithfully as the tender things. Yet we must do this, not harshly, but with "droppings of warm tears"; and, after the wind and earthquake and fire of judgment, the still small voice of invitation and mercy must follow. Thus, "truthing it in love," we shall have our humble place in the goodly fellowship of the prophets.

But, next, see the prophet and the king.

Baruch was Jeremiah's spokesman as well as his scribe. Some months after the incriminating parchment was written, on a feast-day when the Temple was thronged with crowds, he read its contents to the people, and by and by communicated them in more private audience to the princes of Judah. What they had heard overawed the princes beyond measure. They trembled both for themselves and their country, and for the two servants of God who had acted so boldly. But they knew that they must

report the matter to the king. For a little Jehoiakim hearkened, as one of the counselors recited the counts in God's indictment and the penalties which are God's wage for sin. Then the impatience, the rage, and the impiety of the man revealed themselves. Seizing the roll, he hacked it with his knife, and flung it down into the blazing brazier in front. It was like Diocletian, giving orders that the sacred books of the Christians should be destroyed, or like Papal Rome burning the writings of Wyclif and Luther. It was a sacrilege which did not hurt the prophet, but injured only the childish and wicked king.

If we do not maltreat the Word of God in so flagrant a fashion, there are modern repetitions of Jehoiakim's crime. When the great facts of Scripture are called in question, or when its chapters and verses are dissected by a critical science which is strongly lacking in devoutness and reverence, or when its sentences are quoted flippantly and lightly, or when its humbling truths are rejected by the pride of our intellect and the pride of our will, or when we are up in arms against its way of salvation, we are surely following in the footsteps of the audacious and foolish king of Judah. It is God Himself who lives and moves, speaks and pleads and warns and commands in the Holy Book; and any slight we inflict on it is a wound dealt against Him.

Again, we see God and the king.

Jehoiakim gained nothing at all by his fatuous perversity. If the majority of the princes were too subservient and cowardly to tell him that he was wrong, he roused three of their better-minded companions to open protest. Nor was he allowed to wreak his anger upon Baruch and Jeremiah, *for the Lord hid them*—"cast the lap of His cloak" over them, as in the moors and mosses of Ayrshire and Galloway He bade His mists come down to shelter Alexander Peden from the pursuit of Claverhouse and the dragoons. And, still less did the king blunt the edge of the divine message, or free himself from its lash and scourge. Jeremiah took a fresh parchment and in it Baruch inscribed all those words which the shamed and calcined roll had contained; and *there were added besides unto them many like words.*

So he is always defeated who presumes to contend with God. He only reaps confusion upon confusion for himself, and sinks from one depth to a more hopeless depth. Therefore let us *kiss the Son, lest he be angry and we perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.* For if they destroy themselves who fight against Him, *blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

—The Sunday School Times

"He who has been afar in this wilderness can tell of things learned and tasted in the solitary place. It is as in the wilderness of old, there is no want there. This seems to the men of this world an impossible thing, — and it was so with the Israelites of old, who knew not that the bread of God was all they needed, and that thence was all their strength."

—TAULER

For Younger Readers

THE MAN WITH THE RADIANT FACE

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—2 Corinthians 3:18.

When the great missionary, Adoniram Judson, was home on furlough, he passed through Stonington, Connecticut. In those days the Stonington Line was the principal route between New England and New York, and the boys of the town often played about the wharves in the evening in the hope of catching a glimpse of some famous man. Two trains connected with the boat — an accommodation (a train that stops at every station) and an express.

One evening, when the accommodation came in, one of the boys noticed a man whose appearance excited his curiosity and wonder. Never before had he seen such a light on any human face. Presently it dawned on him that the man was the famous missionary whose picture he had once seen. He ran up the street to the minister's to ask if he could be the man. The minister hurried back with him. Yes, the boy was right. But the minister, absorbed in conversation with the missionary, forgot all about the boy who had brought him the news. The boy, silent, eager, unable to tear himself away, stood by and watched the wonderful face, the face like a benediction.

Many years afterward, that boy, Henry Clay Trumbull, became a famous minister himself, and wrote a book of memorials in which was a chapter entitled, "What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson." Doctor Trumbull, too, has passed into the presence of the Master whom he served, but the light in the missionary's face still shines down the years. Friends to whom Doctor Trumbull told the story tell it to others, and the printed pages—who can tell to how many lives they have carried their message?

The shining face is no mystery. Centuries ago the Psalmist knew the secret and wrote, "They looked unto him and were radiant." It comes to those whose faces are always turned toward Him, as a flower turns toward the light. It was said at the time of the Boxer rebellion that Chinese Christians could not be disguised — the light in their faces betrayed them. The pity of it, that every Christian may not be known by the shining of his face!

—*The Youth's Companion*

HOW IS YOUR FAITH?

Two little girls, playmates, were counting over their pennies. One said, "I have five pennies." The other said, "I have ten." "No," said the first little girl, "you have just five cents, the same as I." "But," the second child quickly replied, "my father said that when he came home tonight, he would give me five cents, and so I have ten cents." The child's faith gave her proof of that which she did not as yet see, and she counted it as being already hers, because it had been promised by her father.

—*S. S. World*

SEMINARY OPENING

In the 27 years of operation Toronto Baptist Seminary has graduated 173 students, many of these with B.D. or B.Th. degrees. Besides this number there are hundreds more who, through failure to complete their courses, did not graduate, yet who derived much benefit from the instruction received here. It is worth while to note that this tuition has always been free.

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On Monday, September 24th, at 2.30 p.m. registration for another school year will begin. Then the next morning will see lectures commencing at 8.30 a.m. Among the subjects being taught this year will be: Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology, Baptist Distinctives, Prophecy, English Bible, Biblical Introduction, Archaeology, Exegesis, Life of Christ, Church History, Evangelism, Christian Education, Homiletics, Pastoral Theology, Hebrew, Greek, French and English.

Christian young people may still file application forms for enrolment in this year's courses.

—G. A. ADAMS, Registrar

NOTICE

The Convention Year of the Conservative Regular Baptist Association ends on September 30th. Churches and interested friends are urged to send in all gifts earmarked for missionary work on or before that date to the Conservative Baptist Association, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Those who trust in their works or ceremonies for salvation deny thereby the grace and merits of Christ. For if our reconciliation consisted in works and ceremonies, grace would come to naught and the merits and virtue of the blood of Christ would all be void. O no! it is grace and will be grace in all eternity, all that the merciful Father through His dear Son and Holy Spirit has done for us grievous sinners.—MENNO SIMONS.

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THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

Lesson Text: Jeremiah 52:1-16.

Golden Text: "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"—1 Peter 4:18.

I. The City of Jerusalem Besieged: verses 1-11.

This most important event in the history of the Jews is described in three other portions of Scripture (2 Kings 25:1-12; 2 Chron. 36:11-21; Jer. 39:1-14). The Books of the Kings usually record the history of the Jews from the political standpoint, whereas the Books of Chronicles give the priestly view. The prophet Jeremiah stresses the fact that this disaster came upon the people because of their refusal to obey the word of the Lord, as given to them by the prophets. Jeremiah also demonstrates how faithfully the Lord fulfills His own word.

The prophecy of Jeremiah proper seems to conclude with chapter 51 (see Jer. 51:64). Chapter 52, which gives a supplementary account of the captivity, as well as an account of events subsequent to the captivity, may have been written by Ezra or another historian, inspired by the Holy Spirit. This would account for the repetition of the record of the events.

This chapter describes the third and final invasion of the land by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He came first during the reign of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:1-4; 2 Chron. 36:5, 6). He came again during the reign of Jehoiachin, deporting the king, the princes, the mighty men and many of the people (2 Kings 24:10-16; 2 Chron. 36:10; Jer. 24:1; 29:1). Zedekiah was made king in place of his nephew, but soon rebelled against his masters (2 Kings 24:17-20). This was the first step in the final overthrow of Judah, permitted by the Lord as a judgment upon them in His wrath against sin.

Nebuchadnezzar now determined to put an end to the rebellious kingdom of Judah, and personally led a huge army against Jerusalem. The siege lasted for about a year and a half (verses 4, 5; 2 Kings 25:1, 2; Jer. 39:1, 2; Ezek. 24:1, 2), there being a brief interruption when Nebuchadnezzar marched against the Egyptians, who sought to relieve Judah (Jer. 37:5). Nebuchadnezzar later removed his headquarters from Jerusalem to Riblah, in the north of Palestine (verse 9; Jer. 38:17; 39:3, 6).

The people suffered the usual bitter hardships of a siege, chief of which was the lack of food, and this led to inhuman atrocities (2 Kings 25:3; Lam. 2:20-22; 4:9, 10; Ezek. 5:10). Dearly did they pay for their long years of disobedience and apostasy. Sin is always costly.

King Zedekiah had relied for safety upon the strong fortifications of the city, but the enemy broke through all barriers. In the battle against sin and Satan, many trust too confidently in their own supposed strength and resources. Over-confidence will lead to ruin, defeat and disaster (Deut. 8:18-20; Matt. 26:35).

The king fled in secret along a pathway to the plain of the Jordan, but he was captured by the enemy and taken before King Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. The council condemned him for what they termed rebellion and perjury (2 Chron. 36:13; Ezek. 17:11-21), and, according to the thought that a blind man is incapable of ruling, his eyes were put out (Judg. 16:21). Thus, he entered Babylon without seeing it, even as Ezekiel had foretold (Jer. 32:5; Ezek. 12:12, 13). Zedekiah had refused to humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the words of the Lord (2 Chron. 36:12, 13, 21; Jer. 25:9-12; 29:10; 38:14-23). To reject the word of the Lord as spoken through His prophets is the same as rejecting the Lord Himself (Matt. 10:14, 40; John 13:20).

II. The Land of Judah Despoiled: verses 12-16.

About 8 years after the capture of Jerusalem, which took place in 586 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar sent the captain of his

guard, Nebuzaradan, with an army to break down the walls of the city (Neh. 1:3), to destroy and burn the palace and the houses of the great, to plunder the temple and to deport the people to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:14-21). Nebuzaradan evidently started from Riblah on the seventh day of the month (2 Kings 25:8) and arrived in Jerusalem on the tenth day of the month. Seraiah the chief priest, the grandfather of Ezra, the deputy chief and other officers, were taken to Riblah and there murdered (verses 24-26). Sin is destructive; it is a cruel and fearful monster which spares no one. Nothing is too beautiful or too sacred for its grasping hand and defiling touch. For this reason it must be constantly resisted, for they who treat it leniently or yield to its slightest demand will surely be deprived of all glory; they will exchange beauty for ashes and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Some of the unfortunate inhabitants of Jerusalem had already fled outside the city to the Babylonian king, but they, together with the majority who had remained in the city, were carried away to Babylon, just as the Lord had foretold through the prophets (Jer. 21:3-7; 38:3; Ezek. 24:14). They had polluted the holy house of the Lord, transgressed His commandments and mocked the messengers whom in His mercy He had sent to them (Jer. 25:4-7). The captivity of Judah should be a lesson to all, teaching us that the solemn warnings of Scripture must be heeded, and that we dare not do despite to the Spirit of grace (Heb. 2:1-3; 10:28, 29). God will surely judge sin, as He has declared in His word (Ezek. 18:20, 30).

Some Jews were left in the land, including the king's daughters, a few court attendants and some of the poor of the land to till the fields and the vines.

The Lord had not forgotten His faithful prophet Jeremiah, imprisoned for daring to prophesy the capture of Jerusalem (Jer. 37:21; 38:28). King Nebuchadnezzar gave command that the prophet was to be released, treated courteously and obeyed as to his own future (Jer. 39:11-18). We marvel that the heathen despot should be so considerate, but the Lord was in control. Jeremiah was placed under the protection of the new governor, Gedaliah, grandson of Shaphan the scribe (Jer. 40:5-9, 11-16).

The inhabitants of Judah remained in captivity in Babylon until the supremacy of the Kingdom of Persia (2 Chron. 36:20-23). In the year 538 B.C., Cyrus, King of Persia, conquered Babylon and absorbed all its territory into his own kingdom. Then God put it in the heart of Cyrus to issue a decree permitting the Jewish exiles to return to their own land. Their captivity lasted 70 years, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:9-12; 29:10).

The Golden Text does not imply that the righteous man is in danger of not being saved, but it stresses the severity of his trials and difficulties because of sin: "If the righteous with difficulty be saved". By the righteousness of Christ bestowed upon him and by the operation of the Holy Spirit within him, he will finally be delivered from every trace of sin. The ungodly man, alone in his sin without this all-powerful assistance, must deal with a holy God. Sin is real, God is holy and must punish sin.

Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 24—The Babylonians to Return	Jer. 37:1-10
Sept. 25—The City to be Burned	Jer. 38:1-18
Sept. 26—Judah to be Despoiled	Jer. 44:1-10
Sept. 27—The Prophet to be Saved	Jer. 46:24-28
Sept. 28—Babylon to be Judged	Jer. 51:1-16
Sept. 29—Closing Words of Jeremiah	Jer. 51:59-64
Sept. 30—The Temple and the Priests	Jer. 52:17-30

Suggested Hymns

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound!
 Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole.
 Life at best is very brief.
 The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin.
 Come, every soul by sin opprest.
 Will your anchor hold?

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"A mother was standing dumb with grief beside a little coffin in which her only child lay cold in death. Her friends came in and they brought flowers and piled them around the casket in a well-meant effort to disguise death. But it was still death! (I remember myself standing, in a similar case, beside the form of a little boy. His mother stood with me — and I expect she is listening in as I speak this evening. She laid her hand upon his cold little hand, and said, 'Pastor, that is death'. I had nothing to say.) Many friends came in, and they brought their flowers. Others came and told her she should not weep; that after all God had taken her darling child home, and that she must be resigned. She listened to it all, but made no response, and was un comforted! Then a little woman came in and stood with her for a long time in silence. Presently she put her arms gently and lovingly around the stricken mother — she was an intimate friend — and she said, 'Mary, in a drawer at home I have two pairs of little shoes, and the little feet that used to wear them are walking the golden streets to-day'. That was all! But the stricken mother seemed to shade her eyes with her hand as she looked out over the raging waters, until she saw that there were other little ships at sea. There was a bond of sympathy between her and another suffering soul, and she was comforted".

Another gem:

"It was asked at Bethany, 'Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?' Have you ever asked that question, Could He not have done otherwise? Why did He wait? Why was He so long in coming? Had they known it, *He was even then using this human clay which men called Lazarus to open the eyes of the blind.* 'I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe. I am glad that I was absent that I might give Lazarus time to die.' Think of it! 'To the intent ye may believe.' In principle He says, 'The most important thing in the universe is that you should believe. The essential thing is that there should be some fixed centre; that there should be Someone Who from everlasting to everlasting is the same. There can be no peace; there can be no rest; there can be no order; there can be no good, unless there be Someone Who can be believed. I am dealing with you, if you only knew it, so that you may believe. I am leading you step by step, from one experience to another; that I may bring you to the place where you can believe Me for everything.' *And when you come to the place where you can believe God absolutely, you will be in heaven.*"

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