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The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 35, No. 42

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, JANUARY 31, 1957

Whole Number 1810

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

¹
I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

²
And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

³
No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

⁴
And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait for muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

⁵
I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

—John Greenleaf Whittier

DR. AND MRS. SLADE JOURNEY SOUTH

Dr. and Mrs. Slade plan to leave Toronto on February 5th for a trip to the Southland, returning February 28th. In addition to enjoying a brief season of rest, they will be visiting the fields of the Lord's vineyard in Jamaica and the Island of Martinique in which we as Regular Baptists are especially interested. The brethren there are looking forward with keen anticipation to this opportunity of having counsel and fellowship with Dr. Slade and Mrs. Slade in the things of the Lord. Dr. Slade will also be giving a number of messages.

Should there be any readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS in that locality who wish to get in touch with Dr. and Mrs. Slade, they may write to them as follows:

February 8-11—

Care of Mr. Edmond Itty,
Postal Box 343,
Fort de France, Martinique.

February 14-26—

Care of Rev. John Knight,
Clarksonville,
Cave Valley Post Office,
Jamaica.

Let us unitedly pray that the Lord will graciously provide in every way for this journey, and that He will so order all the details of the trip that the name of the Lord may be magnified, souls may be saved and His saints refreshed.

—O.L.C.

THE SUNDAY SERVICES IN JARVIS STREET CHURCH

How do we face the need of the masses? The Saviour's attitude of compassion for the multitudes who were famishing and fainting was in direct contrast to that of the disciples who would have turned them away. Thus did Dr. Slade introduce his morning message in Jarvis Street Church, on January 27th, as he spoke on the theme, "Christ the Bread of Life" (John 6:35, 48, 51). Christ has infinite resources with which to meet the needs of men: none need depart. As the lad's small lunch was blessed to thousands, so can the Lord use our testimony, our talents, our possessions and our powers to the spiritual satisfaction of the many who are in need. He Himself is the Bread of Life, the source of all supply, spiritual as well as physical. Even as food is essential to maintain physical life, so Christ Jesus is an absolute necessity; souls would perish apart from Him. He also provides perfect satisfaction for those who come.

The evening message was likewise positive, direct and powerful. Dr. Slade spoke with great assurance on the theme, "Is It Possible To Be Absolutely Sure of Heaven?" In the midst of so much uncertainty in the world, the Christian has a sure and steadfast hope with regard to the future and the life beyond. God has a great design in salvation by grace (Eph. 1:12-14). Salvation is a transaction between God and the soul which rests on some definite word of God, not on emotional feelings. Therefore, peace comes to the heart through faith in the word of God, which is the word of truth. We receive God's offer through faith, and faith comes by hearing the word of God. By the Holy Spirit the believer is regenerated and also sealed by the Spirit of promise. The stamp is placed upon us; we are His. The seal of the Holy Spirit is the earnest, the pledge that some day we who have

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.

CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
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130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2

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Telephone WALnut 1-7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

trusted in Christ for salvation will stand complete in Him in glory.

The attendance at both services was unusually large, especially in the morning, and the whole day was one of great blessing. The French language service in the afternoon, addressed by Mr. Samuel Pourret, was characterized by larger numbers and by a spirit of enthusiasm. In the morning a lad from the Bible School went forward to confess his faith in Christ, and in the evening two responded to the invitation, one desiring to be baptized and another to join the church.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH CALENDAR**SUNDAY**

- 9.45 Bible School for everybody, from grandfather to the baby.
- 11.00 Morning Service.
- 4.30 Afternoon Class.
- 5.55 Young People's Bible Fellowship Hour.
- 6.00 Prayer Service in Greenway Chapel.
- 7.00 Regular evening service.

TUESDAY

- 8.00 Departmental Conferences of the Bible School, followed by the teaching of the lesson at 8.45.

THURSDAY

- 2.30 Senior Dorcas Sewing Meeting.
- 5.30 Junior Dorcas Sewing Meeting.
- 8.00 Bible Lecture by Dr. H. C. Slade.

FRIDAY

- 7.00 and 8.15—Junior and Senior choir practices.
- 7.00 Friday Night Round-Up for boys and girls.

SATURDAY

- 8.00 Great Weekly Prayer Service in Greenway Hall.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Ye Shall Receive Power

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Massey Music Hall, Toronto, Sunday Morning, June 5th, 1938

(Stenographically Reported)

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

WE HAVE heard a great deal in Ontario in recent years about a certain kind of "power". If you look abroad you will find that men in all walks of life, and in all nations, are seeking power. That is the explanation, I suppose, fundamentally, of the present disturbed condition of the world: individuals and nations seeking more power. There are many kinds of power. Sometimes you would wonder why a man who has amassed millions of dollars, should not be ready to retire. Money to most of us does not mean power, but merely subsistence. But I suppose men continue to amass great wealth in order that they may add to their power. The world is afraid of men of great wealth. And so you find to-day millions of men and women busily engaged in many industries in order that nations may be equipped with sufficient power to defend themselves — and in some cases, to enable them to impose their will upon others.

But here is a very gracious promise, made to all who believe, of a kind of power that will do nobody any harm, but will do everybody good. It is one of the distinctive features of the Christian religion that it undertakes to clothe bankrupt humanity with power, and to enable men to do, by a power not their own, things which would be impossible of accomplishment if attempted in their own strength.

So, rather for the refreshment of our memories than for our instruction, I want you to think for a little while of these words which I am sure must be perfectly familiar to all of you: "Ye shall receive power."

I.

This was spoken to men who were *already privileged in the possession of an unique knowledge*. It was spoken to men to whom the risen Saviour had repeatedly appeared, to whom, by many infallible proofs, for forty days He had shown Himself to be alive. Not only so, they were men who had had the unique privilege of sitting at His feet, and enjoying His teaching ministry for a period of three years. They were men who had already been finally persuaded of the truth of the Messiahship doubt whatever about the authority of holy Scriptures, so far as they had then been written; men who now had been thoroughly persuaded of the truth of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, and who recognized in Him the incarnate God. They were men, then, of unusual knowledge. And yet, in order to make them sufficient workmen, in order that they might be equipped for the discharge of the commission which had been given to them, they were

promised an additional endowment: "Ye shall receive power."

I doubt not that there are many people who need this simple word to-day. It is quite possible for one to be thoroughly versed in the teaching of Scripture; quite possible for one, so far as his opinions are concerned, to be soundly evangelical, to be biblically instructed in the truest sense, to be, in short, evangelically orthodox, believing the great body of evangelical truth, summed up in the word "gospel", and yet to be without power. A powerless orthodoxy, a love that consists in word only, a religion that prides itself on its biblical intelligence, and the accuracy of its doctrinal position, that is yet without power, is one that will do irreparable injury to the cause of Christ. If we are thus instructed, there is reason for thankfulness in that fact. But over and above all that, we all need this spiritual endowment, pledged to us in this promise: "Ye shall receive power".

This promise was made to men who were *already richly experienced in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus*. They were not men who had viewed Him from a distance, who knew Him only remotely: they were men who had a present experience of His goodness; who had been thus partakers of His grace. There was a sense in which they were already one with Him, for surely we must recognize that these people had experienced that great miraculous change which we call conversion. They had been soundly converted. They were men who had been born again; so that their knowledge of the things of God had become an experimental knowledge. They knew Who Jesus was, and surely had had some apprehension of the significance of His death and resurrection in their behalf. And yet the Lord and Master of us all did not propose to send them a warfare at their own charges: He promised this divine equipment: "Ye shall receive power". How very much the true children of God need to dwell upon this promise until they shall be constrained, by faith, to make a full appropriation of it!

II.

Then I would call your attention to the fact that it was not promised that they should develop power, but that *they should receive it*. How many religious counterfeits the adversary of our souls has manufactured! We hear much about the "building of character" — and there is an element of truth in the principle underlying that phrase. We are to be built up — or to be edified, which means the same thing — in Christ. We read much, too, about the possibility of one's *developing his own personal*

ity, enlarging his knowledge, disciplining his memory, strengthening by due exercise, his volitional powers, making him a man of resolution, of strong will, so that he will be able to say, "I will do so and so." And there is a great deal of truth in that suggestion. You cannot look upon the world to-day, and study certain outstanding personalities, whether it be in the world of industry, of commerce, of finance, of politics, in the national and international spheres, without seeing men who are admittedly men of power, men of great natural resource, of great personal endowment, who have coordinated and disciplined all these natural powers to the utmost, until they have become men of power, dominating personalities. With that this text has nothing to do. But you find the counterfeit in the realm of religion, and such power as is here promised is sometimes identified with the reorganization of our mental forces.

I do not want to be offensive, but after all, that is very largely the psychology of the Oxford Group. It is a method of developing power. But that is not what this promise is. And so in certain forms of ultra-spiritual evangelicalism, the power of this text is identified with certain physical sensations, and is confused with a kind of self-hypnotism. And all these counterfeits have this in common, that they represent an effort to develop power out of that which is resident within the man.

But that is not the promise of the text. The promise of the text is that "*ye shall receive power*", power that is not your own; it is not native to any one of us. It is something over and above all our natural abilities: not only a power that is different in degree, but that is different in kind, in essence; it is a power from another world. We are to be born from above, and we are to receive power from above, something that we have not in ourselves.

Dear friends, I might go to many a poor bankrupt man this morning, and were I to talk to him about self-discipline, and about the summoning and re-arranging and coordinating and reorganizing of the latent powers of his personality, I think some such man would say, "Sir, I have tried it all, and I am a completely beaten, defeated man. I have no power. There is nothing in me that will enable me to be what I want to be, and what God wants me to be. You bring me no gospel, you offer me no comfort, by summoning me to a further attempt to do something by my own power."

That is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our gracious God knows that we are defeated. He knows that there are powers beyond the competence of the mightiest man to cope with. I do not care who he is. But the promise of my text is that we shall receive "power", something not our own.

III.

WHAT IS THAT POWER? Ye shall receive the "power" of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. The power of the Holy Ghost is *not something that may be considered as entirely separate from the Holy Ghost*. The Lord does not — if I may so say — stretch a wire from a divine power house to where you live, so that you may turn some kind of intellectual, or volitional, switch, and so receive power, and remain a stranger to Him in Whom that power resides. Oh, no! it is not a personal power. It is the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. And no

man may receive the power of the Holy Ghost without receiving the Holy Ghost Himself. I do not believe there is anything in Scripture to warrant the assumption that this spiritual equipment here promised ever nullifies or sets aside a man's intelligence, or superimposes itself upon his own will, or makes him an unconscious automaton. The Lord never promised that He would hypnotize a man so that he would just be the puppet of the Holy Ghost.

Some years ago I was delivering a course of addresses on The Ministry of the Holy Spirit, and speaking of that strange idea that the one and only evidence of the reception of the Holy Ghost was the ability to speak in some unknown tongue. While I was speaking, a man broke out in an unknown tongue — if it was a tongue at all. It was certainly unknown to me, and to everyone else present, and, by his own confession, equally unknown to him. I said at the time, "Now do not be afraid" — for some were afraid — "Is there anyone here who is able to interpret what this man is saying? If there is, will you stand up?" No one rose. Then I turned to him and I said, "Sit down, sir, and be quiet. The teaching of Scripture is most explicit that unless such a strange tongue can be interpreted, then let him keep silent in church." The application of that principle would have saved thousands of people from spiritual wreck. The simple application, my dear friends, of the precepts and principles of the Word of God will keep you straight, always.

When the meeting was over this man came to me and said, "I am sorry, I did not know that I was going to speak in an unknown tongue. I did not intend to do so, and I could not help it." Then I said, "If you could not help it, it was not of the Spirit of God." The Spirit of God never relieves a man of the responsibility of the exercise of his own will before God. And if the Holy Ghost could come upon a man and make him do things for which he was not responsible, over which he had no control, it would be an infringement upon the sacred rights of personality. And God does not do that: "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you."

What does it mean? It means that *we receive the person of the Holy Ghost*, the Spirit, Who comes to dwell within us, and to abide with us forever, and when thus He dwells with us, He quickens our memory, He enlightens our understanding. He reenfranchises our wills, He quickens our judgment, He engages our affections. He comes to the regenerated personality, and enlarges, energises all the powers of the man in submission to God, and enables him to act as a child of God.

As I remarked in my class this morning, we need to redeem many of these glorious doctrines of the Word of God from the associations which they have had with unintelligent, and very often unethical systems. The power of the Holy Ghost comes upon a man so that he can think God's thoughts after Him; so that he can understand the direction of this Word; and gives him power to do what he knows he ought to do.

May I tell you a story I once heard — I think it was Dr. Frost, former Director of the China Inland Mission, who told it. A missionary in China was once preaching on the street. There was a crowd gathered around. On the outskirts of the crowd there was a Chinese scholar who listened intently. After a while he said, "Preacher,

may I ask you a question?" The missionary gladly gave his consent. He said, "I want to know whether I clearly understand your message. We have many ethical systems, systems which tell us what we ought to do. But we find that we have no strength, no moral strength to do what we ought to do. And so in our philosophies the 'ought to' is here, and the 'want to' is there. And we have never been able to bring the 'ought to' and the 'want to' together. Now if I have understood you correctly, you say that your religion will make a man want to do what he ought to do, and that he will do what he ought to do because he wants to do it. Am I correct?" "Quite correct," said the missionary. Then said the Chinese scholar, "If that be true of your religion, you have the religion that this bankrupt world needs."

And it is true, dear friends, of the really regenerated person, all the avenues of whose nature have been thrown wide to the reception of the Holy Ghost, so that the glorious Third Person of the Trinity comes to live with us to dwell with us always. And such an one, in respect to the forbidden things will say:

"My heart refuseth joys like these,
Since I have known the Lord."

IV.

Now observe, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." *It is quite impossible for any one of us to bear effectual witness for Jesus Christ apart from the power of the Holy Ghost.* Our Lord lived, He died, He was buried, and He rose again; and after establishing the truth of His resurrection, He departed to the Father. And men saw Him no more. The *habeas corpus* principle cannot be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot have the Body in the court, and say, "Here He is." Oh, in those forty days it was true He showed Himself alive. But now He is gone. And if you come to me and say, "I want you to prove, sir, that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, for if you can prove that to me, I shall believe He died for sinners. I shall believe the whole gospel story. But you must first of all prove beyond all possibility of doubt that He rose from the dead, and that He still lives." I say that I am sure of that. "Very well, then, take me to Him. Show me the wounds in His hands, His feet, His side. Bring the Body into court so that I may examine it." I have to say, "I cannot do that." Education cannot do it; science cannot do it; religion cannot do it. There is only one Person in the universe Who can do it, and that Person is the Holy Ghost. He can convince men of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment! "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." In effect the Lord Jesus said, "I commit My case to the Holy Ghost." He must prove the truth of the gospel, and He will prove it, dear friends, as He comes to dwell in His people; not apart from His people, but in His people and through His people. And when He is come, then blessing will follow: "Ye shall receive power".

I fear that sometimes we all have erred in not sufficiently emphasizing this aspect of gospel truth. Let me

avoid that error this morning as I summon any one of you who is not a Christian, whose sins have not been forgiven, washed away by the precious blood, who have no definite experience of the favour of God in Christ — I bid you come to Him, commit your cause to Him. Let Him be your great Advocate before the throne to make intercession for you, to plead the merits of His wounds; and cry: "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." I do not ask you to believe in an absentee Saviour, merely to subscribe to a statement of truth, to yield mental assent to a certain verbal proposition, and say, "I believe so and so, and so and so, and therefore I must be a Christian." Not that; I ask you to receive the living Saviour, and to remember that to everyone who thus receives Him, the promise is given: "Ye shall receive power." He comes to take possession of us, to go home with us, and to go to business with us in the morning; to keep company with us always even unto the end of the age. So said Peter, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Oh, discouraged, defeated, almost despairing soul, this morning yield to Him! "How shall I receive Him?" Just as you receive Christ. "How do you receive Christ?" By faith. We have received the promise of the Spirit by faith; not by rolling on the floor; not by shouting yourself into a frenzy. That is not it. It is simply by taking God at His Word, and, receiving Christ as my Saviour, I also receive the Holy Ghost. Accept the promise, act upon it; and, yielding obedience to Him, we shall find that within us, and within every faculty of the mind, there is a new power functioning, and we shall be enabled to bear witness unto Him here, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that Thou art with us still. We thank Thee that we have Thy promise to-day as had the disciples of old. Oh, give us of Thy grace that we may honour Thy Word, and that we may rest upon Thy promise. Send us forth this morning, every one of us newly, and adequately empowered for all our varied ministries as Christians, in the home, in the office, in the shop, in school, on the street, and everywhere, may we walk in the Spirit for Thy name's sake, Amen.

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THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada

The Divine Purpose Concerning Baptism

By Dr. Robert Dubarry

(Part I)

(Translated from the French by M. E. Daish)

"I also will ask you one thing:
"The baptism of John, whence was it?
"From heaven, or of men!"

—Matth. xxi:24, 25.

THE DIVINE PURPOSE ESTABLISHED

MOST evangelical believers agree in acknowledging that the Founder of the Christian religion, intended to establish an outward sign to distinguish His disciples, and that the sign which He chose can be *no other* than baptism.

The establishment of such a sign answers to a need inherent in the nature of all human organisations:

A logical law rules the choice of this common mark. The more varied the elements of which a community is composed, the more restricted in its limits must be the sign which manifests their unity; but the more also must it be at once apparent and significant.

Of all communities, the Christian body is certainly the most varied, since it embraces all times, all places, all races, all minds and all moral, physical and spiritual degrees. What "depth of wisdom and knowledge" is necessary therefore to discover a sign equally well adapted to all these individualities! A sign *simple* enough to be understood by everyone, *explicit* enough to interpret a profound thought, and *personal* enough not to eclipse individuality!

1.—A secret password, such as in free-masonry, would not have revealed, but rather hidden the unity and would thus have *suppressed* the testimony.

2.—A public gesture, such as the sign of the cross, might have been appropriated by those who were not Christians, and would thus have *compromised* the testimony.

3.—A material mark, a uniform or some such emblem, could not easily have been adapted to all times and to all places, and would thus have *diminished* the testimony.

4.—A solemn parade or ceremony might have developed human pride and *paralysed* the testimony.

5.—A commonplace rite, void of meaning, might in many cases have been performed without conviction, or might have been frequently prevented by circumstances. This would have caused the *equivocation* of the testimony.

This elimination of so many unacceptable signs, leaves us in the *sole* presence of Christian baptism, under the form of total immersion; the form which in the opinion of the most eminent of pedobaptists, was uniquely and universally practised in apostolic times.

None of the above mentioned objections, applies to this symbol. In it are concentrated all the qualities and all the advantages which can be desired or even *imagined*, in favour of a distinguishing sign, common to all Christians.

1.—This symbol is, in the first place, universally practicable. All places and all climates have seen it celebrated, and the material element required is, of all elements, the most easily available.

2.—This symbol has been observed at all periods. Even in the most obscure times of history, witnesses arise to

prove that it was never entirely contrary to the customs of their epoch.

3.—This symbol derives its significance from the experience which is most striking, most universal, and most certain in every human existence, that of death.

4.—This symbol has also the advantage of reflecting the most decisive, most profound, and most significant fact in the Christian's experience. As Paul declared to the Saints at Colosse: "*Ye died*, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

5.—This symbol places such a death at the very beginning of the Christian career; so that the first religious act of the new convert obliges him to understand that the past is entirely left behind and that the future is to be wholly new.

6.—This symbol places, between conversion and entry into the visible church, a tomb into which each member descends in turn, declaring thus his identity with those who have preceded him and with those who follow him, and putting himself on a level, in the eyes of men, with those whom sin and grace have already placed on an equality in the eyes of God.

7.—This symbol proclaims, to those who witness it, the complete rupture of him who performs it, with the world and its evil works.

But this symbol, so wisely chosen, possesses, in addition, all the advantages of a Confession of faith, without the inconveniences thereof. It proclaims that those who practise it believe:—

1.—In the authority of the Word of God, since the reasons which make them accept it, are solely scriptural.

2.—In the divinity, personality and authority of each of the three Persons of the Trinity, since it is in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost that the act is accomplished.

3.—In the atoning death and resurrection of Christ, since it is to His tomb that baptism brings us.

4.—In the legal death in Christ, and in the personal resurrection of the believer.

5.—In the intimate union of the believer with his Saviour, since he who is baptized, "has put on Christ."

6.—In the necessary separation of the Christian from the world, of the past from the future. The baptized convert leaves the sphere in which he moved formerly, for the church in which he will live henceforth. The baptistry becomes the frontier between the world and the church.

7.—In the necessity for a courageous and disinterested witness of faith, since the one baptized pledges himself publicly by the most humiliating of rites.

Observe that this Confession of faith possesses, above all those which men have transmitted to us, through the centuries, the advantages:—

1.—Of being *plain* enough, to be understood, both by those who proclaim it, and by those who witness it.

2.—Of being so *clear*, as not to lend itself to evasive interpretations.

3.—Of being sufficiently *adaptable*, to permit those who do not see all its aspects, to comply with it sincerely nevertheless, without mental reservation or fear, and that, with a sure profit; which can but increase with subsequent meditation.

4.—Of speaking at the same time of *life* and of principles, of *practice* and of theory, since, being as it is an illustrated Confession of faith, it constrains its actor, if one may say so, to depict his faith in a living parable.

* * *

If this interpretation of baptism be the true one, it is wrong and dangerous, for individuals, as well as for churches, to modify or to neglect a symbol so important, and so full of significance. This, we shall now endeavour to demonstrate.

THE DIVINE PURPOSE REJECTED

We have seen of what wise and divine purposes the institution of baptism is the expression. We shall now examine the consequences to the individual, to the local church, and to the entire Christian world, involved by the frustration of these designs.

Speaking of the forerunner, Jesus declared that "All the people that heard him, and all the publicans, *justified* God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the pharisees and lawyers *rejected the counsel of God* against themselves, being not baptized of him."

By the voice of John the Baptist, God demanded of the people a public recognition of their sorrow for sin, by being baptized. Confessing their sins in the waters of the Jordan, the publicans and the common people proclaimed the absolute character of the divine rights, and by their confession God was justified. On His side, by welcoming their repentance, God made them enter as factors in the development of his plans, causing them eventually to become disciples of Christ, founders of the church and heirs of heaven.

As for the pharisees and lawyers, who, from lack of spiritual discernment, or from fear of man, did not come to the baptism, by their abstention they discredited the authority of the messenger of God, and instead of justifying the divine law, they contested it publicly by their ostentatious disobedience. Even those among them who might have been accessible to feelings of repentance, showed that they were not impressed with the gravity of their sin toward God, since, in refusing baptism, they declared that the offended holiness of God, could quite well be accommodated to the terms of reconciliation which man might himself choose to impose.

God could not covenant with such gracelessness. These Jews, heirs of an education of twenty centuries and guardians of the sacred oracles, were the designed guard of honour of the promised Messiah. On them, should have rested one of the most glorious responsibilities that man could envy, that of bringing their co-operation to the work of redemption, and to the destruction of the barriers which separated Israel from the Gentiles.

Having already rejected John the Baptist in refusing to accomplish the initial act, they were *unable* thereafter to become disciples of the Messiah. In this reprehensible position, they showed themselves incapable of receiving the Holy Spirit, and of contributing to the formation of a new community, of which baptism was to be the initial rite.

Moreover, as this position not only involved the loss of positive advantages, but also committed them to a downward course, the pharisees and lawyers were, by their tacit protest regarding baptism, *driven* to enter a path of hostility toward John the Baptist, and afterwards towards Jesus Himself, Whom they finally drove to the Cross.

* * *

This tragic example of the consequences of an apparently slight violation of divine commands, still repeats itself in our days, in the very domain of Christian baptism.

The design of God was to lead His children to take publicly before the eyes of men and of angels, the only place proper for them—the depths of a tomb. The self-abasement of man magnifies God in proportion to the depth to which man stoops. What spectacle grander than that of a universal company, the flower of humanity, proclaiming in the person of each one of her members, by a symbol understood of all, that she confesses herself to be nothing, and that men should not look to her, but to the God before whom she bows. What a vindication, what a glorification of God! No grave could have been too deep or too dark to illustrate such testimony!

In spurning primitive baptism, Christianity has rejected a purpose of God. She has turned attention from Him to draw it upon herself. But the human wisdom, the regard for worldly sentiment and respectability, which has led her to adapt her rites to suit the children of this world, has not succeeded in accrediting her, in their eyes. Too often, the world, seeing only her hollow spiritual pretensions, has in its turn rejected her.

* * *

Let us now consider more closely the consequences, in our own day, of rejecting baptism, as they concern the individual and the local church, as well as the entire Christian community.

We will examine successively: 1st. The reprehensible character of the rejection of baptism; 2nd. The regrettable consequences involved therein; 3rd. The divine disapproval caused thereby.

I.—The rejection of baptism is certainly *reprehensible*, since it implies:

1.—A kind of challenge to God, by the refusal to submit to the clear expression of His will;

2.—A concession to Satan, since in the face of the most positive declarations of Scripture, credence is granted to the doubt: "Yea, hath God said?";

3.—A weight on the conscience, which those so exercised seek to relieve by all kinds of specious arguments, in order to justify their abstention from a symbolic act which they cannot but recognise as a divine institution;

4.—Grave consequences, which we are about to enumerate, and the recognition of which should suffice to bring Christian people back to the observance of the ordinances of their Lord.

II.—The rejection of baptism entails extremely *regrettable consequences*:

A.—To the individual:

1.—The impossibility of having a conscience truly at rest in the presence of the Word of God;

2.—The loss of the consciousness of complete union with Christ in His death;

3.—The loss of the authority of example with one's fellows;

4.—The loss of the joy which is found in bearing the reproach of Christ;

5.—The habit of taking the opinion of the world into consideration;

6.—The almost inevitable isolation of the non-baptized, with regard to those of his brethren who have already accepted baptism.

B.—To the local church, the rejection of baptism entails:

1.—The removal of the barrier, which should best protect the Christian assembly against the introduction into their midst of those who are irresponsible or unworthy;

2.—The deprivation of the spiritual stimulus which might be given by the scriptural argument: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus-Christ were baptized into His death?" — Romans vi., 3.

3.—The restriction from full communion of thought with those Christian churches whose conception of baptism does not warrant them in sanctioning anti-scriptural practices.

C.—To the Christian community throughout the world, the rejection of baptism results in:

1.—The weakening of the public testimony, since it exempts the disciple from humbling himself before God and man, as he is commanded.

2.—The spectacle of disunion among the people of God even upon the subject of entrance into the church;

3.—The disappearance of a line of demarcation distinguishing between the world and the church;

4.—The absence within the Church herself, of a marked difference between the Christian and the unconverted, and the illusion that it is easier to reach the masses by other than individual methods.

5.—A growing independence with regard to the Scriptures, because, ceasing to be the rule of faith in details, their authority is weakened when great principles are in question;

6.—The introduction and the perpetuation of the sprinkling of infants. Although it may appear to have some ground for existence as an act of consecration, this ceremony presents the *immense disadvantage* of later making an ordinance so gracious, so expressive and so clearly commanded as believers' baptism, appear to many a useless repetition.

7.—The substitution of the "first communion" in the place of baptism, as the sign of affiliation, and the infliction upon the church of all the abuses and of all the insoluble problems which this untoward innovation entails;

8.—The loss of equilibrium between the two Christian symbols. Whilst the baptism of believers, mentioned explicitly more than a hundred times in the Word of God,

is systematically left in the background, the communion, mentioned only seven times and that in passages sometimes obscure, has however become the sign of entrance into the church, and even, in certain instances, the indispensable visible element of the assembly of God's children.

9.—Complications in heathen countries, when, in the vicinity of baptist and non-baptist missions, trouble is caused in the minds of the converts and the weakening of the native church, through unconverted descendants of a first generation of Christians being introduced into it by infant sprinkling;

10.—Grave historic and doctrinal consequences, such as union with the State, the establishment of papacy, the great schisms embodied in the Greek and Roman Churches, the wars of the Reformation, and theological scepticism. These consequences could *never* have followed, if the immersion of believers had remained the narrow door of the churches.

III.—The rejection of believers' baptism involves, for those who are guilty of it, divine disapproval.

A.—The individual who, having *seen* in the Scriptures that God asks him to consecrate a few seconds of his Christian life to an act as easy and so full of meaning as baptism, *refuses Him* this minimum of obedience, puts himself, whether he admits it or not, under a disability. The efforts and sacrifices which he may impose upon himself henceforth, cannot be fully approved, and run the risk of remaining unfruitful. The marvellous career of George Muller would, by his own declaration, *never* have been achieved, if, while quite young, he had not risen above his personal reluctance and the prejudices of his connections, and commenced the life of obedience by being baptized.

B.—Christian bodies have also incurred divine disfavor by not observing the scriptural teaching concerning baptism. Called to raise this barrier between themselves and the world and thus to draw attention to the Author of the Commandment, the churches which have refused to take the determined attitude which baptism implies, have in the end lost their power, and have more or less failed in their object; for the rejection of the divine purpose, cannot but entail a loss of the blessings which are connected therewith.

To lose divine favour, and to incur the blame of a Father, such as our God — what an unspeakable calamity! Will anyone refuse to understand those who, foreseeing this misfortune, strive to urge their brethren to escape therefrom?

By yet other arguments, we would still persist in this desire, the motive of which is solely anxiety for the glory of God, and brotherly solicitude toward Christians for whom, in all other things, we feel naught but esteem and affection.

OPPORTUNITY IS EVERYWHERE

Is there a reading room or a hospital where you may leave a copy of *THE GOSPEL WITNESS*?
Why not investigate this possibility?
Spread the truth.

The Soul-Winner's Reward

By Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon

(Address at a Tabernacle Prayer-Meeting)

ON MY way to this meeting I observed upon the notice-board of the police station a striking placard, offering a large

REWARD

to anyone who can discover and bring to justice the perpetrators of a great crime. No doubt our legislators know that the hope of a huge reward is the only motive which will have power with the comrades of assassins. The common informer earns so much scorn and hate that few can be induced to stand in his place, even when piles of gold are offered. It is a poor business at best.

It is far more pleasant to remember that there is a reward for bringing men to mercy, and that it is of a higher order than the premium for bringing men to justice; it is, moreover, much more within our reach, and that is a practical point worthy of our notice. We cannot all hunt down criminals, but we may all rescue the perishing. God be thanked that assassins and burglars are comparatively few, but sinners who need to be sought and saved swarm around us in every place. Here is scope for you all; and none need think himself shut out from the rewards which love bestows on all who do her service.

At the mention of the word REWARD, some will prick up their ears, and mutter "legality". Yet the reward we speak of is not of debt, but of grace; and it is enjoyed, not with the proud conceit of merit, but with the grateful delight of humility.

Other friends will whisper, "Is not this a low and mercenary motive?" We reply that it is as mercenary as the spirit of Moses, who "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." In this matter, all depends upon what the reward is; and if that happens to be the joy of doing good, the comfort of having glorified God, and the bliss of pleasing the Lord Jesus — then the aspiration to be allowed to endeavour to save our fellowmen from going down into the pit is in itself a grace from the Lord; and if we did not succeed in it, yet the Lord would say of it, as He did of David's intent to build a temple, "It is well that it was in thine heart." Even if the souls we seek should all perish in unbelief, if they all despise and reject and ridicule us, yet still it will be a divine work to have at least made the attempt. If there comes no rain out of the cloud, yet it has screened off the fierce heat of the sun; all is not lost even if the greater design be not accomplished. What if we only learn how to join the Saviour in His tears, and cry, "How often would I have gathered you, but ye would not"! It is sublimity itself to be allowed to stand on the same platform with Jesus, and weep with Him. We are the better for such sorrows, if no others are.

But, thank God, our labours are not in vain in the Lord. I believe that most of you, who have really tried, in the power of the Holy Spirit, by Scriptural teaching and by prayer, to bring others to Jesus, have been successful. I may be speaking to a few who have not succeeded; if so, I would recommend them to look steadily over their motive, their spirit, their work, and their prayer, and then begin again. Perhaps they may get to work more

wisely, more believingly, more humbly, and more in the power of the Holy Spirit. They must act as farmers do who, after a poor harvest, plough again in hope. They ought not to be dispirited, but they ought to be aroused: We should be anxious to find out the reason of failure, if there be any, and we should be ready to learn from all our fellow-labourers; but we must steadfastly set our faces, if by any means we may save some, resolving that whatever happens we will leave no stone unturned to effect the salvation of those around us. How can we bear to go out of the world without sheaves to bear with us rejoicingly? I believe that the most of us who are now assembled to pray have been successful beyond our expectations. God has blessed us, not beyond our desires, but yet beyond our hopes.

I have often been surprised at the mercy of God to myself. Poor sermons of mine, that I could cry over when I got home, have led scores to the cross; and more wonderful still, words that I have spoken in ordinary conversation, mere chance sentences, as men call them, have nevertheless been as winged arrows from God, and have pierced men's hearts, and laid them wounded at Jesus' feet. I have often lifted up my hands in astonishment, and said, "How can God bless such a feeble instrumentality?" This is the feeling of most who addict themselves to the blessed craft of fishing for men, and the desire of such success furnishes as pure a motive as could move an angel's heart, as pure, indeed, as that which swayed the Saviour when, for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame. "Doth Job serve God for nought?" said Satan. If he could have answered the question in the affirmative, if it could have been proved that the perfect and upright man found no reward in his holy living, then Satan would have cavilled at the justice of God, and urged men to renounce a service so unprofitable. Verily there is a reward to the righteous, and in the lofty pursuits of grace there are recompenses of infinite value. When we endeavour to lead men to God, we pursue a business far more profitable than the pearl-fisher's diving or the diamond-hunter's searching. No pursuit of mortal men is to be compared with that of soul-winning. I know what I say when I bid you think of it as men think of entering the cabinet of the nation, or occupying a throne; it is a royal business, and they are true kings who follow it successfully.

The harvest of godly service is not yet: "we do with patience wait for it"; but we have earnestness of our wage, refreshing pledges of that which is laid up in heaven for us. Partly, this reward lies in the work itself. Men go hunting and shooting for mere love of the sport; surely, in an infinitely higher sphere, we may hunt for men's souls for the pleasing indulgence of our benevolence. To some of us, it would be an unendurable misery to see men sink to hell, and to be making no effort for their salvation. It is a reward to us to have a vent for our inward forces. It is woe and weariness to us to be shut up from those sacred activities which aim at plucking fire-brands from the flame. We are in deep sympathy with our fellows, and feel that, in a measure, their sin

is our sin, their peril our peril.

If another lose the way,
My feet also go astray;
If another downward go,
In my heart is also woe.

It is therefore a relief to set forth the gospel, that we may save ourselves from that sympathetic misery which echoes in our hearts the crash of soul-ruin.

Soul-winning is a service which brings great benefit to the individual who consecrates himself to it. The man who has watched for a soul, prayed for it, laid his plans for it, spoken with much trembling, and endeavoured to make an impression, has been educating himself by the effort. Having been disappointed, he has cried to God more earnestly, has tried again, has looked up the promise to meet the case of the convicted one, has turned to that point of the divine character which seems most likely to encourage trembling faith — he has in every step been benefiting himself. When he has gone over the old, old story of the cross to the weeping penitent, and has at last gripped the hand of one who could say: "I do believe, I will believe, that Jesus died for me"; I say, he has had a reward in the process through which his own mind has gone.

It has reminded him of his own lost estate; it has shown him the struggles that the Spirit had in bringing him to repentance; it has reminded him of that precious moment when he first looked to Jesus; and it has strengthened him in his firm confidence that Christ will save men. When we see Jesus save another, and see that marvellous transfiguration which passes over the face of the saved one, our own faith is greatly confirmed. Sceptics and modern-thought men have little to do with converts: those who labour for conversions believe in conversions; those who behold the process of regeneration see a miracle wrought and are certain that "this is the finger of God." It is the most blessed exercise for a soul, it is the divinest ennobling of the heart, to spend yourself in seeking to bring another to the dear Redeemer's feet. If it ended there, you might thank God that He ever called you to a service, so elevating, so confirming, as that of converting others from their evil ways.

Another precious recompense is found in the gratitude and affection of those you bring to Christ. This is a choice boon — the blessedness of joying in another's joy, the bliss of hearing that you have led a soul to Jesus. Measure the sweetness of this recompense by the bitterness of its opposite. Men of God have brought many to Jesus, and all things have gone well in the church till declining years or change of fashions have thrown the good man into the shade, and then the minister's own spiritual children have been eager to turn him out of doors. The unkindest cut of all has come from those who owed their souls to him. His heart was broken while he sighed, "I could have borne it, had not the persons that I brought to the Saviour turned against me." The pang is not unknown to me. I can never forget a certain household, in which the Lord gave me the great joy to bring four employers and several persons engaged by them to Jesus' feet. Snatched from the utmost carelessness of worldliness, these who had previously known nothing of the grace of God were joyful confessors of the faith. After a while they imbibed certain opinions differing from ours, and from that moment some of them had nothing but hard words for me and my preaching. I had

done my best to teach them all the truth I knew, and if they had found out more than I had discovered, they might at least have remembered where they learned the elements of the faith. It is years ago now, and I have never said as much as this before; but I feel the wound much. I only mention these sharp pricks to show how very sweet it is to have those about you whom you have brought to the Saviour.

A mother feels great delight in her children, for an intense love comes with natural relationships; but there is a still deeper love connected with spiritual kinship, a love which lasts through life, and will continue in eternity, for even in heaven each servant of the Lord shall say, "Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me." They neither marry nor are given in marriage in the city of our God, but fatherhood and brotherhood in Christ shall still survive. Those sweet and blessed bonds which grace has formed continue for ever, and spiritual relationships are rather developed than dissolved by translation to the better land. If you are eager for real joy, such as you may think over and sleep upon, I am persuaded that no joy of growing wealthy, no joy of increasing knowledge, no joy of influence over your fellow-creatures, no joy of any other sort, can ever be compared with the rapture of saving a soul from death, and helping to restore our lost brethren to our great Father's house. Talk of ten thousand pounds reward! It is nothing at all, one might easily spend that amount; but one cannot exhaust the unutterable delights which come from the gratitude of souls converted from the error of their ways.

But the richest reward lies in pleasing God, and causing the Redeemer to see of the travail of His soul. That Jesus should have His reward, is worthy of the Eternal Father; but it is marvellous that we should be employed by the Father to give to Christ the purchase of His agonies. This is a wonder of wonders! O my soul, this is an honour too great for thee! A bliss too deep for words! Listen, dear friends, and answer me. What would you give to cause a thrill of pleasure in the heart of the Well-beloved? Recollect the grief you cost Him, and the pangs that shot through Him that He might deliver you from your sin and its consequences; do you not long to make Him glad? When you bring others to His feet, you give Him joy, and no small joy either. Is not that a wonderful text: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"? What does that mean? Does it mean that the angels have joy? We generally read it so, but it is not the intent of the verse. It says, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God" — that is, joy in the heart of God, around whose throne the angels stand. It is a joy which angels delight to behold, — what is it? Is the blessed God capable of greater joy than His own boundless happiness? Wondrous language this! The infinite bliss of God is more eminently displayed, if it cannot be increased. Can we be instruments of this? Can we do anything which will make the Ever-blessed glad? Yes, for we are told that the great Father rejoices above measure when His prodigal son that was dead is alive again, and the lost one is found.

If I could say this as I ought to say it, it would make every Christian cry out, "Then I will labour to bring souls to the Saviour"; and it would make those of us who have brought many to Jesus instant, in season and out of season, to bring more to Him. It is a great pleasure to be doing a kindness to an earthly friend, but to be doing something distinctly for Jesus, something which will be

of all things in the world most pleasing to Him, is, a great delight! It is a good work to build a meeting house, and give it outright to the cause of God, if it is done with a right and proper motive; but one living stone, built upon the sure foundation of our instrumentality, will give the Master more pleasure than if we erected a vast

pile of natural stones, which might only cumber the ground. Then go, dear friends, and seek to bring your children and your neighbours, your friends and your kinsfolk, to the Saviour's feet, for nothing will give Him so much pleasure as to see them turn and live. By your love to Jesus, I beseech you, become fishers of men.

Pastors of Jamaica Urge Government to Assure Full Religious Freedom

THE Rev. G. W. Smith, director of the Independent Jamaica Baptist Mission, has released the following statement on "Religious Liberty in the British Caribbean Federation":

"The following appears under 'Constitutional Matters' in the Report of the British Caribbean Federation Conference, held in London, which was printed, in part, in *The Daily Gleaner* of Kingston, Jamaica on February 25, 1956:

"11. The preamble to the Constitution shall include a recital to the effect that all persons in the Federation shall continue to enjoy the free exercise of their respective modes of religious worship."

"In a letter to Sir Hugh Foot, Governor of Jamaica, dated October 12, the writer said concerning it, "This would not guarantee complete freedom of religious worship and the right to propagate one's faith. If the Constitution were to be so worded it could be construed as forbidding the introduction of new denominations, other modes of worship, and proselytising. Evangelicals could be prevented from working in an island like Dominica."

"It is most important that the Standing Federation Committee should alter the Draft Constitution being prepared by the Colonial Office, if necessary, to ensure the enjoyment of full religious liberty to all the inhabitants of the Federation before it assumes its final form for presentation to the Federal Legislature. A Jesuit could have framed what appears in the above excerpt.

"Every evangelical church and every evangelical minister in the countries which are to be federated should insist that this be done. As President Theodore Roosevelt said, 'There may be a reason for not fighting, but there can be no reason for fighting feebly.' And time is of the essence. The Standing Federation Committee meets in January.

"Dr. T. T. Shields, the pastor of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, in his controversy with Premier W. L. MacKenzie King of Canada over the encroachments of the Roman Catholic Church declared: 'I insist that it is as much my right as a British subject to expose a religion that I believe to be false, as it is to espouse a religion I believe to be true. That is the very essence of religious liberty.'"

Eight pastors in Jamaica have addressed a letter to the Governor of Jamaica, His Excellency, Sir Hugh Foot, on the subject, "Religious Liberty: The Constitution of the British Caribbean Federation." The full text of the letter, dated December 6, with the names of the pastors who signed it, follows:

"Your Excellency,

"With reference to the letter of 23rd of October from your Private Secretary, Mrs. C. St. Aubyn, addressed to Rev. G. W. Smith of 'Clovelly,' Ramble P.O., would you kindly make the following representations to the Colonial Office and the Standing Federation Committee on behalf of the undersigned ministers of the Gospel in the Island of Jamaica:

"1 We urge that the Constitution of the British Caribbean Federation contain a clause to the effect that the Church is to be separated entirely from the State.

"2. We are concerned that all persons in the Federation shall enjoy *full liberty of conscience* and have the right to *practise* and *propagate* their religious beliefs and request that the Constitution should be worded specifically to guarantee these vital rights of free men.

"3. We are of the opinion that if the phraseology of Clause 11, Section III, Constitutional Matters, of the Report of the British Caribbean Federation Conference, were to be adopted these rights would not be fully safeguarded.

"4. We therefore appeal to those who are responsible for the drawing up of the Constitution to take these points into consideration when they are preparing the Preamble.

"5. We respectfully request that a copy of the letter addressed to you by Rev. G. W. Smith, dated October 12th, be forwarded with these representations.

"Thanking you, we are

"Your Excellency's obedient servants,

(Signed)

"A. L. McKENZIE, Pastor Buff Bay, Skibo, Bethesda Bethbara, and Tranquillity Baptist Churches.

"J. W. KNIGHT, Pastor, Clarksonville, Mt. Moriah and Tweedside Baptist Churches.

"J. T. M. GREEN, Pastor, Nightingale Grove, Rock Cliffe and Cataboo Baptist Churches and Acting-Pastor of Thornton and Forest Mtn. Baptist Churches.

"S. I. CUMMINGS, Pastor, Independence Hall Baptist Church, Axe-and-Adze, Hanover.

"H. A. WHITE, Pastor, Rehoboth Mission, Kingston.

"W. M. KNIGHT, Pastor Sudbury Baptist Church.

"LEONARD DUNN, Pastor, Missionary Church, Devon, Manchester.

"G. W. SMITH, Pastor, Macfield and Hewett's View Baptist Churches."

—Christian Beacon

PRAYER WITHOUT CEASING

By Rev. Gerald B. Griffiths, B.A., B.D.

*Extracts from a Sunday morning Sermon preached
at Charlotte Baptist Chapel, Edinburgh)*

Pray without ceasing—1 Thessalonians 5:17.

PRAY without stopping? What does Paul mean? We should always remember that prayer assumes two fundamental forms: prayer should often be a *conscious act* in our Christian life and it should always be our *unconscious attitude*. To begin with the aspect most familiar to us, prayer is an act of our conscious mind.

A Conscious Act

As a conscious activity prayer may assume a variety of forms; it may be public — as at the congregational prayer meeting, it may be private — as in our own room or at our bedside; it may be in our own words, or in the words of a psalm or a collect from the Book of Common Prayer or some other treasury of devotion; it may be wordless. For whilst words are frequently an aid to prayer they are by no means indispensable. The essence of prayer is not in our vocabulary and diction but in the longing of our souls: real prayer is to be measured by the intensity and spirituality of our soul's desires. And there are times when the most fervent souls are dumb in prayer; their adoration and pleading too deep for words. But whether public or private, extempore or liturgical, spoken or silent, all these prayers have one element in common — they involve the concentration of our hearts and minds upon God.

Now we cannot hope to obey Paul's injunction literally on this conscious level. It would be manifestly wrong for a surgeon to be contemplating the majesty of God or the distressed in Africa when he should be concentrating on the distressed patient on the operating table before him. Unless we are to withdraw from the world altogether and become hermits or monks, we can only "pray without stopping" at the penalty of neglecting our daily duty and failing our fellows. A practical saint like Paul would never encourage any man to renounce a life of service to his fellows for an unreal or occult mysticism — he has already told these Thessalonians "to do their own business and to work with their own hands."

What Paul means by "without ceasing" is evident from the opening words of this letter where he tells his Thessalonian converts how much he loved them! "... remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love and patience of hope." By which Paul meant that he remembered them *consistently* — he had not glibly promised to pray for them and then promptly forgotten them, nor had he fervently prayed for them for a few days and then lost all interest in them. No, they were as much in his heart and intercession now as the day he said goodbye to them. There was staying power and stickability in Paul's remembrance.

Many of us have to confess with shame that this stickability is a quality all too often absent in our own prayers. Is the graph of our prayer life steady or does it betray serious fluctuations, is it even or erratic? Have we to confess that we no longer pray as once we did — when Christ first met us or when years later He revealed Him-

self to us in a new way? When we were first married we reared a family altar — has it fallen into disrepair?

Whilst praying without ceasing does not mean praying without interval for work and play, it does certainly involve praying with intensity and regularity. But how can we maintain our graph constantly at the high mark of a close walk with God? What practical helps can we give our fickle hearts?

(1) There is first the important element of personal *discipline*. Our Lord made a great deal of tenacity in prayer. You recall that when He urged His disciples "always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). He told them the story of the determined widow who insisted upon seeing justice done — she worried and harried, pestered and badgered the judge until he simply had to do something to get rid of her! Jesus made the same point in His story about the man who knocked a neighbour up in the middle of the night and refused to go away until his reluctant neighbour had got out of bed and given him the loaves he wanted — "because of his *importunity*". It is grit and tenacity of this kind that we must have in prayer. Paul bids the Romans continue "constant in prayer" and exhorts the Ephesians to pray "with all prayer and supplication . . . watching thereunto with all perseverance."

But perseverance in prayer demands unrelenting self-discipline. The "quiet time" must become a sacred priority in our day. And it is so fatally easy to allow ourselves to be so "troubled about many things" that we have no time left for the one thing that is needful — to sit like Mary at the feet of Jesus. And if private prayer is easily reduced to a few hurried sentences in the morning and evening, what of the difficulties of maintaining the Family Altar?

"Pray and you shall pray oftener," says Jeremy Taylor. There is nothing to compare with the joy of a clean heart and that holy baptism of inward peace and compassion which fills our innermost soul through prayer. Family life reaches its tenderest and deepest happiness when parents and children sing a few simple choruses or a hymn, read a Scripture, pray and join in the Family Prayer. But whilst we acknowledge its benefit, how easy to drift on day after day and week after week without family worship or private devotion. Our season of fenced-in quietness with God is something for which we must literally *fight* if we are to be constant: only those who exercise holy resolution can maintain the steady, clear flame of prayer in their hearts and homes. Mr. Ready-to-Halt will soon find himself too busy to pray without ceasing.

(2) To this quality of self-discipline we must add the element of *patience*. How many of us become discouraged by the slowness of God's actions? When we stop to analyse what it is that has clogged the fountain of prayer in our hearts, we sometimes discover the boulder to be a secret grudge that we are nursing against Providence.

Events are not moving fast enough for us, God is too slow in answering our cry. It is then we need to remember that God's delays are not denials. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was." That is an illuminating statement: Jesus delayed his deliverance *because* He loved Mary and Martha. He allowed them to pass through the agony of their brother's death that they might know the startling joy of his resurrection; He did not restore Lazarus from illness because He wished to do something better — to resurrect him from the dead. Monica prayed that her son might not go to Rome. Her prayer was not immediately answered; to her dismay Augustine went to Rome — but only to be converted! And if we are not to lose heart in prayer it is essential that we should cultivate long views of God's workings. A thousand years is as a day with the eternal God! We are feverish and hasty, demanding that the whole plot should unfold in the first act. But God will not be stampeded. Indeed, many of His plans require more than one life for their fulfilment. Stephen died a *human* failure, cut off in the morning of his power. But Stephen's triumphant martyrdom exercised an influence for the furtherance of the Gospel far beyond his own day. Perhaps it is only from the fourth centenary of their gallant death at the stake that we can see what God wrought in Bilney, Latimer, Ridley and Cranmer. Elijah took too short a view of God's purpose and sat under his juniper tree in a fit of depression in which he had neither heart nor strength for prayer. If we are then to pray without ceasing we must guard against the paralysing discouragements of our impatience.

(3) Another ally in keeping the fire always burning upon the altar is *praise*. "Praise, pray, peg on" was the counsel given to a minister in Edinburgh the other day. Praise is certainly an indisputable element in all persevering prayer. No man can be content with a few hurried words of prayer once he begins to count his blessings! When war is on or danger threatens, when a loved one faces a critical operation or decision, when there is fear or shame to bring us to God in a state of desperation, then we really put our hearts into our prayers. But when the crisis is past and we breathe freely, our prayers easily become formal and soulless again — unless we return like the Samaritan to give God thanks. Let us but begin to bless the Lord for His benefits towards us and we shall find that eternity itself is too short for such a blessed task. Indeed, even in Heaven — where every other form of prayer may be outmoded — there will always be adoration, the crowning rapture of the redeemed.

(4) But there is a final call to unceasing prayer which must press heavily upon every sensitive soul to-day — the ministry of *intercession*. Psychologists classify some men and women as introverts: their thoughts and feelings are turned in upon themselves. It is an unhappy trait and when it dominates our prayer life it is plainly unchristian, for whatever our psychological make-up may be, we must become extroverts before the throne of grace if we are to be real intercessors. Let any believer look out upon the world with compassionate eyes, let him see and feel the terrible weight of men's sins and sorrows, physical, mental and spiritual, and he can only cry out with Samuel: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

Unconscious Attitude

But prayer is more than regular acts of praise, penitence and petition. Fundamentally prayer is an attitude of the believing soul.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

And whilst it would not be right for us — so long as we are citizens of this world — to be unceasingly engaged in conscious prayer we can and should be always in the attitude of prayer. "Though a man cannot be incessantly praying in words," to quote an old commentator, "the mind may be held continuously in an attitude of prayer, even in sleep."

Clement of Alexandria sees this injunction to pray without ceasing as a plea for the continual reference of all things to God, and in this way a Christian is represented in every situation; in his walks, talks, silences, reading, in all reasonable pursuits. Basil, a fourth century saint, enlarges upon this thought: "Not in syllables, but rather in the intuition of the soul and in acts of virtue which extend to all the life is the power of prayer. . . . When thou sittest down to table, pray; when thou takest food, give thanks to Him that gave it thee; when the time of taking food is passed, let not the memory of the merciful Giver pass too. When thou puttest on thy coat, thank Him that gave it thee; and when thy cloak, increase thy love to God, who provided us with garments fit for both summer and winter. Is the day over? Thank Him who gave us the sun for the service of our daily work, and gave another fire to lighten the night and serve the rest of the needs of life. Let night afford other suggestions of prayer. When thou lookest up to heaven and seest the beauty of the stars, pray to the Lord of all things seen and adore the all-merciful Artist of the whole, who in wisdom hath made them all. And when thou seest all things buried in sleep, then again worship Him who even against our will breaks off by sleep the stress of toil and by a short respite restores our strength. . . . Thus mayest thou pray without ceasing, not in words but the whole conduct of thy life, so uniting thyself to God that thy existence is an **unceasing prayer.**"

—Charlotte Chapel Record

The Gospel Witness Family

has the happy privilege of studying similar portions of the Bible together, and praying for common objectives together. **BUT WE MUST INCREASE.**

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When you have finished reading this copy of **THE GOSPEL WITNESS**, pass it on to someone else. If you can use additional copies we should be glad to supply them. Spread the truth.

A Quick Answer to Prayer

Translated from the German by the late
Ernest Gordon

DR. WILHELM BUSCH was in early life a follower of so-called Modernist opinion, but was converted to Christ and is now an outstanding evangelical. There is no more powerful preacher of the truth in Germany, and he is also the gifted editor of *Licht und Leben* ("Light and Life"). The following tells of an answer to prayer in his early life as pastor:

"Recently a photo came to light which was taken thirty years ago. Twenty men of various ages with drums and fifes! Where are they now? Most of them the war swallowed up. Some have moved from Essen. Two or three I meet now and then and it is an occasion of great joy.

"They were of the time of agitation. The Stahlheim, the iron front of the Nazis, and Uniformed Communist companies fought with each other in 'hall battles.'

"I was then a young pastor in a wholly Communist quarter, walking down a street, tired and discouraged. Men were so bitter, they would not even listen to Jesus' words. I felt very lonesome even in the heart of this thickly populated tenement quarter.

"In front of me I noticed a couple of young men. One wore the uniform of the Red Front fighters. They were in lively discussion. I sighed to myself, saying, How can one reach such fellows? Then came the thought: Why cannot God work a miracle and give me open door into the hearts of such young men? It says in the Revelation, 'He that openeth, and no man shutteth.' I folded my hands in prayer to my ever-present Lord: 'O Lord, let me see Thy marvelous work. Open a door to these people.' I had indeed no idea how that could happen.

"I walked a little faster and overtook them. In passing, I heard the man in uniform ask the other, 'Have you anything for me to read?'"

"I was delighted. Here was an open door. I turned quickly and said, 'If you want something to read, come to me.'

'He looked at me surprised. 'Who are you, then?'

"I am a pastor.'

"He laughed. 'I, too, am a pastor.'

"'You certainly are not,' I retorted. Whereat he smilingly offered to bet on it.

"It came out that his name was Pastor, Willy Pastor. And I, too, am named Wilhelm and am a pastor.

"Suddenly he stared at me with agitated look, asking, 'When can I come tomorrow?' I named an hour and he promised to be there. Then he left hurriedly. Next day he was in my study and related the following:

"'Last year I was going by Weber Place where a multitude of people were streaming into Holy Cross Church. Out of curiosity I went up the church steps for a look around. A wave of people pushed me inside. It was long since I had been in a church. I found myself wedged in the middle aisle and when I attempted to get out, the

organ had begun to play and the people told me to be quiet. So it came about that I was attending a church service without intending to.'

"'Well, and how did it please you?' I interjected. It had become clear to me that he had attended my ordination service, and that was, to tell the truth, a painful memory, for I had then preached the poorest sermon in my life. How did that happen? The day before, a moving van had come, and I had spent half the night ordering my library. I was twenty-seven years of age and full of hope that the right words would come into my head when the time came.

"I saw in memory Holy Cross Church filled with people. Around the altar stood the banner-bearers of many unions and pastors in robes. Came the organ music and a long liturgy. One and another spoke; an hour and a half had passed. There was lack of oxygen in the crowded church. Then it was my turn. The people were tired, and a sunbeam struck me straight in the eyes so that I could scarce see anything. The little I had planned to say soon vanished, and I was glad to climb down again from the high pulpit.

"When I sat down beside my dear, young wife, she said, 'One could only be ashamed at such a sermon.'

"Yes, so it was; and now there sat before me a clever young Communist, who tells me he attended that service involuntarily. I'll hear a second time what a pitiful witness I then was.

"But my eyes opened wide when he went on:

"I stood there in desperation, for things went on endlessly. When a new speaker walked up the pulpit, I determined to force my way out, no matter what happened. However, I saw a young man of my own age go up and I said, 'I'm curious to know how much he knows.' And then the address struck me, struck me as nothing had ever struck me before. Yet I was a convinced atheist.'

"He paused. I hung on his lips:

"'You see, I was a regional leader for the drum and fife corps of the whole Red Front of the Ruhr area. Whenever there was a birthday, we celebrated. There was much drinking. My married life went wrong, as, in fact, my whole life. Some days ago, I was thinking, Would that I might find one who could show me a better way and lo! there on the street the very man whose talk had so impressed me! If that is not marvelous!'"

"I explained that another Hand was here at work.

"He became my dear co-worker. His heart and service, now belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, and because his interest was in drum and fife bands, he formed one for me. Never will I forget how the first procession drew out with tremendous noise and a brave company of men distributing tracts. So was a highway broken through this spiritually dead city quarter of Essen."

—The Sunday School Times

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 21 First Quarter Lesson 6 February 10, 1957

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

THE BELIEVER'S PATH IN FACING APOSTASY

Lesson Text: 2 Timothy 2:1-15.

Golden Text: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."—2 Timothy 2:4.

Introduction:

The Second Epistle to Timothy, written about 67 or 68 A.D., was probably the Apostle Paul's final official communication. Unlike the First Epistle, which is a formal letter dealing with church order and administration, this one is intensely personal. Languishing in a Roman prison, the Apostle feels keenly the loneliness of his position. Some of his former companions in the Gospel are engaged elsewhere, while others have deserted him (2 Tim. 4:10-12, 14-16, 20). He needs the comfort of warm clothing, but especially does he long for his books and for the presence of his young friend Timothy (2 Timothy 4:9, 13, 21).

Confidence in his early release mitigated the trial of his first imprisonment (Phil. 1:19, 24-26), but he is conscious of the fact that this time he will die for the Saviour (2 Tim. 4:6-8), and the hope which sustains him is his desire to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23, 24). In anticipation he is already living in the heavenly realm and looking upon his earthly struggles with the serene and triumphant joy of a successful general who is about to lay down his command. The younger leader must be advised as to the plan of action.

The local church is the subject of First Timothy, but the church of the future is dealt with in Second Timothy.

Outline of Second Timothy:

- I. Hold Fast to the Truth of the Gospel: chapter 1.
- II. Be Strong in the Grace of the Gospel: chapter 2.
- III. Continue in the Study of the Scriptures: chapter 3.
- IV. Watch in All Things: chapter 4.

I. The Believer's Life: verses 1-7.

In Chapter 2 the Apostle uses various metaphors, each one suggestive of some aspect of the believer's life and activity, and with each there is an appropriate exhortation. The believer, as a son of God, is to be strong in the grace of Christ. As a teacher, he is to pass on to others the instruction which he has himself received; and as a soldier, he is to endure hardness. As an athlete he is to strive lawfully, and as a husbandman he is to labour patiently. He is to be a workman, pleasing his Master. He must be a holy vessel, a vehicle for the blessing of the Lord to flow through him to others (verses 20, 21). As the servant of Christ, he is to be patient and obedient (verse 24). As a member of the Christian rescue squad he will tenderly release those who have been trapped by the Adversary (verse 26).

The believer's path in the time of apostasy is beset by many dangers (chapter 3), but the grace of God is his sufficiency (2 Cor. 3:5, 6; 12:9; Phil. 4:13). Therefore, as a son of God by faith in Christ, he has every right to that abounding grace (2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:19), and must be strong in the Lord.

The truth must be propagated by those who already know it (2 Tim. 1:13; 3:14). God's plan was that Christ should train His disciples to go forth with the message of the Gospel and that these in turn should relay the message to others (Mark 3:13-15; John 17:18, 20, 21; Acts 26:16-18). Timothy was to be one of the key heralds to transmit the truth of the Gospel.

As the Apostle Paul had been called upon to face the conflict against error and wrong, so must Timothy learn to

endure hardship and thus prove himself a good soldier (2 Tim. 4:5, 7). He will not cling to his own plans and desires, but will yield himself in submissive obedience to his general (2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12). The soldier submits to strict discipline, obeying the commands of his superiors. An athlete, also, is bound by the rules of the game (1 Cor. 9:25, 26).

The marginal reading of verse 6 is to be preferred: "The husbandman, labouring first, must be partaker of the fruits." A husbandman or farmer must labour first, if he would enjoy the harvest (Jas. 5:7). So must the Christian endure hardship and labour faithfully, if he would reap his reward (Gal. 6:9).

II. The Believer's Duty: verses 8-15.

The truth of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the cardinal truths of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4). It was because of Paul's faithfulness to the Lord and to His Gospel that he was now imprisoned (Phil. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:22). Timothy, too, must be prepared to suffer for Christ and with Him (Matt. 5:10; Luke 22:29). Only by sharing in the suffering of Christ can the believer share in His glory (Rom. 8:17).

Christ suffered vicariously for us, and there is a sense in which we who are in the service of Christ suffer on behalf of others (verse 10; 1 John 3:16). If we would be channels of spiritual blessing, we must be prepared to endure trials and sorrows, unnecessary, perhaps, for our own growth in grace, but essential if we would be of comfort and assistance to others (John 17:19; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4; 12:15; Col. 1:24).

Faith may be sorely tried in times of apostasy, but it is comforting to know that the Lord never changes (Heb. 13:8). Men may be unfaithful, but He is always faithful (1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; Tit. 1:13). Men may fail Him, but He will never fail those who put their trust in Him (Isa. 42:4; Rom. 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:6). Being God, He can never deny Himself; He can never repudiate His word or act otherwise than according to His eternal Godhead (Hab. 1:12; Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17).

Timothy was to charge the people not to engage in profitless discussions, calculated to turn the hearers from the truth (1 Tim. 1:4, 6; 6:4). Representatives of religious cults argue for hours, but their talk may be a mere striving about words and may have no connection with the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures, except that it is a denial of that which is written. They cover up the truth by subtle arguments (2 Pet. 3:16).

In the time of apostasy, when people are turning away from the truth, it behooves the servant of God to be diligent in the study of the Scriptures, that he may be able to distinguish between truth and error, and that he may discern the teaching of the Word on various subjects. He must be like a skilled workman, understanding his tools and making the best possible use of them. The work of God demands our very best preparation and effort. Let us do all in our power to win His approval (Matt. 25:23; Rom. 14:8; 2 Cor. 10:18; Col. 3:23, 24).

Daily Bible Readings

Feb. 4—The Path is one of Faith	2 Tim. 1:1-12
Feb. 5—The Path is one of Steadfastness	2 Tim. 1:13-18
Feb. 6—The Path is one of Separation	Eph. 5:1-21
Feb. 7—The Path is one of Holiness	1 Pet. 1:13-25
Feb. 8—The Path is one of Suffering	1 Pet. 3:10-22
Feb. 9—The Path is one of Self-Discipline	1 Cor. 9:19-27
Feb. 10—The Path is one of Light	Psalms 119:97-112

Suggested Hymns

I know not why God's wondrous grace.
 Fight the good fight.
 A glory gilds the sacred page.
 He leadeth me.
 Simply trusting every day.
 Jesus bids us shine.

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