

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

Authorized as Second Class Mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa

Vol. 35, No. 43

130 Gerrard St. E., TORONTO, FEBRUARY 7, 1957

Whole Number 1811

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday-Morning, April 10th, 1932

(Stenographically Reported)

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:14-16.

IT IS exceedingly important, imperative indeed, for our own comfort that we should have a clear view respecting the historic Jesus. As our brother sang to you this morning of the sins that were nailed to the cross, I am sure we all felt the importance of the record as well as the fact of that great accomplishment. It is well that we should look back and see what Jesus did for us:

"My faith looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear
While hanging on the cursed tree,
And knows its guilt was there."

It is important also that we should be forward-looking men and women, that we should have an eye to the future, that we should remember and frequently reflect upon the promises of God respecting the grace that is to be revealed to us at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It surely is equally important that we should see what Jesus is to-day, that we should rejoice in what He is now doing, not only in what He has done. It is important, I say, that we should clearly apprehend something of the present ministry of Jesus Christ.

I am inclined to believe that many of the Lord's people are somewhat impoverished by their habit of looking backward and forward, rather than looking upward. This text tells us what we now have in Jesus Christ: we have an High Priest Who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. And because of that we are exhorted to hold fast our profession.

I.

We come, then, to this observation that the believer's profession ought to be based upon the fact of his sure position: because of what we have, we dare to profess our faith. Now WE HAVE AN HIGH PRIEST. You may not have much money; you may not have many friends; you may not have very much influence; you may not possess great ability; but if you are a Christian you have one thing, you have a High Priest.

It is a great thing when sickness comes into the home to have a physician. The family physician is a member of the family. How should we do without him? I used to know a lady who suffered much, and frequently she wanted her doctor to come and see her. She did not want him to give her medicine very often: she thought she would be better if he would just call and see her. And so when he came he sat down and had a talk with her, and she was always helped, even by his presence. It is a great thing to have a family physician who is a family friend, and to feel that if there is any sickness in the house we have not to take a telephone directory and make up our mind just whom we shall call: we know whom we are going to call; he is one of us; he belongs to us.

And there are some people who need a lawyer occasionally. It is a great mistake to think that the only business of a lawyer is to help people if they have a quarrel. A good lawyer tries to keep people out of court instead of bringing them into it, and advises them how to avoid trouble. And if you have some contract to draw up, some

covenant into which you want to enter, it is a fine thing to have an expert counsellor to whom you can go with the confidence that his advice will be sound. If you have any money it is a good thing to have a bank, some place to put it, some place in which you can deposit your treasure. If you have troubles it is a good thing to have a friend upon whom you can rely.

But now I remind you who are Christians that we have an High Priest. So far as we are concerned that is settled, is it not? Is it not a great thing to have some things settled? You have had a problem in your mind, and you have been weighing the respective merits of two courses until at last you reach a decision, and you say, "Well, I am relieved that that is settled".

Now so far as our Priest is concerned, there remains no choice. Some people frequently make changes respecting the church they attend. They first choose one and then another. But in respect to the High Priest we have no second choice: we have an High Priest. And I want you to think of that this morning, and of all its implications. Not we shall have by and by; I am not speaking to you now about the King Who is to come in glory. I am speaking of the Priest Whom we now have; that is, of His character. He is "a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec". We have an High Priest. That is settled. Now, where is He?

II.

WHERE IS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST?

There are some people with whom it is somewhat difficult to keep in communication — they move so often. If you have ever had experience in trying to keep a church roll, you would know something of the difficulties. I have often wished some people would get a gypsy wagon, a house on wheels, so that they would stay in it. And if they did not like one street, they could move it over to another; but you would have some idea of what house they were living in anyhow.

I have frequent enquiries as to where certain ministers live. Some people seem to think I am a sort of Baptist directory. There is scarcely a day passes but somebody telephones. They actually pay me the compliment sometimes of asking me if I could tell them how to get to a certain church that is not Jarvis St.! There are ministers who do not stay put very long either: they are always on the move.

Now what is the address of the Lord Jesus Christ? Where is He? When He was upon earth you remember two of John's disciples heard Him speak, and they followed Him. And they said to Him, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see." And they followed Jesus.

But where is Jesus now? There was a time when they thought He was in the grave, and they came to the sepulchre with their spices to anoint His precious body. Then you remember the weeping woman who said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And to one standing by she said, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." There was a time when the disciples of Jesus had to ask, Where is He? a time when He was localized, and they had to enquire respecting His address.

But where is our High Priest now? What is His permanent address? Listen: "We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens" — That is where He is;

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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SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. That is His address — "From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." But until then He has passed into the heavens.. What does that mean?

Ministers sometimes are troubled about their reputation, and some of them about their standing. Years ago I knew a man who seemed to think that if he piled up university degrees it would give him standing. I said to him one day, "My dear brother, if you had diplomas enough to paper your study wall, it would not make any difference. It is not what you are reputed to be, but what you really are that will count."

But what about our High Priest? What is His standing? He has passed into the heavens and is seated "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." It means that He has found acceptance with God. He is in session at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

When an ambassador goes to a foreign court he presents the credentials of his government, and is accepted by the government to which he is accredited, as being the representative of the court from which he comes. Now Jesus has passed into the heavens. His credentials have been accepted. Heaven itself has been satisfied. And He is our High Priest.

Let us find out a little about Him. We have a great High Priest. I would rather have a great High Priest than a great preacher, would not you? — or a great anything else. How great He is no man can say. It is folly to compare Him with men. Whenever you hear a preacher name the Lord Jesus Christ in association with anybody else who ever lived, comparing Him with the greatest men of all time, be careful of that preacher, for "He hath given him a name that is above every name." Ours is a

great High Priest; no one can be compared with Him. He is not like Aaron! "Our Lord sprang of the tribe of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood". Aaron was one type of Christ, but here is a High Priest Who is incomparably greater than Aaron, likened only to Melchisedec, a priest forever.

We have a great High Priest; and His name is Jesus. He appears not to prosecute, but to defend. His name is Saviour. Is not that a glorious thing? Oh, I love to think of Jesus in the manger! "Thou shalt call his name JESUS". I love to think of Jesus in Nazareth, and Capernaum, moving about among men, and touching men in their need by the touch of God. I love to think of Jesus on the cross, dying in our room and stead; and I rejoice in Him as I see Him risen, moving among men. But He is not here now, and I am glad He is not; I am glad He is not here in physical presence until he has come to be the King. No! No! He is passed into the heavens; the Jesus of the manger and the wilderness and the cross and the empty grave has passed into the heavens to be our High Priest. And as though that were not enough, He is described as Jesus the Son of God. How marvellous that is! — the Son of the Highest, knowing God as no one else knows Him, knowing the requirements of the divine holiness as no one else can possibly understand them, knowing the inner spiritual significance of the law of God as no one else can possibly comprehend it. The Son of God Who is One with the Father, Who was with the Father before the foundation of the world, Who is inseparable from the Father, one in essence, one in all the qualities of His being, Jesus the Son of God, that is my High Priest! And, mark you, the Son of God is there to represent the sons of men.

There are lawyers who, in the beginning of their career, are glad to take any case. You will find them in the police court; you will find them dealing with little matters. By and by the man gets on, and he is too busy to be bothered with these little things. Presently you hear of him as a distinguished counsellor. Only the great cases now would he touch. Usually there are just one or two men at the top of their profession. If someone has an exceedingly difficult case, no matter what the fee, they say, "If only I can get that man, I shall win my case."

Here is the wonder of it, that poor human creatures like ourselves, just men with all the frailties of our human kind, with all our weaknesses, with all our tendencies to sin, just ordinary men, have a High Priest Who is no other than the Son of God! And then the wonder of it, too, is that He is the Priest of sinful men, such as you are, such as I am! Jesus the Son of God appearing before the throne of the divine holiness in behalf of men who are sinners!

Now you can say it for yourself, but I say it for myself; I have a High Priest, whatever you have. I know that I have One Who not only died for me, but is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God Who appears in heaven for me. And in His Person I, too, have passed into the heavens, and His presence there is a pledge of my ultimate appearance before the throne of the divine glory.

III.

What is the argument of all this? "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, LET US HOLD FAST OUR PROFESSION."

"Do you dare to call yourself a Christian? That would be presumption!" someone says. "I say my prayers; I read my Bible; I go to church; I do the best I can; I hope some day I shall be saved. But oh, I would not think of saying, 'I am a Christian!'" Ah but, my friend, seeing we have so great a High Priest, Who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, hold fast your profession and dare to say, "I am saved." Can you say it? ("Amen!")

Oh, there are some people who are troubled with doubts. They examine themselves; they read their record; they say, "I do not know whether I ought to say it." My purpose this morning, dear friends, is to get you to look away from yourself entirely to the High Priest in the heavens. And because of that, because so completely you are wrapped up in Christ — one with Him — because your exalted Head has passed into the heavens, it is absolutely sure, as God Who cannot lie has promised, that you, too, will be there! Hold fast your profession in spite of all your unworthiness, in spite of all your failures. Take fresh hold upon the promises of God this morning; lay your hand again to the sword, to the plow, get on with God's work, seeing we have such a High Priest Who has passed into the heavens.

If I had to depend on some church members I should long ago have been forced to give up. Would not you? I tell you I should have abandoned my ministry long ago if I had got my eyes off Jesus Christ. Long ago the Lord taught me that. We are to "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself" lest we be weary and faint in our minds. As our brother sang to us, "When everybody else fails" — everybody! Have you been in a darkness like that? I have; when I felt that there was not a living, breathing, man anywhere who could be depended upon. Such treachery have I seen, such betrayal!

What then? I know One Who never fails. And seeing I have such a High Priest, I am going to hold fast my profession, if I am the last man, and the only man, on earth. Will you do the same, my friends? Look to Jesus; cleave to Him; abide in Him.

IV.

Now there is a special characteristic here described. I think I must take time to call your attention to it. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We might have had a High Priest Who would have become impatient with our ignorance. But not so. We have a SYMPATHETIC HIGH PRIEST.

I have the greatest admiration for teachers, teachers of little children, of boys and girls, and of young men and women. When you have said a thing over and over again, and you think you have surely got the nail in now and clinched so that it will never come out, somebody asks a question, and you say, "Well, were they asleep? They have not heard anything at all!" Ah, it is one of the disabilities from which a man or a woman with a keen intellect suffers. There is a tendency to be impatient with people who cannot learn. That is why it is that the brilliant student usually makes a poor teacher. But the man who has to work hard for everything he gets, who gains his knowledge little by little, and seems to be a slow student, but at length arrives so that he becomes master of his subject, when he is dealing with others, he remembers his own infirmity, and is able to be patient with others who also find it difficult to learn. Oh the

wonder of it, the wonder of it, that the One Who says, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was with him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth" — that that One is our Teacher!

The woman of the South came from the uttermost parts of the earth to behold the wisdom of Solomon; and, "behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Infinite wisdom is with Him. And you see what the text says, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"; from Him no secrets are hid. What a Teacher!

But "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." And He said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. Do not be afraid to come to My school, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

How easily He might have been impatient with our moral blindness when we cannot see the difference between right and wrong. Did you ever meet people like that? Here it is, just as plain as day, as plain as the simplest problem in mathematics. That is wrong — cannot be right. The person says, "Now come, let me argue, I do not see that there is any wrong in it." You plead your cause and bring forth your strong reasons arguing the point, but the man or the woman, especially the woman perhaps, will not see it. Is there not a tendency to be impatient? You say, "But there it is, plain as can be. That is wrong, that is right." "I do not see it".

Did you every try to help somebody who was slipping down hill? Did you ever try to prop them up? And they seemed to have no moral fibre left, a man who cannot say, "No!", to temptation of any kind, a man who cannot strengthen his resolution so as to do right because it is right.

I remember a fellow who came to me from the penitentiary. He came to me in the vestry and shut the door. I did not know who he was. He said, "Look at me, sir. Do you know where I come from?" I said, "No, I do not." "Well, look at my head, and you will know." It was close-cropped. He said, "I have just come from Kingston Penitentiary". It was a long story; but I found him a position. And I said to the man who employed him, "I want you to hold me responsible for that man. Please employ him on my recommendation, and ask no questions. I will be responsible for his conduct, and if he fails I will make good his failure. But I want you to trust him for my sake." Well, I did everything for that man, but he seemed to have no moral stamina in him; and after a while he slipped through my hands, and got away. I got a pitiful letter from him from Australia later. Oh, how weak he was! I held on to him as long as I could; but at last I found I could do no more.

How easily the Lord-Jesus might have become impatient with us! But, notwithstanding all these things, He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin. My dear friends, He will never let you go, if you are a Christian. You have a High Priest; you will always have a High Priest, and the High Priest will always have you, for He seeks and saves that which was lost.

If that be so, let us this morning come boldly because we have Jesus, and for no other reason, to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and forgiveness for our sins, and grace to help in time of need.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou art in the heavens, appearing for us in the presence of the Father, yet in the person of the Holy Ghost Thou art present with us here. And we pray that Thy dear children may be strengthened in their faith, and that any who have not yet yielded to Christ may be led to do so now. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

VISITING PREACHERS AT JARVIS STREET CHURCH

During the absence of the Pastor, Dr. H. C. Slade, currently on a missionary tour in the islands of Jamaica and Martinique in the West Indies, the following visiting preachers will minister in Jarvis Street Church:

DR. K. R. KINNEY, of Johnson City, New York, Vice-President of the International Council of Christian Churches, will give an illustrated lecture on the work of the I.C.C.C., of which Dr. Carl McIntire is President, on Thursday evening, February 7th. He will show pictures taken in Palestine, The Antipodes and parts of Europe. Dr. Kinney will also preach at both services on Sunday, February 10th.

REV. GEORGE OLLEY, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Ottawa, will be the guest preacher on Thursday, February 14th, and on Sunday, February 17th.

REV. GEORGE B. FLETCHER, of Virginia, U.S.A., Lecturer at Toronto Baptist Seminary, will minister on Thursday, February 21st, and on Sunday, February 24th.

DR. H. C. SLADE expects to be home in time to preach on Sunday morning, March 3rd.

DR. P. W. PHILPOTT, honoured servant of the Lord, who has been preaching the glorious gospel for many years, is scheduled to preach Sunday evening, March 3rd.

DAUGHTERS OF EARNESTNESS

Not simply to the wind, however auspicious, does the seaman owe his progress. Without it, indeed, his ship would but rise and fall in the swell of the deep; but without the skill to catch and use the breeze, and compel it, even when adverse, by dexterous trimming of the yards, and setting of the sails, and handling of the helm, to force him on and over the waves, what service were the wind to him? So was it in Joseph's and so is it in all cases of success. God gives the opportunities but success turns on the use we make of them; on the promptitude with which we seize the openings of providence; on the earnestness of character we bring into the field; on the resolution and energy we throw into our business.

—GUTHRIE

THE WEEK-END SERVICES IN JARVIS STREET

THE Thursday evening Bible Lectures by Dr. H. C. Slade are always well attended, great interest being shown in the present series of most interesting and helpful studies in The Pentateuch. On Thursday evening, January 31st, the Feasts of Jehovah (Leviticus 23) were described, with the significance of each in its portrayal of the life of Christ and its typical teaching concerning the experience of the individual believer and concerning the history of the Christian church.

The Saturday Night Prayer Meeting was unusual in character, being devoted almost entirely to earnest intercession on behalf of the missionary causes for which the church is responsible, with special emphasis on the missionary tour of Dr. and Mrs. Slade as they visit the fields of Martinique and Jamaica, February 5th to 28th. As the hearts of the large number present united in calling upon the Lord for His blessing, the Holy Spirit responded, giving to His waiting people the assurance of His presence and benediction.

The Sunday services on February 3rd were seasons of spiritual refreshment. In the morning Dr. Slade preached on the topic "The Woman of Samaria" (John 4:1-14). This illuminating incident formed the basis of a powerful plea to sinners that they should come to the Saviour, and to saints that they should consecrate themselves to the main task of the church, that of reaching out to souls with the Gospel. We must obey the command of Christ to go into all the world and preach the Gospel as His witnesses, and we must follow His example. When on earth He sought out individuals, for He places the highest value on the human soul. To do the will of God in this regard should be our passion, as it was His. At the close of the service a boy openly confessed his faith in Christ as his personal Saviour, and during the evening service one of the Bible School boys was baptized.

The Sunday evening message on "The Everlasting Covenant" (Hebrews 13:20, 21), while clearly and decisively pointing sinners to the Lamb of God, also prepared the hearts of His people for the great Communion Service which followed. The old covenant of works, with its purpose as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ and to lead to the covenant of grace, failed to provide salvation. The

new covenant of grace was established by our Saviour, who in His own person fulfilled and honoured the law. Salvation now is free to all who will come, trusting in the work of Christ on their behalf. Christ is our Great Shepherd; great in His resurrection, deliverance, provision and protection. The new covenant of grace was established between Christ and His Father. The demands of divine justice have been fully satisfied, and reconciliation between God and man is now graciously possible. Five new members were received at the Communion Service.

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 busy world shoves angrily aside
 The man who stands with arms akimbo set,
 Until occasion tells him what to do;
 And he who waits to have his task marked out,
 Shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled.
 Our time is one which calls for earnest deeds."

"My People are destroyed for lack of knowledge." So said Hosea in his day. So say we in ours. **THE GOSPEL WITNESS** is seeking to remedy this condition. Help spread it. Send us names — more names — and still more names. Use this coupon now.

EDITOR, THE GOSPEL WITNESS

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The Divine Purpose Concerning Baptism

By Dr. Robert Dubarry

(Part II)

(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!"

—Matt. xxi:24, 25.

THE DIVINE PURPOSE FRUSTRATED

WE HAVE already seen:

1.—How wise and benevolent, was the purpose of God in furnishing His people with the spiritual assistance afforded by believers' baptism.

2.—How serious have been the consequences of the rejection of this loving design.

We now propose to examine still further:

1.—How greatly Christian people have erred, in instituting infant sprinkling.

2.—How urgent is the necessity laid upon us, to return to the divine ordinance of the immersion of believers.

We shall avoid lingering, in the following lines, upon the minor points of the controversy which infant sprinkling has evoked. Forbearing also to return to historical arguments so many times stated, we submit only the following points, which numbers of most eminent pedo-baptists agree with us in considering as definitely settled.

1.—Infant sprinkling is not the subject of any scriptural command, nor of any clear scriptural precedent or inference.

2.—Infant sprinkling is a ceremony clearly distinct in its form, in its meaning, and in its subjects, from the immersion of believers.

3.—Infant sprinkling can never be established, but by arguments which are *not* scriptural, and quite distinct from those which apply to the immersion of believers.

These arguments fall into two classes:

A.—Those which were brought forward at the introduction of infant sprinkling, to justify its establishment. Practically unknown before the beginning of the third century, and ardently striven against for a number of years, the institution which is under our consideration could not be established: (a) except under cover of the idea of a magical virtue attaching to the sacraments; (b) except in consideration of the superstitious fear of perishing without baptism; (c) except by virtue of the illusion that a visible Church should gather, from their birth, all the citizens of the State into her membership.

B.—Those arguments which sprang up many centuries later, when, the first appearing untenable, it became necessary to abandon the ceremony completely, or else to prop it up henceforth on new grounds.

If the Reformers, pursuing to the end their desire to return to the Scriptures, had rejected, together with so many other Romish practices, the sprinkling of infants, we dare to affirm that Protestantism would *never* have dreamed of going back upon that verdict, any more than it has re-established other customs equally wanting in scriptural foundations, such as, for instance, the ancient participation of infants in the communion.

Why then did the first Reformers adhere to a ceremony, far more foreign to the letter and to the spirit of the Scriptures than many others, with regard to which they showed themselves pitiless?

1.—Because, though admirable men, they were nevertheless men of limited faculties, naturally incapable of handling all questions with absolute thoroughness, and of escaping from all the errors and all the weaknesses of their times, or for foreseeing the lamentable consequences thereof;

2.—Because, being prudent men, they desired to resist the excesses which fraudulently shielded themselves behind the noble name of the Anabaptists,* so that they spurned every appearance, even ceremonial, of connection with them.

3.—Because, being fallible men, they could, for the moment, forget that the approval of God is always infinitely more to be desired than that of men, and hesitate before the reproach and the complications, which might have been occasioned by the re-introduction of the immersion of believers.

* * *

This regrettable inconsistency on the part of the first Reformers was, alas! to be pitilessly remembered by Bossuet. In masterly pages, too little known by Protestantism, we see how the famous Catholic controversialist turns to the greatest possible account the dilemma in which the Protestants had so unfortunately allowed themselves to be caught. To those who so energetically rejected the doctrinal value of tradition, and who declared that they could trust to nothing but the Bible, he triumphantly called to mind that the Scriptures only recognise the immersion of believers, and that by preserving infant sprinkling upon the sole evidence of tradition, Protestants sanctioned in their own midst, after having censured it among their adversaries, recourse to an authority other than the Scriptures. (Bossuet: *Traité de la Communion*).

In order to save Protestantism from the discredit of such an evident contradiction, it was necessary for the Reformers to tax their ingenuity in order to make some reply. Bossuet's opponents had the choice of three alternatives:

* In Church history, the name Anabaptists (from Greek—"to baptise again") usually designates a sect of fanatics, who, led by one Thomas Munzer, (1520) committed wild extravagances during the troublous Reformation period. They rejected infant baptism, and had they kept true to their worthy origin, the whole trend of Protestantism might have been most thoroughly improved. In more modern times, the name has been applied to those who do not regard infant sprinkling as real baptism, according to the Scriptures.

1.—Either to accept with humility the recall to their principles, which the famous prelate had addressed to them, and henceforth to entirely abandon infant sprinkling as unscriptural.

2.—Or else, while adhering to infant sprinkling, to recognise its traditional character, and to establish it *not* upon scriptural arguments, but on grounds of expediency and convenience. This would certainly have been illogical, but it would at least have been an attitude of candour and uprightness.

3.—Or lastly, to maintain it by attempting a desperate effort on its behalf by the use of scriptural arguments, texts and analogies.

Unfortunately, it was this last alternative, the most perilous of all, which the Reformers chose. The consequences were lamentable. A bad cause makes the arguments bad, which are used for its defence. Thus we see that in order to establish in their encounters with Bossuet and other opponents, both Catholic and Anabaptist, the scriptural validity of infant sprinkling, the Reformers were compelled:

A.—To do violence to the best rules of biblical interpretation:

1.—To the rules of *philology*, by arbitrarily modifying the obvious meaning of "baptizo", to immerse.

2.—To the rules of *historical criticism*, by considering as established the existence of infants in the household of Lydia.

3.—To the *analogy of faith*, by resting the fundamental dogma of entrance into the church, upon the problematic existence of newly born infants not mentioned in the Bible, and that, in the face of the distinct teaching of the entirety of Scripture, which demands personal faith, previous to any religious act, and before baptism in particular.

4.—To the rules of a sane *exegesis*, by taking out of their context, and by interpreting in an unjustifiable manner such words as: "Suffer little children to come unto Me." "Your children are holy." "Thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." Etc.

5.—To the unchanging rules of *typology*, by instituting an arbitrary comparison between infant sprinkling and circumcision.

B.—To establish the biblical validity of this ceremony, they moreover ascribe to God intentions which are nowhere set forth in the teachings of His Word.

1.—The intention that His explicit instructions relating to the immersion of believers *should be modified* in the course of time.

2.—The intention of attaching to baptism a blessing *essentially distinct* from any other which may be received in the accomplishment of other Christian duties.

3.—The intention of creating an innate difference between the children of Christians and those of worldly people, by the means of a *special covenant* with Christian families, and of a special promise to their children.

4.—The intention of seeing co-existent in the church two classes of people: those who, having received baptism as infants, are not converted; and those who, sprinkled or not, have become Christians.

* * *

The consequences of these errors of interpretation have been profoundly disastrous.

1.—The reproach of Bossuet has remained, all through the centuries, the implacable challenge which still exposes Protestantism to most humiliating sarcasm, from well-informed Catholics.

2.—The embarrassment of liturgical authors has become acute, when they have had to attempt to incorporate in the service for infant sprinkling, appropriate biblical allusions and texts, as well as common sense arguments ensuring seriousness and solemnity.

3.—The intellectual conscience of Pedobaptist expositors has become more or less perverted, and their ability to expound the teaching of the Scriptures on ecclesiastical matters, has been hence in a great measure paralysed.

4.—The churches have been weakened by the introduction of the unconverted into their midst.

5.—Conversion, being considered unnecessary to baptism, it has become very difficult to require it for admission to the Lord's table.

6.—The "first Communion" being practically considered as the sign of entrance into the church, this innovation has unavoidably led to inextricable confusion, and to unutterable moral sufferings for godly pastors.

7.—The liberty of the little ones baptized not having been respected, these same have too often felt it very unjust to be reproached later on with having broken promises, which they would never have dreamed of making of their own accord. This circumstance has not helped to render religion congenial to them, but rather is one of the chief causes of modern indifference.

8.—To these evil consequences should be added the immense loss sustained by all those who, mistaking their sprinkling as infants for a true baptism, are deprived of the very considerable spiritual advantages which have been ascribed above to the immersion of believers.

9.—Lastly, God Himself cannot but experience real sorrow, in seeing so many of His most sincere children, so many of those whom He has taken infinite pains to redeem at such great cost, capable of rejecting one ordinance of His Word in order to adopt another, which not only fails to correspond with His own thought, but which has become a veritable reversal of it.

* * *

It is no exaggeration to affirm that, for all these reasons, infant sprinkling is to-day defended only by means of questionable arguments. Theologians as a whole agree, let us remember, in refusing it any scriptural foundation; and their great majority admit, with praise-worthy candour, that the other grounds upon which it is maintained are most fragile.

Among them, the *only* one which appears to have any weight, is the argument of the solidarity of the human race.

The idea of infant sprinkling is founded for many on this fact, which we are far from denying. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Romans 5:19. But the solidarity of the race does not destroy individuality. No man is lost by Adam's sin; it is *our own personal sin* which ruins us. And in the same manner, no man is saved by the death of Christ, *except he die to himself*. Thus, baptism is not designed to repre-

sent original sin and universal grace, but, essentially, the repentance of the sinner, and the faith by which he lays hold upon grace. Baptism symbolises our *voluntary* death (in contrast with the common fate which falls upon all men) and our *personal* resurrection with Christ.

The basis of the old covenant was *heredity*, the sign being circumcision. The basis of the new covenant is *liberty*, and the sign is baptism of regenerate believers.

* * *

THE DIVINE PURPOSE ACKNOWLEDGED

In the preceding pages, we have endeavoured to establish the *raison d'être* of the immersion of believers, the sad consequences of its abandonment, and the necessity of transforming the ceremony of infant sprinkling. We desire now to insist on the urgency of a *return* to the divine purpose concerning this symbol.

The fact that our Lord clearly commanded immersion, and that He linked a profound meaning to its practice, as well as the consideration of the rare blessings which it brings to the individual and to the whole body, should, it seems, suffice to decide every true child of God and every faithful Christian body, on a prompt and joyous obedience.

If it is not thus, it is because the point in question is that of an ordinance fallen into disuse, and of which generally but a glimpse is seen, through a thick veil of distressing objections.

These objections may be divided into two classes: those which arise from *falterings of the will*, and those which come from *incomplete conviction*.

Among the first, let us enumerate the following, frequently raised by Christians who, though recognizing baptism as a divine institution, nevertheless remain irresolute.

1.—*Immersion adds nothing to the spiritual graces already possessed.*—We reply that, were it thus, we could by no means dispense with it on that account, for we owe implicit obedience to God; particularly in such things as bring us no reward, since disinterestedness is the token of true love. But, although the material act of immersion possesses *no* virtue in itself, we must however recall that the preceding pages have shown how very precious are the divine favours attached to it by our Lord, on account of the obedience which it expresses. In this entirely spiritual sense, we can therefore affirm that immersion really adds *much* to the graces already possessed.

2.—*Immersion is a ceremony which does not create any religious impression.*—We reply that in this, baptism resembles the Lord's Supper. In these two symbols, those who look at the material form only, do indeed discover nothing impressive; they might even go so far as to find that, in certain aspects, they both lend themselves to ridicule. But these symbols are acted parables, and resemble the spoken parables of the Saviour. Under the external covering of the verbal or material figure, which is *all* that indifferent spectators perceive, a profound meaning is to be found, which *only* attentive spectators discover. Those who can read as a commonplace, that the Son of God was plunged beneath the waters of the Jordan by John the Baptist, know nothing of the profound impression which they might themselves experience as participants or as sympathetic witnesses of baptism. Those who behold in the immersion of a brother, not a strange

plunge in water, but a solemn proclamation of his death and of his resurrection with Christ, understand why the Lord attached in His Word such great importance to this impressive symbol.

3.—*Immersion is an act which is repulsive to certain natures.*—We reply that, where this is the case, it is but another reason for practising it, since those who are in Christ have crucified the flesh, and should seize every occasion to put to death their human repugnances, when these exert themselves in opposition to divine obligations. Moreover, it is especially to tastes perverted by sin, that immersion is contrary. But at conversion, when the rule of the old nature passes away, the first act of the new creature should, by the choice of God, be precisely this. If after conversion, the conflict is persistent between the inclinations of man and the divine ordinance, the deficiency is in man, and the reformation must take place within himself.

4.—*Immersion is, in general, an unpopular act.*—When this is so, Christians should embrace it as a propitious opportunity to offer to God a sacrifice which costs them something. But let us determine the extent of this unpopularity. The majority of those who disapprove of immersion, have never seriously studied the question. Consequently, their opinion can have no weight whatever. Among those who have studied it, the immense majority, composed of the unanimity of Baptists, and of almost all Pedo-baptists, recognize the scriptural character of immersion. The number is low therefore, of those whose sincere convictions or whose prejudices, keep them on the other side. The baptized have thus but few against them who are not ignorant or deluded. To be unpopular among such, should not be very intimidating to those who are looking to God.

5.—*Facts prove that immersion does not procure a warrant of superior piety.*—This is a very poor objection, for piety is far too individual a thing, for the Christian ever to regulate his conduct by that of those who have passed by the road which he should take. Moreover, even were it proved that *all* the baptized are inconsistent or hypocritical, that fact should cause *no* hesitation, to one who *sees* his duty. However, it is easy to prove that the immersion of believers is inevitably followed by less defection than is infant sprinkling. Besides it is not because immersion is bad in itself, that some Baptists are inconsistent, but because the human imperfection with which it is practised, cannot prevent its sometimes being observed with too much promptitude, or on mistaken manifestations of faith, of which God alone is in a position to discern the true character.

6.—*Immersion obliges those who practise it to join themselves to the Baptists.*—Since, in the matter of baptism, it is impossible to be neutral, it is better after all to be united with those who hold the same views as oneself, especially when those views are scriptural.

We understand however that some hesitate to become connected with Baptists:

A.—*First, on account of the name which they bear.* But this name is the only means of plainly stating one of the features respecting which they might be confused with others. It is a convenient secondary appellation, which is employed in the place of the real title, by virtue of that law of language which requires that for the sake of clearness, the whole should be described by the name of a part. It goes without saying that the single title

of Christians, of disciples, or of brethren would be, although still incomplete, quite sufficient and very preferable. Moreover, to any who know a little of the Baptist bodies, it is very plain that Christ Himself, and not one of His rites, is, in reality, the central point and the supreme object of the thoughts, the conversation and preaching of His baptised disciples. From this point of view therefore, connection with them does not offend the conscience.

B.—Abstention from baptism, may be born of a wish to escape from the *narrowness* which is said to characterize Baptists.

We confess that, as everywhere else, it is possible that there may be *individuals* among them, of a naturally narrow character; and we deplore it. But the great principle of private liberty which is at the foundation of baptism, reacts against narrow-mindedness, which appears far more readily wherever, for want of a deeper unifying principle, the unity can only be maintained by the artificial tie of a common infant sprinkling.

Fidelity to the principle of immersion and the logical acceptance of its consequences, does not therefore involve more sectarian behaviour, than does the adoption of any other biblical conviction.

C.—Some hesitate to face the consequences of baptism, because Baptists are not, in general, very numerous, and because to do as they do, is apparently to condemn oneself to *isolation*.

This objection is, in a certain measure, to be understood in places where our principles are represented only by small churches, where gifts are few, intercourse slight, and the opportunities of doing good apparently very scarce. But if Baptist principles are right, they are the best and the most fruitful, and therefore the body which labours to maintain them, whatever its circumstances may be, should have the loyal support of all who have been convinced of their truth. Let us add nevertheless, that in the case of a Christian who, in his neighbourhood, risks remaining solitary in his convictions, his baptism by no means hinders his loyal and disinterested co-operation in the evangelical activities of the neighbouring bodies.

D.—Some hesitate to embrace baptism because they are not ready to unite themselves with Baptist bodies *in all the consequences* which the latter believe to be involved in their baptism.

While fully believing that the views and methods of the Baptists are, in their entirety, perfectly logical and scriptural, we are quite ready to admit that certain casts of mind, and certain dispositions of heart, cannot immediately consent to them. But no Christian has a right to refuse obedience to one of God's commands, under the pretext that the whole length of the path which he must travel, is not illuminated. It should suffice that the spot upon which he must set his first step be visible, for him to set out immediately, trusting that the following steps will also be made plain. When a disciple sees that baptism is a duty for him, he should be baptized without delay, even though he cannot yet bind himself to *all the consequences* which Baptists hold to be connected with their baptism. Moreover, it is well to realize that the individualism from which the conception of baptism which we advocate originates, ensures to the most militant full liberty of personal judgment in all questions which are clearly recognised as open ones.

7.—*Immersion entails so many material complications, that its practice is hard to reconcile with the religion of the Spirit.*—As it is proved that the Spirit of God has Himself inscribed the commandment of immersion in the Scriptures, it is most daring of man to pretend to surpass the divine Person in spirituality. The example of Naaman, that of the blind man of Siloam, the details of the Passion, the Lord's Supper itself, prove, among other things, that it is not immaterial whether a spiritual action should, or should not, be accomplished under specified material conditions. Moreover, these complications are, after all, very slight, wherever baptism is practised in a regular manner. The holding of the smallest meeting pre-supposes the existence of material conditions far more complex.

* * *

Having up to this point fixed our attention upon the objections which are raised by Christians who are *persuaded, but not decided*, we shall now occupy ourselves with those of Christians who are *decided, but not yet persuaded*. Logically, these last should have come first; but as they are infinitely more plausible and more deserving of respect than the preceding ones, we have thought it better to keep them for the end. Should not the education of the will, moreover, always have the precedence over that of the understanding?

1.—Some object that *immersion is superfluous for those who have previously been christened as infants*.

We think we have proved, in the preceding pages, that these two acts have absolutely nothing in common, and that consequently the one cannot be a useless repetition of the other. The immersion of believers is therefore no slight upon the gracious and Christian design, which under the ill-chosen name of 'baptism', has come to affirm the desire of parents to consecrate their child to God, and the desire of the church to welcome them under her influence. The experience of the twelve Ephesians (Acts 19) clearly shows that a baptism, even though sincere, and even by immersion, should always be repeated when it is absolutely plain that it was accomplished with no understanding whatever of its true meaning.

2.—Some again object to immersion on account of there being *another baptism, that of the Holy Spirit*.

The example of the household of Cornelius (Acts 10: 47), should, however, suffice to show that there is no useless repetition in these two baptisms, which are in fact absolutely *distinct*, both in their design, in the elements which they require, and in their meaning. The one expresses the testimony which *man* renders to God. The other is the testimony which *God* accords to man. Jesus Himself never confused them. Endowed, above all others, with the Holy Spirit, not only was He immersed Himself, but He specially sent Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, on the double mission of speaking to him of the fulness of the Holy Spirit, and of baptizing him speedily.

3.—Some also object to the immersion of believers on the ground of *the non-perpetuity of this ordinance*.

We ask those who tell us that baptism was established provisionally, on account of special and passing circumstances, to try to reconcile this supposition with the text: "Go . . . baptize . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," and then with this next declaration: "Even unto the end of the world." Moreover, can we believe that the Lord would have given to His first disciples a symbol, the gracious significance

of which is eternally true and effectual, and that He would have decided to deprive their successors of it? How, above all, could we prove this intention, in the absence of *any* biblical allusion to the subsequent abolition of the symbol? And in the place of scriptural instructions, by what signs would Christianity have known, when the hour for this abolition had arrived? There are those who declare that this change has been a necessary consequence of the apostasy of the church. But in this case, it would be necessary to prove: (a) That the *Scriptures* sanction the idea of a visible, universal church; (b) That there are *facts* to show that there has been a collective apostasy of this visible church; (c) That this apostasy *entailed* for the churches and for all time, a kind of hereditary rejection, following which baptism, the sign of the visible church, lost its importance in the eyes of the Lord. This demonstration, though often attempted, has never been effected.

4.—Others object to immersion for the reason that *the majority of Christians have been converted too long to be able to return so tardily to this form of testimony.*

In matters of Christian obedience, there is no time-limit. In the twenty-first chapter of Matthew, we read the story of a son who, when invited to go and work in his father's vineyard, answered: "I will not"; but afterwards he repented, and went. Jesus thus emphasized that approval must naturally be the portion of those who do the will of the Father. Since sonship did not dispense with obedience in his case, neither should it suffice for us that we have long been children of God. Since one of the sons was approved for going back upon his first refusal of obedience, we cannot but expect divine approbation in retrieving our own. And since, in the majority of cases, only lack of knowledge, and not refusal of obedience, prevents immersion at the time of conversion, it should be all the easier to have the grace to retrieve an omission, rather than a sin of disobedience. Even though previous testimony may have long borne witness to conversion, it remains none the less true that, in the eyes of men and more especially in the eyes of God and of angels, the observance of immersion proclaims, with yet greater fulness and clearness, what *kind* of conversion is in question: a conversion which compels obedience even unto death, and unto the symbol of death.

5.—After these abundant arguments, from which however, we have omitted all allusion to many notoriously childish objections, which are too often urged against believers' immersion, we should nevertheless by no means be surprised to hear that classical remark: "The Baptist point of view is best." No doubt the Christian world would gain immensely by its adoption. But nevertheless, *it is very necessary that the Christian should feel himself called upon to be baptized.*

This disconcerting objection proceeds from a false mysticism. By putting all actions under the control of perceptible inward impulses, one displaces, in favour of an imaginary individual revelation, the absolute and universal authority of the perfect revelation given by the Holy Spirit Himself, *once for all* in the *Scriptures*. The Holy Spirit never gives a new revelation about matters upon which He has already explicitly spoken. His divine dignity would prohibit Him from thus repeating the same thing, and He will *never* call to baptism, a second time, those who will not try to discern His voice in the *Scriptures*. Nowhere moreover, does the Bible teach that the law of baptism is only binding on those to whom the Lord

miraculously comes to confirm it, and nowhere does it sanction, or even anticipate, the existence in the religious world, of one category of Christians whose *duty* it is to be buried in the name of the Lord, and another of whom it is *not* the *duty*.

This final objection is then most feeble, and could not long remain the bulwark of anyone who has died to self and therefore considers, above *all else*, that it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness, even as Jesus did.

CONCLUSION

The future of Christian reforms is ever shrouded in mystery, for undoubtedly any departure from the course of divine ordinances unhappily entails absolutely inextricable situations. We do not know moreover, how much longer the divine Bridegroom will tarry before His return. But this we do know, that when the Bridegroom comes, nothing will be immaterial. There may be *more or less* oil in the lamps; but the measure of love thus revealed will decide the place of each one in the bridal procession. The endeavour to delight the Bridegroom, even in the exactness of the least details of material service, and to please Him by conformity to His spiritual purpose, is what will determine the degree of welcome which will be given to those who will go forward to meet Him.

"Thou hast been faithful over a *few* things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

EDUCATION INCREASES RESPONSIBILITY

The educated rationalist may laugh at you. But tomorrow he will be trodden under foot, and will go down to shame and everlasting contempt. "Stop," you say, "suppose he graduated at Harvard? or at Princeton? or suppose he is at the head of one of the German Universities?" I can not help that. God makes no special regulation for the graduates of Harvard or Princeton. Rejecting the Bible, they will go down to be companions of the most abandoned wretches in the universe, and more miserable than they, because of their superior education. One rule for all — for great brain and little brain; for high-fore-headed Greek professor, and for flat-skulled Esquimaux: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned."

—TALMAGE

CHRISTIANITY AN EDUCATION

Christianity redeems us; not from sin only, but from all narrowness, meanness, and littleness of conception; it puts great thought into our hearts and bold words into our mouths, and leads us out from our village prisons to behold all nations of mankind. On this ground alone, Christianity is the best educator in the world. It will not allow the soul to be mean. It forces the heart to be noble and hopeful. It says, "Go and teach all nations;" "Go ye into all the world;" "Look not every man on his own things, but every man, also on the things of others;" "Give and it shall be given unto you." It is something to have a voice so Divine ever stirring the will and mingling counsels. It is like a sea-breeze blowing over a sickly land; like sunlight piercing the fogs of a long dark night. If we have narrow sympathies, mean ideas, paltry conceptions, we are not scholars in the school of Christ. We are citizens of the world; let us bring no reproach upon Christ by our exclusiveness.—PARKER.

The Conversion of Children

By Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—James 5:19, 20.

BELOVED friends, I hope you do not altogether forget the Sabbath-school, and yet I am afraid a great many Christians are scarcely aware that there are such things as Sabbath-schools at all; they know it by hearsay, but not by observation. Probably, in the course of twenty years, they have never visited the school, nor concerned themselves about it. They would be gratified to hear of any success accomplished, but though they may not have heard anything about the matter one way or the other, they are well content. In most churches, you will find a band of young and ardent spirits giving themselves to Sunday-school work; but there are numbers of others who might greatly strengthen the school who never attempt anything of the sort. In this they might be excused if they had other work to do; but, unfortunately, they have no godly occupation, but are mere killers of time, while this work which lies ready to hand, and is accessible, and demands their assistance, is entirely neglected. I will not say there are any such sluggards here, but I am not able to believe that we are quite free from them, and therefore, I will ask conscience to do its work with the guilty parties.

Children need to be saved; children may be saved; children are to be saved by instrumentality. Children may be saved while they are children. He who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," never intended that His Church should say, "We will look after the children by-and-by when they have grown up to be young men and women." He intended that it should be a subject of prayer and earnest endeavour that children as children should be converted to God.

The conversion of a child involves the same work of divine grace, and results in the same blessed consequences as the conversion of the adult. There is the saving of the soul from death in the child's case, and the hiding of a multitude of sins, but there is this additional matter for joy, that a great preventive work is done when the young are converted. Conversion saves a child from a multitude of sins. If God's eternal mercy shall bless your teaching to a little prattler, how happy that boy's life will be compared with what it might have been if he had grown up in folly, sin, and shame, and had only been converted after many days! It is the highest wisdom and the truest prudence, to pray for our children that, while they are yet young, their hearts may be given to the Saviour:

"Twill save them from a thousand snares,
To mind religion young;
Grace will preserve their following years,
And make their virtues strong."

To reclaim the prodigal is well, but to save him from ever being a prodigal is better. To bring back the thief and the drunkard is a praiseworthy action, but so to act that the boy shall never become a thief or a drunkard is far better; Hence Sabbath-school instruction stands very high in the list of philanthropic enterprises, and Chris-

tians ought to be most earnest in it. He who converts a child from the error of his way, prevents as well as covers a multitude of sins.

Moreover, this gives the Church the hope of being furnished with the best of men and women. The Church's Samuels and Solomons are made wise in their youth; David and Josiah were tender of heart when they were tender in years. Read the lives of the most eminent ministers, and you shall usually find that their Christian history began early. Though it is not absolutely needful, yet it is highly propitious to the growth of a well-developed Christian character, that its foundation should be laid on the basis of youthful piety. I do not expect to see the Churches of Jesus Christ ordinarily built up by those who have through life lived in sin, but by the bringing up in their midst, in the fear and admonition of the Lord, young men and women who become pillars in the house of our God. If we want strong Christians, we must look to those who were Christians in their youth. Trees must be planted in the courts of the Lord while they are yet young if they are to live long and to flourish well.

And, brethren, I feel that the work of teaching the young has at this time an importance superior to any which it ever had before, for at this time there are abroad those who are creeping into our houses, and deluding men and women with their false doctrine. Let the Sunday-school teachers of England teach the children well. Let them not merely occupy their time with pious phrases, but teach them the whole gospel and the doctrines of grace intelligently, and let them pray over the children, and never be satisfied unless the children are turned to the Lord Jesus Christ, and added to the Church, and then I shall not be afraid of Popery. Popish priests said of old that they could have won England back again to Rome, if it had not been for the catechising of the children. We have laid aside catechisms, I think with too little reason; but, at any rate, if we do not use godly catechisms, we must bring back decided, plain, simple teaching, and there must be pleading and praying for the immediate conversion of the children unto the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God waits to help us in this effort. He is with us if we be with Him. He is ready to bless the humblest teacher, and even the infant classes shall not be without a benediction. He can give us words and thoughts suitable to our little auditory. He can so bless us that we shall know how to speak a word in season to the youthful ear. And oh, if it be not so, if teachers are not found, or, being found, are unfaithful, we shall see the children that have been in our schools go back into the world, like their parents, hating religion because of the tedium of the hours spent in the Sunday-School, and we shall produce a race of infidels, or a generation of superstitious persons; the golden opportunity will be lost, and most solemn responsibility will rest upon us! I pray the Church of God to think much of the Sunday-school. I beseech all lovers of the nation to pray for Sunday-

schools; I entreat all who love Jesus Christ, and would see His kingdom come, to be very tender towards all youthful people, and to pray that their hearts may be won to Jesus.

I have not spoken as I should like to speak; but the theme lies very near my heart. It is one which ought to press heavily upon all our consciences; but I must leave it. God must lead your thoughts fully into it; I leave it; but not till I have asked these questions: — What have you been doing for the conversion of children, each one of you? What have you done for the conversion of your own children? Are you quite clear upon that matter? Do you ever put your arms around your boy's neck, and pray for him and with him? Father, you will find that such an act will exercise great influence over your lad. Mother, do you ever talk to your little daughter about Christ, and Him crucified? Under God's hands, you may be a spiritual as well as a natural mother to that well-beloved child of yours. What are you doing, you who are guardians and teachers of youth? Are you clear about their souls? You week-day schoolmasters, as well as you who labour on the Sabbath, are you doing all you should that your boys and girls may be brought early to confess the Lord? I leave it with yourselves.

You shall receive a great reward if, when you enter heaven, as I trust you will, you shall find many dear children there to welcome you into eternal habitations; it will add another heaven to your own heaven, to meet with heavenly beings who shall salute you as their teacher who brought them to Jesus. I would not wish to go to heaven alone; — would you? I would not wish to have a crown in heaven without a star in it, because no soul was ever saved by my means; — would you? There they go, the sacred flock of blood-bought sheep, the great Shepherd leads them; many of them are followed by twins, and others have, each one, their lamb; would you like to be a barren sheep of the great Shepherd's flock? The scene changes. Harken to the trampings of a great host. I hear their war music, my ears are filled with their songs of victory. The warriors are coming home, and each one is bringing his trophy on his shoulder, to the honour of the great Captain. They stream through the gate of pearl, they march in triumph to the celestial Capitol, along the golden streets, and each soldier bears with him his own portion of the spoil. Will you be there? And being there, will you march without a trophy, and add nothing to the pomp of the triumph? Will you bear nothing that you have won in battle, nothing which you have ever taken for Jesus with your sword and with your bow? Again, another scene is before me. I hear them shout the "harvest home", and I see the reapers bearing every one his sheaf. Some of them are bowed down with the heaps of sheaves which load their happy shoulders: they went forth weeping, but they have come, again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. Yonder comes one who bears but a little handful, but it is rich grain; he had only a tiny plot, and a little seed corn entrusted to him, yet it has multiplied well according to the rule of proportion.

Will you be there without so much as a solitary ear? Never having ploughed nor sown, and therefore never having reaped? If so, every shout of every reaper might well strike a fresh pang into your heart as you remember that you did not sow, and therefore could not reap. If you do not love my Master, do not profess to do so. If He never bought you with His blood, do not lie unto Him and

come unto His table, and say that you are His servant; but if His dear wounds bought you, give yourself to Him; and if you love Him, feed His sheep and feed His lambs. He stands here unseen by my sight, but recognized by my faith, He exhibits to you the marks of the wounds upon His hands and His feet, and He says to you, "Peace be unto you! As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; and this know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Good Master, help us to serve Thee! Amen.

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The Meaning of the Death of Christ

*Message Broadcast in the Name of the American Council of Christian Churches
Over the Then Blue Network, April, 1944*

By Dr. T. T. Shields

WE ARE not specialists in observing times and seasons. It is difficult to conceive of the Inhabitor of eternity as conditioning His favour to His human creatures upon their colouring the calendar with religious red-letter days. Notwithstanding, when the public mind is more or less concentrated upon a religious seasonal anniversary, it is well to take advantage of the popular mental attitude.

Good Friday speaks of Calvary and the death of Jesus Christ. But millions of influential men have died since then whose very names are forgotten. Why should His name and His death be remembered? And why is its approximate anniversary observed? Only a knowledge of His origin and Person, and of the purpose of His death can answer that question.

The earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth was only a parenthesis in the eternal circle of His existence. "From everlasting to everlasting" He is God. Born of a human mother, He had no human father. The Babe in the manger was Infinity wrapped in swaddling clothes. His baby smile was a prophetic anticipation of a new creation, a sinless race, and a new, and never-aging world. His earthly life was short-lived as even mortal men count years. His public career was shorter still; a brief span of about three years. But they were the three most pregnant, most potentially influential years of all time. They renumbered the centuries; they reoriented human history.

Incarnate Deity for thirty-three years, or thereabouts, walked the earth in human form, a heavenly Model of a perfect man, an Exemplification of the divine creational ideal, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." And in the dual nature of that harmonious personality, there were revealed the acme of human perfection and the fullness of divine grace.

But an inhospitable sinful world would have neither of them; and in one Person, nailed both to a cross. Thereby was manifested the utter blackness of human sin in its violent rejection of the Perfection of manhood, and of the fullness of Deity.

But if He were God, why did He submit to death? He laid down His life that He might take it again; no man took it from Him. "He poured out his soul unto death," because He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. His infinitely capacious soul afforded hospitality to all the sufferings and sorrows of a world. His truth, and righteousness, and justice, in a word, His absolute holiness, could not condone sin; His infinite mercy could not consent to the destruction of the sinner. Hence, mercy and truth met together in Him, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. The fullness of the God-head dwelt in Him. All the qualities of Deity, if I may worshipfully so say, were liquid in His blood. His blood was the wealth, the creative, and recreative, and preserving wisdom and power of the universe, the very essence of all that God is, was, in solution, poured out for the expiation of the world's guilt. By His death He made

His soul an offering for sin. His resurrection was the divine certification of this fact; it was Heaven's validation of the payment of the debt. He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.

Now it is finished. Who would presume to add to the value of His blood? If the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, does not cleanse us from all sin, nothing can.

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all." "This man when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God."

The operational forces by which the universe is held together and perpetuated, and which we call laws of nature, were intrinsic in the creation at the beginning. The scientist, whether in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, discovers nothing new: the only newness about it is his discovery of it. All these laws as they affect the sun and moon and the remotest star, and all that is inherent in this planet, have continued as they were without amendment of any sort, from the beginning, for the reason that even God cannot improve upon perfection. Therefore, "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever." Since the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy at Creation's birth, the only new thing in the world is human sin. And in His anticipatory provision for that emergency, God has not been less thorough than in the physical universe. The sun is an unimprovable luminary: so is the Gospel of salvation; for God has given us both. It is wise to blow out your candles and turn off your brightest electric light when the sun comes up, for no light can successfully compete with it. And such turning off of lesser lights, and the throwing up of your blinds, is your confession of faith in the adequacy of the sun. It is the function of faith to blow out the candles of human wisdom and merit, to turn off all reasoning that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God, to throw up the blinds of the mind, that God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness may shine in your heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

If thus I commit my sinful soul to the infinite, cleansing power of the blood of the Incarnate God, and trust as fully as I know how the Son of God who became dead but is now alive for ever more, how may I be sure I am saved?

Talking to a little girl of about twelve years of age, who said she believed in the Lord Jesus, I asked her if she were sure she were saved, and received a negative reply. But, I said, "If Jesus Christ were sitting beside you, as I am, and were to tell you that He had heard your prayer, and had forgiven your sins, and given you eternal life, would you not know it?" She replied, "Certainly, if He said so, I should know it, but He is not here, I cannot

see Him, or hear Him." Then, I said, "Suppose He were to send you a letter, and to say the same thing in a letter?" "Oh," she said, "I would rather have a letter, for if He told me that in a letter, I could always keep it, then I should always know." I then turned to the First Epistle of John, the fifth chapter and the thirteenth verse, and asked her to read it with me; and she read, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God." Then, I asked her, "Is that written to you?" She said, "It certainly is, for I believe on the name of the Son of God." "Very well," I said, "that is the name on the envelope. Let us open it and read the letter," and I asked her to read on, "That ye may know that ye have eternal life." After a moment's reflection, she exclaimed joyfully, "Oh, I see it! He has sent me a letter to tell me that I have eternal life. Now I know it, and I shall always keep His letter so that I may always know it no matter how I may feel."

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and accept the assurance of His Word that you have eternal life.

—*Christian Beacon*

For Younger Readers

THE VALENTINE BOX

By May Dorn

Valentine's Day was next Friday. The teacher said there would be a valentine box. Every boy and girl in the room was happy except Ann. Ann knew she wouldn't get any valentines and everybody else would.

Ann had hardly any friends at school, so how could she get any valentines? So she sat at her desk and frowned while all the others were glad because, on Friday afternoon, there was to be a valentine box.

All the way home from school that day Ann worried about next Friday. Maybe she could make some excuse and not go to school that day. It would be terrible to sit there and watch all the other girls and boys get nice valentines while she got none at all.

Ann was a shy little girl who found it hard to make friends. At recess she stood around all alone and felt sorry for herself. She was so lonely, while all the others were having lots of fun, that sometimes she felt like crying. Ann didn't know why she couldn't make friends. She was very unhappy.

That night while she was watching television Ann heard a little verse which helped her see why she was not liked by others. She found out that she was not as polite as she should be.

On the television program a boy, about her own age, read a little saying,

Politeness is to do and say

The kindest thing in the kindest way.

When she was getting ready for bed that night Ann thought about it. She wondered if she was always as polite as she should be. She knew she was not. She remembered how she talked back to her mother sometimes. She remembered how she was rough with her little sister. And she remembered how she pushed other children around at school and sometimes said unkind things to them. Sometimes she even made other little girls cry

when she said mean things to them. No wonder she had few friends!

Ann prayed about it that night. As she knelt at her bedside she asked God to help her to be kind. "And let it be before next Friday, please," she added. "I do want to get some valentines at school."

The next morning Ann thought of the little rhyme the first thing. Today she would try to be polite. At breakfast she remembered to be polite. She watched her table manners carefully. Ann knew that this made Mother and Dad happy.

After breakfast Ann offered to help with the dishes and bedmaking. And she dusted the living room and took out the wastebaskets before it was time for school. This made Mother's work lighter.

Kindness! Ann thought of Mother and Father. They were always kind to her and to her little sister. She would try from now on to be kind, too. She would be kind to her parents and to everyone.

On the way to school Ann walked behind Mary Jo, one of the nicest girls in her room. Mary Jo had many friends and was always kind to her classmates and polite to the teacher.

A pencil slipped out of Mary Jo's pocket and rolled right in front of Ann. Right away she remembered to be polite. She picked up the pencil and ran up to Mary Jo and gave it to her. "Oh, thank you, Ann. I wouldn't want to lose that one. It's my favorite."

"You're welcome, Mary Jo," Ann remembered to say. The two girls walked together to school and talked of a lot of things. Mary Jo said she could hardly wait until Friday when they had the valentine box.

Ann remembered the rhyme and said, "Oh, you'll get a lot of valentines, Mary Jo. Everyone likes you a lot!"

"I hope you get lots of them, too," Mary Jo said, smiling.

Ann remembered to be polite and kind all that day. She felt so good about it. It was nicer than being rude. She was polite and kind all the rest of the week, too. She began making friends with the other boys and girls. She didn't know before how many nice classmates she had. She liked them all.

By Friday Ann was glad about the valentine box. Even if she didn't get a single one, she wanted to see the others made happy by getting valentines.

But when the big valentine box was opened that day there were as many for Ann as for any of the others. She was happy and grateful that God had shown her how to be kind and friendly, and she chose as her Bible memory verse, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

—*The Sunday School Times*

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Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 21 First Quarter Lesson 7 February 17, 1957

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

THE BELIEVER'S PERILS IN FACING APOSTASY

Lesson Text: 2 Timothy 3:1-12.

Golden Text: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."—2 Timothy 3:15.

The Sins of the Apostasy: verses 1-5.

The Scriptures exhort us that we should always watch and pray (Luke 21:36; 1 Pet. 5:8). As long as we dwell in this world, which is no friend to grace, we shall never be so securely situated that we can afford to cease our vigilance. The hills of prosperity, as the valleys of adversity, have their pitfalls (Prov. 30:8, 9; Eccl. 7:14; Jas. 1:9, 10). Temptations may come to the believer when he is triumphant, or when he is dejected. Some of the perilous sins which are rampant in the time of apostasy are listed by the Apostle.

The root sin in the age of apostasy is selfishness. The backslider in heart is filled with his own ways (Prov. 14:14) and has no regard for the will of God. He loves himself and devotes thought, care and energy to his own interests, rather than to the cause of God, or the affairs of others (Psa. 14:1; 36:1-4). He sets up idols in his heart, which should be a sanctuary for the Lord (Ezek. 14:3; 1 Pet. 3:5).

From the root of selfishness spring the sins of covetousness, a desire to possess that which belongs to another (Exod. 20:17; Rom. 1:29; Eph. 5:3) and boastfulness, a desire to display that which belongs to oneself (Dan. 4:30; Jas. 4:16), both sins ministering to pride, which is the exaltation of self at the expense of others (Prov. 3:34; 1 Pet. 5:5). Their disregard of God is shown in their evil, blasphemous speech (Luke 6:45; Eph. 4:31; Jas. 1:26).

Apostasy differs from unbelief in that apostasy is a deliberate forsaking of the way of truth; it is disbelief, a wilful repudiation of God's word and God's way. It is a rejection of His authority in all realms. Lawlessness will be evident, not merely in personal life and habits, but also in the family, in the church and in society. Children are disobedient to parents, unmindful of the debt they owe (Rom. 1:30; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; 1 Tim. 5:8). Ingratitude, too, is a sin which springs from selfishness (Rom. 1:21). Where sin is cherished, holiness is marred.

Sin, which has its origin in the realm of the spirit, spreads to the intellectual and moral spheres, for it darkens the whole personality. Natural affections are blunted (Rom. 1:31), and moral obligations have no force, for truth is lightly regarded (Isa. 59:13-15). The unbeliever will break covenants and promises, while he thinks nothing of slandering another or of making false accusations (Psa. 35:10, 11; 50:20). He does not control his tongue or his passions, but becomes harsh and cruel (Prov. 3:31, 32).

The one whose sense of truth has become darkened will hate the truth, for it is ever true that the evil hate the good (Prov. 37:12-14). The very presence of a good man is obnoxious to the wicked, especially if in former days they walked together in the ways of God. A betrayer or a traitor arises from within the circle, not from without (Psa. 41:9; 55:12-14; Matt. 26:14-16, 47-50).

Headstrong and obstinate, men who turn away from God know no restraint. They will not curb their selfish ambitions, but ride high over the rights of others (2 Pet. 2:10). They care far more for their own pleasures than for the things of God: God is not in all their thoughts (Psa. 10:4-11).

Undue attention to the externals of religion is usually a sign of internal corruption. Form and ceremony are often used to cover up a dearth of spiritual reality (Matt. 23:1-30; Jude 16). Religious systems may resemble Christianity in outward matters without manifesting the power of Christ. Individuals also may hold to certain religious views, while being untouched by the Spirit of God. One must beware of all such deception and hypocrisy.

II. The Course of the Apostates: verses 6-9.

Apostates, those who wilfully turn away from God, do not work openly. They are like serpents, which insidiously glide into houses. False teachers subtly worm their way into the confidence of their dupes. They do not choose stalwart people for their victims, but in cowardly fashion deceive those who are ignorant and weak, characterized in the text as "silly women" (verse 6; 1 Tim. 4:7). Such are easily captured by the wiles of the false teachers. Instead of being released from the burden and power of their sins, as those are who receive the message of the Gospel, they remain in slavery to the sinful desires of their own hearts (Acts 8:23; 2 Pet. 2:17-22).

The true disciple of the Lord will ever desire to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord (Col. 1:9, 10; 2 Pet. 1:3-8; 3:18). He counts himself as one who is ever learning, but also ever receiving through the Holy Spirit a knowledge of the truth, advancing nearer and nearer toward the goal of perfection, longing for the time when he shall know as he is known (1 Cor. 13:12). On the other hand, those who hold erroneous doctrines are always in the spiritual kindergarten; they never advance in knowledge, nor can they know the truth, so long as they reject Christ, the Truth of God Incarnate. They repudiate and take a strong stand against the truth which is presented to them (2 Pet. 2:1, 2).

Jannes and Jambres are the traditional names of the Egyptian magicians who resisted Moses, the representative of the Lord, by attempting to rival the miracles of Moses (Exod. 7:11, 12, 22; 8:7; 9:11). Even so, false teachers in the last days will show lying wonders (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:14, 15). They and their devotees are corrupt in mind, as well as in heart (1 Tim. 6:5); they are devoid of judgment and discernment, incapable of testing or recognizing the truth (Rom. 1:28).

Error will not be permitted to go on for ever, for in the Lord's own time He will expose and punish all sin (2 Thess. 2:8). Then at length the folly of those who have rejected Christ and His truth will be fully revealed (2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 15).

Daily Bible Readings

Feb. 11—The Sins of the Wicked	Psa. 10
Feb. 12—The Sins of the Hypocrite	Matt. 23:23-36
Feb. 13—The Sins of the Godless	Rom. 1:18-32
Feb. 14—The Sins of the Carnal	Gal. 5:16-21
Feb. 15—The Sins of the Corrupt	Eph. 4:17-29
Feb. 16—The Sins of the Presumptuous	2 Peter 2
Feb. 17—The Sins of the Apostates	Jude

Suggested Hymns

And can it be that I should gain?
Once I was dead in sin.
Have you any room for Jesus?
I've wandered far away from God.
Jesus, my Lord, to Thee I cry.
Weary of earth and laden with my sin.

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