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The Reward of the Righteous

Charles H. Spurgeon

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory." —Matthew 25:31.

IT IS exceedingly beneficial to our souls to mount above this present evil world to something nobler and better. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches are apt to choke everything good within us, and we grow fretful, desponding, perhaps proud, carnal. It is well for us to cut down these thorns and briars, for heavenly seed sown among them is not likely to yield a harvest, and I do not know a better sickle with which to cut them down than thoughts of the kingdom to come. In the valleys of Switzerland some of the inhabitants are deformed and dwarfish, and wear a sickly appearance, for the atmosphere is charged with miasma, and is close and stagnant; you traverse them as rapidly as you can, and are glad to escape from them. Up yonder on the mountain you will find a hardy race, who breathe the clear fresh air as it blows from the virgin snows of the Alpine summits. It would be well frequently for their frames if the dwellers in the valley could frequently leave their abodes among the marshes and fever mists, and get themselves up into the clear atmosphere above. It is to such an exploit of climbing that I would invite you. May the Spirit of God bear us up upon eagles' wings, that we may leave the mists of fear and the fevers of anxiety, and all the ills which gather in this valley of earth, and get ourselves up to the mountains of future joy and blessedness where it is to be our delight to dwell world without end! Oh may God disentangle us now for a little while, cut the cords that keep us here below, and permit us to mount! We sit, some of us, like chained eagles fastened to the rock, only that, unlike the eagle, we begin to love our chain, and would, perhaps, if it came really to the test, be loth to have it snapped. May God grant us grace if we cannot at once escape from the chain of mortal life as to our bodies, yet to do so as to our spirits; and leaving the body like a servant at the foot of the hill, may our soul, like Abraham, go to the top of the mountain, and there may we have communion with the Most High.

"When the King shall come in His glory." It appears, then, that we must not expect to receive our reward till by and by. Like the hireling we must fulfil our day, and then at evening we shall have our penny. Too many

Christians look for a present reward for their labours, and if they meet with success, they begin doting upon it as though they had received their recompense. Like the disciples who returned saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us," they rejoice too exclusively in present prosperity; whereas the Master bade them not to look upon miraculous success as being their reward, since that might not always be the case. "Nevertheless," said He, "rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Success in the ministry is not the minister's true reward: it is an earnest, but the wages still wait. The approbation of your fellowmen you must not look upon as being the reward of excellence, for often you will meet with reverse; you will find your best actions misconstrued, and your motives ill interpreted. If you are looking for reward *here* I may warn you of the apostle's words, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable:" because other men get their reward; even the Pharisee gets his: "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward:" but we have none here. To be despised and rejected of men is the Christian's lot. Among his fellow Christians he will not always stand in good repute. It is not unmitigated kindness nor unmingled love that we receive even from the saints. I tell you if you look for your reward to Christ's bride herself you will miss it; if you expect to receive your crown from the hand even of your brethren in the ministry who know your labours, and who ought to sympathize with your trials, you will be mistaken. "When the King shall come in His glory," then is your time of recompense; but not to-day, not to-morrow, nor at any time in this world. Reckon nothing which you acquire, no honour which you gain, to be the reward of your service to your Master; that is reserved to the time "when the King shall come in His glory."

Observe with delight the august person by whose hand the reward is given. It is written, "When the King shall come." Brethren, we love the King's courtiers; we delight to be numbered with them ourselves. It is no mean thing to do service with others to Him whose head — "Though once 'twas crowned with thorns, is crowned

with glory now." But it is a delightful thought that the service of rewarding us will not be left to the courtiers. The angels will be there, and the brethren of the King will be there; but heaven was not prepared by them, nor can it be given by them. Their hands shall not yield us the coronation; we shall join their songs, but their songs would be no reward for us; we shall bow with them and they with us, but it will not be possible for them to give us the recompense of the reward — that starry crown is all too weighty for an angel's hand to bring, and the benediction all too sweet to be pronounced, even by seraphic lips. The King Himself must say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." What say you to this, my dear brother? You have felt a temptation to look to God's servants, to the approbation of the minister, to the kindly look of parents, to the word of commendation from your fellow-worker; all these may fail you, and therefore never consider them as being *the reward*. You must wait till the time when the King cometh, and then it will neither be your brethren, your pastors, your parents, nor your helpers, but the King Himself who shall say to you, "Come, ye blessed." How this sweetens heaven! It will be Christ's own gift. How this makes the benediction doubly blessed! It shall come from His lips, which drop like myrrh and flow with honey. Beloved, it is Christ who became a curse for us, who shall give the blessing to us. Roll ye this as a sweet morsel under your tongues.

The character in which our Lord Jesus shall appear is significant. Jesus will then be revealed as truly *"the King"*. "When the King shall come." It was to Him as King that the service was rendered, and it is from Him as King that the reward must therefore come; and so upon the very threshold a question of self-examination arises: "The King will not reward the servants of another prince — am I therefore His servant? Is it my joy to wait at the threshold of His gates, and sit like Mordecai at the courts of Ahasuerus — at the entrance of His door? Say, soul, dost thou serve *the King*?" I mean not the kings and queens of earth; let them have loyal servants for their subjects; but saints are servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings — are ye also? If ye be not so, when the King cometh in His glory, there can be no reward for you. I long in my own heart to recognize Christ's kingly office more than ever I have done. It has been my delight to preach to you Christ dying on the cross, and "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross"; but I want for my own self to realize Him on His throne, reigning in my heart, having a right to do as He wills with me, that I may get to the condition of Abraham, who, when God spoke, though it was to tell him to offer up his own Isaac, never asked a question, but simply said, "Here am I." Beloved, seek to know and feel the controlling power of the King, for else when He comes, since you have not known Him as King, He cannot know you as servant; and it is only to the servant that the King can give the reward: "When the King shall come in His glory."

CONGRATULATIONS

THE GOSPEL WITNESS extends hearty congratulations to the beloved veteran of the cross, Dr. C. J. Loney of Hamilton, Ontario. Brother Loney celebrated his 42nd Anniversary as Pastor of Stanley Avenue Baptist Church last Sunday, June 2nd. "May his bow long abide in strength."

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

FOUNDER AND FIRST EDITOR—Dr. T. T. Shields
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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16

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SHAME, PRIDE, OR FEAR

Hungry souls go up and down, to and fro, before Christ's table, when there is bread that will cause that hunger to cease forever, and water that is drawn from the river coming from God's throne; and yet they have gone back, thinking what wife would say, what father would say, what the business partner would say, what gay companions would say. They feel the gnawings of hunger, and, as they look at the spread table, they say, "Oh, how we need this food, but we dare not come and take it." Oh! what is it causes their delay, and keeps them thus back? It is shame, pride, or fear.—BEECHER.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY

- 9.45 Bible School for everybody, from grandfather to the baby.
- 11.00 Morning Service.
- 4.30 Afternoon Class.
- 6.00 Prayer Service in Greenway Chapel.
- 6.00 Open-Air Service in Allan Gardens.
- 7.00 Regular evening service.
- 7.30-8.30 Broadcast CHWO—Oakville (1250)
- 8.40 Open-Air Service on Church Grounds.

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.

SATURDAY

- 8.00 Great Weekly Prayer Service in Greenway Hall.

REV. W. P. BAUMAN, B.A., B.D.

Becomes Promotion Manager of
The Gospel Witness and Toronto Baptist Seminary

Rev. Wilfred P. Bauman, who for the past several years has been part-time Instructor in Toronto Baptist Seminary, will now be giving his entire time to the work of the Seminary and THE GOSPEL WITNESS. In response to the invitation extended by the joint Board of THE GOSPEL WITNESS and Toronto Baptist Seminary some



months ago, Mr. Bauman has resigned his pastorate in North Bay and this week began to assume his duties as "Promotion Manager" of both institutions.

Mr. Bauman is a Jarvis Street boy. We feel we have every reason to be legitimately proud of Mr. Bauman as a Jarvis Street boy. At an early age he was converted in Jarvis Street, and for years, during his days of school and university training, in the person of the late Dr. T. T. Shields he sat at the feet of the greatest Bible teacher, gospel preacher, and theological writer Canada has ever known.

While still a young man, Mr. Bauman has travelled much. His nearly two years spent on the continent of Europe, where he studied at Sorbonne University of Paris and worked in fellowship with the churches of the French Bible Mission which are under the leadership of Dr. Robert Dubarry of Nimes, France, and then nearly one year in Quito, South America, have afforded him wide opportunity for experience and observation. Having served for nearly ten years as a minister of the gospel, Mr. Bauman is well acquainted with the life, duties and responsibilities of a pastor. He has also had considerable experience in deputation work in Canada, United States and France. In the year 1946 Mr. Bauman graduated from Toronto University with his Bachelor of Arts degree and later from Toronto Baptist Seminary received his Bachelor of Divinity degree. While assisting on the staff of Toronto Baptist Seminary he has taught a number of subjects, but chiefly Church History, French and Christian Education. He is very highly regarded among us as a young man of ability, industry, earnest consecration to the Lord and sound Christian character.

We are sure that thousands of our readers, who are intensely interested in extending the testimony of THE GOSPEL WITNESS and that of Toronto Baptist Seminary, will hail this announcement with gladness. It is because Mr. Bauman accepts this position (Promotion Manager) in the spirit of his text of last Sunday morning in Jarvis Street Church — "Your servants for Jesus' sake" — that we predict, under his leadership, days of still

greater prosperity for THE GOSPEL WITNESS and the institution known as Toronto Baptist Seminary.

—DR. H. C. SLADE

THE SUNDAY SERVICES IN JARVIS STREET

ON SUNDAY morning, June 2nd, Rev. W. P. Bauman preached a fine sermon on the subject, "Ourselves Your Servants for Jesus' Sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). Believers rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, for salvation is entirely by grace. How foolish for men to preach themselves! Some in Corinth were saying, "I am of Paul"; others, "I am of Apollos" or "I am of Cephas" or "I am of Christ." From the Word we see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One to be exalted; His redeeming grace should ever keep us humble. We do not come proclaiming men's theories and speculations, but the Word of God and the Lordship of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Saviour, the Messiah; He is God the Lord.

In describing his mission, the Apostle Paul spoke of himself as the servant of God. He was a glorious servant, called to many fields, witnessing to many men. He was willing to be all things to all men that by all means some might be saved and the Lord glorified. They that serve men may serve in vain, but they who serve the Lord never labour in vain.

Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as Jesus Christ the Lord? Is He your Lord? God's clock says NOW: "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

There was an excellent open-air service of witness at 6 p.m. in Allan Gardens, adjoining the church grounds, and a number who had been present at that service welcomed the invitation to come into the auditorium for the evening hour of worship. Two of the men openly responded to the call of God, coming forward as the last hymn was being sung, without waiting for a formal Gospel invitation to be given.

The broadcast portion of the evening service commenced at 7.30 over station CHWO, Oakville, 1250. Once again the message of the Gospel was proclaimed far and wide throughout our land. Rev. Samuel Tulloch read the lesson (Rev. 7:9-17) and Rev. W. P. Bauman led in prayer.

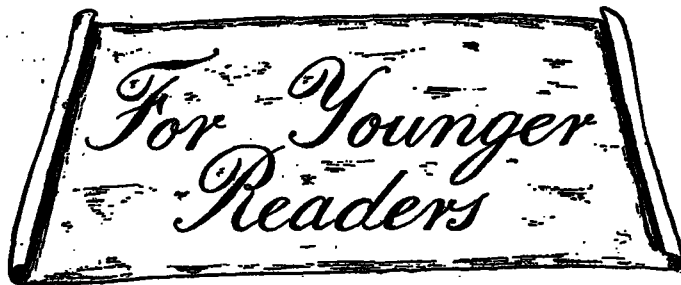
Dr. H. C. Slade, the Pastor, with clear convincing tones preached a truly great sermon on the subject of "Redemption" (Eph. 1:7), expounding this fundamental doctrine of the Scriptures in such a way as to silence every doubt. The word "redemption" is perhaps the most comprehensive one our language can afford, for redemption itself is one of the greatest blessings God can bestow or man can receive. This theme strikes the joyful strings of the heavenly harpers; none but the redeemed can sing it. It engages the hearts of the glorified saints. We take up the strains and join with them. Redemption is the means to all heavenly privileges which none but believers know. In the original the text reads, "In whom we have the redemption." It is the real redemption, called so to show its superiority to all others, such as those in the Old Testament, which were but types, shadows and illustrations pointing to the redemption. Redemption means deliverance by means of a ransom price that has been paid, and release from a claim or judgment by adequate settlement.

Redemption recognizes the fact of sin, and the fact

that Divine justice demands satisfaction for the transgression of the law of God. Even human instinct calls out for justice against outrageous evil, and for our righteous God to overlook human sin and crime, He would have to set aside His Deity. We have all sinned, there is none righteous, and God punishes our sin in the person of our Substitute, whom He Himself has provided. His loving heart prompted Him to send His Son to be a ransom for many.

How does God redeem us? Redemption is through the blood of Christ. It is not possible for a human soul to by-pass the cross and enter heaven: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." How are we saved? Our Divine Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ, presented His blood as full atonement for our sins, and He demands a verdict on behalf of those who believe. All who are redeemed are safe. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

Who are the redeemed? Believing souls who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. The price has been paid for your soul and for my soul. One of the fundamental elements of redemption is forgiveness; God delights to forgive freely and completely. He blots out our transgressions, leaving nothing against us on the record. Will you rejoice in the richness of His grace? Will you come to Him out of your bondage? "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."



THEY REFUSED TO BE WARNED

I had reached the fishing village of Eyemouth, in southeast Scotland, and had gone in search of an old fisherman who remembered the terrible disaster. I had heard strange things about the calamity which had overtaken the picturesque district, and I greatly desired to obtain information from someone who was present at the time. John Newton, the efficient deputy leader of the Pilgrim Preachers, was also interested, and finally we found the old man. True to his type, he was clad in dark blue jeans, and a big navy blue jersey reaching to his chin. He was sitting outside a cottage overlooking the placid waters of the harbour. A monumental pipe supplied the anti-gnat vapour which curled lazily around his old unshaven face, and his eyes seemed to be speculating whether or not we were worthy of the tale he alone could tell.

Yes, he remembered the fishing disaster. He remembered it as if it had happened yesterday. His elbow seemed to be hinged on his knee, for each time he moved his pipe, his arm swivelled on his knee-cap. He was very slow, and my impatient spirit longed to hurry him along. When he looked at me and decided to have a few more pulls at his pipe, I sat down and allowed John Newton to extract the information. Yes, he remembered the morning quite well. The younger fellows had refused to listen to common sense. The fishing fleet had

been idle for days, for the weather had been extremely bad, and not a vessel had been to sea. The men were impatient. The markets wanted fish; so did they. The old man paused again, and calmly sent a smoke ring in pursuit of his aerial tormentors. His hand whizzed past his ear, and all the while we waited. He would not be hurried. Yes, he remembered the morning. The sun was shining beautifully, and the sea was as calm as a mill-pond; but the glass — we should have seen the glass. It had never been as low. The younger fellows said it had gone wrong. It was a fool of a thing, anyhow! There was nothing wrong with the weather, and they could not afford to stay ashore for the rest of their lives. If the older men were scared they could stay home, but the morning was too lovely to miss the chance of a day's fishing.

"Aye," continued the old fisherman, "they went — all of them, and they never came back. Not a single ship came back. Hours later, when they had reached the fishing grounds, the weather suddenly changed, and a great storm churned the sea into a heaving mass. Our men turned for home, but it was too late. The ships were smashed, and driven on the rocks; we lost the entire fleet. The rest of us were down at the water's edge, waiting and hoping that some of the men would be washed ashore. We were ready to rush into the water to help them. Aye, Mister, that was a bad day, that was. They wouldn't listen to us, and it cost them their lives."

Later, I stood with my host, James Bremner, of Wick, Caithness, overlooking the quaint but pretty little harbour of the northern town. He had shown me the place where the herrings were gutted, and had introduced me to many of the fishermen who sat on the quay. I saw the massive walls which helped to make the breakwater, and I saw also the narrow opening through which the ships went out to sea. A large lamp was suspended over the harbour entrance, and when I asked its purpose, he explained that when the harbour was closed, the red light warned all mariners to remain outside. And then he added, "But I remember one fellow who refused to listen. A great storm had been blowing for days, and the swirling waters had made entry into the harbour an impossibility. Some ships had already decided to ride it out. They had turned about and were facing the elements. They were quite safe. But one fellow — I think he was a Dane — had arranged to meet a girl in town, and he was quite sure he could bring his vessel into the harbour *light or no light*. The harbour master urgently warned him to stay outside, but the signals were disregarded. The vessel was caught by the terrific currents, and before the eyes of the watching people, cap-sized with the loss of all hands. The man refused to be warned." There are many sinners who appear to be following his example.

—IVOR POWELL

REWARD

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10.

"The season will come and is coming,
When the Christian shall lay down the cross,
And receive the reward from his glorified Lord,
Feel joy without measure,
Exchange gain for pleasure,
Obtain gain for loss."

—CHAS. BENJ. MANLY

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

Offering Hospitality to the Messengers of God

An Address by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, August 7th, 1930

(Stenographically Reported)

Basis of Address: Genesis, Chapter Eighteen

IT IS the way of grace always to take the initiative in dealing with the human soul. God does not wait until we approach Him: He approaches us. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

There was a time when men tried to climb up to heaven, and they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name." They began to build the tower, but were unable to finish it; and from then until now men have been busy designing and attempting to construct towers which would reach to heaven. But because men cannot ascend into heaven, God has sent His Son, Who came down from heaven. That is the difference between grace and works; that is the difference between the salvation of which this Bible tells us, and every method which men would devise in substitution thereof by which they hope themselves to get to God.

That same human tendency manifests itself to-day in that which is dividing Christendom. The great question at bottom to-day is whether you are a revelationist or a rationalist; whether you believe that anything you know — or can know — about God must be based upon what God is pleased to reveal of Himself, or whether your knowledge of God is to rest upon what you yourself may discover about God. Abraham did not discover God on this occasion. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" We shall never know any more about God than He is pleased to reveal to us. Hence grace lies at the basis of our relationship to God.

I.

"THE LORD APPEARED UNTO ABRAHAM." And any man who has ever known God from then until now has known Him because God has appeared unto him, because God has come to him, because God has sought him and found him. That is why we are Christians, because in His infinite mercy, because, by reasons known only to Himself which we cannot understand, He has set His love upon us to seek us and find us and bring us to Himself. I say this over and over again so that young people — and all others too — if you forget everything I may say, always remember that I told you that salvation, in every aspect of it, in every stage of it, is of grace, and only of grace; which means that it is of God, and only of God.

Abraham felt very much like you and I do on a hot day, getting as near the door as possible. He sat in the tent door at the heat of the day. It is worth while noticing what happened, what followed from God's communication to Abraham at high noon on a hot day.

There are people whose religion does not last twelve months of the year, who are disposed to bid God good-

bye in the summer-time. Perhaps you have heard of the little boy who had witnessed the activities of the household as everyone was getting ready to go away to the seaside? The night before they were to start, when he said his prayers, he said his usual prayer, and when he had finished the prayer his mother had taught him, he added a little one of his own. He said, "Well, good-bye, God, we will be home again in September." That is child-like, but children sometimes have a way of going to the heart of matters.

I am not saying we should live in the city in the summer-time, nor am I saying it is wrong to be by the lakeside getting a little rest and recreation; but surely people to whom God has appeared should take Him with them, —

"Take the name of Jesus with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you,
Take it then where'er you go."

Our religion should be a matter of three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. We should not need a vacation from our praying and our praising and our commerce with God, any more than we need a vacation from eating.

I sometimes think that even orthodox people are in danger of making a difference between Sunday and Monday, between the sacred and the secular. We imagine there are certain things that are quite appropriate on Monday — or, not inappropriate at least — that would be out of place on Sunday. "Holiness to the Lord" ought to be written upon everything connected with a Christian. We ought to serve the Lord seven days every week. As we sit in our tent door at the heat of the day we ought to be as responsive to the approach of God — or in our leisure hours, in our recreation moments — as when sitting in our pew in church. We shall never "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ", unless and until we learn how to recognize God in the everyday affairs of life.

Here was a godly man who perhaps in the heat of the day felt especially weary. He sat where the breeze was blowing, perhaps relaxing a little. What occupied his mind? What do you think about "in the heat of the day"? What occupies your mind in the brief respite from the day's toil, that comes perhaps in the lunch hour? Have we learned, in respect to the fragments of time, to "gather up the fragments that remain"? Are we always on the alert to see God, ready to receive Him?

II.

Here is an event that is not distinctively religious. It was just a commonplace experience, that as this man sat

at the tent door he saw certain strangers approaching, and he was hospitably disposed toward them, and exercised himself to show hospitality to strangers. That is to say, he opened his home to people who were passing by, who came without credentials, without anybody's recommendation. He was a man who showed kindness to somebody, just a little ordinary act of kindness. I am aware that we find God when we turn the pages of this holy Book, and that all our experiences must be valued, must be appraised by the standards of Scripture; but I do not believe that God is shut up to the particular hours when we are studying our Bible, or when we may be bowed in prayer, or when we may be engaged in some distinctively religious work — God is not shut up to these periods as the only time in which He can communicate Himself to us. He can meet us on the highway, He can meet us in the store, He can meet us while about our daily task in the kitchen, He can meet us in the street-car, — He can meet us anywhere.

And very often GOD DOES DRAW NEAR to people who, for His sake, do show acts of kindness to other people. You say, "You are getting back now to the principle of works." Not at all! Not at all! I am simply insisting that what we know of God should affect life at every point, and it ought to make us considerate of other people and willing to bear other people's burdens.

The New Testament says, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Thus we have New Testament authority for saying that Abraham did not know first of all who these visitors were, but he simply performed an act of kindness. I do not believe it is any more possible for you or me to do an act, to perform an act that is godlike in character, that is in agreement with the will of God, than it is for us to open our hearts to the explicit teaching of Scripture, and miss the presence of God. Read God's Word, and offer it hospitality, receive the truth "in the love of it", and in that reception you receive Christ in larger measure, and the Spirit of God takes more complete possession of you.

Similarly, if you and I take the principles of the Bible and reduce them to practice, and in our business across the counter, in our contact with people with whom we have to do, or in our travels, our pleasures, whatever we have to do — if we are in all these things actuated by pure motives, and if our activities are in line with the will of God, in the very doing of these things God will appear to us again. What I mean is, that we may make the office a veritable holy of holies, we may make any place of duty a veritable Bethel where the angels will ascend and descend; and although we have to go about our daily task between Sundays, we may have Sunday all the time. Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we may do all to the glory of God. Abraham simply showed kindness to strangers.

Do we do it? Do we find a delight in carrying somebody's burdens? in helping some other man to get his shoulder a little more comfortably under his load? Or do we follow the maxims of the world and insist it is our main business to look after ourselves. You have heard of the man whose cardinal principle was that his life was directed toward the end of securing the greatest good to the greatest number — and in his estimation the greatest number was always number one! There are many people who, when it comes to business and other things, say, "One simply has to look after himself. If he does

not, nobody else will. Let somebody else do the worrying; it is none of my affairs. I did not erect this tent to entertain strangers. I did not build my house for the accommodation of somebody else: I built it for myself and my family. It is my business to look after myself." Some people do it well! They really do. They cannot be accused of neglect at that point! But a Christian ought to be different.

And this man did not wait until they came knocking at his door, begging admission; for as soon as he saw them he ran to meet them: "He lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant."

I remember some years ago conducting an evangelistic mission for a certain minister. It is a good many years ago, and a brother came to help me. When the meeting was over each evening we invariably left the building in company with the minister, and walked along the main street until we came to the intersection of another street, down which the minister went to his home. I do not know what it was like, for I never saw it. But we walked along, and when we came to that corner he always said the same thing every evening. This is what he said: "Well, I suppose you will not come down, will you?" I remember my friend's saying to me one night when he had passed the usual invitation, "Just exactly what did that dear brother mean?" What do you think he meant? (Laughter) I think he meant what he said, that he supposed we would not come down! And he "supposed" right, for we would not think of going without being asked! I suppose he saved his conscience by persuading himself that he had offered us his hospitality. We were not particularly in need of it.

But that is how some people do: "You will not come down, will you? I live at such a number. I suppose you would not like to come to see me, would you?"

That is just how Abraham did not invite these strangers, for when he saw them he ran toward them, and left them in no doubt whatever as to their welcome. The doors were thrown wide, and he said, "Come in."

It is well that we should develop in ourselves that — what shall I call it? — that hospitable attitude toward goodness, toward the truth, toward everything that is of the truth, so that when God's angels come near we may not miss them. They may not come with the voice of the trumpet, they may not come advertising their heavenly origin: they may come *incognito*. Yes, that is a good word. That is just how God often comes. God often comes to us *incognito*. He stands at our door to see whether there is any real affinity between our heart and Himself. If there is, He will not need to mention His name. We shall discover that He and we are one, and He will find His way into our hearts and into our homes.

Abraham said, "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said." What an ideal host Abraham was! How well he knew how to entertain! That is a high compliment when one

knows how to entertain strangers. He did it lavishly, abundantly.

Do you remember how a Prophet once came into the house of a Pharisee who had invited his neighbours to come in to the feast? The Pharisee had heard much about this Prophet, but he was not quite sure who He was; so he was careful not to be extravagant in his reception. But there was somebody out on the street who followed the Prophet into the Pharisee's house, just like a piece of steel follows a magnet. Her penitent heart she knew instinctively had something in common with that Prophet. I do not suppose she knew that it was written, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." That woman came in and sat at His feet, and bathed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. The proud Pharisee, the host of the occasion, said: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." Said the unknown Guest, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. . . . Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." What a contrast!

Abraham did not know his guests by name, but he said, "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant."

But that is only part of the story. It is all very well for a man to invite somebody to dinner, but what has his wife to say about it? When a man brings a company of strangers in without any notice — on a hot day! — did you hear that? On a hot day, to propose to entertain three strangers! When Abraham had thus welcomed them for himself he ran away to Sarah and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth." I do not think Sarah was disposed to object. He knew her well enough for that. He knew that they were one in that respect. Anyway, he did not stay long enough to hear her objections if she had any. Perhaps that was a good thing to do! In any case, as soon as he had said that, Abraham "ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."

I do not think it is very difficult for a household to be one in this matter. Abraham and Sarah were evidently one, and so was the servant. He offered no objection. Abraham was the head of his house, but they all delighted to do this same form of service.

What a wonderful thing it is when the Lord Himself, although He comes anonymously, can be welcomed into our families! Is there anything nearer to heaven on earth than a godly home where God is put first, and where all the members of the family, and servants too, if there are any, recognize that as the guiding principle of the home? So much for that.

Abraham did not intend to charge anything for board. There was to be no board bill, you know. They were not "paying guests". They were just strangers hospitably received. But very often you will find that they are the best sort of paying guests. You would be offended if they offered anything to you, when you invited friends into your home, and you welcome them for the time being as members of your family in whose fellowship you delight. They sit at your table, and as they go away you urge them to come again sometime — you would be offended, I say, if they were to offer to remunerate you. You would be insulted. Of course, if you were keeping a boarding-house or a hotel, it would be entirely different; but I am speaking now of such hospitality as you offer to a friend.

And yet you cannot entertain such strangers without entertaining angels; and angels always leave something when they go. There is something about the household that was not there before they came. I wonder, if we are the guest, what we leave behind? I wonder, when we are entertained, how far we enrich those whose hospitality we accepted?

III.

But THE ANGELS THEN REPEATED A PROMISE that Abraham had heard before, and which he needed to hear the second time. When Sarah overheard it she laughed, and the Angel said unto Abraham, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh?" She said, "I did not laugh." And the angel said, "But you did." There is no use for us to deny the divine accusation, for the Lord knows all about it. But what I want to point out to you is this: God is always promising the impossible to us. You have had it again and again, and at first blush you said, "How wonderful! Hallelujah! That is wonderful." But the next day you get back to the commonplaces of life, and that wonderful experience on the mountaintop becomes to you something like an echo, and you say, "Now! now! Did God promise that? Will He perform it?" As the utterance of the promise becomes more remote you begin to wonder, after all, whether you were wise in accepting it at face value. Did you ever have that experience? — when the word of God came to you with such freshness and power, and because it was not immediately fulfilled, and a year or more than a year passed and it was not fulfilled, you have said, "I am not quite as sure as at first?"

My point is: God knows that we need to have the promises repeated to us. It was as though He would say to Abraham, "Perhaps you have forgotten, but I have not. I made you a promise some time ago, but remember my yesterdays are my to-days, and my to-days are my to-morrows. What I have said, I will do. What is Sarah laughing at out there in the kitchen? Has she, too, forgotten my promise?"

We are all tempted to laugh at the promises of God when they seem to be remote from us, but blessed be God, He comes to us even in the summertime as though He would whisper in our ears, "Be of good cheer. I will do it yet." Is not that good? Is not that wonderful? "I know the fourteenth chapter of John," someone says. No, you do not. "But, sir, I have read it a thousand times." Go and read it another thousand times. You do not know what is in the fourteenth of John. Read it again, and let God come to you a second time; let the Word of God burn its way into your soul and there will be a new

hallelujah on your lips. Do not say you are familiar with anything of God's book. Do not ask for something fresh: ask for the old path. You need the old promises repeated, —

"Tell me the Story often,
For I forget so soon;
The 'early dew' of morning
Has passed away at noon."

Blessed be God, He comes at noon, while we sit in the tent door "at the heat of the day," and says, "I will tell you again what I told you this morning, and I want you to believe it all the day long."

IV

Was that all? No. ABRAHAM BECAME A BLESSING TO OTHERS. The Lord was going on His way, and He stopped a moment and soliloquized saying, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" — Abraham did not say good-bye to them at the door. He said, "I will go with you a little way." As they walked along the road the Lord talked with Himself and said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

And the Lord said — oh, how different from what I have been talking about just now — the Lord said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom" — but One of them remained — "and Abraham stood yet before the Lord", the Angel of the Covenant, none other than the One Who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. And then there arose from his anguished heart that cry for the salvation of Lot. You remember how he prayed that it might be spared for the sake of fifty, and so on down until the Lord said, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake", because He to whom Abraham spoke knew that the day would come when the children of grace should understand that judgment would pass, not for the sake of ten, but for the sake of One upon Whom God had made all the world's iniquities to meet.

My point is this, and I should like to carry it on if my time were not gone, that while Abraham, by the proper use of the noon hour on a summer day, received confirmation of his own faith and a repetition of the promise that he should become heir to all the world, in addition to that, God acquainted him with the fact that a dark cloud of judgment was hanging over somebody else, and on the basis of that further revelation Abraham prayed as he never would have prayed if God had not appeared unto him. All prayer, true prayer, rests upon a divine revelation; and when God tells us that those who are without Christ are under condemnation and in danger of suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, of which Sodom and Gomorrah have become the example, then ought we

to pray. And thus in the summer-time we may pray. And while the judgment falls, when the smoke of the city of the plain ascends up like the smoke of a great furnace, God remembered Abraham when He sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow in the midst of which Lot dwelt.

Judgment may fall in the summer-time. Somebody may have his last opportunity in the summer-time. And we may become God's instruments in their salvation — in the summer-time, if we know how to use the hour of high noon, on the hottest day in summer.

God keep us faithful, and make us useful, so that in answer to our prayer, reaching the throne through Him Who tarried at Abraham's tent, people may be saved. Be hospitable to every message and every messenger from heaven, for who knows but that He comes with that twofold mission, to promise additional blessing to us, and to make us a channel of His grace to somebody else who needs His salvation.

Let us pray:

Help us, O Lord, by Thine abounding grace that we may be true to Thee. Bless us in these somewhat trying days, when the heat is so oppressive; and when often the flesh is weak, give us willing spirits. Come near to us, and make Thyself so real to us that Thou shalt be nearer to us than breathing, and closer than hands and feet. Make our faith vital and vigorous, — yes, and sometimes vicarious. Help us to believe for the Lots, and to pray for the Lots who will not pray for themselves. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

DO NOT MAGNIFY TRIFLES

If a man should fire a house to destroy the mice in it, we should think him to be fairly mad. Yet those who consider themselves to be reasonable men will set the church in a blaze about the merest trifle. Meeting after meeting will be called, and angry discussions provoked, and holy work overturned about the smallest mistake of the preacher, on the minutest fault of the deacon. One would think that heaven itself were endangered, and yet it turns out to be a question of infinitesimal importance. Societies which were doing great service have often been broken up by the crazy whimsies of good brethren, who made much ado about nothing, and did great harm in trying to do a little good. Aim at reformation, not at desolation. The church has been thought to be sick, and fools have doctored it till they brought it to death's door by their poisons.—SPURGEON.

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Devotional Study of Revelation Twelve

(Chapter XV of *A Devotional Study in Revelation*, by Dr. Robert Dubarry,
a series of articles published in THE GOSPEL WITNESS in 1955.)

THREE DECISIVE DEFEATS OF SATAN

Revelation 11:15 to 12:17

OUR preceding study brought us to the time of the end and to the consummation of the last judgments of history. That is confirmed by the sounding of the seventh trumpet, as the great voices in heaven cry out: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (11:15). And in their turn the elders fall upon their faces and worship God in a song of praise and thankfulness: "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets."

In the open heavens, there now appears the temple of God and the ark of His covenant; that new vision, together with the lightnings, the voices, the thunders, the earthquake and the hail, represent the divine answer to the appeals of the saints who invoke the throne of grace and cry for justice.

Those final things thus predicted, the vision once again goes back to the causes of that great upheaval. Chapter twelve of the book of Revelation therefore deals with the origin of the conflict.

Let us pause here to observe the logical gradation of the apocalyptic prophecies. Let us firmly remember that the vision of the seals was mainly a picture of the conflict of *ideas* which, throughout the Christian economy, must confront gospel truths with spiritual falsehood: that conflict ends with a vision of *peace*. On the other hand, the trumpet-series was mainly a vision of the conflict of *persons* which must bring face to face the witnesses of the gospel and the hostile human organizations: that war logically results in a vision of *victory*.

The scenes of chapters 12 to 14 do not confront us any more with ideas or persons, which are but instruments in the course of the hostilities. They directly acquaint us with their *authors*. Extending well beyond the Christian dispensation, a stupendous war, at once accursed and holy, had pitted both in heaven and on earth, the eternal God against His great Adversary. Of this gigantic struggle, the opposition of anti-Christianity to Christianity is but the last episode. The issue of the conflict is depicted in chapter 14, vv. 14-20, where we behold the scenes of *retribution* under the figures of the harvest and grape-gathering.

Chapter twelve will therefore describe, in impressive images, the summary of that deadly war which will be transferred from heaven to the scene of our world. Only by grasping the enlarged scope of these hostilities and by taking our own place in them, shall we avoid the misfortune and the folly of believing that we fight only for ideas and against men. We have to understand that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the

darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Our study of the twelfth chapter of Revelation will thus reveal to us that, in this conflict, God has chosen to fight His Adversary, not directly but through the action of intermediaries. We shall see the gradual downfall of Satan as he is successively in opposition to the Son of God, then to the archangel Michael, finally to redeemed men.

I. SATAN'S DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF THE SON OF GOD (12:1-6)

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

Most of the commentaries identify the mysterious woman with the people of God. Isaiah 54 describes it under feminine features, whereas the great promise of Genesis 3:15 concerning the Redeemer refers to Him as the seed of the woman. It goes without saying that the present vision does not involve the act of incarnation, entirely divine in its origin and its fulfilment. But, in a particular sense, the Son of Man is certainly the Father's answer to the anguish and prayers of those waiting for a spiritual deliverance.

It seems therefore that the scene described here at once carries us to the beginning and to the ending of the eternal purpose of God towards His own. And thus the woman appears in a twofold state of majesty and suffering.

A state of *majesty*: she is clothed with the symbol of supreme authority, the sun; she rules over the moon, a figure for the lesser authority; her crown of stars symbolizes all the other powers. Such is the destiny of the kingly people.

A state of *suffering*, as also predicted in various Scriptures: "I have heard a voice as of a *woman in travail*, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself (Jer. 4:31) — "... The kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. Now why dost thou cry aloud? is there no *king* in thee? for pangs have taken thee as a *woman in travail*. Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail . . ." (Micah 4:8-10). And in the context of the latter passage is found the prophecy of the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem. To acquaint rebellious mankind with an absolute Master, such is the ungrateful but high calling of the true people of God.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads."

The faithful works of the symbolical woman have their origin in heaven, and in the same way, the forces hostile to her came from heaven, by virtue of a mysterious divine permission.

The formidable being mentioned here can be easily

identified as Satan by the context of the following scenes. His dragon-like appearance symbolizes his threatening designs. His red colour seems to emphasize his ferocious instincts. His seven heads figure his intelligence and his ten horns his power. His seven crowns tell of his universal prestige.

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

In connection with previous allusions made to the instruments used by the Satanic powers, we read that their tails "were like unto serpents" — which would seem to indicate that through seduction the Father of lies drew after him from heaven a multitude of the celestial beings symbolized by the stars, thus increasing his means of action.

The dragon's attitude toward the Child reminds us of that of Pharaoh against the newly-born Hebrews and of Herod against the Son of God. The Enemy knows the loss he will suffer through the seed of the woman who will bruise his head. And unable to act more wickedly, he prepares to bruise his heel.

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron."

This is naturally a symbolic picture. For instance, Mary was only the instrument through which the long expectation of the coming of the Son of Man was realized. As a representative of what was best among the servants of the God of Israel, she gave birth to her Son through the power of the Holy Spirit, and in answer to the prayers of those who had longed for His coming with an earnest heart. In the same way, during the present economy, the Christian people have been called, like the apostle Paul to "travail in birth again, until Christ be formed" in the saints (Gal. 4:19).

Revelation 2:27 throws light on the quality of the threatened child: "He that overcometh . . . shall rule the nations with a rod of iron . . . even as I received of my Father." For what must characterize the Son of God is His matchless and decisive authority, an authority first exercised without limitation over the Christian's heart, and finally triumphing over all the adversaries of the gospel.

"And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

Our Saviour's career, that one long and victorious conflict with the dragon, is sufficiently described in the Gospels. Our text, therefore, designedly omits depicting it, only mentioning its miraculous beginning and end. We thus reach here the events told in the fourth and fifth chapters, that is, the enthronement of Jesus Christ and the opening on earth of the Christian era.

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

This is a striking picture of the condition of the people of God throughout Christian history. To "flee" has always been the very legitimate means of safe-guard for the representatives of Jesus Christ: "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another" (Matt. 10:23).

The place of refuge is at once a "wilderness" and a "place prepared of God", that is, a condition of suffering, and of safety. It is also the seat of divine Providence, which as long as necessary provides for the needs of the persecuted ones. The oasis of the desert of Shur, with

its twelve wells of water and its threescore and ten palm trees (Ex. 15:27), is here repeated.

This 1,260 days' period of exile takes us back to our preceding remarks concerning the similar duration of the persecution of God's witnesses in chapter eleven. Let us again remind our readers that those three and a half years — a broken seven — refer to the *limited* and measured length of God's Israel's stay on earth.

II. SATAN'S DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF THE ARCHANGEL OF GOD (11:7-11)

"And there was war in heaven."

We need not marvel at the earthly hostilities if we see in them the continuation of much more amazing and much more important war, that waged in Heaven itself.

The great mystery is not so much the existence of sin on earth as its appearing in the heavenly places. Thus, the seriousness and the power of evil are brought out with an infinitely greater vividness when considered in their bearings outside of the terrestrial scene.

"Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels."

The conflict between good and evil has therefore a superhuman origin. The importance of such a conflict is stressed by the high position of its main participants: Michael, the only known archangel, and Satan, now a rebel, but possibly or even superior to his adversary before his revolt. The importance of the conflict is further emphasized by the participation of allied forces. The commotion mentioned here may have then caused the fall of myriads of accomplices well-equipped for their guilty enterprises.

"And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."

The inevitable has happened. God who, from the beginning, could have crushed the Satanic forces with a flip of His hand, first pleased to set up against them opponents of comparable station. Later, He temporarily set in opposition to Satan the lonely Jesus, whose means had been purposely reduced. But He now desires to make his presumptuous Adversary's defeat more humiliating still by setting up against him such insignificant champions as men are.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

The person and the evil designs of the Enemy are too clearly described here to necessitate any word of comment. We shall therefore only lay stress on the fact that, from this time on, the scope of the activities of Satan and his angels had been limited to earth. For the heavens are now free from all impurity.

The phrase "cast out" indicates the sudden, total and final character of that unparalleled downfall, which had been foreseen by Jesus: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven!" (Luke 10:18).

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

What rendered the position of rebellious men dangerous was that, until then, God was as it were bound to listen to the unceasing accusations of the Adversary. But,

in order to reduce him to silence, Jesus Christ had to accomplish His atoning work. And thus the Accuser had to make room for the Advocate. How comforting to know that not a single word will ever be spoken against us to the divine judge, either in heaven, whence the Enemy is finally banished, or from earth, for the Seducer's perfidious denunciations will never reach heaven!

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Two instruments are here mentioned, which will allow the victory: the atoning work, and the testimony of God's elect. Thus, two forces which would be of no avail if acting separately, are together fully effective.

The conclusion of the verse clearly shows that the spiritual conflict of the Christian must indeed be considered as a matter of life and death.

III. SATAN'S DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD (12:12-17)

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

There exists a perfect correspondence between the relief of heaven and the peril of earth. Most serious thoughts urgently command our attention as we become aware of the danger constituted by the concentration in our tiny world, and only for a little time, of all the fearful forces of an enemy much older than mankind.

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."

We here find a further explanation of the flight of the people of God into the wilderness, already described in verses 5 and 6 of the same chapter.

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place. . . ."

We thus learn, in that striking picture, that the symbolical woman's flight was made easier by a miraculous intervention from above. He that has prepared a place for us will always provide the means to reach it.

" . . . where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

During this long, yet limited, period of time, the people will be perfectly preserved, through separation and suffering.

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood."

It seems that we have here a counterpart of the Saviour's action when, opening His mouth, He taught the truth. After attempting the destruction of the people of God through fierce persecutions, the Enemy, changing his method of attack, resorts to the misguiding action of error and of the doctrines of demons.

"And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."

The earth represents mankind which, owing to the influence of the gospel, is in many respects immunized against some of the Enemy's grossest arms. For the Christian civilization has gradually rendered certain forms of persecution and certain seduction ineffective or impossible.

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Unable to continue its opposition against Christianity at large, Satan turns his fury against individuals who distinguish themselves by a particular faithfulness to the spirit, the doctrines and practices of the gospel. If we remember that his unlimited field of action has now been restricted to earth, then especially to the professing people, we can well imagine the much-threatened position of the "remnant" which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. But the present perils of the faithful champions of the Lord will some day be their crown of glory. And let us bear in mind the threefold defeat of our Adversary and keep in memory the essential teaching of that twelfth chapter: "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."

The three vast episodes of this chapter are well made to encourage any one who has not truly taken sides in the conflict, for, as Jesus Christ Himself declared, "He that is not with me is against me."

It would be indeed "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God", in the company of His vanquished Enemy; but a blessed advantage is presented to us, as the "Captain of our salvation" grants us a last opportunity to enrol in His ever-victorious armies. For His atoning work can perfectly justify us from our past defeats and give us full share in all the privileges of His triumph.

"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE!"

THE THREE "R's" OF THE GOSPEL

The old-fashioned saying: *Ruin by the Fall; Redemption by the Blood of Christ; and Regeneration by the Holy Ghost*—is true, profound and most important. Calvin used to remark that there are three great chapters in Scripture, each a third chapter; the third chapter of Genesis, showing us man's fall and sinful condition; the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, revealing propitiation by the atonement of Christ; and the third chapter of the Gospel of John, teaching us regeneration by the Holy Ghost. Unless we know what guilt is, we do not feel the need of atonement: unless we know the utter sinfulness and helplessness of man, we do not feel the need of the Spirit to enlighten and persuade our hearts to accept Christ.

—REV. ADOLPH SAPHIR, D.D.

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Refined or Removed?

By Dr. A. W. Tozer

WE CHRISTIANS must look sharp that our Christianity does not simply refine our sins without removing them.

The work of Christ as Saviour is twofold: to "save his people from their sins" and to reunite them forever with the God from whom sin had alienated them.

For God's holy character requires that He refuse to admit sin into His fellowship. Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus mercy may pardon the returning sinner and place him judicially beyond the reach of the broken law; but not the boundless grace nor the infinite kindness of God can make it morally congruous for a pure being to have communion with an impure one. It is necessary to the moral health of the universe that God divide the light from the darkness and that He say at last to every sinner, "Depart from ye, ye that work iniquity."

This certainly is no new thought. Christian theologians have all recognized the necessity for an adequate purgation of the inner springs of moral conduct and the impartation of a renewed nature to the believer before he is ready for the fellowship of God. Our hymnists also have seen and wrestled with this great problem — and thanks be to God, have found the answer, too.

Binney felt the weight of this problem and stated it along with the solution in a little known but deeply spiritual hymn:

*Eternal Light! eternal Light!
How pure that soul must be
When, placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight
Can live, and look on Thee.*

*O how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear
That uncreated beam?*

*There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God.*

The offering and the sacrifice and the sanctifying energies of the Holy Spirit are indeed sufficient to prepare the soul for communion with God. This the Bible declares and this ten thousand times ten thousand witnesses confirm. The big danger is that we assume that we have been delivered from our sins when we have in reality only exchanged one kind of sin for another. This is the peril that lies in wait for everyone. It need not discourage us nor turn us back, but it should make us watchful.

We must, for instance, be careful that our repentance is not simply a change of location. Whereas we once sinned in the far country among the swineherds, we are now chumming with religious persons, considerably cleaner and much more respectable in appearance, to

be sure, but no nearer to true heart purity than we were before.

Again, pride may by religious influence be refined to a quiet self-esteem, skillfully dissembled by a neat use of Bible words that meant everything to those who first used them but which may only serve to disguise a deep self-love which is to God a hateful and intolerable thing. The real trouble is thus not cleared up, but only driven underground.

The gossip and troublemaker sometimes at conversion turns into a "spiritual counsellor", but often a closer look will reveal the same restless, inquisitive spirit at work that made her a nuisance before her conversion. The whole thing has been refined and given a religious appearance, but actually nothing radical has happened. She is still running the same stand, only on the other side of the street. There has been a certain refinement of the sin, but definitely not a removal of it. This is Satan's most successful way of getting into the church to cause weakness, backsliding and division.

Many a business transaction which among worldly men we would brand as sharp practice when carried on by a Christian after he has prayed over it is hailed as a remarkable answer to prayer and a proof that God is a "partner" in the affair.

These are illustrations only, intended to show how sin may alter its appearance without changing its nature, and are not to be taken to mean that I am opposed to Christian counsellors or businessmen who pray over their affairs. The contrary is true. That church is blessed indeed which has in it a few persons with the gift of discernment to whom weak and troubled Christians may come for help in times of crisis. And blessed is the businessman today who has learned to pray his way through red tape and taxes. Without the help of God I do not see how businessmen stay sane in this frightful rat race we call civilization.

The temptation to spare the best of the sheep and the cattle is very strong in all of us. Like Saul before us we are willing enough to slay the scrubby sheep and the old sway-back steers, but Adam and the devil join to try to persuade us to keep the fattest beasts alive. And many of us fall for the old trick. We make pets of the cattle we should have destroyed and their beatings and bellowings are heard throughout all Christendom.

The will of God is that sin should be removed, not merely refined. Let's walk in His will.

—The Alliance Weekly

Jarvis Street Church

WEEKLY BROADCAST

Sunday 7.30 - 8.30 P.M.

(1250) CHWO Oakville

Why Men Cannot Believe

(Substance of Sermon preached in Calvary Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, by the Pastor,
Rev. E. W. Johnson)

IN OUR text this morning (John 5:39-47) our Lord sets forth some five reasons why faith is impossible to the natural man without a prior work of grace.

You will never believe in election unless you believe in the inability of man to come to Christ without enabling grace. Of course, all men believe in election, but most of them believe that the sinner elects himself an heir of God.

Let us this morning look at these five reasons why the natural man cannot believe on Christ without prevenient grace and learn that election must be of God —

I. Men will not draw nigh to the God of the Holy Scriptures.

Our Lord in John 5:40 says: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Coming to Christ means far more than searching the Scriptures or joining the church. These Jews had already done that. The preceding verse says, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." They were not members of the New Testament church, but they were members of the visible representation of the invisible kingdom of that day — the Jewish nation.

Coming to Christ means drawing nigh to the Lord of the Holy Scriptures. Men will not come near to that God who is perfect in holiness, power, and grace. Take away His holiness, have Him loving men in their sins, and they will come near. Take away His power over His creatures, and they will come near. Take away His grace, make salvation something we earn; something we deserve, and they will come near. But set forth the Christ of the Holy Scriptures and you will see that men will not come near.

Faith is a revelation, Matt. 16:17, faith is a kind of seeing, an inward vision of the Christ of holiness, power, and mercy, Num. 21:9; John 3:15. Faith is the ability to see God as God indeed, Isaiah 45:22. Christ must reveal Himself as the God of holiness, power and mercy. We cannot of ourselves unveil Him, but we can draw near to the God of the Holy Scriptures, but men of themselves won't even do that. They will draw back.

II. Men do not love the Lord.

In our text this morning Jesus said: "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." John 5:42. Faith is a kind of knowledge. There are three kinds of knowledge, that which is *experienced*, that which is ours by *examination*, and that which is based on *testimony*. Faith is knowledge based on testimony. That faith which is based on the testimony of men is human faith. That faith which is based on the testimony of God (John 5:36) is Divine. Only the latter will save.

Love and faith must go hand in hand. Without the love of God you will not attend upon His testimony. My little daughter is taking piano lessons. Much that she learns must be based on testimony. We are happy that she loves her teacher, for without that love there is no trust and without trust she cannot receive that knowledge which is based on testimony.

The graces of the Spirit must go hand in hand. To

the extent which you receive the grace of repentance to that extent you receive the grace of faith. To the extent which you receive the grace of faith you receive the grace of patience. To the extent which you receive the grace of patience you receive the grace of humility. And the binding grace of it all is the love of God.

How can men rest in Him in whom they have no love? And how can they love Him who is Lord and must be Lord when they think themselves lord in their lives?

III. Men do not respect the authority of God.

Our Lord in our text this morning said: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not." John 5:43. Speaking in the name of God is speaking in the authority of God.

If faith is knowledge based on testimony, how can men believe when they do not respect the authority of God? The natural man is in rebellion against the God who is God indeed, Romans 8:7, and he cannot believe until that rebellion is broken by the grace of evangelical repentance.

Behold, Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus! He attends upon the voice of Christ. Would he have done it without the prior work of Sovereign Grace? Did not God first bring him to his knees? That self-love, self-worship, self-will principle in man must be mortified or men cannot believe, and to the extent to which it is mortified in repentance, men believe.

IV. Men do not seek the grace of God.

Our text reads: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" John 5:44. The word *honour* here is the same word which is often translated *glory* in our English New Testament. It comes from a Greek word which means *good opinion*.

Which do men value more, to be held in the good opinion of their fellow men or to be well thought of by God? Where do they receive their *honour*?

Only in grace could God have a good opinion of us sinners; it must be an unmerited favor. In fact, if we were not sinners, God who is perfect in glory could hold us, who are but creatures of the dust, in high esteem only in grace. But men value not the high esteem of God.

Faith, beloved, is a sense of Divine favor, resting on the knowledge of Christ revealed and not on sinful presumption. How can you have that faith when you care not for the high esteem of God? And you never will until Sovereign Grace brings you from your high throne of self-worship to the feet of Christ.

V. Men do not believe the Holy Scriptures.

Our Lord said in our text this morning: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me . . ." John 5:46. Take the Bible anyway you want to, men do not believe it.

Take it as a book of doctrine. Its great doctrinal themes are God, man, and salvation. What does the Bible say about God? It tells us that He is God indeed. What does the Bible say about man? It tells us that he is a sinner, without merit in the sight of God. What

does it tell us about salvation? The Bible tells us that salvation is in the mercy of a Sovereign God and not in the works of men.

Do men believe these great doctrinal propositions of the Bible? Not at all and never will without grace preventing them.

Take the Bible as a book of history. What are its great historical themes? I would list these four: The fall of man, the giving of the law, the death of Christ, and the calling of the Gentiles. Do men believe any of these great historic facts?

Men do not believe that the race of man *died* in those days when that race consisted of but two. Spiritual death is separation from God. We are taught in the Holy Scriptures that man became separated from God the very day that he ate the forbidden fruit. And we are taught that the race is now by nature in a state of separation from God. But men do not believe this.

Men do not believe the law and its penalty as revealed at Sinai. Take away the *absoluteness* of that law and its penalty, make it something *relative* to human capacity, and they will believe that God spoke to the Israelitish nation as recorded in the book of Exodus.

Men do not believe in the full implication of the death of Christ as an historic fact. They will accept the message of Calvary which speaks of human depravity and Divine justice.

Men do not believe in the calling of the Gentiles as

described in the epistles of Paul, Eph. 2:1-10. If they did, they would believe in Sovereign Grace.

Man cannot believe in Christ if they refuse to hear the Scriptures. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Why do men not respect the Holy Scriptures? Our text tells us why: "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses . . ." John 5:45. Men will find themselves *destroyed* in their own eyes if they will really search the Sacred Scriptures with awakened minds. The self-love, self-praise principle will be cast down.

Conclusion

What is faith? Faith is the confidence of salvation, a sense of Divine mercy, resting in the knowledge of Christ revealed to an awakened mind, will, and affection — and not in the sinful presumption of human merit before God.

Men must see Christ. They must see Him as Lord, perfect in holiness, power, and mercy. Why can they not see Him? Because their eyes are blinded to the beauty of His holiness by the love of sin. Because their eyes are blinded to the beauty of His grace by their sense of personal merit. Because their eyes are blinded to the beauty of His Lordship by their sense of personal sovereignty.

Are there any here this morning who are of another mind by the grace of God? Are there any here this morning who are thirsting for the knowledge of Christ?

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Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 21 Second Quarter Lesson 11 June 16, 1957

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

THE BIRTH OF THE MAN CHILD

Lesson Text: Revelation 12:1-17.

Golden Text: "And she brought forth a man child, which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."—Revelation 12:5.

For the assistance of teachers of adult classes and others who desire to continue without interruption the studies in the Book of Revelation, an extract from Dr. Dubarry's excellent devotional study of this Book is printed elsewhere in this issue. Teachers of younger classes may prefer the following Alternative Lesson, a study in Unselfish Giving.

ALTERNATIVE LESSON THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES (A Lesson in Unselfish Giving)

Lesson Text: Mark 12:38-44.

Golden Text: "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not."—2 Corinthians 8:12.

I. The Scribes and the Widows: verses 38-40. Parallel Passage: Luke 20:45-47.

Much space in the Gospels is devoted to the events of the last week of our Saviour's life on earth, indicating something of the importance attached by the Holy Spirit to our Lord's teachings and actions immediately before His crucifixion. For example, this matter of Christian stewardship must always be viewed in the light of the Saviour's death on the cross on our behalf. On this occasion He had been teaching in the temple court, and being wearied, sat down beside the treasury of the temple. This incident probably took place on the Tuesday of the week of the crucifixion.

Our Saviour strongly denounced the scribes and Pharisees on many occasions. While they claimed to belong to the upper class, the foremost religious teachers, yet their actions belied their smooth words. In the passage before us the Evangelist Mark, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives a summary of our Lord's extended message of criticism, directed against the leaders in this His last public discourse (Matt. 23).

The scribes were supposed to be specialists in the law. They were not only responsible for seeing that the law was copied and preserved, but they were also regarded as the official interpreters of its provisions. However, they were utterly unworthy of the high esteem in which they were held by the common people. How terrible that our Lord should find it necessary to utter a warning against those who stood in the highest positions of authority in the religious world of that day!

The first indictment against them was that they loved to parade before the people in their robes of office (Matt. 6:5; 23:5). They placed high value upon the habit of their dress, rather than upon the habit of their minds (1 Pet. 3:3, 4). They lived for the praise of men, for the plaudits of those whom they regarded as their inferiors (John 12:43). They loved to be saluted by the people in public places as father, teacher, rabbi, great one (Matt. 23:6-10). They aspired to leadership in the synagogue (Mark 5:22), but had no will to pay the price of real power with men. In their pride they sought the uppermost seats in the feasts, which would place them apart from their fellows (Luke 14:7-11). Such worldly ambition is everywhere rebuked in the Word of God (Jas. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6).

So far from considering that their superior privileges should give them opportunities of performing greater service to their fellows, the proud scribes used their high office as a means of increasing their own resources. They supposed that godliness was to be a means of personal gain (1 Tim. 6:5). In their selfishness they took advantage of the widows and preyed upon the helpless, defenceless and needy ones. It was their practice to "fleece the sheep" of their flock rather than to feed them; they were too busy feeding themselves and had

no time or inclination to feed the flock of God (Ezek. 34:8; Jude 12; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3). The widows and other lowly ones, who should have been honoured and cared for (1 Tim. 5:3; Jas. 1:27), were sacrificed to the pride and greediness of these selfish leaders.

Worst of all, the scribes used the garment of piety as a cloak to cover up their iniquity (1 Pet. 2:16). They were like a policeman in Toronto some years ago, who because of his uniform had access to buildings at night and then systematically stole valuables. The worst hypocrisy in the world is religious hypocrisy (Luke 12:1). Long robes and long prayers cannot conceal from the Lord the iniquity of the heart. Our Saviour says that those leaders who preach holiness but practise iniquity shall receive the greater condemnation (Matt. 23:33; 25:15, 29; Luke 12:48; 2 Tim. 3:5; Jas. 3:1).

The scribes, then, were men of selfish, grasping natures, always looking out for themselves. The poor widow, in contrast, whom they would despise, displayed utter selflessness and a spirit of generous, whole-hearted sacrificial devotion to the Lord which caused her to give all that she had to further His glory and His cause.

II. The Saviour and the Widow: verses 41-44. Parallel Passage: Luke 21:1-4.

After teaching the people for many hours in the court of the temple, the Saviour sat down beside the treasury, the chest in which offerings were deposited for the maintenance of the Lord's house (2 Kings 12:9; John 8:20). There He observed the people as they came with their offerings. The Saviour had every right to watch to see who gave of their substance to Him, and how much and why they gave. He Himself was the Lord of the temple. He still searches the actions and the hearts of men as they give their gifts unto Him. We may be assured that even although men may judge by appearances, the Lord looks upon the heart (1 Sam. 16:7; Psa. 11:4). His judgments are righteous judgments. Let us remember that our Lord still stands by the treasury, and let us give as in His holy sight.

The Lord Jesus noticed that many rich people donated money, and their offerings were large. In this they were to be commended; they had received much and were under obligation to give much. Contrary to popular opinion, it is not a sin to be rich, as it is not a sign of grace to be poor. It is not money, but the love of it, that is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10). We are to be rich toward God (Luke 16:19-31). Those entrusted with more of this world's goods have greater opportunities to use their money for the glory of God and for the help of the needy.

Not only the rich, but also the poor gave to the cause of the Lord's house. Among these was a humble widow, poverty-stricken, but rich in faith. She cast in two mites, a very small sum, and her tiny offering would be despised by the Jews. But the Lord had regard for the gratitude, the love which was in her heart and which caused her to forget her own needs and in a holy abandon give all her slender means to Him. If she gave her best to the Lord, He who had promised to care for the widow would supply her future needs (Deut. 10:18; 1 Kings 17:13-16; Psa. 68:5; 146:9). The Lord does not measure our gifts according to their size, but according to the measure of love, sacrifice and faith which they represent. If we first give ourselves to the Lord in gratitude for all that He has done and is doing for us, there will be no difficulty when it comes to giving of our substance for the glory of the Lord and for the enrichment of the needy (2 Cor. 8:5).

Daily Bible Readings

June 10—The Sacrifice of the Widow	1 Kings 17:8-16
June 11—Her Reward	1 Kings 17:17-24
June 12—The Judge of the Widow	Psalm 68
June 13—A Woman's Sacrifice	Mark 14:1-9
June 14—Systematic Giving	1 Cor. 16:1-9
June 15—First, a Willing Mind	2 Cor. 8:1-15
June 16—Cheerful Giving	2 Cor. 9:5-15

Suggested Hymns

I gave My life for thee.
Saviour, Thy dying love.
All my doubts I give to Jesus.
Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow.
All to Jesus I surrender.
"Not my own!" but saved by Jesus.

Jarvis Street Sunday Evening Broadcast

**Over CHWO (dial 1250)
7.30 to 8.30**

Since April 21st JARVIS STREET has been broadcasting a portion of the Sunday evening services from 7.30 to 8.30 each Sunday over Station CHWO (1250).

CHWO is a new Radio Station located in Oakville, covering the most thickly populated area in Ontario. It has been heard on occasions in Quebec, Boston, New York, and as far away as Texas. Of course such a wide coverage is by no means guaranteed; but when exceptional atmospheric conditions obtain, as in the case of all radio stations, it may be heard many miles beyond its usual range. Through this medium we shall doubtless have the opportunity of ministering God's Word every Sunday evening to vast multitudes of unconverted people. There are also many of the Lord's saints who through particular circumstances are deprived on Sunday evening of gospel privileges. We think especially of the shut-ins, the aged, and the sick, as well as those who must remain at home, or in hospitals, to attend the sick.

In view of the few radio broadcasts to be heard on Sunday evening, we consider this a rare opportunity.

REQUEST FOR LETTERS

We should be greatly obliged if GOSPEL WITNESS readers who hear our broadcasts would send us a letter. Naturally, we are deeply concerned to know whether or not the service is being heard distinctly in the various districts.

Some may desire to help us extend the radio ministry by inviting their neighbours, who do not attend any evangelical church, to listen in. Invitation cards with an attractive picture of Jarvis Street Baptist Church on one side, will be sent upon request to any who care to use them.

RADIO FUND

The radio ministry is distinctly a missionary undertaking, and entirely a venture of faith. Our one and only object is to make known on a wider scale salvation through the blood of Christ. Our readers will readily recognize that in order to maintain this vitally needed testimony much money will be required. We therefore ask those who have some money for the propagation of the gospel, to send us gifts. For the convenience of any who care to contribute, special envelopes have been prepared for this purpose.

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