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NOT NOW BUT HEREAFTER

By Dr. T. T. Shields

"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."—John 13:7.

THE Great Teacher here lays down a fundamental principle in all learning: knowledge comes as a slow growth, not as a sudden flash. The truth that we learn in school, even though it be at the feet of the Master Himself, must have time to take root and spring up before it can bear fruit. It is one thing to hear words, to memorize them, even to understand them as the disciples in some limited way must have understood the acted parable of our Lord when He girded Himself with a towel and washed their feet. Peter understood it well enough to repel the suggestion that the Lord Jesus should ever serve him: "Thou shalt never wash my feet," he said in haste, just as on another occasion he dared rebuke the Saviour for telling of His future sufferings. But neither Peter nor the others grasped the significance of the Lord's act. Before genuine understanding of the lesson could come to them, they must see the lesson re-enacted not in parable but in awful, yet gracious reality on the Cross; they must be enlightened and empowered by the Spirit at Pentecost and, dare we say, they must learn the further lesson by taking up the cross themselves and following Christ. Impetuous Peter, who savoured not the things that be of God but those that be of men when he rejected His Lord's prophecy of the cross, was to live long enough to learn by personal experience the lessons of affliction so that he could write to other persecuted saints: "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5:10).

The Lord Jesus once asked His disciples, "Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. 13:51). And with childish pride they answered, "Yea, Lord." One can sense the glow of satisfaction they had in a lesson well learned, their assurance that they now knew the secrets of wisdom and knowledge. And doubtless in a certain fashion they did know them, for there is knowledge and knowledge. Their Master had already spoken of that head knowledge of His teaching at which His unbelieving auditors were halted by their pride and arrogance. In hearing they heard and did not understand, and in seeing

they saw and did not perceive. But even disciples come under the workings of this principle. A pint jar cannot contain a quart until its capacity is enlarged, and this very enlargement is the true end of education, above all, of the education of the Spirit. In order to know God we must be born again, that is to say our capacity must be enlarged, our eyes opened, our ears unstopped, our minds developed. We are on dangerous ground when, like the learners of old, we feel that we have already arrived; that we know it all. We must always be "going on", adding to our faith, virtue; "and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:5f.). If we can with truth say that we "understand all these things," let us thank God with true humility and then pray for the greater grace that may enable us to "do them"; remembering that the Master said that "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

It is humbling and perhaps humiliating for a brilliant pupil who has exerted himself to the utmost to be told that he does not yet know anything. But it is a lesson of which students stand in need. The pride of achievement exhibited by little children when they first go to school is often in inverse proportion to their knowledge. The less anyone knows, the more apt he is to be proud of it. There is a knowledge which puffeth up, but it is not true knowledge, which is tempered and enriched by faith, hope and charity. The more one advances in the truth, the more keenly aware of his own ignorance he becomes and the more amazed he is at the vastness of the fields which he has not yet trod upon or even seen.

But if we are humbled by the Master's "not now", we have reason to be encouraged by His "hereafter". To the rebuke is attached a promise, which will not be spurned by those who are willing to take upon themselves the yoke of Him who is meek and lowly in heart. Only those who are so conceited as to imagine that they

now know with science absolute, will disdain the promise of fuller knowledge hereafter. We catch some glimpse of how this deeper understanding comes as we think of the way in which our minds work concerning the ordinary affairs of life. Take for instance, the knowledge a child has of its parents' love. So far as his experience allows him, he believes that they love him. But when, as a grown-up man, now come to a father's estate to spend and be spent, for his own children, he begins to know with a new and deeper realization how much his parents really loved him. Happy is the learner in the school of Christ who, in taking stock of himself, can mark a growth in his knowledge of the Saviour, noting that truths which he once believed and knew, have now taken on a new power, have come alive as they have been written on the fleshly tables of his heart.

Our text refers primarily to this present growth in knowledge while we are still in the flesh, but the principle of it also applies to the hereafter which we shall some day enter when time and sense are no more. There we shall no longer know in part, no longer see through a glass darkly; "but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). If here below we have tasted and known that the Lord is good, if any glimpse has now been revealed to us of the great vistas of knowledge that yet await us there, the thought of that blessed hereafter, that "face to face" knowledge, will leave us breathless with expectation:

When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.

THE TWO "ALLS"

A minister, upon finishing his sermon, went hurrying out of the church to catch the train. Upon arrival at the gate he found he had just three minutes left.

A man who had heard him speak rushed up and said, "I am very anxious about my soul."

The minister replied, "I have only two minutes to catch my train. It is the last one tonight. I request you to read Isaiah 53:6. Go in at the first all, and come out at the last all."

The man went home, thinking over that strange instruction. He got out his Bible and opened to the passage referred to.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

The anxious sinner after reading the passage said: "I am included in that first 'all'"; after reflection he suddenly recalled that he was included in the last "all". He immediately fell upon his knees to accept pardon and cleansing, and to thank God for peace and quietness.

—Selected

NAMES OF PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS WANTED

The new Prospectus of Toronto Baptist Seminary will be ready shortly. Would ministers and readers who know of young men or women who would be interested in training for the Lord's service at Toronto Baptist Seminary kindly send us the names and addresses? Copies of the Prospectus will be mailed to these prospective students.

The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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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 Open-Air Service in Allan Gardens.
- 6.15 Prayer Service in Greenway Chapel.
- 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.

Jarvis Street Church

WEEKLY BROADCAST

Sunday 7.30 - 8.30 P.M.

(1250) CHWO Oakville

THE SUNDAY SERVICES IN JARVIS STREET

IN SPITE of the extreme heat there was a splendid Bible School at 9.45 a.m. At the 11 o'clock service Dr. Slade preached an inspiring and practical sermon on the subject, "A Memorable Act of Love" (Mark 14:1-8) taking as his text the Master's word of commendation, "She hath done what she could" (Mark 14:8). The setting for the incident was the home of Simon the leper. Thus, our Lord by teaching and by example emphasized the importance of ministry in the home (Matt. 8:14, 10:12; Luke 5:29, 8:41, 19:5). Dr. Robert Lee of Memphis, Tenn., said: "Visitation is not play, it is work. It is not a waste of time, it is time invaluablely spent."

No doubt Mary had some intimation of the Lord's death. She came to Jesus with an alabaster box of precious ointment, and breaking the box, she poured the ointment upon the head of Jesus in an act of worship and love. When Judas called her sacrifice a "waste" the Lord rose up to vindicate her. He commended her, for she sought to please Him, not men. We, too, in Christian service will meet with those who make objections, but we should seek always to please our Saviour, that we may hear His "Well done."

It was an exemplary act to stimulate us, that we may imitate Mary in devotion by the cultivation of our souls, by sitting at the feet of our Saviour and by hearing His Word. We may also imitate Mary in her service; we are encouraged to do something for Christ. He would have us use the talents which He has entrusted to us. Let us do what we can. Let us worship and praise Him more and serve Him better. Think of the destiny of human souls. We know the truth, let us make it known. "Jesus saves."

One young lady openly confessed her faith in Christ and expressed the desire to follow her Lord in believer's baptism.

The 6 p.m. Open Air Service in Allan Gardens which is conducted by Mr. Bruce Inrig had one of the largest attendances on record, some 200 or more assembling to hear the Word of the Lord. Workers had previously given out tracts and invitations to those in the park.

The broadcast portion of the evening service consisted in Scripture reading (Matt. 3:1-9) by Rev. S. Tulloch, prayer by Rev. W. P. Bauman, choir selection, hymns and powerful message by Dr. Slade.

Dr. Slade had a timely subject, "What is Canada's Most Needed Change? Could a Diefenbaker Government Effect It?" Various popular opinions are held concerning the most needed change; economic, financial, material, social and moral evils cry out for reform. But looking at the Divine side of things, the greatest need of all is for repentance (Acts 17:30, 31). There can be no true justice or true prosperity without repentance. This is an unpopular subject; it is disturbing to hear about sin and to have it exposed. It is also a forbidden doctrine in many quarters, but if we preachers would be faithful we must not hesitate to declare it, though we may receive censure. But it is a popular theme in the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ began with this message, the necessity of repentance and faith (Matt. 3:1-9). Peter preached it (Acts 2:37-39), also the Apostle Paul (Acts 20:17-21). Those who preach repentance are not preaching law, but the Gospel of grace. Law pronounces upon sin, defines sin, but provides no remedy. It condemns the soul, then stops. Deliverance from sin is not found at

Mount Sinai, but at Calvary. The change every soul needs is repentance, a work of God's grace in the human soul which cannot be effected by human governments or by human hands. We can never of ourselves turn from sin except by the working of the Spirit of God.

What is the reason for repentance? Simply sin. Sin has come into the world, all have sinned and are subject to eternal death. What great havoc sin has wrought in this world!

What is the meaning of repentance? It is more than mere sorrow for sin, more than remorse for wrongdoing. It is a change of mind, a right about face with regard to one's attitude to the Lord Jesus Christ. God calls us to repentance through His Word, by His Spirit and by His messengers. The Puritans described the four ingredients of repentance as follows: illumination, humiliation, detestation and transformation.

Why does God call us to repent? Sin has created and produced judgment. Without repentance we are not ready to meet that judgment. Not one impenitent person will be in heaven. Would you have that change of mind and heart which will enable you to stand uncondemned at that judgment? May the Spirit of God work upon us that we may see our sin, loathe it and turn to Christ who can forgive it.

At 8.40 p.m. the second Open Air Service, under the leadership of Rev. W. P. Bauman, was held on the church grounds, adjoining Allan Gardens. This service also was largely attended. Dr. Slade spoke briefly on 1 Pet. 2:7, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." Sinners were exhorted to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and find Him precious to their souls.

Thus ended another glorious day of worship and service. In these days when many churches slacken their efforts for the Lord, it is a delight to see the hearty way in which the whole Jarvis Street family are responding to the heavy summer program of the church.

DEMAND FOR GOOD MEN

In a hot summer's day, some years ago, I was sailing with a friend in a tiny boat, on a miniature lake, enclosed like a cup within a circle of steep, bare Scottish hills. On the shoulder of the brown sun-burnt mountain, and full in sight, was a well with a crystal stream trickling over its lip, and making its way down to the lake. Around the well's mouth and along the course of the rivulet, a belt of green stood out in strong contrast with the iron surface of the rocks all around. We soon agreed as to what should be made of it. There it was, a legend clearly printed by the finger of God on the side of these silent hills, teaching the passer-by how needful a good man is, and how useful he may be in a desert world.

—SPURGEON

MERCY FOR THE POOR

Thank God there is mercy for the poor! The great Dr. Mason preached over a hundred times the same sermon, and the text was, "To the poor the gospel is preached." Lazarus went up, while Dives went down; and there are candidates for imperial splendor in the back alleys and by the peat fire of the Irish shanty. King Jesus set up His throne in a manger and made a resurrection day for the poor widow of Nain, and sprang the gate of heaven wide open, so that all the beggars and thieves and scoundrels of the universe may come in if they only repent.

—TALMAGE

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A Second Chance for John Mark

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, October 1st, 1933

(Stenographically Reported)

"And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark." Acts 12:25.

"Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem." Acts 13:13.

"And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

"And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

"And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

"And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God." Acts 15:36-40.

"Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." 2 Timothy 4:11.

"Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him.) Col. 4:10.

THE verses I have read to you give us the biblical story of a very interesting character named John Mark.

In any landscape the hills challenge our attention; and in history we are disposed to give our thought chiefly to the more conspicuous characters, to the heroic figures who have wrought valiantly in their respective spheres, and we are in danger, perhaps, of passing by many who have been less conspicuous but, notwithstanding, on the whole, extremely useful.

This is the story of John Mark, who went with Paul and Barnabas on their first journey together, or at least he started with them, and went as far as Pamphylia, and then for some reason which is not specified, he left them, and turned back again to Jerusalem. Having completed the journey and returned, some time afterwards Paul proposed that they should go again and visit the places they had established, and see how these young converts were doing, that they might minister to them in the things of God, and confirm them in their faith. Barnabas proposed that they should ask John Mark to accompany them, but Paul would have none of it. He had tried him once, and Mark had proved unworthy of his trust. He had begun, but having put his hand to the plough he had turned back, and Paul was unwilling to give him a second chance. Paul and Barnabas had a very sharp contention between them over John Mark. These two men, so like minded in many particulars, were unable to reach an agreement in their estimate of this young man's character. Barnabas, the son of consolation, as he was called, was unwilling to yield, and determined to take John Mark with him in any case, and the Apostle Paul sacrificed the fellowship and companionship of Barnabas because he refused to be one of the party of three, if John was to be included. Paul took with him Silas, and so instead of one party of three, there were two parties of two each. Then at a later period you find Paul writing a letter to Colosse, and including in his

greetings a special greeting for Mark, or John. Evidently their difficulties had been healed, and they had come together again; and Paul writing to Timothy said, "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

And so the story of John Mark is the story of a man who came back, of one who failed, but who repented of his failure, retraced his steps, and regained the confidence which in the beginning of his career he had forfeited. And I propose that we look very simply into this story to see what lessons we may learn therefrom for our own encouragement, for I am sure that the John Marks are many, and there is still a place for the ministry of such sons of consolation as Barnabas, who are able to discern some good in men with whom heroic spirits like Paul have absolutely no patience.

I.

NOW FIRST OF ALL, LOOK AT THE EARLY ADVANTAGES WHICH THIS YOUNG MAN, JOHN, ENJOYED. It was in the house of his mother that the prayer meeting was held, when Peter had been cast into prison, shortly after James the brother of John had been killed with the sword by Herod, and it seemed almost certain that Peter would suffer the same fate. The church gathered together for prayer, and the place of assembly was the house of John Mark's mother; from which we may gather that *he came of a godly parentage*, at least on his mother's side, and that he enjoyed the advantage of her early instruction and godly example.

It is a great thing, I remind you, to be born into a Christian home. We rejoice that the grace of God abounds, and much more abounds where sin abounds, and God does bring men back from the farthest reaches of the far country: the drunkard, and the libertine, and men who have plunged deeply into sin may, by God's grace, be saved, restored to divine favour, and made useful in His service. But it is surely something to be thank-

ful for if we have been saved from such excesses of riot, and have enjoyed the advantages of a Christian home from our youth up.

There are many boys and girls here this morning who come from Christian homes. And there are many who come from homes where the name of Christ is scarcely ever mentioned, perhaps, and where the voice of prayer in the family circle is never heard. But those of you who have godly parents have a special advantage. You ought to become better men and women because of your initial advantage in life. But it is not always that heroic characters come from such surroundings.

John began well. He had the advantage of early association with the apostle Peter, and with the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and with Barnabas. I remember visiting in a certain place on one occasion when a lawyer of the place, a Christian man, came to me, and said, "My wife and I would like very much if, while you are here, you would accept our hospitality rather than going to a hotel." He said, "I am not proposing a favour to you, but asking a favour of you, for my wife and I at the beginning of our family life resolved that we would lose no opportunity of bringing our children early in life in touch with the servants of God. And we always count it a privilege to have a minister of Christ in our home for our own sakes, and especially for the sake of our children." I gladly accepted the invitation, and had a very happy time in that godly home.

Now John had had that advantage. It was to his mother's house Peter came knocking at the door when prayer had been answered. John knew that God answered prayer. The answer had come to his own mother's house, and he had come under the influence of Barnabas and of Saul. Apparently he was a man of good impulses, and readily volunteered to go with them on their missionary journey.

II.

There are a lot of young men who think it would be a fine thing to be a minister. There may be some of you students who are inclined to believe that it is rather a respectable thing to enter the ministry, and, incidentally, not particularly hard. I think John supposed, in the beginning at least, that it would be an interesting excursion to go with these two men, Paul and Barnabas. AND THERE ARE MANY LIKE JOHN WHO HAVE SOON TURNED BACK. Some think that he was unwilling to climb the mountains of taunts; that he was unwilling to climb the steep hills, or bear the load; much less was he willing to endure stripes for the sake of his Lord. And when he came to a certain place he parted company even with Paul and Barnabas. You who are teachers must not be discouraged if John Mark leaves you. It is not a serious reflection upon your ministry if some scholars for a while forsake you. I used to be greatly troubled when I found it was impossible to hold everybody who came. When someone went off somewhere else I used to feel that that involved rather a serious reflection upon my ministry. I have got over that now, and I am not so much troubled when I remember that even so great a man as Paul, and so gracious a soul as Barnabas in the beginning in that partnership at least, were unable to retain John in their fellowship, but he ran away home, went back to his mother, I suppose.

I wonder if there are any here like that? I know we have had a good many people join Jarvis Street Church

because they enjoyed it, and they thought it was interesting, and would be profitable. But when, after a while, they found that it involved — oh, certain difficulties, that it meant they would not be so popular in some directions as they formerly were, they have turned back again.

A young lady came to me on one occasion and said, "It costs too much to be a member of Jarvis Street. The people sneer at me. They say that yours is a congregation of fanatics, and that in our day we must be broader-minded, and more liberal in spirit. I find it impossible to endure the strain that is involved in being a member of Jarvis Street." Well, I suppose there is something in that. And we need not be surprised if the John Marks forsake us. Of course, Paul and Barnabas must go on just the same, and the work of the Lord must not be allowed to suffer because John Mark resigns. And that is what I wanted to get at: John was expert in the business of writing a resignation. There are people like that. We have not many around Jarvis Street because quite a good while ago I think it was decided among us that every resignation would be immediately accepted, and that no explanations would be asked for; if John wanted to resign he would have to be permitted to resign, and we would go on about our work.

That is what happened in this triangular fellowship: John returned to Jerusalem. I shall show you that John came back, but in the meantime, *think of all that John missed.* As nearly as I can make out it was perhaps five years before John got back into harness again. He did get back, but there was a parenthesis in his Christian experience of possibly five years or thereabout. But what did he miss in that time? *He missed association with valiant spirits like the apostle Paul.* You cannot keep company with good men without gaining something from them. You cannot hold fellowship with the servants of God without profiting thereby.

I am sure that there are many people who have come into the fellowship of this church who, in the beginning, were not conditioned spiritually, or in any other way, to make a very large contribution to this church's life. I do not suppose John was in the beginning a very competent workman, and I dare say Paul and Barnabas got along fairly well without him. They did not need John, but he needed them very, very much, and for all that period, however long it was, he missed the advantage of their fellowship. It is a great thing to be in the gospel ministry. It must have been an education to walk with Paul, and to hear him preach.

A young fellow came to me at Binghampton and said, "I lose no opportunity of attending conferences like these. I like to see how you men of larger experience get at the thing." Well, it must have been a great treat to see how Paul got at it, meeting all sorts of opposition, men of all classes, men of keen intellect, and to study him to see how he met every obstacle, and triumphed over it in the name of the Lord.

John Mark, instead of sitting at the feet of those older men and learning from them, missed those five years of privilege. What a loss that was! Five years, or whatever the time may be, of service, and therefore of reward! Life is short enough, dear friends, at the longest. We have not many hours in which to work. Even if we have good health, and should live as long as Dr. Haldeman, who was recently called home, at nearly ninety years of age, even at that, brief life is here our portion. We have

not much time in which to work, and certainly we have not so much time that we can afford to waste five years of it doing nothing, or doing little, or doing less than we might have done.

I wonder are there any here like John Mark, who have gone back to Jerusalem instead of going on with the work? Well, if you have, I want to remind you of the loss you are sustaining. You may not be conscious of it now, but you will be later, for while we are not saved by our work, we are to be rewarded for our faithfulness if we do the will of God. John not only *missed the five years of service*, but in a certain sense *wasted the treasure that he might have laid up in heaven* during that period. May the Lord save us from such folly as that.

III.

Then we have the later chapter in their history when Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch, and had proposed to go forth the second time and Barnabas suggests that John might be invited. Paul says "No". I have a little sympathy with Paul. Here was a man who stopped at nothing in the service of the Lord; he counted not his life dear unto himself. There was no hill too steep for him to climb, no burden too heavy for him to assume, no foe so formidable that he was afraid to join issue with him. Paul was cast in a heroic mould. He dared everything in the name of the Lord, and he had not any patience with men like John. I am not surprised. People of that sort need somebody to be patient with them.

It may be that some of you are disposed to view religious delinquents, people who are easily turned aside from duty, people who need just a little nursing and coddling, and help—perhaps some of you are disposed to say, "I cannot be bothered with people like that. I tried John once. He was just as strong as I was, just as able as I was, and the moment we came face to face with difficulty he ran home to his mother. Let him stay there; I am not going to be bothered with him any longer." I have felt like that in respect to some people myself. I have said, "Once is enough, thank you." I frankly say I have known people since I have been Pastor of Jarvis Street Church, perhaps some who have gone out from us. I wish them well, but I should want to be sure if ever they were to come back to us that they were coming back for business. I should really want to be sure of them.

Perhaps there is some John Mark here who has had an argument with Paul. I am sorry for you, because I know you got the worst of it. John Mark cannot stand up to a man like Paul. I expect he felt pretty small when Paul had told him why he would not have anything more to do with him. But are you going to be discouraged because Paul won't take you along? Is there no other fellowship than that? Blessed be God for Barnabas, son of consolation. I am not sure that Barnabas was any less heroic than Paul. He was more patient, perhaps. He may have been somewhat gentler than Paul, and they had an argument, and I think Barnabas said, "O let's give him another chance! He has good qualities, and he might make good the second time. Let us give him a second chance, and see what we can do for him." I can imagine Paul saying, "We can do without him; we don't need him." And I think Barnabas would have said, "Quite so. We had a fairly successful pilgrimage the last time, but oh, Paul, he needs us. Let us give him

another chance. He is too good a man to waste. Let us try him out a second time." And Paul said, "You may if you like, but I am not going to take him."

Have you ever seen Paul and Barnabas disagree about somebody? They were both good men, were they not? And are you going to quarrel with Paul or Barnabas, because Paul and Barnabas cannot reach an agreement respecting John Mark. I have had a good many people come to me and say, "I do not like So-and-So." And they want me to dislike them too. I say, "If you cannot get along with John Mark that is your affair. I am not going to quarrel with him on your account." It is a case of "Love me, love my dog" you know. If you do not like my friends, well then I am not going to have anything to do with you!

PAUL AND BARNABAS HAD A PRETTY SHARP CONTENTION, and Paul managed to do fairly well without Barnabas. That was rather an extraordinary thing too, but he did. I suppose we ought all to learn *Paul's independence*, so that if for any reason Barnabas should break up the partnership, we shall still be able to carry on. And if you cannot get along with John you may be able to find a Silas who will help you. And that was a great partnership! Did you ever read the 16th chapter of Acts? Do you remember the earthquake? And do you remember the songs at midnight, and how all the prisoners heard them? It was a duet. Did you ever think of the Apostle Paul as a member of the choir? Do you remember that he was a good singer, and that he and Silas sang together at midnight, and the prisoners heard them? Well John, you must not think you are necessary to Paul. You must not say, "He will find out what he missed when he did not take me along." Oh no, he will not miss anything. He will find Silas, and Silas will do what you refused to do. Every Paul will find a Silas if he has to, in place of John. And Paul and Silas did marvelously well together.

On the other hand, *how gracious Barnabas was!* I do not think he spared John. I think when he got John alone he said, "John, you deserve everything Paul said to you, and a lot more. You played the coward. You had no right to expect that you would ever be suffered in that company again. You ought to have known that a man like Paul would not have patience with your delinquency." And then I rather think Barnabas laid down the law to him, and said, "Now, I am going to give you a second chance, but remember there will be only the second. You will have to make good this time." And he did give him a second chance.

I wonder if there are any John Marks who need a little attention? I wonder if you cannot find them out, and put your arms about them, and say, "John, there are gifts in you that ought to be used in the Lord's service. You ought to be busily occupied in doing the will of God. You ought not to allow that little disagreement that you had with somebody a year or so ago to blast your life, and spoil you forever. Cannot you get back again into harness? Won't you come with me?" "Well, I do not know where to begin." "Come into my class and stay with me for a little while, and after a while you may go out and teach a class for yourself. Who knows but that the Lord may call you to preach the gospel?" I think there are hundreds of John Marks, who can be enlisted in the Lord's service if we had the patience and discernment and large charity of Barnabas, just to go after them, and kindly entreat them, and bring them back again.

IV.

What a day that must have been when Timothy said, "John, I have just received a letter from the apostle Paul." "Oh, that is fine! What does he say?" "A great many things, but I just thought I should like to tell you, because he specially mentions you." "Paul mentions me!" "Yes; and this letter asks me to go to him and to take you with me as soon as possible. He says he has only Luke with him now." John may have said, "Well, perhaps I am not the only man who failed. There were some others who could not follow Paul; he takes some following," I think John would have said, "It is pretty hard to keep up with him. But what does he say about me?" "He says that I am to take you with me; that you are profitable to him in the ministry. He wants your fellowship and cooperation, and he looks upon you now as a fellow workman in the service of God."

Would you rather have a word of commendation like that than any university degree in the world — a word of approval from a man like Paul! And what a day that must have been for John when at last he stood beside the Apostle, and felt that HE HAD REGAINED HIS CONFIDENCE, that he had proved worthy of his fellowship, and that now he was a true yokefellow in the service of the Lord! One can almost imagine as Paul was nearing the end of his letter to the Colossians, his saying, "John, I am writing to the Church at Colosse. Have you anything to say?" And John would say, "Oh, give them my loving greetings, and tell them that I salute them in the Lord." I wonder did he stand by to see that word written? — the great Apostle at last writing down his name, and sending his salutations to a distant church as one who was worthy to be heard from.

That is a very simple suggestion, is it not, but oh, the blessing of it! What if the Lord should be impatient with us! How often we have all turned back! How often we have deserved dismissal from His service! There is not one of us who has not deserved it. And yet, our Lord is the Lord of the second chance. He has always tried us over and over again, and given us more grace, and an opportunity to redeem the past.

Are there any of you who have not begun with Him yet, any of you who have not received Him as Saviour? I bid you come to Him. All your sins were laid upon Him; you have but to trust Him, and you shall be saved.

Let us pray:

We pray Thee, O Lord, to bless this simple meditation this morning. Give us all grace that we may be patient with each other, that we may be forgiving toward each other. If any should at any time offend us, help us to forgive them, even as the Lord has forgiven us. If there be a John Mark here this morning, one who has failed signally in Thy service, who has turned aside from the path of duty, bring such an one back again into fellowship with Thyself. Restore him or her to the position they have vacated, and make them profitable at last unto the ministry. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

POWER

To the hills we lift our vision,
From whence must come all power,
And we pray to God the Father,
To send like a gentle shower,
The spirit of light, of truth and might,
To brighten our hearts and show us the way,
From the realms of night
To unending day.

—CHAS. BENJ. MANLY

RADIO MAIL

Hamilton, Ont.

Dear Sir:

Greeting! We heard the broadcast Sunday evening and it was good and clear. But the message was just wonderful. It brings back memories of long ago when dear Dr. Shields used to broadcast over CFRB. Many a pleasant hour have we spent in the dear old church.

You see we are more or less shut in. We are 80 and 85 years of age. But praise God, we are only shut in, but not shut out, because He rose again. But better still, He is coming back again.

We will continue to pray for you and the great work to which He has called you. Do not forget, "Great is His faithfulness".

Yours in a risen Christ.

* * * *

Hamilton, Ont.

Dear Christian Friends:

I was one who listened in on your broadcast Sunday, June, 2 p.m. I appreciated the service. I am a Christian believer 79 years of age, saved as a boy 14 years old. I live alone, but Jesus is everything to me.

I read the Scripture with you, Eph. 1. What riches! The reception was good and the service joyously received. I thank God for the joy and comfort received.

Please forward to my address THE GOSPEL WITNESS with the sermon preached by Dr. Shields on "The Bomb." "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and He will take care of that which He created.

* * * *

Sunderland, Ont.

Dear Brother Slade:

I did so appreciate the broadcast on Sunday night. It was as clear as a bell and your voice was so distinct, but best of all was the subject, "What must I do to be saved?" I hope there were many responded to the invitation.

I could picture the church as it used to be some years ago when my wife and I always went there. You know we have grown a lot older now and depend on the radio to hear God's word in speech and song, except for our Bible and family worship which we could not do without. He grows dearer as the days go by . . .

Just keep up the good work and we will continue to pray for you and the work in Jarvis Street, as well as in so many places where the need is so great.

* * * *

Hamilton, Ont.

Dear Dr. Slade:

I listened with interest and profit to the broadcast of your service on Sunday evening. The reception was clear from the Oakville station, to which I frequently listen, as the programs seem uniformly good.

* * * *

Bloomfield, Ont.

Dear Miss Lindsay:

We are so pleased that the evening services are being broadcast. While we are not able to hear that station, I am sure there will be a large listening audience in the Oakville area. It is nice to have the report of the services in THE GOSPEL WITNESS and to learn of the Lord's blessing on the ministry in souls saved and the church family built up spiritually. . . Use this money for the Radio Fund.

SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION

(Its Causes and Cure)

By Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

(Report of Sermon preached on Sunday, 17th January, 1954, in Westminster Chapel, London)

II. THE TRUE FOUNDATION

Romans 3:28

I WANT to consider this statement with you (and indeed the entire statement of which it is but a part, to which it is in a sense, a kind of conclusion) in the light of the fundamental text which we began to consider last time. In other words, we return to a consideration of what we described as the condition known as spiritual depression.

There can be no doubt at all but that this is a very common complaint, indeed the more one thinks about it and the more one speaks about it, the more one discovers how common it is. This is the condition in which numbers of people find themselves who are members of Christian Churches but who never seem to be enjoying the Christian salvation for various reasons. As the Psalmist puts it, "they are cast down, they are disquieted." They are troubled, and they are anxious and perplexed, there is an absence of repose and of joy and of a spirit of exultation in their lives and their witness. And we are considering this because, as I suggested last time, there are at any rate two great reasons for our doing so. The first is that it is very sad that anybody should remain in that condition. But still more serious and important, such people are very poor representatives of the Christian faith. And as we face the modern world with all its trouble and turmoil and all its difficulties and sadness, surely nothing is more important than that we who claim the Name of Christ and to be Christian, should be representing it in such a way before others as to give them the impression that here is the solution, here is the answer. In a world where everything has gone so sadly astray, we should be standing out as men and women apart, who are characterised by a fundamental joy and certainty in spite of conditions, in spite of adversity. Now that, I think you will agree, is the picture which is given of God's people everywhere in the Scriptures, whether it is the Old Testament or the New. Those men of God stood out in that way, and, whatever the circumstances and conditions, they seemed to possess a secret which enabled them to live triumphantly and to be more than conquerors. It therefore behoves us to examine this condition very closely.

Now last time we looked at this position in general and we considered some of its main causes. We ended by saying that the essence of the treatment according to the Psalmist is that we must really face ourselves. I put it in a phrase by saying that we must talk to ourselves instead of allowing ourselves to talk to us. We must take ourselves in hand, we must address ourselves as the Psalmist addressed himself and his soul, and ask the question — "Why art thou cast down? why art thou disquieted within me? You have no right to be like this. Why are you depressed and cast down?" He talks to himself and faces himself and argues with himself and brings himself back to the position of faith. He exhorts

himself to have faith in God, and then he is in a condition to pray to God.

I.

I want to take up this method which is advocated by the Psalmist. The vital principle is that we really must face ourselves and examine ourselves, and if we belong to this type that never seems to know the joy of salvation and the joy of the Lord, we must discover the cause. The causes are many, and it seems to me that the essence of wisdom in this matter is to deal with these causes one by one and take them in detail. Nothing must be taken for granted. Indeed I could easily establish that point — that the main cause of trouble in this matter is THAT FATAL TENDENCY TO TAKE THINGS FOR GRANTED. More and more I find this to be the case as I am privileged to talk to others about these matters. There are so many people who never seem to arrive at the true Christian position because they are not clear in their minds about certain primary matters, certain fundamental things that should be dealt with at the beginning. They are in trouble because they never really face these things; they assume them, they have taken them for granted, and have supposed that they have been alright about these things.

At the risk of being misunderstood at this point, let us put it like this: This particular trouble with which we are dealing this morning tends, I find, to be common amongst those who have been brought up in a religious manner. The particular thing with which we are now dealing is one which affects those who have been brought up in Christian homes and families and who have always been taken to a place of worship. There are many such people who seem to go right through their lives in the way described by the poet as "bound in shallows and in miseries". They never seem to get out of it. There they are in the realm of the Church, and very interested in Christian things; and yet when you compare them with the description given of the new man in Christ in the New Testament you see at once that there is a great difference. Indeed they themselves see that, and this is perhaps the main cause of their depression and their unhappiness. They see other Christians rejoicing and they say: "Well, I cannot say that I am like that. That person has got something that I have not got." And they would give the whole world if they could but get that something which the other person has. They take up Christian biographies and read the lives of various saints who have adorned the life of the Christian Church, and they admit at once that they are not like that. They have never been like that. They see that there is clearly something which those people obviously enjoyed which they have never had.

You will agree that there are large numbers of people in this very situation that I have described. The Christian life seems to them to be a constant problem, and they are always asking certain questions. They ask:

"Why cannot I get there? Why cannot I be like that?" They read various books which are meant to give instruction about the Christian way of life, they attend meetings and conferences, they are always seeking this something which they do not get. And they are cast down, their souls are cast down and disquieted within them.

Now the important point, I say, as we face such people, is to be quite certain that they are clear in their minds about the most primary and fundamental principles of the Christian faith. What I mean by that is just this, that many and many a time I have found in talking to such people that their real trouble is that they have never understood the way of salvation. I do not go so far as to say that they are not Christian, but I am suggesting that they are what I would call miserable Christians, simply because *they have never really understood the way of salvation*. And because of that all their beliefs and efforts have been more or less useless. They have often concentrated on the question of sanctification, but it does not help them because they have not been clear about justification. Having assumed that they were clear about the beginning they have assumed that all they have to do is to continue along the road.

It is a very interesting theological point as to whether such people are Christians or not. For myself I would say they are. The classical example is of course John Wesley. I would not like to say that John Wesley was not a Christian until 1738; but I am certain of this, that John Wesley had not understood the way of salvation as justification by faith only until 1738. He, in a sense, had subscribed to the full teaching of the Bible. Yes, but he had not understood it, he had not apprehended it. I have no doubt if you had asked him questions he would have given the correct answers even about the death of our Lord; and yet in practice he was not clear about justification by faith. You will recall that it was only as the result of his meeting with the Moravian brethren, and in particular the conversation he had with one called Peter Böhler between London and Oxford that he was truly put right on this question of justification by faith. There was a man who had been trying to find happiness in his Christian life by doing things, preaching to the prisoners in Oxford, giving up his fellowship of his College, and crossing the Atlantic with all its hazards in those days to preach to pagans in Georgia. He was trying to find happiness by living life in a given way. The whole trouble really with John Wesley was that he had never understood and grasped the doctrine of justification by faith. He never understood this verse we are considering: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." It appears to be almost ridiculous that a man like that who had been brought up in an unusually godly home and who had spent all his life and time in Christian work, should be wrong about a first and fundamental point and should have gone wrong at the very beginning. But so it was.

I am suggesting that this is the case with large numbers of people still. They have assumed that they are right about the first things, but they never have been right at the beginning. That is why I start with this. It is no use going on to deal with the superstructure if the foundation is not right. No, no, we must make absolutely certain that the foundation is right before we proceed any further. We therefore start with this great

doctrine. It is just here, I say, that the devil causes confusion. It suits him well that such people should be concerned about sanctification and holiness and various other things, but they can never be right until they are right here. That is why I am dealing with it now.

This is, of course, an old trouble. *This is the master-piece of Satan* in a sense. He will even encourage us to be righteous as long as he has us confused at this point. That he is doing so at the present time is clear from the fact that the average person in the church seems to regard men as Christian simply because they do good works, and though they may be entirely wrong about this preliminary truth. It is an old trouble, and it was of course the essential trouble with the Jews. That was the thing our Lord kept on saying to the Pharisees, and it certainly was the major argument which the Apostle Paul had with the Jews. They had gone entirely wrong with regard to this question of the Law. That was the essence of their trouble; and the main problem was to show them the right view of the Law. The Jews said that the Law was made by God in order that man might save himself by keeping it. They said that all one had to do was to keep the Law, and that if you kept the Law you would justify yourself, and that if you led your life according to the Law that God would accept you and you would be well pleasing in His sight. And they believed that they could do that. That was because they never understood the Law. They put their own interpretation on it and made of it something that was well within their reach. And so they thought all was well. That is the picture of the Pharisees given in the Gospels and everywhere in the New Testament. It was the whole essential trouble with the Jews.

It is still the essence of the problem with large numbers. We have to realize that there are many different ways in which this can show itself, or, to put it in another way, there are certain things about which we must be perfectly clear before we can really hope to have peace and to enjoy the Christian life.

This preliminary point is one which we can well put by a general exposition of the teaching of this third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. You realize that the first four chapters of this great and mighty Epistle are really devoted to this one theme. The one thing Paul was anxious to make clear was this message about the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ. He had already said in chapter 1:16, 17: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Yes, but the question was, why did not everybody believe that? Why was this not accepted almost automatically by all and sundry as the greatest good news that had ever come into the world? The answer was, simply, that they did not believe it because they did not see the need of it. They had the wrong view of righteousness. Now this righteousness meant, rightness with God. That is the thing. There is no happiness finally, there is no peace, *there is no joy except we be right with God*. Now that is agreed by all, that is assented to by the miserable Christian as well as the true Christian. Yes, but the whole difference between the true Christian and the miserable Christian is that the latter has gone wrong in his ideas as to how this

rightness with God is to be obtained. That was the trouble with the Jews also. They said, as I have reminded you, that you obtain this rightness by conforming to the Law and keeping it. In other words, their whole view of the Law was entirely wrong. They perverted it, with the result that the very thing which God had given them to further His way of salvation had become in their hands the main obstacle to salvation.

II.

What does it mean? Let me put it like this. There are CERTAIN SIMPLE PRINCIPLES about which we must be quite clear before we can ever hope to enjoy this Christian salvation. The first is CONVICTION OF SIN. We must be absolutely clear about our sinfulness. I raise here an imaginary objection. (The Apostle Paul as he writes the letter imagines people putting up questions and difficulties. It is a good way of teaching.) I imagine someone saying at once: "Are you going to preach to us about sin, are you going to preach about conviction of sin? And yet you say your object is to make us happy. If you are going to preach to us about conviction of sin, surely that is going to make us still more unhappy. Are you deliberately going to make us miserable and wretched?" To which the simple reply is this. Yes! That is, as I understand it, the teaching of the great Apostle in these chapters. It may sound paradoxical — the term does not matter — but as certain as we are alive that is the rule, without any exception. You must be made miserable before you can know true Christian joy. I would put it again by saying that the real trouble with the miserable Christian is that he has never been truly made miserable because of conviction of sin. He has bypassed the essential preliminary to joy, he has been assuming something that he has no right to assume.

Let me put it again in a Scriptural statement. You remember that ancient man Simeon standing with the Infant Lord Jesus Christ in his arms. He said a very profound thing when he said: "This Child is set for the fall and for the rising again of many in Israel". That is it — there is no rising again until there has been a preliminary fall. This is an absolute rule, and yet I think you will agree with me that this is the thing that is being so sadly forgotten by so many today, and assumed by so many. If I may put it like this, children have been brought to birth before they have been truly born, and the result is that you get all these problems and difficulties arising afterwards. But the Scripture has its order, and its order must be observed if we are really to derive the benefits of this Christian salvation. Let me put it like this. The only thing ultimately which is going to drive a man to Christ and make him rely upon Christ alone, is a true conviction of sin. We go wrong because we are not truly convicted of our sin. That is why I say that this is in particular the problem of all those who have been brought up in a religious or Christian manner. Their chief trouble often is their wrong idea of sin. I remember such a person putting this very dramatically to me on one occasion in this way. She was a member in a Church where a number of people had been converted right from the world and from various kinds of evil living, drunkenness and things like that. I remember this person who had been brought up in a very religious home, and had always attended a place of worship and been busily and actively engaged in the life of the Church, saying to me: "You know, I almost wish

that I had not been brought up in the way I have been brought up, and that I had been living their kind of life in order that I might have their marvellous experience." What did she mean? What she was really saying was that she had never seen herself as a sinner. Why not? There are many reasons. That kind of person thinks of sin only in terms of actions, in terms of sins. Not only that but in terms of certain particular actions only. So their tendency is to say and to argue that because they have not been guilty of these particular things that they are not really sinners at all. Indeed sometimes they put it quite plainly, and say: "I have never really thought of myself as a sinner: but of course that is not surprising as my life has been sheltered from the beginning. I have never had occasion to do these things, and it is not surprising therefore that I have never felt myself to be a sinner". Now there we see the very essence of this fallacy. They have thought of it all in terms of actions, particular actions, and of other people and their experiences and so on. And so they have never had a real conviction of sin and because of that they have never finally and truly seen their utter absolute need of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have heard it preached that Christ has died for our sins and they say that they believe that; but they have never really seen and known its utter absolute necessity. The whole trouble with such people is that they have never had a true conviction of sin.

Well then how can such people be convicted of sin? That is Paul's subject in this third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. He has been dealing with it really in the entire second chapter also. This is his way of doing it, this is his great thesis: "There is none righteous, no not one, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God". Who are these "all"? He keeps on telling us, Jews as well as Gentiles. He keeps on dealing with the false argument. The Jews of course said that the Gentiles were certainly sinners, outside the pale, sinners against God. "But wait a minute," says Paul, "in effect you are equally sinners." The reason why the Jews hated Christ and crucified Him, the whole explanation of "the offence of the Cross", the reason why Paul was treated as he was by his fellow countrymen who hated the Christian faith, was that the Christian faith said that the Jew was as much a sinner as the Gentile. It asserts that the person who has lived a righteous, nay godly, life is as much a sinner as the most flagrant sinner amongst the Gentiles. "All have sinned", Jews and Gentiles are equally condemned before God.

The same is true today and if we are concerned about a conviction of sin, the first thing we have to do is stop thinking about particular sins. How difficult we all find this. We have all got these prejudices. We confine sin to certain things only, and because we are not guilty of these we think that we are not sinners. But that is not the way to know conviction of sin. It was not in that way that John Wesley came to see himself as a sinner. You remember what brought him to a conviction of sin? Well it was this. It was chiefly that he observed the way in which those Moravian Brethren behaved during a storm in mid-Atlantic. John Wesley was terrified by the storm and afraid to die; the Moravians were not. They seemed to be as happy in the hurricane and in the midst of the storm as they were when the sun was shining. John Wesley realized that he was afraid of death, he somehow did not seem to know God as these people knew God. In

other words he began to feel his need, and that is always the beginning of a conviction of sin.

Let me put it like this then. The way to be convicted of sin is not to compare yourself with other people; it is to come face to face with the Law of God. Well what is God's Law? Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal? "I have never done that, therefore I am not a sinner." But, my friend, that is not the Law of God in its entirety. Would you like to know what the Law of God is? Here it is—"Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy mind and all thy strength — that is the first — and the second is like unto it — thou shalt love thy neighbour as you love yourself." Forget all about drunkards and people like that, and all the people you read about in the press at the present time. Here is the test for you and me: Are you loving God with all your being? If you are not, you are a sinner. That is the test. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." That is it. God has made us and He has made us for Himself. He made man for His own glory and He intended man to live entirely for Him. Man was to be His representative, and was to dwell in communion with Him. He was to be the lord of the universe, he was to glorify God. Well there it is once more: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever", and if you are not doing so you are a sinner of the deepest dye.

Or let me put it like this. I find this is a very valuable way of approaching the subject. God knows I am preaching my own experience to you for I was brought up in a religious manner. I am also preaching my experience as one who has frequently to help people who have been brought up in the same way. Man is meant to know God. So the question is: Do you know God? I am not asking if you believe in God, or if you believe certain things about Him. To be a Christian is to have eternal life as our Lord says in John 17:3: "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hath sent." So the test we apply to ourselves is that. Not, "Have I done this or that." My test is a positive one: "Do I know God? Is Jesus Christ real to me?" I am not asking whether you know things about Him but do I know God, am I enjoying God, is God the centre of my life, the soul of my being, the source of my greatest joy? He is meant to be. He made man in such a way that that was to be the position, that man might dwell in communion with God and enjoy God and walk with God. You and I are meant to be like that, and if we are not like that, it is sin. That is the essence of sin. We have no right not to be like that. That is sin of the deepest and the worst type. The essence of sin, in other words, is that we do not live entirely to the glory of God. Of course by committing particular sins we aggravate our guilt before God, but you can be innocent of all these things and yet be guilty of this terrible thing, of being satisfied with your life, having pride in your achievements and looking down on others and feeling that you are better than others. There is nothing worse than that because you are saying to yourself that you are somehow nearer to God than they are, and yet the whole time you are not. If that is your attitude, you are like the Pharisee in the Temple who thanked God he was not like the other man. That Pharisee had never seen the need of forgiveness. There is no more terrible sin than that. I know of nothing worse than the person who says: "You know I have never really felt that I am a sinner." That

is the height of sin because it means that you have never realized the truth about God and the truth about yourself. Read the argument of the Apostle Paul and you will find that his logic is not only inevitable, but also unanswerable. "There is none righteous, no not one." "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." If you have never realized your guilt or guiltiness before God you will never have joy in Christ. It is impossible. "Not the righteous, sinners Jesus came to save." "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."

There is the first thing — conviction of sin. If you have not a conviction of sin, and if you do not realize that you are unworthy before God, and that you are utterly condemned and a complete failure before God, pay attention to nothing else. Stay there until you have it, because you will never find joy, you will never get rid of this depression until you are right about that. Conviction of sin is an essential preliminary to a true experience of salvation.

That brings me to the second thing. The second thing the true Christian realizes is *God's way of salvation in Christ*. This is the great good news. "This is the thing I am preaching," says Paul to the Romans, "this righteousness that is of God, that is in Jesus Christ, His righteousness". What is he talking about? Let me put it simply and directly. It can be put in the form of a question if you like. What is your view of Christ? Why did He come into the world? What has God done in Christ? Is He merely a teacher, an example and so on? I shall not waste your time by showing the utter futility of all that. No, this is something positive, this righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. Salvation is all in Christ, and unless you feel yourself shut up to Christ with everything else having failed, you are not a Christian, and it is not surprising that you are not happy. "The righteousness of God in Jesus Christ." It means this. God sent Him into the world in order that He might honour the Law and so men might be forgiven. Here is One who gave perfect obedience to God. Here is one, God in the flesh, who has taken human nature unto Himself and as man He has rendered perfect homage to God, perfect allegiance, perfect obedience. God's law He keeps fully and absolutely without a failure. But not only that. Paul adds other things in this classical statement of the doctrine of the Atonement; "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare at this time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus". Which means this. Before man can be reconciled to God, before man can know God, this sin of his must be removed. God has said that He will punish sin, and that the punishment of sin is death and banishment from the face of God. This has to be dealt with. And what has happened? Well, says Paul, God has set Him forth as a propitiation. That is the means that God has employed. His being the propitiation for our sins means that God has made Him responsible for our sins. They have been placed upon Him and God has dealt with them and punished them there, and therefore because He has punished the sin in Christ, in His body upon the Cross, He can justly forgive us. You see this is high doctrine. It is a daring thing for the

Apostle to say, but it has to be said and I repeat it. God, because He is righteous and Holy and Eternal, could not forgive the sin of man without punishing it. He said He would punish it, so He must punish it, and, blessed be His Name, He has punished it. He is just, therefore, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. The sin has been punished, so God, Who is just and righteous, can forgive sin.

Now then how does it work? It works like this. God takes this righteousness of Christ, this perfect righteousness face to face with the Law which He honoured in every respect. He has kept it and given obedience to it, He has borne its penalty. The Law is fully satisfied. God's way of salvation, says Paul, is this. He gives to us the righteousness of Christ. If we have seen our need and go to God and confess it, God will give us His own Son's righteousness. He imputes Christ's righteousness to us who believe in Him, and regards us as righteous and declares and pronounces us to be righteous in Him. That is the way of salvation, the Christian way of salvation, the way of salvation by justification by faith. So that it comes to this. That I see and I believe, that I look to nothing and no one except to the Lord Jesus Christ. I like Paul's way of putting it. He asks: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith". You foolish Jews, says Paul, you are boasting about the fact that you have been circumcised, you have the oracles of God and that you are God's people. You must cease to do that. You must not rest upon the fact that you have this tradition and you are children of your forefathers. No, no, you have to rest exclusively upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His perfect work. There is no boasting. The Jew is not superior to the Gentile in this respect. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We look to Christ and to Christ alone, and not to ourselves in any respect whatsoever.

III.

To make it quite practical as I close let me say that there is a very simple WAY OF TESTING YOURSELF to know whether you believe that. We betray ourselves by what we say. The Lord Himself said we should be justified by our words, and how true it is. I have often had to deal with this point with people, and I have explained this way of justification by faith and told them how it is all in Christ, and that God puts His righteousness upon us. I have explained it all to them, and then I have said: "Well now are you quite happy about it, do you believe that?" And they say, "Yes." Then I say: "Well then you are now ready to say that you are a Christian." And they hesitate. And I know they have not got it. And then I say: "What is the matter, why are you hesitating?" And they say: "I do not feel that I am good enough." At once I know that in a sense I have been wasting my breath. They are still thinking in terms of themselves; their idea still is that they have to make themselves good enough to be a Christian, good enough to be accepted with Christ. They have to do it! "I am not good enough." It sounds very modest, but it is the lie of the devil, it is a denial of the faith. You think that you are being humble. But you will never be good enough; nobody has ever been good enough. The essence of the Christian salvation is to say that He is good enough and that I am in Him!

As long as you go on thinking about yourself and saying: "Ah yes, I would like to, but I am not good enough;

I am a sinner, a great sinner," you are denying God and you will never be happy. You will continue to be cast down and disquieted in your soul. You will think you are better at times and then you will find that you are not as good as you thought you were. You read the lives of the saints and you realize that you are nowhere. So you keep on asking: "What can I do? I still feel that I am not good enough." Forget yourself, forget all about yourself. Of course you are not good enough, you will never be good enough. The Christian way of salvation tells you this, that it does not matter what you have been, it does not matter what you have done. How can I put this plainly? I try to say it from the pulpit every Sunday because I think it is the thing that is robbing most people of the joy of the Lord. It does not matter if you have almost entered into the depths of hell, if you are guilty of murder as well as every other vile sin, it does not matter from the standpoint of being justified with God. You are no worse than the most respectable self-righteous person in the world. Do you believe that?

That is another good way of testing yourself. Do you believe that from the standpoint of salvation and justification with God that all our customary distinctions are abolished at a stroke and that what determines whether we are sinners or not is not what we have done, but our relationship to God. I say, therefore, that this is the test, that you acknowledge readily and say clearly that you look to Christ and to Christ alone and to nothing and no-one else, that you stop looking at particular sins and particular people. Look at nothing and nobody but look entirely to Christ and say:—

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesu's Blood and righteousness,
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesu's Name.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

You must so believe that as to be able to go further and say with holy boldness:—

"The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do,
My Saviour's obedience and blood,
Hide all my transgressions from view."

Would you like to be rid of this spiritual depression? The first thing you have to do is this, say farewell now once and for ever to your past. Realize that it has been covered and blotted out in Christ. Never look back at your sins again. Say: "It is finished, it is covered by the Blood of Christ." That is your first step. Take that and finish with yourself and all this talk about goodness, and look to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only then that true happiness and joy are possible for you. What you need is not to make resolutions to live a better life, to start fasting and sweating and praying. No! you just begin to say:—

"I rest my faith on Him alone
Who died for my transgressions to atone."

Take that first step and you will find that immediately you will begin to experience a joy and a release that you have never known in your life before. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." Blessed be the Name of God for such a wondrous salvation for desperate sinners.

—The Westminster Record

THE ASPECTS OF GRACE

By Dr. C. D. Cole

Dean Emeritus of Toronto Baptist Seminary

The Reign of Grace

THAT as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). Paul personifies SIN and GRACE and speaks of them as royal figures — two queens on their thrones. He then shows what each gives to her subjects. Sin has death in her painted hand, while grace has eternal life in her white and charming hand.

1. *Grace is more powerful than sin.* Here is the sinner's only hope, although until quickened by the Spirit of grace, he does not know it. No man can rescue himself from the tyranny of sin. Sin is too much for any man. Men are taken captive by the devil (2 Tim. 2:26). Men may reform, but they cannot regenerate themselves. They may give up their crimes and their vices, but they cannot give up their sins. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23).

2. *Grace reigns lawfully.* The reign of grace is a righteous reign. Grace is not against the law. Grace does not seek to destroy justice; that would be to divide God against Himself. Grace honours the law by giving the Lord Jesus Christ, who satisfied the law by becoming our Surety, and bearing the guilt of our sins in His own body on the tree. God dealt with His Son in justice that He might deal with sinners in grace.

3. *Grace reigns by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Christ is not the source but the medium of grace. Grace has its source in the heart of God, and operates according to the sovereign will of God. The word "reign" suggests a king or a queen on a throne. And a throne speaks of power, and resources. The power of grace is the power of God. This makes it fitting to speak of irresistible grace. Surely we can speak of an irresistible God! The resources of grace are to be found in God. The blood of God's Son is the capital stock of grace. When His blood loses its value, then grace has become bankrupt and the believer will be lost. But this shall never be!

"Thou dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

4. *Grace reigns in every phase and step of salvation.* "Twas grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home." Salvation is a comprehensive term, including within its scope all the aspects and stages of deliverance from sin. Every aspect and every stage of salvation is of grace, and this precludes human merit at any and every point. Salvation from beginning to end is of grace.

(1) *Grace reigns in foreknowledge.* The first thing God ever did for His people was to foreknow them. In His foreknowledge He set His affections upon them. He foreknew them with the intention of blessing them. He loved them with an everlasting love, and this love was a gracious love, and in no wise was it merited.

(2) *Grace reigns in election.* Election is of grace (Rom.

11:5). Election was not on the ground of foreseen merit in sinners, but of gracious love in God. In 2 Thessalonians, second chapter, Paul speaks of them that perish because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; and then exclaims with reference to the saints: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). We have two things in this text: first, why men are saved; and second, how they are saved. They are said to be saved because God chose them unto salvation. And they are saved by being sanctified by the Spirit and by believing the truth — the truth of the Gospel. This is what made them differ from "them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth." Had it not been for the choice of God and the sanctification of the Spirit, the Thessalonians would also have rejected the truth. Therefore, God is to be thanked for their salvation. Now, why did God choose them? Was the ground of God's choice foreseen faith, or some other good in them; or was it grace in Himself? Romans 11:5, 6, gives answer: "Even so then at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works."

" 'Tis not that I did choose Thee,
For, Lord, that could not be;
This heart would still refuse Thee,
But Thou hast chosen me."

(3) *Grace reigns in predestination.* To predestinate is to determine destiny beforehand. Predestination is never said to be unto damnation, but unto salvation. God causes nobody to be damned; sin is the thing that damns men. But God is the cause of salvation. The foreknown are said to be predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29). Why were people predestined to such glory? Was it because of their foreseen faith or goodness? In Ephesians 1:5, 6 we have the answer: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace."

(4) *Grace reigns in our calling.* "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called" (Rom. 8:30). The word "called" is never in the New Testament applied to those who are the recipients of a mere external invitation of the Gospel. It always signifies an inward and effectual call — a call that brings to Christ and salvation. And this call is of grace according to 2 Timothy 1:9: "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began." And in Galatians 1:15 Paul says that God called him by His grace.

" 'Twas sovereign mercy called me,
And taught my opening mind;
The world had else enthralled me,
to heavenly glories blind."

(5) *Grace reigns in justification.* Justification may be defined as the judicial act of God in which He declares the believer to be no longer under condemnation, but to have a standing of righteousness before Him. Justification and condemnation are antonyms. The justified person is free from the guilt of sin. In this blessing a matter of merit or of grace? Romans 3:24 says: "Being

justified freely (without any cause in me, C.D.C.) by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

(6) Grace reigns in *conversion*. In conversion a change is wrought in the sinner. There is a change from darkness to light, from death to life, and from the power of Satan unto God. There is a change of opinion so that he believes what he once rejected; a change of affection so that he loves what he once hated. What explains such a change? Does the sinner convert himself? Does darkness create light? Does death beget life? Does filth produce purity? Then, and not till then, can the sinner convert himself. If God converts the sinner, does He do it as a matter of obligation or of grace? Paul gives grace credit for his conversion. After speaking of himself as a persecutor of the saints, he says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am."

"O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!"

(7) Grace reigns in *glorification*. "Whom He justified them He also glorified." Glorification is the complete deliverance from every aspect and vestige of sin. It is the crowning work of redemption by which we will become personally glorious and in glorious surroundings. It takes in the body as well as the soul. Our salvation is not complete as long as these bodies of ours remain in the grave or, if living, continue mortal. Let time write wrinkles upon the brow; let sorrow's scalding tears wet the cheeks; let sickness and pain twist and torture this body into a shapeless mass; and let death turn it into a veritable dust-heap; still grace shall win for us and fashion it into a glorious body like unto that of our dear Lord. "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the appearing (second coming) of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13). "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Provisions of Grace

Grace, like the Good Samaritan, not only meets the present emergency, but provides for future and eternal blessings. Let the trembling sinner be told that there are ample provisions of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. Every one who feels the plague of his own heart may come to Jesus Christ for healing. He gives all a gracious invitation and assures a hearty welcome. Hear His words: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Though vile as Manasseh, filthy as Magdalene, guilty as the cross-thief, He will not turn away the poor in spirit. He turns no real beggar from His gate, though full of sores and vermin. His heart is lined with sweet compassion, and His hands are filled with the richest gifts. He has supplies for all needs: legs for a lame beggar, eyes for a blind one, cordials for a faint one, garments for a naked one, a fountain for a filthy one — Yes, and a rope for a sham beggar who asks for mercy and talks of merit. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word;
What more can He say than to you He hath said —
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"

God's Grace Is Manifold

There is sustaining grace for seasons of sorrow, triumphing grace for times of temptation, persevering grace for days of discouragement. There is teaching grace, living grace and dying grace. But time and paper would fail me to tell of the sin of frustrating grace by teaching salvation by works, and of abusing grace — turning the grace of God into lasciviousness — by pleading grace as a license to sin. Grace has delivered every believer from the guilt of sin, from the love of sin, and will yet deliver from the very presence of sin. Until the dear Lord returns to complete His work of grace, every believer will experience with Paul the inward workings of sin, and confess with him, that "what I hate, that I do" (Rom. 7:15).

"Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

—From *Definitions of Doctrines*. This book may be procured at the office of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. Price: \$1.50.

For Younger Readers

PRAYER SAVES FAMILY FROM FLAMES

By William Rutledge

During the holiday week at the end of last year a terrifying fire swept the luxurious Malibu region of southern California. High and shifting winds, plus the canyons and mountainous terrain on which stood many costly homes, made the inferno almost impossible to combat. Thousands of fire-fighters, including professional experts and whole units from the U.S. Navy and Army stationed in the vicinity, were able to defeat the flames — but only after a week of battling, day and night, and at a cost of nearly one hundred million dollars.

One of the remarkable stories which came out of this sensational and baffling fire was also a story of a remarkable answer to prayer. It concerned a man and his wife and their two children.

They suddenly found their mountainside home surrounded with blazing walls of flames. There was no escape and no way that rescue teams could reach them. The father simply told his frantic family that there was nothing they could do but to pray, and hope that the greatest Power would intervene to spare them in this holocaust.

The father, speaking for his family, gently prayed.

To the amazement of all, including observers in the helicopters overhead, the flames miraculously parted and swept around the entire home and the family. Not one of them was so much as singed. The flames roared on and around them in a way that cannot be understood or explained except in terms of true and positive faith.

Men study all the laws and effects of every phase of life, but there has ever been — and always will be — that which cannot be explained, that which cannot be pinned down to iron-clad rules. By every natural law of forest fires, this family and their home should have burned to cinders.

He on His throne heard this desperate prayer, and the

raging flames were obedient to Him, the Ruler of all things.

No matter how skilled and expert and lauded any of us may become in any phase or pursuit of life we cannot ignore or fail to reckon with God who governs the universe. He can turn every expectation into failure, every wisdom into foolishness, and every despair into thrilling triumph.

—Moody Monthly

Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 21 Second Quarter Lesson 13 June 30, 1957

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

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

Lesson Text: Revelation 21:1-7.

Golden Text: "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."—Revelation 21:5.

I. The Vision: verses 1-4.

The visions which the Lord gave to His servant John included some features pertaining to the past, some to the present and some to the future (Rev. 1:19). In these last visions the Lord vouchsafed to John glimpses of the eternal abode of the saints.

John saw a new heaven and a new earth, both of which were of surpassing beauty and glory. The first heaven and the first earth, when created by the hand of God, were perfect (Gen. 1:31), but because of the sin of the inhabitants, the whole earth became involved in the curse (Gen. 3:17, 18; Rom. 8:20-22). There would come a day of judgment, wherein the first heaven and earth would be dissolved and purged with fire (Heb. 12:26, 27; 2 Pet. 3:10-12), preparatory to the new heaven and new earth, when the universe would be redeemed (Rom. 8:19). The heaven which would be destroyed is of course not the eternal abode of the saints, but rather the atmosphere above the earth. The new heaven and the new earth may be the first ones restored and renewed, or they may be entirely new.

The sea in Scriptural imagery is the symbol of turmoil and unrest (Psa. 46:3; Isa. 48:22; 57:20), of separation (Lam. 2:13), of judgment and destruction (Gen. 6:17; 7:11; Rev. 20:13). In that land of quiet peace, there will be no more sea, in the sense that these disturbing elements will no longer trouble men or nations.

The New Jerusalem which John saw was a spiritual city of heavenly origin (Isa. 52:1; Rev. 22:9), contrasted in its character and source with earthly Jerusalem, symbolic of bondage and fleshly aims (Gal. 4:25, 26; Heb. 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 1:17, 18). The inhabitants of New Jerusalem are those who are true members of the body of Christ, His bride, His church (1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 12:13; Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:25-27; Col. 2:7; Rev. 3:12). How glorious shall the saints appear, with all faults and blemishes removed, and adorned with the white robes of the righteousness of Christ, their Lord and heavenly Bridegroom, with whom they are united for evermore (verse 9; Rev. 19:7; 22:17)! The heavenly city is now completed, each living stone being in its proper place (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 21:14).

In figure and symbol, but especially in the tabernacle in the wilderness, the presence of God was made manifest to the ancient Hebrews (Exod. 25:22; 29:45, 46; 40:34, 35; Lev. 20:26; 26:11, 12). But in the Eternal City the Lord Himself shall dwell forever among His people, now redeemed from all sin and iniquity (Zech. 2:10; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 7:15).

What a comforting thought to know that in the Celestial City there will be no sin (verses 8, 27; Isa. 35:8; Joel 3:17), and that none of the fruits of sin will be present — tears, sorrow, suffering, pain or death (Isa. 25:8; 35:10; 51:11; Matt. 11:28; 1 Cor. 15:26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 7:17; 20:14)! All such woes belong to the first earth with its bondage of corruption.

II. The Voice: verses 5-7.

The triumphant Saviour, the One sitting upon the throne of power and glory (Rev. 4:2, 8), informed John that it was He who had made all things new. All things were in reality new, as prefigured by the new creation in the heart of every redeemed soul (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Apostle John was commanded to write the vision, to record it, for it had been given to him by One who was called True and Faithful (Rev. 3:7, 14; 19:11; 22:6), the Beginning and the Ending, the Source and Purpose of all things (Col. 1:16; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 1:8). Moreover, the promise was as sure and certain as though these things had already taken place.

To encourage any who might despair of reaching such a holy and blessed abode, the Apostle John was exhorted to repeat the gracious invitation of the Gospel, that the Lord was ready to satisfy with the waters of eternal life those who expressed spiritual thirst (Isa. 55:1; John 4:10; 7:37; Rev. 22:17). Salvation would be given to them freely, without money and without price.

The promise of the Gospel was repeated for the benefit of the saints of God also. Those who would be victorious in the conflict against the world, the flesh and Satan would inherit the blessings described in the sacred vision (Rev. 2:7). As sons of God by the new birth they would have a right to the heavenly inheritance (Rom. 8:16, 17). God would manifest Himself as their Father, and they would be manifested before all as His sons (Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 6:18). What a glorious inheritance awaits those who by faith receive Christ as their Saviour and Lord (1 Pet. 1:3, 4)! Let us press on toward the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12-14)!

Daily Bible Readings

- June 24—Heaven, the Dwelling Place of God
Deut. 6:39; Isa. 6
June 25—Angels Expelled from Heaven ... 2 Pet. 2; Jude 5-7
June 26—Heaven, Denied to the Unsaved Rev. 20:1-15
June 27—Heaven, Promised to Believers
John 17:20-26; 1 Cor. 5:1-10
June 28—Heaven, Prepared by Christ for Believers
John 14:1-24
June 29—Heaven, a Rest for the Christian Hebrews 4
June 30—Heaven, a Place of Untold Blessing. Rev. 21:8-22:5

Suggested Hymns

Jerusalem the golden.
Who, who are these?
For ever with the Lord.
Jerusalem, my happy home.
There's a land of fadeless day.
Jesus the water of life has given.

THE WORTH OF MAN

If the value of anything is to be estimated by its price, to what an immeasurable height of worth does it exalt man that God gave His Son to redeem him! — redeeming him not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ; as of a lamb without spot or blemish. So far from cherishing low views of man, I believe that a gem of inestimable value lies concealed beneath the beggar's rags. A soul is there of divine-like faculties and of priceless worth: and a body also, which, though the seat of appetites that man shares with brutes, and of passions, perhaps, such as burn in the breast of friends, may become more sacred than any fane built by human hands — a temple of the Holy Ghost. There is a worth in man no meanness of circumstances, no degradation of character can altogether conceal. He is a jewel, though buried in a heap of corruption; the vilest outcast, possessing powers and affections that need only to be sanctified to ally him with angels, and make publicans and harlots fit for Heaven.

—GUTHRIE

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