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A New Toronto Baptist Seminary Year Has Commenced

By OLIVE L. CLARK

ON MONDAY, September 23rd, the doors of Toronto Baptist Seminary were re-opened for the commencement of another school year, the 31st year since the founding of this Baptist training centre by Dr. T. T. Shields of sainted memory. As in that day, when, because of the spread of Modernism in McMaster University, some provision must be made for the education of young men as Baptist ministers, so in this year 1957, the classes have commenced in an atmosphere of great urgency. The times in which we live call for men of unswerving loyalty to the Lord and to His Word, of courage and of deep consecration. Such young men has the Lord sent to us, and once again as in the past we marvel at His wondrous grace in calling chosen men away from other pursuits and leading them to this place.

After the students had registered, the Seminary staff and student body gathered together for a period of united worship and prayer, the President, Dr. H. C. Slade, presiding. Dr. Slade gave a warm welcome to the new students, the returning students and the members of the Faculty, all of whom were present except Rev. T. Summers, who was unavoidably detained. Special reference was made to Rev. B. R. Oatley-Willis, now joining the staff of the Seminary from which he graduated with distinction a few years ago. Each member of the Faculty spoke briefly concerning his subjects and gave a few words of counsel and encouragement. This was a profitable session, and all were conscious of the presence of the Lord in our midst.

At six o'clock the whole Seminary family, including the Trustees, had supper together, and this was followed by a splendid evening of Christian fellowship and testimony.

It was most encouraging to hear brief reports from the students who had been on summer fields, near and far, of the way in which the Lord had worked with them. All expressed gratitude to the Lord for the privilege of serving Him, and for the opportunities of studying at the Seminary through the generosity of Jarvis Street Church, other churches and many individuals, whose loving gifts make possible the maintenance of this institution. The new students testified to the Lord's grace in saving them and in a sovereign manner laying His hand upon them for service, directing them to the Seminary. One could not but be impressed with the spiritual maturity of our present students. "Go forward" is the motto of the Seminary, as it is of Jarvis Street Church.

We send greetings to all our graduates and former students, scattered throughout the world, serving the Lord in various capacities in many lands, and we assure them of our earnest prayer on their behalf. To those who help us by prayer, interest and donations of money, books or food, we send grateful thanks. Some of those returning to classes brought with them fruit and vegetables, the gifts of churches and individuals. Others may be able to help in this way.

Classes commenced on Tuesday morning, September 24th, in the newly-decorated bright lecture rooms. As the Seminary activities get into full swing, we would invite the hearty and prayerful co-operation of all our friends in this most important missionary enterprise. Please join us in prayer that the Lord may strengthen and sustain each member of the Seminary family, that He may provide for our every need and use Toronto Baptist Seminary as never before to increase the glory of His own great Name.

Student Missionaries Report

"... and thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."—Acts 14:26-27.

(The following reports were given Thursday evening, September 19):

Report from Martinique

I am very happy to be back in Canada and among the people of Jarvis St. Baptist Church, who made my summer in Martinique possible and whose fellowship, though geographically distant, meant so much. Not that I was anxious to leave this beautiful mountainous island between the blue Caribbean and the Atlantic, for such fine fellowship had been enjoyed with the saints of God — colour makes no difference in God's family — and it was a particular joy to be able to preach to them and the unconverted in their own language — French. (This is, however, a kind of second language for most of them as they generally speak Creole in ordinary conversation. This is a mixture of French, English, etc.)

Taking the plane from Miami, Florida, we fly south-east to Puerto Rico. Leaving here we touch down at St. Croix and Antigua, and then we turn due south calling at Guadeloupe, another French island, before arriving in Martinique, about three hundred miles from the coast of north-eastern South America. The island is forty-three miles long by about fifteen miles wide, and has an area not much larger than that of New York. The cultivation of sugar cane and bananas is the main occupation, much of the former being used for rum, one of the curses of the island, the process of production having been introduced by a Roman Catholic cleric.

The island was discovered by Columbus at about the turn of the fifteenth century, and the original inhabitants, the Caribs, were later exterminated. The French government acquired the island, and slaves were brought from Africa. They were emancipated in 1848, so that now there is no colour bar at all, although there is quite a colour consciousness.

The Roman Catholic Church was soon there, and was the undisputed ruler of consciences until a few decades ago when the Adventists went in and began to make converts, who now number about 4,000. I heard the Adventist chief there say that they would have more if they did not have to observe Saturday. Although most of the people are good Catholics they are not good morally. A Catholic priest actually stated over the radio that only seven per cent of the population are legally married, and so about ninety per cent are illegitimate; they even have special days for "baptizing" illegitimate babies.

The Adventists are the largest Protestant group on the island. The only other non-Catholics are a handful of "Jehovah's Witnesses" and the Evangelicals or, popularly, "Evangelistes". These arose a few years ago but did not have any qualified leaders, for whom they prayed. When in 1946 missionaries of what is now called the Evangelical

Baptist Mission arrived there, it seemed as if their prayers were answered, but however half of the church remained separate and maintained Brethren views—apparently they did not like the idea of white foreign leaders. Each group is strongest in Fort-de-France, the capital, a town of some 65,000, and throughout the island each must have a constituency of roughly two hundred.

I had the privilege of preaching several times in the Baptist church in Fort-de-France, where Mr. Itty is the able pastor. Not long before leaving I witnessed a dozen baptisms in the sea, and it was a fine experience afterwards to stand with them and the other fifty church members around the table for the Lord's Supper; for these children of God had not only been saved from sin but from Rome, immorality, worldliness, and the influence of sorcery.

One of the four missionary families had recently moved to Basse-Pointe, a town or commune most of whose inhabitants are able to reconcile communism and Romanism in their thinking. The missionary is still learning French, and I helped him for a few weeks. One of the Evangelical families I visited ate and slept in the same room, most of the ten children sleeping on the floor. The busy season on the sugar-cane plantations was over, and so the father was out of work with no unemployment benefit and only family allowances coming in. It is not much wonder that even some of the believers have communist persuasions. It was encouraging, however, to be able to preach free salvation to the unsaved who stood at the windows and to see one or two really anxious about eternal things.

Another missionary I helped had spent a couple of years at a town where only one person is known to have been converted as a result. This missionary family, at present on furlough, later moved to Vauclin, a fishing commune of about 10,000. Here there is now a handful of believers, and as well as preaching to them and to the unsaved at the window, I conducted the Daily Vacation Bible School to which about thirty children came every day, and even on Assumption Day when a statue of Mary was taken on a tour of the town.

When I left Vauclin one of the brothers said to me, "Tell them when you get home that we need more workers in Martinique." Yes; in Martinique, which has a population of about 250,000, there is one evangelical missionary to every 60,000 people, whereas in Brazil the figure is one to every 9000 (figures from *News of Quebec* 1957, which, incidentally, gives the figure for Quebec as one to 62,000). As can be seen the work in Martinique is slow. There is much to pull down before one can begin to build, but the Lord is working. Perhaps the Lord is saying to some of our readers, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" May you be given grace to say, "Here am I; send me." If the Lord calls you to stay at home do intercede for this most worthy work.

—Peter Tyson

Report from Jamaica

I take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation of the wide-spread interest and prayerful support of the work of the Lord in Jamaica. And I know that I speak also for Rev. J. Knight with whom I laboured this past summer. As this report and summary is read, my prayer is that your interest will be deepened and that prayer on behalf of the work will be unceasing.

Jamaica is one of the West Indian Islands which are divided into two groups — the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles. Jamaica belongs to the Greater Antilles. It is situated 90 miles south of Cuba and 100 west of Haiti. It is approximately 152 miles long and 52 miles wide, comprising a total area of 4,207 square miles. Nearly one-half of the island is over 1,000 feet above sea-level. The island is predominantly mountainous which makes travel difficult and slow. The climate is semi-tropical. Jamaica is divided into three counties which are further divided into fourteen parishes. Agriculture is the basic industry, although there are many other industries located in the larger towns and cities. The population is mainly Negro, augmented by Chinese, East Indian, White, Syrian and other races.

In recent reports, an account was given of the Lord's blessing upon the work this past summer in definite answer to prayer. Especially is this true with respect to the various special missions conducted in the class-houses of Aboukin Wood, Anderson Town, John Reid and Cascade. These class-houses are a necessity due to the mountainous country. There are several attached to each of the main churches of Clarksonville, Mt. Moriah and Tweedside, in which services are held weekly in addition to the regular services in the main churches. The evangelical pastors in Jamaica carry on a very heavy programme but the Lord is blessing their labours, in spite of the many difficulties that they encounter. Of these difficulties, there are three in particular that I would like to mention.

(1) There is a moral situation to cope with that is a constant problem. Immorality is common, although in a land where the gospel has been preached for over 150 years we might not expect it to be so. Unfortunately this is true of other lands also. The latest available government statistics show that from 1941-52, illegitimate births outnumbered legitimate births approximately two and one-half to one. In 1952, 70 per cent of the island's births were illegitimate. For this situation various reasons might be assigned. Living conditions, social customs and the lack of a heart acceptance of the gospel are contributing factors. There is one definite solution to this grave problem. The preaching of the whole counsel of God which will bring sinners to repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is alone able to cope with this situation. However, let me emphasize that in the midst of such a moral morass, there are many fine Christians whose lives are living testimonies of what the grace of God is able to accomplish. Their lives are disciplined by God's Word and many of them are being used to rescue others and bring them to Christ.

(2) A second problem is that of illiteracy. In 1953, the island's population was 1,476,923. The population over 10 years of age numbered 1,072,940. Of that number 189,809 were unable to read or write; 38,172 could read but not write. That is, approximately 1 in 5 over 10 years of age are illiterate. This makes the pastor's ministry more difficult than otherwise it would be. However, the situation is constantly improving as the younger generation is given

better opportunities of education than was afforded their parents.

(3) A third and most serious problem is that of modernism, of those who deny or cast doubt upon the verities of the faith. In Jamaica there is a fellowship of churches and denominations known as the Jamaica Christian Council which is affiliated with the apostate World Council of Churches. Belonging to this Council as constituent members are Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Moravians, Disciples of Christ, Churches of God, Salvation Army, Religious Society of Friends, Church of England, British and Foreign Bible Society, Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. In their official handbook, "Christ for Jamaica," published in 1951, we read the following quotations which show the modernism of some of its members.

In the chapter entitled, "The Church and Youth", we read: "The Christian doctrine of man is that each person is of eternal value and significance. This is but another way of saying that each one of us is a child of God with an eternal destiny, born in time but made for eternity." In contrast to this the Bible declares, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1: 12). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

In the chapter on "The World Church" their position is clearly set forth: "In almost every country today Christian Councils are to be found and a growing co-operation between the churches. As a result a new word has become fashionable in church circles — 'Ecumenical'. It means belonging to the whole household; when used of the Church it means, 'The whole household of faith.'" Further on in this same chapter we read, "Is it possible that God is leading toward the establishing of a larger and more comprehensive Church of the West Indies that shall bring nearer the fulfilment of our Saviour's prayer, 'that they may all be one'?" Thus we see their affiliation with the world-wide apostasy of our day, as represented in the World Council of Churches.

Writing on "The Historic Church and the Sects", the writer says in speaking of the Reformation, "The Reformation unfortunately caused various splits in Western Christendom, and theological differences since have marred the unity of the fellowship." When anyone calls the Reformation unfortunate, we can readily see where he stands in regard to the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Chapter II of this handbook deals with Evangelism. Again we quote, "It is true to say that all branches of the Christian Church admit the duty of evangelism. The words: "Go ye out into all the world, and make disciples of all nations" have been heeded by most denominations and solemnly and seriously obeyed. In spite of this there is need for a re-statement concerning evangelism, not because the Churches see no necessity for it, but because the evangelical approach must be adopted to meet the needs of the hour.

"Today we are living in a changing world. Scientific research has placed forces in our hands which are slipping quickly from our control. Persons must be produced who have sufficient spiritual, physical and social power to keep the world in check. It is to this situation that evangelism must be reoriented. The old methods will not do. "The technique of the last century, based on cut and dried schemes of salvation, artificial and mechanical theologies, supreme emphasis upon other worldly interests, must be

displaced with newer calls to repentance, and greater demands for personal and social righteousness on the part of converts it seeks to win," says Lyn. D. Cartwright in his book on evangelism.

"It was Walt Whitman who wrote, "Produce Persons and the rest follows. That is the task of evangelism today. The old evangelism produced converts; we must produce persons — there is a considerable difference. Paul seems to have had this in mind when he wrote, "Until we all attain unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The challenge of the old evangelism was "Will you accept Christ?" The challenge of today must be, "Will you allow Christ to make you like Him?" The teaching of the last century about "being saved" tended to make people look back into their lives and base their salvation upon some past emotional experience. The note struck in this century must be to look forward all the time to growth in personality brought about by the indwelling Christ which will fit us not only for life after death but to live in *this* world and help it to be a God-ordered society. The aim of our modern evangelism must be not only conversion but the creation of Christian personalities."

It is easily discerned that the writer is not advocating New Testament evangelism. Instead of producing converts he wants to produce persons. But how can a Christ-like life be produced apart from the regeneration of the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit? It cannot be done. Instead of advocating new kinds of evangelism we need more of the Spirit-filled evangelism and preaching that characterized the apostolic days. I believe that these quotations will speak for themselves to show the apostasy of some members of the Jamaica Christian Council. However, it is only fair to point out that many evangelicals are also in the Council. Yet these are having fellowship with those who deny essential verities of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They ought to come out from among them and separate themselves from such apostate unions.

The bright spot in the entire situation is the work being done by the evangelical pastors who under the blessing of the Lord are holding high the banner of truth. They need and would appreciate our continued financial and prayerful support as they continue to serve the Lord in the midst of such difficulties. May each reader be found faithful in bearing them up before the throne of grace.

—Edwin Fry

SPECIAL VISITORS IN JARVIS STREET

Rev. I. E. D. Thomas, pastor of Christmas Evans Memorial Baptist Church, Caernarvon, Wales, will be the guest preacher Thursday evening, September 26th, and Sunday, September 29th, at the morning and evening services. Special gospel music will be provided by Welsh harpist and singer, Mrs. Frances Jones, who on repeated occasions has won awards in the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales.

FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

3.00 p.m. — Greenway Hall

Speaker: MR. PETER TYSON

Subject: "4 Months in Martinique"

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A HINT TO GOSPEL PREACHERS

Daniel Webster, the famous American orator and politician, spent a summer in New Hampshire. Every Sunday found him in Church paying marked attention to the sermon.

His niece asked him how it was he paid so much attention there, when he paid little attention to far abler sermons in Washington. He replied:

"In Washington, they preach to Daniel Webster the statesman; but this man has been telling Daniel Webster, the sinner, of Jesus Christ."

—Selected

UNPLEASANT PREACHING

Some can be content to hear all pleasant things, as the promises and mercies of God; but judgments and reproofs, threats and checks, these they cannot brook; like unto those who, in medicine, care only for a pleasant smell or appearance in the remedy, as pills rolled in gold, but have no regard for the efficacy of the physic. Some can willingly hear that which concerns other men and their sins, their lives and manners, but nothing touching themselves or their own sins: as men can willingly abide to hear of other men's deaths, but cannot abide to think of their own.

—RICHARD STOCK

SEMINARY CONVOCATION DATE CHANGED

Toronto Baptist Seminary Convocation will be held Thursday evening, October 31.

COMING IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

We have just received the first article of Dr. C. D. Cole on the Doctrine of sin, which will appear next week.

The Sermons of Dr. T. T. Shields

"Fruitful in Every Good Work"

(Stenographically Reported)

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering and joyfulness;

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature;

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

"And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."—Col. 1:9-20.

WE HAVE, for two or three Sunday mornings, given our thought to this Apostle's prayer for the Colossian saints. And I want you this evening to think a little with me of a part of verse ten: "Being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

We should do well to study these inspired prayers, that we may learn how to pray one for another. So often our petitions are meagre, of small dimensions. We ask for blessings, some times not knowing what we ourselves mean by the petitions we present. This prayer was very broad, and at the same time very specific. And it gives us some idea of the apostolic conception of the possibility of the Christian life. If we offer no larger prayers to-day than we did twenty years ago surely it indicates that we have grown but little. The young man of twenty does not want the same things as the boy of ten or twelve. The young woman of twenty has outgrown many of her girlish fancies, and she has scrapped — or they have been dissolved for her perhaps — many of her girlish dreams. As we grow in years, naturally we grow in wisdom, and in our knowledge of life. And so in the Christian life, as we are more matured in our experience of divine grace, we ought to be enabled to offer prayers of larger dimensions. We ought, indeed, to have an ever-increasing view, an ever-enlarging view of the purpose of God when He called us out of darkness into light.

Look at the principle involved in that one phrase for example, to begin with: "Being fruitful in every good work". The Apostle Paul had no mechanistic view of the Christian life; to him a Christian was not a manufactured product: christianity was something that was produced by vital principles. The church is not a factory, but a garden. And you will find that in all his representations of what we are, and what we ought to be, he never fails to bring us to that principle of vitality, showing us that a Christian is

a living thing. He speaks of good works, but the good works are but fruits; we are to be "fruitful in every good work". And fruit can come only of that which is alive. Dead things produce no fruit, whatever else they may do. So let us ever keep that clearly in mind. You remember how our Lord, under various figures, enunciated the same principle: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." In His view Christians were delicate exotics: they are not indigenous to this sun-cursed earth; they are imports; they are brought from a far country; they are born from above, to use another figure. But they have been planted by the heavenly Father. He is the Husbandman, and they are brought into relation to vital springs, so that whatever is produced by them is the product, not of machinery, or any kind of mechanical effort, but is the natural product of a peculiar life that is in them.

Oh, how it would save us from disappointment in our work as Christians, if we could ever bear in mind that we are dealing with living things all the time; and that there is but One Who has power to give life! We have power to take it away, but no power to give it. He is the Source of life: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." And we can bear fruit only in the measure in which we are related to the Source of life. Without Him we can do nothing; we are plants of the heavenly Father's planting. And you will remember that even where Paul does depart somewhat from this vital figure, he seems deliberately to mix his metaphors, in order that the principle shall not wholly fail of expression; when he is speaking of the one foundation — and we are building upon the one foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble, as the case may be — he prefaces his statement in respect to that matter by saying, "Ye are God's husbandry", ye are God's tillage; ye are more than a building. And when the Holy Ghost speaks of the stones that are laid, "Ye also as

lively stones" — as living stones — He is careful always to avoid that mechanical, carnal conception of things, as though the Holy Ghost would guard us against ever falling into the error of supposing we could do anything of ourselves. You see, even in the simple metaphors we are shut up in principle to the source of life. And whatever we do is to be the fruit of the life that is in us.

And so all that you can do, as teachers, is to allow God to use you as His gardener, to plant His plants. He will bring them from afar. And by powers that are not earthly but heavenly, and by a life that comes from above, and not from beneath, He will produce His garden, and our Beloved will come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits.

How important it is that plants should be kept in vital relation to the source of life! There are some plants roundabout here that I brought from Bruce county. We went into the woods and dug them up; and we got as much earth as we possibly could, with the roots, and wrapped some sacking around them, and then put them in a shady place. And inside of fifteen minutes the leaves were hanging down. I said to the man who was helping me, "I will tell you what we will do. We will carry these plants down to the edge of the lake, and put bag and root and all into the water." We carried them down to the lake, and inside of half an hour the leaves were spread out again: they were drinking of that fountain. We cannot be fruitful, dear friends, we cannot be vital Christians if we are separated from the source of life for even an hour. "Fruitful in every good work." We are plants.

Of course, there is the other figure: "I am the true vine"; "I am the vine, ye are the branches." You have exactly the same figure there: united to the Living One.

Well now, what sorts of plants? Evergreens! Yes; be as verdant as you like! Now is there any Scripture for that? "But," you say, "we cannot be bearing fruit all the time?" Perhaps not. I was talking with a man just last week, a student, and he said it had been a problem with him as to how to witness for Christ among the students in Toronto University — many of them utterly godless young men; and some of them quite antagonistic to religion. And he said, "First of all I tried to speak, to testify all the time. And at last I reached the conclusion that it was neither wise, nor profitable, for me so to do." Of course I recognize the danger of covering one's cowardice under a cloak of expedience. But there is that principle: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." There are some people who imagine that witnessing for Christ involves throwing a text at everyone you meet. Very often you do far more harm than good by that kind of thing. It is an art, not a science. The Spirit of the Lord will teach us when we ought to testify, and He will make us fruitful. But bear this in mind, the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, is described as a blessed man. And he refrains from these things because he does something else: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." There is the plant, just rooted in the very source of life. Now what happens? He "bringeth forth his fruit in his season." And do not forget this: "his leaf also shall not wither." And though you may not always be able to cut the luscious clusters from its boughs, it will always be evident that it is alive. That is the point.

What we are to witness to is that we are alive. That is

the very essence of our witness. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me": we are in union with the Living One, and even though at times we may not be able to point to direct fruit in the sense of converts — indeed there may be times when we may seem almost to be stagnant, not to be growing so very much — there should never be a time in the Christian life when we do not give evidence that we are alive.

"His leaf also shall not wither." And in such a case as I have mentioned when a young man does not immediately quote a text, perhaps, and rebuke somebody, the very fact that there is no smile on his countenance, while others laugh, his whole demeanour is a rebuke to those who have spoken after an unholy fashion in His presence. And though he may not at the time seem to bear fruit, his leaf does not wither. And others will say, "Did you notice Mr. So-and-So? What is there about that fellow that is different from the rest? Why he is an evergreen tree in the midst of the winter! He has a leaf that is not dependent upon the coming and going of the seasons." And yet, dear friends, we are not altogether evergreens; we are not here to be foliage plants, are we? just as ornaments in the garden? Some of us belong to the vegetable garden, rather than the flower garden, I think. There is hope for us that if we cannot be very beautiful, we can at least be useful. And perhaps that is the highest sort of beauty after all.

WE ARE TO BE FRUITFUL. Surely the presence of Christ in the life of the believer ought to make a difference, not only in outward demeanour, but in the output, in the product of the life; we ought to be different. We are to be fruitful. Well, my friends, there are a lot of people who are busy making paper flowers you know — wax flowers, and that sort of thing, artificial fruit, glass blown. I was in a part of this continent one time where they do not grow apples like we do here. I went into a restaurant for luncheon and I saw there on the shelf some magnificent apples. I said, "Ah, that looks like home." I had a simple lunch; and the waitress came along and said, "What will you have for dessert, sir?" I said, "I will have one of those apples over there." "Oh," she said, "they are not to eat; they are artificial." I felt like saying, "You bunch of hypocrites, why do you mock me when I have my palate set for a bit of home, to find that they are nothing but make-believe?" But there is a lot of that in the world — just manufactured fruit, just something to look at, and nothing to eat.

Now we are to bear real fruit: and the only way by which that can be done is to live in vital fellowship with our Lord Himself. Oh, I know it is a commonplace, dear friends, I know it is the very alphabet of Christian experience; but we cannot do without the alphabet, can we? And we need to say it to ourselves over and over again. We need perpetually to remind ourselves of the great truth: Severed from Me ye can do nothing. Not, ye can do little, but, ye can do *nothing*.

II.

Well now, WHAT SORT OF FRUIT ARE WE TO BEAR? "Fruitful in every good work." Good works are to characterize the Christian; but they are not to be the result of our own personal efforts apart from the vitalizing power of the indwelling Spirit. That is the point I want to make. The fruit of the Spirit is another figure; and all the graces of the Christian life are to issue from the life within. They are not to be put on from without, but they are to come from within: "Out of the heart are the issues of life." And if we would be better Christians, and more fruitful Christians, then we must learn how to yield ourselves more

fully to the springs, that we may have not only life, but that we may have it more abundantly.

Very well then, such fruit as we bear is to be *good fruit*, really good fruit. They say that though the tree may be very good, you can continue to produce good fruit only as you give that tree constant attention. The figure of the vine is used in Scripture. But even an apple tree will deteriorate. Leave it alone for a little while, and every apple on the tree will have a worm at the heart of it, and they will get smaller and smaller, until by and by they are not worth the picking. And even though we are plants of the heavenly Father's planting, and bear fruit, if it is to be good fruit, it will be the result of careful and painstaking culture.

How people labour to exercise and develop the powers of the body, and to develop the faculties of the mind in order that they may be qualified to live a life, and to earn a livelihood! Ought we not to give the same painstaking care to the cultivation of our spiritual lives, so that when we get home to heaven we shall not be ignoramuses?

There are some people who are very superficial: they love to appear learned. I remember some years ago being invited to go for a drive when motor cars were scarce, and when good roads were even more scarce. And on that occasion I remember the car got stuck in a sandy road. There was a uniformed chauffeur to drive it. He had to get out and wrap a rope around the wheels to get the thing out of the sand. But we were going out for a drive, and there was a certain person a — lady — in that car, and I was the guest of herself and her husband. They were taking the minister out for a drive! And of course the whole affair had to have some sort of literary flavour, so she brought along a volume of the poets! Well, I do not read the poets when I go driving. And I was very soon convinced that she did not read the poets any other time. She did not know anything about them. It is like putting a flower in your lapel — you have not any in your garden, but you have one somewhere, and it gives you an air, you know!

I heard of a young lady one time at a social occasion meeting a man who was supposed to know a little bit about books. And so she engaged him in conversation about — oh, the works of some of the masters of English literature. She was very careful not to get into deep waters. It was quite evident that she was trying to appear travelled in that region, though she did not know much about it. And this gentleman soon discerned the hollowness of it all; and he said, "I presume Miss So-and-So, you are very fond of Scott?" "Oh, I just adore him!" Yes. And so he mentioned some of the titles of Scott's novels: "You have read Scott's *Marmion*?" "Oh, wonderful, wonderful!" "And Scott's *Emulsion*?" "Oh, certainly!" Well you know, I have met religious professors like that. I knew a preacher once deeply taught of the Lord, and his wife was his echo. It was painful to observe how that dear woman was trying to be pious, and just using phrases of whose meaning she had not the remotest idea. There is a religion of that sort abroad to-day, where people have caught a few pious phrases, and they are very, very spiritual! — and it is all cant; it is just Scott's *Emulsion*, that is all: just as empty and vain as anything can be.

Now let the fruit we bear be the *genuine* article. And if we talk about prayer, and recommend it as a high privilege to someone else, let us know something about it. Let us dwell in the depths, and scale the heights, and be fruitful in every good work, and every good work will in itself be found to be fruitful, for as it comes from a vital principle,

it will itself be vital, and it will have within it the power of reproduction.

Testimony that is energized by the Spirit of God, that is really the fruit of the Spirit of God, will have the life-giving principle within it, and it is sown as a seed, and it will spring up again, so that we shall be fruitful in every good work; and in every good work we shall find ourselves becoming fruitful, and we shall thus be perpetuating our testimony in the lives of others.

III.

"INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD."

Oh, that is our privilege, to increase in the knowledge of God. Well, how are we to do that? The idea there is that we are to grow into the personal knowledge of God. It is not that we are to know God as a remote figure of antiquity; that we are to think of Him as some unknown Spirit behind the clouds. I venture to believe it means that we are to become more and more intimate with God Himself, until we know God. You ask me about a certain man, Do I know him? Well, yes, I know him. "Do you know him as a character in a book?" "I did once, but I know him better than that now. I have actually shaken hands with him. I can say that I have been introduced to him. I have the pleasure and honour of his acquaintance. But I do not know much about him: he is a comparative stranger to me." You ask of someone else, Do I know him? "Oh, yes, I know him very well. We have spent hours and hours together in conversation one with the other." I met a man some years ago, a man well advanced in life, who was a graduate of Edinburgh University, and he told me of an experience he had as a student. He said, "There was a very celebrated professor of philosophy there at the time." I said, "I never knew him, but I have one of his books on my shelf", and I told him what the book was. "The very man," he said. "He was my professor. One day I listened to his lecture with amazement. I caught glimpses of his meaning here and there, but for the most part it was away beyond me. I was so full of questions that I felt it was useless to ask questions in the class. He lectured to a large class. I knew him as a lecturer, my professor. At the close of the lecture I went up to him, and I said, 'Professor, may I ask you a question?' He said, 'Certainly!' And I asked him a question. 'Oh now,' he said, and he put his hand on my shoulder, 'that is a very big question. Let me see, Have you any engagement for a certain evening?' I said, 'No.' 'Well,' he said, 'neither have I. Come up to my house, and we will talk that over.' I could hardly believe it. But I went up to the professor's house, and he met me. He had on a comfortable house jacket, and he said to me, 'Come in'; and we sat down beside the fire. He said, 'Now, then, let me have your question.' And we sat there beside a glowing fire until the midnight hour, talking together." And he said, "As I look back, that one evening I spent in personal converse with my professor meant more to me than my whole university course."

Did you ever sit down by the fireside, and talk with God? That is what that means: increasing in the personal knowledge of God; letting Him talk to us, not out of a book, but as we read the Book, finding the living Person in the Book speaking to our hearts, and consciences, and baring our whole souls before Him, and then speaking back to Him in loving and ever deepening confidence. "Increasing in the knowledge of God." I think it means walking with God. You cannot get to know people very well driving —

at least you ought not to; you ought to attend to your driving. I was in the printer's office last night, and one boy was correcting the type, putting in the corrections. Another boy came up and began to talk to him. And the foreman said, "You get away from here. Do not talk to Joe when he is busy." No; you cannot do certain things and talk at the same time. But who cannot talk as they walk with others?

"That ye walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." In that daily walk, in that hourly companionship we get to know God better. I do not believe, dear friends, that you and I can get to know God by studying books alone, nor even by studying the Bible alone. The thing has got to cease to be a Book, and become a personal message, until God speaks to me, as though He were right at my side. Then we may walk together, and talk together, my Lord and I.

So Paul said, "I do pray that you may get to know God better; and if you would be much in His presence, walk with Him, and you will learn." And work with Him. I do not believe, as I read my Bible, we are anywhere told to work for God. Think that over. We are to work with God. You work with anyone for a little while, and you will find out what is in them. You will find out who takes the big end of things, will you not? I leaned on the rail of a ship on my last trip to England, when we went into the port at Belfast, and they were transferring the mail from the ship to the lighter, then to the shore, and from the lighter back to the ship. The decks were piled high with bags of mail, some of them great heavy things, and some of them just little bits of things. I love to see men at work, and I looked down at that company of men. There were some men who had a strange affinity for the smallest bags on the deck. I saw some big giants coming up with two little bags, that were not worthy of a boy; and there were some other men there not very big of stature. One fellow would come up to the pile, and those little bags he would just throw aside as though to say, "I would not be bothered with that"; then he would pull until he got the biggest bag he could get, get his back under it, and off he went. I said, "That is the sort of man to live with; that man is not afraid of a load." But these men who are always looking for the little things —! You work with anyone, and you will find out what is in him. Oh, but go into partnership with God, and begin the day's work with Him, and when the shadows lengthen and the night drops down, you will say, "What a God He is! He carried the load all day; just gave me strength all day, and I have come to the end of the day, and I am not weary at all, for they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Oh, it is a lovely thing to work with God, and to feel that God is condescending to make some use of you.

"Increasing in the knowledge of God." And then the best way to know anybody is to go to live with them. You live in the same house with people, and you will find out what is in them. I would advise young men looking for a wife to call some morning about half past eight, and find her ladyship with her working apron on, and see how she looks. Oh, anybody can look fine when they are all fixed up for appearance, you know, for presentation. And then anybody can be sweet and lovely on a nice June day, when the birds are singing, and the flowers are blooming, and there is a wedding to-morrow: it is easy to be sweet then, is it not? I heard a man say, talking about the tests of religion, "I went home from work, and I found the house cold. My wife said, 'I wish you would go down and look

at the furnace.'" And he said, "I looked in, and there was a little fire there. and I began to shake it, — I was so tired as I began to shake it — and the bottom came down, and I had to dump the whole thing. Ah," he said, "it takes a bit of religion to be sweet in circumstances like that." I rather think it does. But you live with God, and you will find it true that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. And the more you know Him, the more you will love Him. And it is our privilege to increase in the knowledge of God. And when we start on that study we have set ourselves to the study of a subject that we shall never wholly miss, for when we are through with our school days here, and we go up to the place of the glory, we shall go on learning about God. And when we have been millions of years in His immediate presence, we shall meet each other some day, and say, "Oh, do you remember when we were in the kindergarten class, when sometimes we were foolish enough to think that we knew something, is it not marvellous that God had patience with our vanity, patience with our conceit, patience with all those things that were so alien to His Holy nature?" And we shall go on and on and on, and that will be heaven, just to know God better. That is a real prayer is it not? "Being fruitful in every good work, increasing in the personal knowledge of God."

October 16, 1930.

CHRISTIAN HOPE TRANSFORMS SORROW

Consecration to God's purposes does not eradicate our deep human love; say rather that it heightens, refines, sanctifies it! Every father is more a father in proportion as he loves and serves the great Father in heaven. We should be on our guard against any system of religion or philosophy that seeks to cool the fervour of natural and lawful love. It may be very majestic not to shed tears; but it is most inhuman, most ungodly. We have heard of Abraham mourning, of David crying bitterly, of the Saviour allowing his feet to be washed with a sinner's tears, and of Jesus Christ weeping; but who ever heard of the devil broken down in pity or mournfulness? Christianity educates our humanity, not deadens it; and when we are in tears it helps us to see through them nearly into heaven.

—JOSEPH PARKER

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EVER LEARNING . . .

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

(An Address delivered at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, on Sunday evening, 12th February 1956)

"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

—2 Timothy 3:7.

EDUCATION is one of the main industries of Edinburgh. It is said that we have more book shops in this city than in any other city in the world of comparable size. Our schools and colleges are known far beyond our borders, and more than one scholar has written his name across the five continents. On several scores this fair city is called "Athens of the North".

The words of the Apostle may therefore be particularly challenging in a city which sets such store by learning. Our very passion for education may easily place us among the people who are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth".

I. A Description of Christianity

Paul describes Christianity as "the knowledge of the truth". This is quite a favourite description with Paul for the Gospel. He uses it in his First Letter to Timothy: "God our Saviour who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." He reminds the Christians at Ephesus that "the gospel of your salvation" is "the word of truth."

This description of the Gospel as the Truth gives the lie to several popular misconceptions of Christianity to-day. It reminds us, for instance, that the Gospel is:

Not a Drug

Karl Marx dismissed Christianity as "the dope of the masses". He could see no more in it than a drug used by capitalists to keep the proletariat quiet whilst they amassed their fortunes: the Bread of Heaven was only a sop to rob men of their daily bread. This is still the official line of Marxist Communism. In justice to Marx it should be admitted that the Church he saw in Russia, as the Church Voltaire saw in France, was in many ways a terrible travesty of the Gospel. But Christianity must be judged ultimately not by those who falsely call themselves Christians but by the claims and gifts of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament.

But Karl Marx is not alone. Psychologists — like Freud, for instance — have been equally ready to dismiss the Gospel of Christ as a sleeping draught or an anaesthetic. Christianity is only a dummy, a comforter for over-grown babies in need of security. The men and women who find comfort in religion are cowards who cannot look the stark facts of life in the face; soft, immature folk who must be coddled with false comforts. Christianity is escapism from start to finish and Christians are like frightened boys whistling in the dark to keep up their courage. So say the critics.

But our Lord was no escapist. He plunged His face into no chloroform mask on the Cross. He faced the brute facts of suffering, sin and death as no other has or could. He refused to be drugged by "the vinegar mingled with gall." He knew the raw, raging agony of those nails to the end, and as we listen to His cry of dereliction from the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" we suspect that there was an abyss in His sorrow we shall never be able to fathom. Christ suffered for our sins —

We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains He had to bear.

No escapist could possibly feel at home in His presence. He declared plainly that He held out no sop for men. "I am not come to bring peace, but a sword." "I am not come to make men smug and self-centred, curled up and content. I am come to wage war against all that is cruel, callous and corrupt." He opens our eyes as no one else can to see the world's wounds. His holy love made Francis of Assisi renounce his cavalier life of pleasure to espouse poverty and tramp all over Europe in quest of the wretched and needy: His love compelled Henry Martyn to leave the cloisters of Cambridge to burn himself out in India and Persia translating the Good News of the Cross, fighting on gallantly against persecution and consumption in both lungs which sent him to an early grave: young Tom Barnardo sensed as soon as he came to Christ in one of Moody's meetings in Belfast that to be a Christian was to be a great lover of men — to go about *doing good* — and Dr. Thomas Barnardo devoted all he had to feed, clothe, train and love 60,000 homeless children for Christ's sake: C. T. Studd, the popular English cricketer of the last century, willingly signed away his fortune for the privilege of going out to China to proclaim the love of God: and Schweitzer, Doctor of Music, Doctor of Theology, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Literature, counts it the greatest thrill and honour of his life to heal the sick in West Africa for no reward but that of love.

Is all this the effect of a dope? Surely it is far more like the work of some holy dynamite. This is what Christ does when His love grips and dominates a man's heart: sends one to found an orphanage, another a hospital, and tens of thousands to renounce this world's prizes to heal their neighbour's wounds.

Christianity is Truth. It looks the real facts of life in the face. To come to Christ is to be confronted with reality; to live and labour under His sceptre is to meet the world's stings and stabs, its slime and slums with compassion as well as courage.

Not a Dream

This description of the Gospel as truth reminds us, again, that Christianity cannot be dismissed as a beautiful but impossible dream. One of the great Foreign Secretaries of the last century confessed, Churchman though he was, that he considered the Sermon on the Mount quite impracticable in the rough and tumble of life. But it is impracticable only because we lack the moral courage to put it to the test. The truth of the matter is, "not that Christianity has been tried and found wanting, but that it has been found difficult and not tried." It takes grit and moral pluck to be a thorough Christian.

Indeed, the dreamers are not those who proclaim the Word of God, but the false prophets of Humanism and Science so-called. Before the War it was quite the thing for popular writers on science and philosophy to laugh the Bible out of court. Religion, they declared loudly, may have

been all right for the childhood of our race when fairy tales satisfied the undeveloped mind. But science with all its wonderful psychological and technological advances has made the Christian Faith untenable and an irrelevance. Man could save himself without the Bible and the Church, without the Cross and the Resurrection. Utopia was just round the corner. H. G. Wells talked like that until the grim horrors of war made him think again. His last picture of the world was, you remember, one of unrelieved despair—a convoy of ships lost in the darkness on a rocky coast, with quarrelling pirates in the chart-room and savages clambering up the sides of the ship to plunder as their whim took them.

So the march of events compelled H. G. Wells, the prophet of inevitable progress, to revise his opinions. The materialistic optimist died a hopeless fatalist. A similar fundamental change of opinion is evident in Professor Joad before he became a Christian. Which proves that these clever critics of Christianity were only guessing after all. The grim facts of history burst their bubble.

But not so the Bible. The Gospel (to which the Bible bears witness from Genesis to Revelation) stands the test of time and remains the unchangeable Truth of God. The Bible does not vacillate like some of its critics from godless optimism to fatalistic despair. It deals faithfully with the realities of the universe. It grapples with the menace of the Devil, with a Master Strategist of evil, on a cosmic scale, who is the enemy of God and of man—the Devil has his representative in the Garden of Eden. The Devil proclaims man's Fall through the pride and rebellion of his own heart, and repeats with tireless energy the truth of man's corruption. "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." "Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts." "There is a crack in everything," an evil without in the Devil and an evil within in our own unregenerate hearts. The Bible warns us that man cannot of his own strength overcome the Devil nor master the demon in his own bosom. "Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it." And there is deliverance for man only as he turns in repentance to God to claim the redemption which Christ has made possible for all who believe.

Christianity is Truth, unchanged, unchanging, the light of our dark sky. The march of events will never prove its map too small or outmoded.

But the Gospel is not a mere map; it is not an impersonal programme. Or to use a favourite modern term, it is:

Not a Dialectic

Communism, so different from the Gospel, flaunts itself under the high-sounding name of Dialectical Materialism. It is, in simple terms, a system based on brute force. Everything is matter. There is no God and men are only impure carbon and water. There is no personal Creator behind all things visible and invisible. The universe is a cosmic fluke, a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Matter is all and the human race is being driven blindly on by some brute economic force to a Communist Utopia! We are all only cogs in the vast Communist machine. Machines are no respectors of human personality, and since Stalin's creed consisted in such a soulless, godless dialectic it is perhaps not surprising that 14 million people were liquidated in Russia during his regime.

The Truth Incarnate

But the truth of Christianity is intensely personal. The first prayer we are taught in the New Testament begins: "Our Father, who art in heaven." On the throne of the

universe is a Father who loves men with a love so vast and deep as to leave us all dumb in astonishment and adoration. Every man is infinitely precious in His sight; His care of us is so intense and detailed that Jesus declared that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." The Bible depicts God as yearning over the sinning and sorrowing race He made in His own image. And the proof and pledge of that love is the fact that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we should find salvation in Him.

In a sentence, the Gospel makes the stupendous announcement that the Eternal Truth became personal in human form in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Truth after which men have groped all down the ages assumed flesh and blood in Jesus of Nazareth. Listen to John's announcement: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

All the world's great thinkers are at best only groping after the ultimate Truth about God, man and human destiny, but he who is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than Aristotle, Socrates, Plato and Bertrand Russell. Why? Because God has told us the last word about Himself in Jesus of Nazareth. He has revealed His Character, His Intention and His Power in the life of our Lord. Jesus claimed to be God Incarnate. "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believeest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" This is the momentous news of Christianity. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him."

So we are not left in doubt about God. His real character is focussed for us in the life and death of Jesus Christ, "the express image of His Person." In His death we see not a martyr's death, but the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. God was present in saving power on Calvary's Cross. It was God who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

So you see the importance of the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ. He is nothing less than God manifest in the flesh: the Heart and Hand of God revealed.

Christianity is nothing less than the Ultimate Truth present in personal and saving power in the God Man, Jesus Christ. To let our Lord speak for Himself: "I AM . . . THE TRUTH . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

II. A Description of the Christian

"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." A Christian, according to Paul here, is a person who has "come to the knowledge of the truth."

I need hardly point out that the Apostle is speaking here of knowledge in a special sense. He is not thinking of a head knowledge of the truth. A man may have a knowledge of Napoleon, Shakespeare, and his wife, but it is not the same kind of knowledge. The knowledge of Napoleon may be no more than the bare fact that a man from Corsica proved himself a brilliant general and French leader: the knowledge of Shakespeare may be more intimate in that his plays reveal the man's mind and soul: but the best

Shakespearean scholar in the world cannot claim to know Shakespeare as he ought to know his wife. Between a devoted husband and wife there grows up a bond of friendship, there is communion of mind with mind, an overflowing of heart to heart. There is an experience of *personal fellowship*, a personal fellowship which Scripture declares should be some image of the fellowship between Christ and His Church, between the Heavenly Bridegroom and His Holy Bride.

Now this is what Paul means here by "knowledge" — personal fellowship with Christ, the Truth Incarnate. Paul was once a proud man, and with some reason. He was proud of his Jewish nationality, proud of his family connections, of his learning, of his social standing and moral integrity. He could afford to hold his head high. "But," says he, in looking back to his conversion, "what things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ . . . that I may know Him." He didn't need to renounce this world to know about Christ: it was to know Him in a deep, dynamic personal fellowship that Paul counted all things but refuse.

Knowing Christ for John Wesley meant the assurance of His pardon. When at that little Moravian meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, a quarter-to-nine on a Friday evening in May over 200 years ago, John Wesley felt his heart "strangely warmed" by the reading of Luther's Preface to Paul's Letter to the Romans, Wesley's knowledge of Christ was no longer the knowledge of a cold, unkindled intellect — it was the fellowship of a glowing heart. Knowing Christ for Wesley meant nothing less than taking the pardon of his God "in wonder lost, with trembling joy."

For John G. Paton the knowledge of the Truth meant the comfort of Christ's presence. Tragedy befell him in his twenties when his young wife died in the island of Tanna giving birth to their first-born, and a few days later the baby died too. The poor man was alone in this terrible hour. The natives would not come near: this white man must have been visited by the wrath of the gods; it would be dangerous to have too much to do with him. So Paton was left almost single-handed to dig the graves and lay his beloved wife and babe to rest. His testimony is proof that he, too, had experienced this personal knowledge of the Truth. "But for Jesus," he testifies, "and the fellowship He vouchsafed me there, I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave!"

The dissolute young Augustine had another problem: a crippling moral weakness. He knew that it was all wrong, but could he break free from it? No, not until a Power leaped out of a New Testament page one afternoon and commanded him: "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." And Christ not only commanded but enabled, so that Augustine could confess years later: "Everybody knows I came to Italy one man and went back another."

And this is the personal knowledge of Himself that Christ offers to us all: a daily experience of His pardon, His presence and emancipating power. Jesus is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." He lives to-day and waits to break into our poor, bungling lives with delivering grace!

III. A Description of the Non-Christian

"Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Does that describe somebody here now? Ever learning from *experience* perhaps. Ask any alcoholic whether he could soberly recommend his dissipated existence to any one else. Of course he knows that alcohol is bad for

his body, his mind, his character, his pocket and his home. He knows that the life of a drunken sot is bad for any man. But how many alcoholics really profit from their bitter experience and turn to God? Alas, all too many only vacillate between abject self-despair and foolish self-confidence. Few of them stretch out their hand to Christ that He might lift them up, and set their feet upon a rock and establish their goings. In other ways, too, we learn our hard lesson, and then, like a dog, return to our vomit. We stop short of this decisive step of casting all our care upon Him. He longs to communicate to you His own life and make all things new!

Ever learning from the variety of human *cults* which come knocking at our door, trying everything by turn and never finding rest for our souls. One day it is Communism, another it is Psychology, another it is Christian Science or Jehovah's Witness or Spiritism or some other modern "ism". For months, perhaps for years, you have been living like a spiritual gipsy, wandering in the wilderness without finding the refuge of the Eternal Rock. Always learning, and always stopping short of personal surrender to Christ Who is the Truth.

Perhaps you are ever learning from the *Church* or the *Bible*, and yet you have no personal experience of His grace. For all your church attendance you cannot humbly say with Paul: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

The secret of Christianity is in its personal pronouns. Every Christian has the honour to claim an intimate fellowship with the Eternal Son of God! "I believe." We have the privilege to address Him as:

Jesus, my Shepherd, Saviour, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest and King;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

Can you sincerely use such language to Him?

You can now, for He waits to enter into your life. The moment of calling Him, "My Lord, my God," has arrived if you will now commit yourself to Him without reserve, body, soul and spirit, past, present and future. He waits only for you to lift the latch and He will come in. "If any man . . . open the door . . . I will come in."

Listen again to His promises and embrace them and make them your very own: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

I looked to Him and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun,
And in that Light of Life I'll walk
Till travelling days are done.

—Charlotte Chapel Record

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Sunday 7.30 - 8.30 P.M.

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When God Saves a Sinner

By Rev. E. W. Johnson

(Outline of Sermon Preached in Calvary Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, Arkansas)

IN OUR text this evening (Luke 23:37-44) we have one of the great examples of sovereign grace. What can we learn tonight about the grace of God as we study the story of the salvation of the dying thief?

I. *It does not necessarily take God long to save a sinner.*

This sinner attended one service and he was gloriously transformed by redeeming grace. He came to this service not separated from those who cast vile reproaches upon the Son of God. Read Matt. 27:39-44 where we are told that this man had joined his fellow-malefactor in casting the same into the teeth of the Son of God.

I know our services cannot be so complete a portrayal of our Lord in His death on the cross as the dying thief attended this day, as he actually saw Jesus Christ and Him crucified, but let us strive toward that end and pray that God might use these services to call some sinner unto Himself.

II. *When God saves a sinner, He convinces that one of his sins.*

Note his words: He says, "We indeed justly." Seldom will a man confess the justness of his punishment when paying a traffic fine. Very seldom will a man confess that he is justly condemned when serving for a felony. But this man is being executed and that by crucifixion, and yet he says, "We indeed justly."

Great consciousness of sin is not due to great participation in sin. The unrepentant thief was as deep in sin as the one who repented. In fact great participation in sin will rather deaden and destroy a consciousness of sin. The repentant thief's consciousness of sin was the work of grace manifesting Jesus Christ to his heart and mind. As the dying thief beheld the Christ indeed, he said, "This man hath done nothing amiss . . ."

III. *When God saves a sinner, He makes of him a seeker after grace.*

"Lord, remember me . . ." We are not saved by prayer, but we are not saved *without* prayer. All who have been touched by redeeming grace have become *callers upon the name of the Lord*.

God does not forgive sins because we beg Him into it. God forgives our sins upon the basis of the work of Christ upon the cross. But one of the great evidences of the work of grace is this calling upon the name of the Lord.

IV. *God can save without the use of the ordinances of the church.*

And I do not believe that God has changed His system. I do not believe that the Lord tightened things up a bit after Pentecost. For I read in 1 Cor. 1:14 that Paul had not baptized the Corinthian converts, except a certain few, but in 1 Cor. 4:15 I read that Paul had been used of God to bring these converts to the new birth. Therefore I conclude that men are not regenerated in water baptism, but they are born again under the hearing of the Gospel.

When I get up to glory, I intend to look up this poor dying thief and shake his old nail-scarred hand and tell him, "Brother, you sure made it hard on the Campbellites."

V. *When God saves a sinner, He gives that one an assurance of grace.*

Something was taking place in this sinner's heart, but the assurance was found in the word of Christ. "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

It might be possible for a man to be saved and not have the assurance of salvation because he has never had the word of God opened up to him, but those who are saved can have and ought to have the assurance of salvation.

The assurance of salvation relates not simply to the present or the past but to the future. "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." I cannot see how a man can have the assurance of final salvation unless the doctrines of grace have been opened up to him. See Romans 8:28-39. When our Christian experience is in accord with the ways of grace, we have made our calling and election sure. See II Peter 1:4-11.

VI. *When God saves a sinner, He makes a change in the personality.*

If you do not believe this, compare Matt. 27:39-44 and Luke 23:39-44.

When a man is regenerated by the grace of God, he does not receive a new soul nor is there a vital change made in the constitution of the old soul. But when a man is born again, he receives a new nature and the old nature is *mortified*. Please note the evidence of mortification in this man, "We indeed justly," and, "Remember me." He knew he was a sinner and he was calling on the name of the Lord.

The impartation of a new spirit, or life principle or nature, or whatever we might choose to call it, and the mortification of the old nature or life principle will be marked in the personality. The personality, or face of man, the countenance or outward reflection of the inward person, is markedly changed when a person is born again. For this reason I always say that there is no regeneration where there has been no conversion.

VII. *When God saves a sinner, He creates another witness.*

Most of us here tonight have been Christians for many years. This man was a Christian but a short while from conversion until death. He was nailed hand and foot during that time, and yet he bore witness concerning sin and concerning Christ.

There is no salvation without that confession of Christ which makes us separate from sinners. Not that we are saved by confession, but we are saved *unto* confession and never *apart* from confession.

Here then is a work of grace which ought to test the hearts of us all.

Conclusion.

You may ask where in all this is repentance and faith? But evangelical repentance is essentially this — the mortification of the old nature in man. And evangelical faith is essentially this — the knowledge of Christ, the casting of oneself upon Him, and the assurance of grace.

All this we have seen tonight in the salvation of the dying thief.

The Sovereignty of Truth

By Dr. A. W. Tozer

1. *The Lovers of Truth Are Few*

ALMOST everywhere it is assumed that people are seeking truth, that society is literally swarming with dedicated truth seekers.

Colleges and universities are forever releasing promotional material with pictures of strong young men and beautiful girls walking side by side into the sunrise with rays of ethereal light illuminating their upturned faces; the idea being, one would gather, that those who enter our halls of higher learning are one and all burning with desire to walk in the way of philosophers and sages, if not indeed in the way of prophets and apostles, or even of martyrs if God so wills.

This fallacy is obviously maintained by our educators for the time the student remains within the ivied walls, for the baccalaureate orator chosen to do the honors at graduation is almost always one who will go along with the pleasant deception and assure the innocent graduate that after years of searching for the fountain of all wisdom he has at last found it and is now prepared to go out along with his fellow graduates to "build a better and a finer world."

Why this kind of pabulum is swallowed so eagerly by the outgoing students and by their smiling and misty-eyed parents can be understood only when we remember that people like to hear what they want to hear and at a time like that they are not willing to spoil the pleasure of it by checking on the accuracy of anything they are told.

The fact is that men have never in any numbers sought after truth. If we may judge people's interests by their deeds, then of the young men and women who stream forth from our halls of learning each year the vast majority have no more than a passing and academic interest in truth. They go to college not to satisfy a yearning to discover truth, but to improve their social standing and increase their earning power. These motives are not necessarily to be despised; but they should be known for what they are, and not hidden beneath a pink cloud of specious idealism.

What are people actually seeking? Of course they seek satisfaction for the basic urges such as hunger, sex, and social companionship; but beyond these what? Certainly for nothing as high and noble as truth.

Ask the average American what he wants from life and if he is candid he will tell you he wants success in his chosen field; and he wants success both for the prestige it brings him and for the financial security it affords. And why does he want financial security? To guarantee him against the loss of comforts, luxuries and pleasures, which he believes are rightfully his as a part of his American heritage. The ominous thing about all this is that *everything he wants can be bought with money*. It would be hard to think of an indictment more terrible than that.

The notion that the world is full of truth seekers becomes stronger as we approach the church and mingle with religious persons. The liberal and humanistic churches bear down especially hard on this point, their ministers constantly flattering their listeners that they are engaged in a heroic quest for the truth. That a few hundred persons will gather in an air-conditioned building once a week to sit on cushioned pews and listen to good music appears to

be enough to satisfy the too-easily satisfied minister that his congregation is composed of crusaders of the first water.

Either to avoid embarrassment or because he is not sure of his own beliefs the said liberal minister is usually careful to avoid definitions, so no one knows exactly what it is he is supposed to be looking for. But it gives a tremendous lift to a man's self-respect to think of himself, if only briefly and once a week, as a lofty idealist searching for truth, a kind of cosmic prospector digging for gold among the hills of God. If his wife fails to recognize him by that description it really doesn't matter, for no one takes the whole thing very seriously anyway. But it is a relief from the grind of business, traffic and taxes.

The world is full of seekers, true enough, and they gravitate quite naturally toward the church. Seekers after peace of mind are plentiful enough to keep the printing presses busy; seekers after physical health are always with us in sufficient numbers to make our leading faith healers comfortably rich; seekers after success and safety are legion, as our popular religious leaders know too well. But real seekers after truth are almost as rare as albino deer. And here is why:

Truth is a glorious but hard master. It makes moral demands upon us. It claims the sovereign right to control us, to strip us, even to slay us as it chooses. Truth will never stoop to be a servant but requires that all men serve it. It never flatters men and never compromises with them. It demands all or nothing, and refuses to be used or patronized. It will be all in all or it will withdraw into silence.

It was Christ who capitalized truth and revealed that it was not an "it" at all but a Being with all the attributes of personality. "I am the Truth," He said, and followed truth straight to the cross.

The truth seeker must follow Him there; and that is the reason few men seek truth.

—*The Alliance Weekly*.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD IN JARVIS STREET

DR. GEORGE B. FLETCHER of Virginia, Instructor in Toronto Baptist Seminary, ministered the Word in Jarvis Street Church on Sunday, September 22nd. His clear expositions of the Scriptures, his fervent, joyous spirit and his strong sympathy with men all contributed to the blessedness of his ministry in our midst.

In the morning message, "A Two-Fold Sanctification" (John 17:19), Dr. Fletcher dealt with Christ's sanctification and ours. This great chapter treats of the intercession of our Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the capacity of High Priest on behalf of the election of grace.

What do we understand by the Saviour's words, "I sanctify myself"? It could not mean that Christ made Himself holy, for He was never a sinner (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5). He took upon Himself the nature of man, was tempted like as we are, yet without sin. As a Man, He may have appeared as a sinner, but He was not. He was treated as a sinner, but as God, He was essentially and infinitely holy. As Man, He was holy in His conception and birth, holy also in His life and death. The basic idea

in the word "sanctification" is "separation". The Father sanctified Christ, set Him apart (John 10:36). Christ also sanctified or separated Himself when He accepted as His charge the election of grace, those whom the Father had given Him (verses 2, 6, 9, 11, 24); when He assumed our nature, sin excepted; and when He went to Calvary, the Lamb without spot.

What was sanctified or offered? "I sanctify MYSELF." He offered Himself, His human nature. His true body and reasonable soul, which in union with His Divine Person gave His sacrifice its efficacy. His Deity gave infinite value to His redemptive work. In His human nature He made atonement upon the altar of His Divine nature. He is our Priest, sacrifice and altar. But this sacrifice was not offered for His own sake, nor for angels, but for all whom the Father had given Him. He was their Substitute and Surety; He died in their room and stead.

Consider the great end in view; "that they also might be sanctified through the truth," through that belief of the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation. He offered Himself that we might have our sins expiated, that we might be cleansed from guilt and condemnation. We are sanctified through the sacrifice of Christ, Who is the Truth. Again, we are sanctified "in truth", in reality, in contrast to the legal sacrifices, which covered sins but temporarily (Rom. 3:25).

Finally, Christ sanctified Himself FOR US, that we might be set apart. Therefore, we are to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts (1 Pet. 3:15) and present our bodies a living sacrifice unto Him (Rom. 12: 1, 2).

Two responded to the invitation at the close of the service, and all hearts were blessed.

The evening message on "The Father's Love" (1 John 3:1) was broadcast over station CHWO, Oakville, 1250. The Apostle John, as led by the Holy Spirit, had a three-fold purpose in writing this Epistle: "that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4); "that ye sin not" (1 John 2:1); "that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

The word "behold" implies wonder. Believers are counselled to behold the wonders of the Father's love. It is wonderful in regard to the Trinity of Persons adopting sinners as sons. The great and glorious God, infinitely exalted above every creature, ever blessed, all-sufficient in Himself, also the Son and the Holy Spirit, all three Persons of the Trinity did the adopting. The Father's love is wonderful, also, in regard to the persons adopted. We who were once strangers were not only taken into the family of God, but were put in the place of sons. Once enemies, we were not only reconciled to God, but we have God for our Father. Though children of wrath, we have been called to inherit a blessing. Though dead in trespasses and sins, we have been begotten unto a living hope. Once slaves to sin, we are now free from the wrath of God and from the bondage of Satan.

Consider also the manner of the Father's love: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." The believing sinner soon realizes that the Father's love has certain characteristics. It is eternal (Jer. 31:3). What an overwhelming thought that God should be self-moved from eternity to set His love upon us, that He purposed to take us into the endeared relation of sons. God's love is free; He was not inclined to love any because of anything foreseen in them of works, worth or faith. His love is also costly. The Father could not express His love except He maintain His law and character, which required the

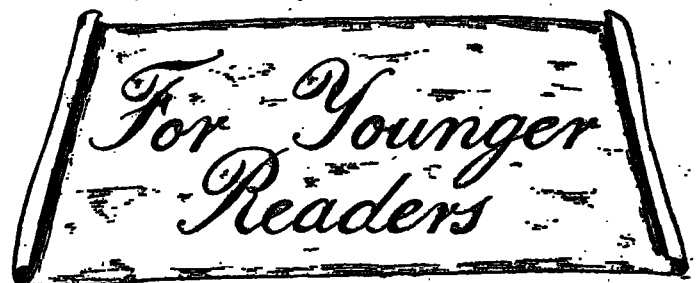
death of His Son. Again, His love is unchangeable and unalterable. He may change in His dealings with us, but never in His love.

Let us behold the results of the Father's love. Adoption is the evidence and the effect of His love. The change when an infant is born is not as great as when a sinner is born again and adopted by the grace of God into His family as a son. What shall be said of the privileges of sonship? If sons, we are now also heirs of God, joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17), and one day He will bring us to glory, as He has promised (Heb. 2:10).

One would think that the world would applaud such marvellous love. But no! The world hates those who have believed and whose lives have been transformed by the grace of God. The world counts it foolish that any should give up the certainties of this world for the seeming uncertainties of a supposed other world. They resent the fact that there should be a class of persons peculiarly dear to God and to which they do not belong. This they scorn.

In conclusion, how does one become a child of God? By believing upon Christ, by trusting in His redeeming love (John 1:12). Have you thus believed? Do you trust in the blood and righteousness of Christ alone for salvation?

—O.L.C.



JIM'S BATTLE

By Donna Leigh

Jim ran down the block after his puppy calling "Boots, come here. Boots!" Boots seemed to be a little deaf at the moment, however, and kept on running. Jim had been trying to teach him to get the ball when he threw it and bring it back to him. But Boots had different ideas of fun and was now half-way down the block with the ball held tightly in his mouth.

As the dog turned the corner, Jim jumped the low hedge and cut across Mr. White's yard. Before he even saw the sign that said *Wet Cement*, there were one, two, three footprints, just the size of Jim's shoes, in the fresh cement of Mr. White's new driveway.

Now I've done it! he thought. What shall I do? Jim turned and looked all around, but there was no one in sight. He started running for home. Now this will cost Dad more money, just when he doesn't have it. Since he was sick last winter the money has been running pretty low . . . But nobody saw me. I won't even have to tell that I did it. Lots of boys have shoes about the same size as mine . . . Mr. White has plenty of money, anyway, with his big grocery store and all . . . If I only had enough money to pay for it myself, but I haven't been able to earn any money at all this summer. Bob, his pal, had been working at the store this summer, and Jim had even asked at all the stores if he could work there, but nobody had a vacancy. No, I just can't tell Dad. I know I really should, but I just can't.

The two separate voices were still arguing in Jim's mind

when he reached his home. When he walked in, his mother called, "Come on, Jimmy, supper is ready."

"I don't believe I want any, Mom."

"Why, what's the matter, Son? Are you sick?"

"No'm, just not hungry. I think I'll go to my room."

"Well, I certainly can't understand that. He's usually half-starved when he comes in," she commented to her husband as they sat down to eat.

Jim slowly climbed the stairs with each foot feeling as if it weighed a ton. In his room the battle in his mind still raged.

He still had not decided what to do when Dad called him down for family devotions. Dad chose Proverbs 28 for the Bible reading. When he read the thirteenth verse, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy," Jim felt even worse. As they prayed, Jim had almost decided to confess when he heard Dad asking God to help him in the present financial difficulties. Then he thought, No, I must not give him even more to worry about.

A few minutes later when Dad was reading the paper and Mother was sewing, the doorbell rang. Dad answered it. Jim was terrified to hear the voice of Mr. White. He's come to get me. He saw me, and he'll tell Dad and Mother about what I did.

"I—I think I'll get a drink of water," he mumbled and escaped to the kitchen. He could hear Mr. White talking as he stood trembling inside the door, but he couldn't understand what he said.

Finally he left and Jim slipped back into the living room. His father didn't say a word but began to read his paper. After a while Jim could not stand the suspense any longer and said, in what he hoped was a casual voice, "Er—what did Mr. White want?"

"Oh, he just wanted to remind me about the Sunday School visitation group meeting tomorrow night. Mr. White and I plan to visit Mr. Phillips; he has been sick."

Jim breathed a sigh of relief and said, "I think I'll go on up to bed."

When he left the room his mother said, "I know something is wrong with him now. We usually have to argue to get him to go to bed, and now he wants to go this early."

And Jim certainly did feel sick as he undressed and got into bed. When he finally fell asleep, he dreamed terrible dreams. Once he saw himself gazing pitifully from behind bars.

When he awoke next morning he knew he would have to confess. He hurried down to breakfast and before he could lose his courage, blurted out, "Dad, I've got to tell you something. Yesterday I was trying to teach Boots to bring me the ball and he ran off. I cut across Mr. White's yard to catch him and stepped in the wet cement of his driveway. Nobody saw me and I just ran home. I was afraid to tell you because I knew it would cost money, and we don't have any, and I can't pay for it because I can't get a job, but then I had to tell you." He caught his breath and added, "I'm sorry, Dad, really I am."

"I'm glad you told me, Son. Now we shall have to figure out a way to pay him. First, though, I think you should tell Mr. White that you did it, and that you will pay him for it somehow."

Jim felt much better and declared, "Yes, Sir, I'll go right down this morning." He dressed and walked down to the grocery store. He went in and asked Mr. White if he could talk to him privately for a few minutes. Mr. White said, "Of course," and they walked back to his office

in the rear of the store. Though Mr. White was smiling, it seemed to Jim that he had never seen his kindly old face quite so fierce. He swallowed the lump in his throat, said a little prayer for courage, then confessed.

When he finished, Mr. White said, "I'm pleased that you told me about it, Jim. I had wondered who did it." He thought a moment, then said, "Jim, how would you like to work it out here in my store?"

Jim cried excitedly, "Oh, could I? That would be wonderful!"

"Yes, I think if you could come in Saturday and work all day, it would just about do it."

Jim walked on air all the way home. He rushed in and told Mom all about it. Now the whole world was shining, where only a few hours before it had been so frightfully dark.

He was up early Saturday morning, eager to get to his first job. He worked hard all day at the check-out stand, putting the groceries in large paper bags and carrying them out to the customer's cars. He was tired but contented that night when the last customer left.

As he was getting ready to go home Mr. White called, "Jim, would you come to my office a moment, please?" Dismay swept over him as he thought, Maybe I didn't do my work well, and he doesn't think it will pay for the damage to his driveway.

Mr. White was smiling when Jim walked hesitantly into the office. "Jim, you did excellent work today. You more than paid for the walk. I think I could use such a good worker and such an honest boy in my store every day for the rest of the summer, if you would consider working for me. How about it?"

"Would I? I'll say I would! I'll be here early Monday morning."

"Good. I'll see you then."

On the way home Jim threw his cap into the air, leap-frogged over two fire-plugs, then said a prayer of thanks to God for His blessings.

—The Evangelical Christian

Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 21 Fourth Quarter Lesson 1 October 6, 1957

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

EZRA'S JOURNEY

Lesson Text: Ezra 8:21-36.

Golden Text: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry."—Psalm 34:15.

I. The Arrangements: verses 21-30.

In the providence of God the first band of captives, numbering some 50,000, set out for the homeland in 535 B.C. (Ezra 1, 2). Under the direction of Joshua and Zerubbabel the sacred institutions were established, and in spite of every obstacle the temple was rebuilt and dedicated about 516 B.C. (Ezra 3-6). In the following year Ezra the scribe, who "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it," was constrained to lead a second and smaller band of 1,754 pilgrims back to Palestine (Ezra 7:1-10; 8:1-14).

The exiles desiring to return had assembled on the banks of the River Ahava, the identification of which is uncertain, but it would seem to be a river in Babylon, near a city of the same name, chosen as a convenient rendezvous. There they pitched their tents and rested in preparation for the long journey (Ezra 8:15).

What a profitable three days for the travellers! Ezra surveyed the host and found that no priests of the tribe of Levi were to be found in the company. He forebore to lead the

exiles without priests who would be responsible for the worship of God. Doubtless most of the priests had gone to Jerusalem with the first band, but more were now summoned, men called and chosen according to the will of God (Ezra 8:18). Are we as careful to be spiritually prepared for every new undertaking (Esther 4:15-17; Dan. 2:14-18; Luke 6:12-16)?

In the meantime, Ezra had proclaimed a time of special fasting and prayer. He would not presume to undertake the leadership or allow the people to travel without the presence and power of God, without the knowledge of His hand upon them for good (Ezra 7:6, 28; 8:18; Ezek. 1:3; 8:1; 37:1). At the River Ahava the people took time to afflict their souls, to search their hearts (Lev. 16:29; 23:29; Isa. 58:3, 5); that they might be ready to receive a revelation from God as to the right path they must travel for a safe and successful journey (Psa. 5:8; 16:11; 27:11; 36:9; 107:7; 119:35). How necessary that we should wait upon the Lord before taking any important step or making any decision!

This earnest prayer for guidance and protection was especially necessary, inasmuch as Ezra did not wish to ask for the usual military escort. This would have been the logical procedure, and would have been quite in order, but the leader of the Jews had evidently told the king about the faithfulness of God in protecting His own (Psa. 33:18, 19; 34:15, 22). For the sake of the testimony to this heathen king the noble scribe put his whole trust in the Lord (Psa. 125:1; Prov. 3:5, 6). Nor was he disappointed; his prevailing prayer, accompanied by such perfect trust, was abundantly answered (Isa. 19:22; Jas. 1:5, 6; 5:16).

Ezra prayed with a full heart for a prosperous journey, then put forth every effort to help answer his prayer (Neh. 2:4, 5; 4:9). He planned the expedition wisely and carefully. Human organization is not sufficient in the work of the Lord (2 Cor. 2:16; 3:5), but, directed by the Spirit of God, it has its place. The work of God is too sacred to be done in a careless or indifferent manner; it deserves our best efforts.

Ezra did not take all the responsibility upon his own shoulders, but wisely distributed burdens among the priests (Exod. 18:17-25). In the Christian church each member of the body of Christ has his own peculiar duty to perform. How splendid if each one would realize and obey this Scriptural principle (Mark 13:34; 1 Cor. 12:4-11)!

As Ezra weighed out the treasures to be carried by the priests, he gave them a solemn charge, based upon three facts. They must ever remember that their persons were holy unto the Lord (Exod. 28:36; Isa. 52:11); that the vessels and utensils were holy unto the Lord, to be used for no other purpose but the sacred services of the temple (1 Kings 8:4); that the free-will offerings which they carried were holy unto the Lord, holy gifts consecrated to His glory (Heb. 13:15, 16). Christian workers in our day need also to be reminded of these facts.

The priests were charged in the name of the Lord to guard the treasures committed to their care and in due time present

them to the proper guardians at Jerusalem. So did our Saviour pledge His word to the Father to watch over the precious souls given to Him as a gift, to keep them securely, and to present them at last faultless before the throne (John 17:6-12; Eph. 5:27; Jude 24). Preachers, teachers and Christian workers have received a similar charge in connection with the souls committed to their care (Col. 1:28; 2 Tim. 1:14; Heb. 13:17).

II. The Arrival: verses 31-36.

No outward token of prosperity can take the place of the favour and blessing of God. The hand of God was upon these holy pilgrims, and notwithstanding all the difficulties and hazards involved when this band of 1,754 persons made their way across desert, mountain and stream, they were guided safely to their journey's end (Psa. 107:30). Surely this was a stupendous miracle of four months' duration (Deut. 8:2-4, 11-16; Ezra 7:9). They had been delivered from all evils, including the fierce desert tribes who roamed about the country. So will our Saviour preserve us, and He will bring us safely at last into the promised haven, delivering us from all our foes (2 Tim. 4:18).

When the large caravan arrived in Jerusalem, the people rested for three days, as they had rested three days before setting out from Babylon (verse 15). Doubtless their former prayer was now changed to praise, as they gave thanks to the Lord for His protecting and preserving care (Psa. 107:1-8). Gratitude is a rare, but becoming quality among Christians.

The time had come for the priests to give an account of the treasures which had been committed to their charge. They would rejoice greatly to hand over the vessels, the silver and the gold, all intact (2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 13:17). May this joy be ours (Matt. 25:14-30; 1 Thess. 2:19, 20)!

Not content with yielding praise with their lips only, the Jews, released from their captivity, offered burnt-offerings which symbolized their whole-hearted devotion to the Lord, and sin-offerings in acknowledgement that they were not worthy of His sovereign mercy and grace in delivering them.

Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 30—The Hand of God upon Ezra	Ezra 7:1-10
Oct. 1—The Hand of God upon the King	Ezra 7:11-28
Oct. 2—The Hand of God upon the Priests	Ezra 8:15-20
Oct. 3—The Hand of God upon the People	Ezra 9
Oct. 4—The Hand of God upon the Separated Ones	Ezra 10:1-17
Oct. 5—The Hand of God upon Ezekiel	Ezek. 3:10-21
Oct. 6—The Hand of God upon Daniel	Dan. 10:10-21

Suggested Hymns

Precious promise God hath given.
He leadeth me.
All the way my Saviour leads me.
Abide with me.
Saviour, like a shepherd lead us.
Under His wings I am safely abiding.

EDITOR, THE GOSPEL WITNESS

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