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The Sermons of Dr. T. T. Shields

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

(Stenographically Reported)

"And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

"And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship.

"Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

"Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

"And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

"And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

"The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

"In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

"And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

"And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

—Acts 8:26-39.

I HAVE read to you a very familiar scripture which needs very little exposition, but a great deal of application. It is one thing to know a thing; it is another matter to do it. So I ask you to look at this page from apostolic history to see how believers in that day were employed; how the gospel was propagated; how converts to Jesus Christ were made. There had been a great revival in Samaria, and Philip, the deacon-evangelist, had been the preacher. When the blessing was at its height the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, bidding him leave Samaria and go down to a desert place.

I.

FIRST OF ALL, WILL YOU OBSERVE THAT THIS IS THE STORY OF A MAN WHO WAS RESPONSIVE

TO DIVINE DIRECTION. If you read the Acts of the Apostles you will find that the missionaries, the evangelists of that day, whether they wrought privately or publicly, were not commissioned by a committee or a board, but were directly sent forth by the Spirit of God to exercise their ministry. We read of John the Baptist: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John". In the tenth of Romans you will recall the question is asked, "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" The really effective worker, whether he bears his witness privately or preaches to assemblies of people, is always one who has been divinely commissioned, who has been sent forth of God Himself.

The angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and bade him leave one place and go to another. And God is just as ready

to speak to believers to-day as He ever was. It is possible for us to receive direct guidance from God, a particular, personal, commission, so that we shall be in no doubt whatever that it is the will of God that we should go to a certain place and deliver a particular message. The Spirit of God is still with us. When our Lord gave His great commission, He said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore" — that is, because authority is with Him, because the Father hath given authority to the Son that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given Him, because He has authority over the hearts of all men, He bids us go and teach all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded"; and joining with the commission this promise, "I am with you alway (or, all the days) even unto the end of the age."

The Spirit of God is still with us, and if we are to be useful in the Lord's service we must be directly responsive to the Spirit of God, ready to answer when He calls. How many of you receive divine communications? To how many of you does God directly speak saying "Go here", or "Go there", bidding you to bear witness to this man, or to give your testimony in another place? How many here do every day live in such relationship to God that the angel of the Lord can get a hearing? There are many voices that call. Self-interest calls; self-ease calls; ambition calls; the world, by a thousand voices, seeks to turn us from the path of duty. How many of us are so abiding in the will of God, how many of us are so attentive to spiritual matters, that every day we are getting orders from Headquarters?

Some of you are employed by other people. Some of you may be employers, but even employers are employees too, because they serve some public interest, and they employ others only because the public employs them. There is a sense therefore in which all are employed, and subject to some direction. When you go to your place of business to-morrow, there will be certain duties which are part of the day's routine to which you will address yourself; but there is someone in authority, someone who gives directions, and when you report in the morning you report for duty. How many of us report daily to God for duty?

Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. He heard the voices of the seraphim crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." They had six wings; with twain they covered their faces, and with twain they covered their feet, and with twain they did fly. Reverently they bowed in the presence of the Holy One. And then Isaiah said: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." He heard a voice saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, *Here am I; send me.*" He was ready, responsive to the divine call, when his lips had been purged with a coal from off the altar.

There is work to be done in Toronto: there are thousands of people who ought to be reached for Christ. There is need of thousands of messengers in this city to carry the gospel of the grace of God to those who are without Christ. And He is asking for those who will go. Are we able to answer, as did Philip, in effect, "Here am I"? Now I bid you listen for His call. Listen to see what God the Lord has to say to you every day and every hour. Let us be at His command.

Nor is it necessary that we understand the word of direc-

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Address Correspondence:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2

Canada

Telephone WALnut 1-7415

Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada

tion. It seemed to be rather an unusual procedure to call a man away from a piece of service such as Philip was rendering in Samaria, where there were multitudes of people, to go "toward the south into the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert"! Very often the word of the Lord will come to you in a way that will be difficult to understand. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Do not ask to understand the ways of God. When He commands, let it be ours to obey, because very often we shall be required to do that which may seem, on the face of it, to be scarcely wise, and for which we can give no adequate reason to carnally-minded men. But let us hear God's voice; and, hearing, obey it.

I said at the outset that this chapter needs little exposition but much application. Now take this word — is there a boy or girl who cannot understand it? Hear it: "And he arose and went." That is all. Like a messenger-boy who is given a parcel, and who is commanded to go and deliver it at a certain address, he immediately, without questioning, goes about his duty to deliver that parcel. I believe the greatest blessing is lost in the life of the average Christian at just this point. There is no man or woman here of experience in the Christian life, who, looking back over his own life, will not testify that he has lost blessing after blessing by his refusal or his neglect to do the simple thing that he knew God required him to do, and his neglect to do it when it ought to have been done.

We do not need a course in theology to understand that. We do not need any elaborate explanation at all. The moment we know the will of God we ought to do it, and the secret of blessing in the Christian life consists in prompt and implicit obedience. That is all God asks of us, that we simply do what we ought to do.

I doubt not among this company of young people this morning there are many, as I speak to you, who can think

of duties unfulfilled, of tasks neglected, of visits not made, of testimonies not given, of failure to witness. There was no doubt about it in your mind; just as clearly as the angel said to Philip, "Go", the Spirit of God said to you, "Go" — but you did not go. You disobeyed. You said, "Tomorrow, Lord"; or "Next week"; "Some other time"; but the fact is, the thing commanded was not done.

If we really believe, we must obey; because, in the measure in which we trust God, we shall believe in the wisdom of and in the divine necessity for His commandment, and we shall do as we are told. If I were not to say another thing this morning, if I could simply call to your memory duties undone, commands disobeyed, opportunities unimproved, this service would not be in vain. As I speak to you this morning I am sure there are scores of people who are saying, "Every day last week I missed opportunities. I can see the catalogue of my omissions before me." If I said nothing else, if I were to dismiss this meeting, and every one would say, "I will go home and do the thing that I did not do last week, I will do it," we should not have come here in vain. But I shall show you presently that promptitude is of the very essence of true obedience. To say, "I have not done it, but I will do it to-morrow," is to disobey; because, when a command is given, it is given for a specific purpose, there is something God has to do when He requires us to do it at a certain time.

II.

Philip went, "And behold" — I want you to see THE SORT OF MAN HE MET — "a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasure." He was not an ordinary man; he was not a poor man, not a man in an obscure position, but a very important man; and I rather expect he was a rich man, a man of great authority. In his own country undoubtedly he was approached by everyone with great deference, because he was the treasurer, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians. Philip is sent to speak, not to a little street urchin, not to a man down-at-heel, not to a man who wants a sandwich, not to a man who is under obligation to listen because he is at the end of his own resources, but to a man of importance.

"The poor have the gospel preached to them" very often, because it is much easier to preach to a poor man than to approach some other sort of man. Down in the place where you work, for example, there is a man who works beside you, or a man who works under you, to whom you have borne your witness. Did you ever go to the head of the establishment, to the man who is right at the very top, whoever he may be, and bear your witness to him? It may be easy to hold up a man in a Ford car and say, "Hold on there, I want to speak to you". But why do you not hold up a Rolls Royce as it is going down the street, and say, "Stop a minute, I have a message for you"? It is one thing to go to a little cottage, but quite another thing to go to the man who thinks he is very important. I believe if we are at God's command He will send us to all sorts of men, to the lowest and to the highest, to those of low position, and to those of exalted position. Your duty is to be on the lookout, and if the Lord sends you to some man of whom you are a bit afraid, remember that you are your Master's servant, and you are divinely commissioned. Do not let anyone make you afraid.

Then this man was a religious man. There are many people who are religious, but who are not Christians. Many

men of religion nowadays are not ever converted. Read the Saturday evening papers, and if you cannot be suited with one of the services advertised there you must be very hard put, very difficult to please; there are all kinds of religions. I read in a paper last week — and I think I will write an editorial about it — an answer to this question, "What is it to be a Christian?" The man who answered it did not get within ten million miles of the truth. He answered it as though he had not the shade of a shadow of a ghost of an idea of what it means to be a Christian. There was not an infinitesimal spark or suggestion of the supernatural in it at all.

There are plenty of people who are religious who need the gospel. There are people who are not religious — go to them; do not take it for granted that because a man is religious he does not need your ministry. I used to be greatly disturbed in the beginning of my ministry when I found I had a congregation of professing Christians, and I had a sermon prepared for people who were not saved. I would say, to myself, "What is the use of preaching to these people who profess to be converted?" I have since learned that professing Christians very often need it as much as the others. It does not do any harm to let them hear it again.

Then I want you to notice another thing. This man was coming home from church, and was still unconverted. He had been up to Jerusalem to worship, and was on his way back, but he had not found Christ. There are thousands of people in this city to-day who will go to church, who are in church even as I speak, and when the benediction is pronounced they will go home as they went to church, without Christ, without any personal knowledge of salvation, without any real experience of the mighty power of God. And it is for us to minister to religious people, and to church-goers too, whether they are Roman Catholics, or Protestants so-called.

He was returning home from church, and reading a passage of the Word of God. Sitting in his chariot he read Isaiah the prophet. I suppose, first of all, Philip did not know what he was doing until he drew near to him, but he saw this great chariot, and the important man, returning from Jerusalem to his queen. Now listen, do not miss this: "The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." The angel of the Lord said, "Go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." Supposing Philip had said, "Lord, will you please explain why I should go? Will you please explain to me what advantage there could be in my going and "wasting my sweetness on the desert air", in going where there is no one at all?"

If Philip had spent time like that he would have missed his opportunity. He travelled, mark this, under sealed orders. The angel said, "You go, and when the time comes you will know exactly what to do, and when to do it." And as the chariot came along it may be it did not occur to Philip that here was his opportunity. But the Spirit of the Lord said, "Here you are, Philip, this is your train, get aboard. Join yourself to this chariot." And he did as he was told.

III.

Of course, it is the old principle with which you are familiar, and again I say, it does not need expounding, but it does need application. GOD NEVER SENDS US AWARFARE AT OUR OWN CHARGES. He never sends you to a man without an implied promise that He

will go with you and prepare that man's heart for your testimony. Philip might have said, "Well, I do not know how to begin a conversation; I do not know how to break in upon this man's meditation. I do not know how to get behind his prejudices to begin a conversation respecting this subject." But the man was already waiting for him!

I was speaking on this matter once when I was Pastor of Adelaide Street Church, London, at a simple afternoon meeting where a number of women had gathered for prayer. I said, "God has His plans, and if you go out and do as you are told He will lead you here and there. If you obey Him you will always find that behind that door there is someone waiting to receive you, you will find the way has been prepared for you, if you follow His direction." There were two women who had come in a little late, and as I said that they looked at each other and smiled. When I had finished one woman got up and said, "Pastor, may I speak?" I said, "Certainly." "Well," she said, "I just want to give a testimony. This afternoon Mrs. So-and-So and I went out visiting. We had planned it yesterday, and we met at a certain hour and started out together to call on two or three people whose names and addresses we had. As we were going down a certain street we were passing a one-storey house, a sort of bungalow, and I felt impressed that I ought to go into that house; I turned to Mrs. So-and-So and said, 'Let us go in here.' She said, 'But who lives there?' I said, 'I have no idea, but I think we ought to go into this house.' So she said, 'All right, let us go'.

"We rang the door-bell, and presently the door opened. A woman stood there — and we did not know what to say. We did not know how to begin, and for want of something else to say I said, 'We have come from the Adelaide Street Baptist Church.' 'Oh,' she said, 'Come in. The Lord must have sent you.' We went in and found that the woman had been at church the Sunday night before, and that she had not closed her eyes in sleep Sunday night, Monday night, or Tuesday night — and this was Wednesday afternoon. She had not been able to sleep. She did not know what to do; she did not know anyone in the church. She wanted to be saved, but she did not know how; and so in sheer desperation she fell on her knees and said, 'Oh, Lord, send someone from that church right away.'" She was ready for her visitors, they had a glorious time, and she received Christ. A little while after I baptized her, and since I have been pastor of this church I heard of her home-going to be with Christ, after a long illness, leaving a glorious testimony behind her.

Those women had no reason, except "the goings of God" upon their own Spirit, as Bunyan would say, for going into that house. But I cite that incident out of my own experience to show how God does in this day exactly as He did in that day when He said to Philip, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." If we respond, there is no limit to the blessing we will have.

IV.

I should like to emphasize this one thing, that PHILIP WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SEND A PROXY. Go thyself! He might have said, "I am glad that man is interested, and I will go home to Samaria and see if Peter and John will not pay him a visit"! There are some people who are always ready to find someone else something to do instead of doing it themselves. We must obey promptly, on the minute. "Join thyself"! You have some special qualification for that particular task or God would not have given it to you. Now go and do as you are told. Again I say I am

not expounding, I am applying, and I want you to do the same thing.

"And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias." When you find a man reading the Bible it ought to be easy to talk to him. Do not be afraid to look at your Bible in a public place, do not be afraid to carry the Bible with you. I have sometimes thought our Salvation Army friends have a great advantage over us by wearing the uniform. Of course, it is a disadvantage some times. I am not suggesting that you carry about a Bible, that it may be seen, or embroider texts about your garments, that you go about in any canting way, not that. But let us not be ashamed of the gospel.

Here was a man who was reading the Scripture, but who did not understand what he read. May I say to you that there are many people who read the Scriptures, who do not understand them until the Spirit of God touches them, and the Spirit of God very often uses someone like Philip to lead them into the truth. The Russellites can quote Scripture by the yard. Christian Scientists actually tell one that their philosophy is based upon the Word of God. Almost every heresy that curses the church to-day will claim scriptural warrant for itself. There are many people who read the Scriptures who do not understand, and only the Spirit of God can make you understand them.

"Understandest thou what thou readest? How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." And the place of the Scripture which he read was the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Is that not wonderful? Is there a Scripture in the Old Testament that has more of Christ in it, than the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah? It is packed full of Christ from the first verse to the last. And that was the scripture that this man had before him.

It may not always be that you will find someone waiting for you with an open Bible when you go, but if not with an open Bible, you will find an open mind, and an open heart, and you will have no difficulty in preaching Jesus.

V.

Philip "began at the same scripture and PREACHED UNTO HIM JESUS." I want you young people to learn to be ready at any time. I want you so to fill your minds with Scripture that, no matter what emergency you may meet, you will be able to begin "at that same scripture" and preach Jesus. There is not a scripture in the Old or New Testaments that does not lead to Christ.

I remember going with Dr. Dixon once, years ago, to a Chicago Bible Conference. I got in from the train, and sat at the back of the building. He called me up and said, "Just sit down beside me." I said, "I have not to speak at this meeting, have I?" He replied, "I have no idea when you are to speak, but be ready to speak at any time." He said, "I used to work with Moody, and he would say to me, 'Dixon, have it always on tap!' Be ready any minute; no matter where you are called on, or when you are called on, see that you can speak.

I hope you students will learn so to store your minds with Scripture that you will always be able to speak. Of course, it is well if you have time thoroughly to prepare yourself for public addresses, but surely we ought to be able at any time to speak about Christ, to tell people how to be saved. He "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

Incidentally, when you find the New Testament quoting a passage from the Old Testament and interpreting it,

accept that interpretation as final. I do not care what all the critics say about the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah as being a description of the suffering servant, and all the rest of it. It would not disturb me for a moment if all the critics on earth were to say the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah did not refer to Christ. I should say, "You are all wrong, every one of you. You know nothing, because the New Testament says it foretells the suffering of our Lord — and the New Testament is never wrong." The Word of God is never wrong. Philip, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and later Luke in writing by inspiration, said the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was a picture of Christ; and it is a good text if we want one to preach the gospel from. You young people, take that principle, and no matter what anyone says, when once the Bible has spoken, let that be the final word in all subjects.

"And he began . . . and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way" — I know what Philip said about Jesus Christ. Of course he told the eunuch He was born in Bethlehem; he told him of His miraculous life, of His sacrificial death, of His resurrection and ascension, he told him of the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, that Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. He must have told him all that, that this prophecy from the Old Testament was fulfilled in Christ, and that He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and so on.

VI.

And the Ethiopian said, "See, here is water; WHAT DOTH HINDER ME TO BE BAPTIZED?" I wonder how he knew anything about it? I wonder how he knew anything about baptism? I do not believe it is possible for any man faithfully to preach Jesus Christ without telling everybody to whom he preaches that it is everybody's duty, without any exception, when he believes on Christ, to be baptized. I care not for the Methodist Church, the United Church, the Episcopalian Church, the Roman Catholic Church. That is not the point. But one cannot preach Jesus Christ in His fulness as Saviour and Lord, His death, His burial, His resurrection, His absolute lordship, without telling every man that it is his duty to take God's word at its face value, and do as he is told. Be baptized! I make no apology for it at all. It is in the Book, and that is what Philip did.

And the man said, "Is it necessary to salvation?" No! He did not say that at all. He said, "Is there any hindrance? Is there any reason why I should not avail myself of this privilege? Is there any reason why I should not be buried with Christ, and raised again to walk in newness of life?" That is the way in which to approach it. Is there anything to hinder? I am ready.

Philip said, "Only your own heart-fitness can hinder you. If you believe with all your heart you may." The eunuch said, "I believe that Jesus Christ of Whom you have told me just now, Who lived in Bethlehem, and wrought among the people, Who died at the place called Calvary, Who rose again, and went to heaven — I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that the Old Testament was fulfilled in Him." "All right," said Philip, "you may be baptized." "Well, let us have it now." "Oh, a week later; a month later; we will think it over!" "No, now!" "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip."

Evidently the Spirit of the Lord approved of what Philip had done: He was still there. He approved of what the eunuch had done: He was still there. "And the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." I should think he would, when he had heard about Jesus, and yielded his heart and life in obedience to Him. It is no wonder he went on his way rejoicing!

That is the way to preach the gospel: take that chapter and do as you are told, and the blessing of the Lord will be upon you.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, Lord, for the simplicity of Thy Word; it is so simple that even a child can understand it. Help us all to be like Philip, obedient to Thy Spirit, and to the direction of Thine angels. Help those who hear our testimony to be like this Ethiopian, and receive it with a ready heart, and gladly and joyously to obey Thy commandments. Bless us for Thy name's sake, Amen.

January 12, 1930.

THE WEEK-END SERVICES IN JARVIS STREET

During the week-end of September 26th to 30th it was our privilege to enjoy the unique ministry of Rev. Isaac D. E. Thomas, pastor of Christmas Evans Memorial Baptist Church, Caernarvon, Wales, and Mrs. Frances Mon-Jones, harpist and sweet singer from Wales. Mrs. Mon-Jones has won the premier award at the famous Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales four times. Mr. Thomas visited this country in 1954 when on tour to mark the semi-centenary of the Welsh Revival of 1904. As on that occasion, his messages were marked by sincerity and a spiritual fervour as he ably expounded the Word of God, depending solely upon the Holy Spirit to drive the message home to hearts. Mrs. Mon-Jones contributed much to the services by her skilful playing upon the harp of heavenly sound and by her tender singing of the songs of praise unto the Lord. It was a joy to welcome Mrs. Thomas also.

A large company were present on Thursday evening to hear the inspiring message by Mr. Thomas, based on 1 Kings 18:44, "Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." It is the duty of the prophet of the Lord to observe the clouds on the horizon in his own day and to interpret the meaning of the same. There is a cloud in the offing in this world to-day. It represents one of three things. It may be the cloud of Ruination for the World. Fear is on every side. Our God, however, sits as King at the flood. All power is in His hand, and He alone will determine when and how this earth shall be destroyed. That cloud may herald Revival for the Church. Revivals come suddenly, unexpectedly, as in England in the 18th century and in Wales in 1904. Again, it may be a sign of the Return of the King. The Lord Jesus Christ will come again "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." How do we react to that truth? Some are afraid of it, some scorn it, some treat it with indifference, lethargy and apathy. As when our Lord came the first time, in religious circles there is much activity, much machinery — committees, World Council and the like. The leaders cry, "The Kingdom of God is at hand," but they are not expecting Him. There is nothing in this world to-day that makes sense, if Christ does not return. Truth will not always be on the scaffold and wrong on the throne. When He comes, wrong will be on the scaffold and truth will be on

the throne. The cloud as we see may be the glimpse of His advent feet.

On Friday morning Mr. Thomas addressed the Chapel service at Toronto Baptist Seminary, giving an inspiring and thought-provoking study of the methods employed by the apostles when they "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). This was followed by a lecture on "Welsh Revivals", and the hearts of all were thrilled.

The Sunday services were marked by a holy enthusiasm and joyful praise. In the morning hour, the Bible School scholars present, even the smaller ones who occupied the gallery, listened with keen attention to the lovely tones of the harp, as played by Mrs. Mon-Jones, and also to her fine singing and simple testimony, given especially with the children in mind. She quite won the hearts of the boys and girls.

In his message concerning the generation of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:1) Mr. Thomas described four of the names of our Saviour, names which give adornment to that register. He was the Son of David, the King, great David's greater Son, being descended from David on His mother's side and also on Joseph's side. He had every claim to the throne of His people; indeed, a more legitimate claim than Herod, who was not even a Jew. He was a King in nature, and He displayed Kingly powers over disease, death and demons. He was also the Son of Abraham, thus a full member of the Hebrew race. Again, He was the Son of Adam, being true Man. The first heresy of the church arose through denial of the truth concerning our Lord's true human nature and true Divine nature.

But chiefly, Jesus Christ was the Son of God. This was His proper title. Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). This is the core and the essence of faith. Christ was truly God and truly Man. He hungered as a man, yet as God fed the multitudes. He paid tribute, yet as Creator, the whole world belonged to Him. As man, he wept at the grave of Lazarus and yet, as God, He will dry all tears. His enemies said that He had a devil, but He had power to cast out devils. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and yet, He is the good Shepherd. Let us bow down before Him and confess Him as our Saviour and Lord. He alone can give eternal life. We cannot be saved by good works, or by depending upon anyone, such as the Virgin Mary, for salvation. Christ Himself is the only way to God.

The Sunday evening service was a powerful one. Inspired by the fine music rendered by Mrs. Mon-Jones by harp and voice, the congregation sang the great hymns of praise with great delight. Technical difficulties interfered with the broadcasting of this service over station CHWO, Oakville (1250), but this condition should be remedied so that the service may be broadcast as usual next Sunday evening, 7.30-8.30.

Rev. Isaac Thomas preached a fine sermon on the New Birth, taking as his text, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation," (2 Cor. 5:17). The same problem faces us from age to age, the problem of human nature. Can human nature be changed? The prisons are full; we are faced with juvenile, adolescent and adult delinquency. The judge and the warden of the jail say that human nature may be curbed; the psychiatrist that it can be improved. Can the lowest become the best? In the Book of Acts, in the time of the early church and the apostles, we have the record of changed lives, changed from vile to holy, from cruel to kind, from drunken to sober,

from lost to saved. According to the Bible man must be changed. Man is by nature a sinner: "All have sinned." What did our human nature do with the best Person this world has ever seen? Men jeered at Him, taunted Him, crowned Him with thorns, spat upon His face, nailed Him to the cross and crucified Him. If we are all right as we are, why did God send His Son? It was because human nature must be changed. How can it be changed? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." He is a new person altogether. There must be spiritual identification with Christ, we must be "in Christ".

What does this mean in terms of daily life? It means a *changed mind*. We then have the mind of Christ, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind. We reason from a different premise. Here is the test: Are you able to accept the truths of God as revealed in the Bible. Only by a re-birth can we understand these truths. The intelligentsia find it impossible, since they cannot believe in original sin, the incarnation, the atonement; or the second advent of Christ. These things are never revealed to the intellect, but to the believing heart. The God of this world has blinded the hearts of men. Only when the mind is changed can man understand these verities.

A new creature in Christ has a *changed heart*; he feels differently. Christ called two disciples; Matthew the publican, traitor to his country, performing the service of an oppressor, and Simon the Zealot, a patriot. At one time these two could have murdered one another, but in Christ they came to love one another. Christ can melt the hardened heart.

The new creature in Christ will have a *changed will*. He acts differently, he makes new decisions. He is controlled and fashioned according to the will of Christ and of God. How is the will changed? In Christ. This is a fact; there is no argument, no discussion. It has happened again and again. The touch of our Saviour has still its ancient power, and His arm is not shortened that it cannot save to-day, as of old. Will you come to Christ? He will make you a new creature, so that you will never be the same again.

On Monday evening, Rev. I. Thomas and Mrs. Mon-Jones conducted a service of music, enjoyed by a large congregation. Great hymns of the nations were beautifully sung and played on the harp by Mrs. Mon-Jones, while the interesting and instructive comments were made by Mr. Thomas. The group singing of the many Welsh people in the audience, praising God with such sweet tones as are peculiar to the Welsh, added much to the service. The whole assembly entered most heartily into the congregational singing. The Lord was honoured in the music and in the message of the Gospel, proclaimed so clearly throughout the evening. In all, this was a most uplifting experience for all who were present.

At this final service conducted by our Welsh friends Dr. Slade, the esteemed Pastor of Jarvis Street Church, expressed to our visitors the thanks of the church members and friends for the gracious ministry exercised in our midst these last few days. Our prayers will accompany Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Mon-Jones as they journey to distant parts.

—O.L.C.

In proportion as a man grows in grace he will feel his dependence upon God. God will be more wonderful and self will be more distrusted and detested.

Violence at Little Rock

THE school issue at Little Rock, Arkansas, is part of the larger problem of integration of whites and non-whites, which appears in Africa as well as in America. That it is highly complex none can deny. It may involve economic, social and moral values. The entry of negroes into a district often has led to a decline in property value and suggests to some the danger of slum conditions. Alleged lower morality and a poorer cultural heritage encourage trepidation about a resulting decline in these standards affecting all. Freer association among young people may lead to an increase in the number of mixed marriages, with consequent embarrassment to future generations. Integration is beset with countless difficulties, but perhaps these are not as insoluble as is suggested.

As the whole issue is integrally associated with human sin and depravity we may expect in the Holy Scriptures principles of guidance, which can influence not only theory but conduct.

I.

The Bible clearly teaches the Adamic Headship of the human race. The negroes are not a lower form of animal life. On a radio broadcast from Central High School, Little Rock, this week a male student contemptuously dismissed the idea that negro students should expect to be treated as human beings. One feels that slavery, which, by the way, is a reproach on the whites rather than on the coloured, has ingrained the idea into many minds that the negro is an advanced brute. But the Apostle Paul can make the quotation, "For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28), apply to the unconverted of Athens as well as unto the converted Jews. The modernistic concept of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man is only a distortion of the truth. In the realm of nature, as opposed to that of Grace, it remains a fact. Negro as well as white in this limited sense is an offspring of God. A despising of Publicans and Samaritans ever incurs the wrath of Christ, and so must contempt for the "nigger".

II.

The Bible clearly teaches the worth of the individual soul. Calvary is the yardstick by which it is measured. The words of the children's chorus come floating back: —

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world,
Red and yellow, black and white,
They are precious in His sight;
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Surely an extension may legitimately be made to include parents. So the soul of "Black Ham" is as precious as that of the "White Trash" that would, if unchecked, lynch him. What a glorious divine comment on the worth of a negro's soul is the recall of Philip from the multitudes of whites in Samaria for personal evangelism to one emasculated Ethiopian.

III.

The Bible clearly teaches that spirit is more important than body, hence Christ can assert: "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast unto hell" (Matt. 5:30). To discriminate against a man because of stature or pig-

ments of the skin is not only cruelly unjust but violently opposed to Scripture. Dare anyone then assert that the souls of these coloured brethren are in any way inferior to others? Coloured believers shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God, while many of Aryan extraction shall be banished into outer darkness.

IV.

Then in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female." (Gal. 3:28) Peter had to be withstood for sinning against Christ's brethren in no longer associating with Gentiles, after certain came from James. That which would divide the Household of Faith must be sharply condemned. Is the body of Christ to be shattered by the cries: "I am of Shem", "I am of Ham", "I am of Japheth"? This being the case, may one not wonder why in the Baptist country of the Southern States church integration did not precede school integration?

The danger in Arkansas is not just a threat to local order, not just a threat to the union of the States of America, not just a weakening of Western defence. It could also add fuel to the fires of nationalism which already are making many countries too warm for Westerners. The opposition to integration then is not only unscriptural, it is futile in a world predominantly coloured and it is highly dangerous.

G. ADAMS

EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGN AT CENTRAL

A week of Evangelistic Meetings will be held at Central Baptist Church, Ossington at Hallam, Toronto, from October 6th to 11th. Rev. Bert Acheson, a former member of Central, will be conducting the meetings. At each service there will be special music and singing, graciously provided by some of the talented members of Jarvis Street Baptist Church. The pastor, Rev. G. Adams, reports that these meetings will follow a week of children's meetings conducted by Mr. Roger Green, a student at Toronto Baptist Seminary.

OCTOBER IS "BIBLE SCHOOL MONTH"

October is Bible School Month in Jarvis Street Baptist Church. Every effort is being made to enlarge and promote the Bible School during this month. Any visitors to Toronto over the Thanksgiving holiday would be welcome to attend Bible School. There will be a conducted tour through the Bible School for those interested each Sunday morning at 10 minutes to 10, meeting in the Concourse. Readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS in the Toronto area are urged to visit our Bible School during "Bible School Month". Infants are cared for by a very competent nursery staff, while there are Bible School classes for all others. Bible School begins at 9.45 a.m., following which the entire School attends the morning service at 11.00.

COMING NEXT WEEK

An important article by Chester E. Tulga, D.D., entitled "The Fundamentalism of Yesterday, the Evangelicalism of To-Day and the Fundamentalism of To-Morrow."

The Bible Doctrine of Sin

By Dr. C. D. Cole

Dean Emeritus of Toronto Baptist Seminary

I. THE NATURE OF SIN

SIN is a patent fact — its reality does not need to be argued. Sin is a fact of experience, of observation, and of revelation. Sin is something I feel in my own heart; it is something I see in others, even in my best friends and loved ones; and it is something revealed in the Bible. The policeman pursues it, the physician prescribes for it, the law discovers it, conscience condemns it, God controls and punishes it, and yet nobody likes to own it. But as a matter of fact, sin is all that anyone owns; he is a steward of everything else he may possess. Obvious as sin is, there is a proneness to treat it like some folks treat their relatives; it is ignored and even denied.

SIN may be defined, but it cannot be explained. To explain sin is to explain it away. How sin got started in the universe is a profound mystery. It had no place in the original creation, which God pronounced good. Sin is a parasite, an interloper, an outlaw cell in the moral system, and a terrible monstrosity. Sin made its appearance on earth in a garden of delights, after it had defiled the heavens, and turned this fair earth into a wilderness of woe. In the original creation we read only of heaven and earth, but later we are told of everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

SIN is a cheat, a deceiver, and a destroyer. It promises pleasure and pays off in pain; it promises life and pays off in death. It promises profit and pays off in poverty — the loss of all good. Every sin is committed for profit, and no one would sin if he did not think it would profit in some form or other. There is profit in sin, but it is short-lived. Moses took the long look and made the wise choice; he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He made his choice in view of the day of judgment.

SIN is dangerous beyond expression and description. Sin is violation of the moral law of God, and violated law cries out for just retribution. Sin is against God, the Judge of all the earth, and must be accounted for before God. Crime is against human society. Human society may and does punish crime, but only God can punish sin. Human society may fail to punish the criminal, but God will not fail to punish the sinner who is without a Saviour. All crime against men is also sin against God, but all sin against God is not crime against men. Human society punishes men for what they do; God punishes men for what they are and in proportion to what they do. Every sinner will either be punished in his own person or in the person of a Surety and Substitute, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Surety of the better covenant. The only possible way for any sinner to be brought into the favor of God as the Lawgiver was for Christ the Just to suffer for the unjust (1 Peter 3:18).

I.

False Definitions of Sin

1. *Modernism*: "Sin is good in the making." John Fiske (1842-1901) says that original sin is neither more nor less

than the brute inheritance which every man carries with him, and the process of evolution is an advance towards true salvation. According to this view the human race is on the way to salvation; there is no hope for the individual; the race will be saved when the process of evolution has made it perfect. It is like the process of improving the razor-back hog by breeding. According to this view there is no individual responsibility, and therefore no individual salvation. Poor hope for the individual who cries out, What must I do to be saved? Cold war everywhere, and shooting wars in various places, with terrible consequences to human happiness and safety, give the lie to the evolutionary process of salvation.

2. *Christian Science*: "Sin is a mere figment of a perverted imagination — an imaginary creation of abnormal minds." In other words, sin does not actually exist; it is not a reality. Some people just imagine they sin, and this imagination is a disease of the mind. The man who is convicted of sin is unbalanced, and the man who mourns over sin and seeks forgiveness from God is terribly insane. Such nonsense is refuted by science, and Scripture, and common sense. When the prodigal came to himself he said, "I have sinned." The insane man is the one who denies the fact of sin. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 Jno. 1:10).

3. *The Popular View* regards sin as only crime against society. Sinners are young men sowing wild oats, prostitute women, murderers, and gangsters. Some sixty or more years ago the Japanese resented the preaching of Paul Kanamori. They complained that he talked to them as if he were an official talking to convicts. They confounded sin with vice; they could not distinguish between sin and crime. Every person is a sinner, but all are not vicious or criminals. There are many virtuous women, but no sinless women. There are many law-abiding men, but no sinless men. There are many beautiful babies, but no baby without a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Eph. 2:1-3).

II.

Some True Definitions of Sin

1. *Westminster Confession*: "Sin is any lack of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God." This is a good definition and includes both sins of commission and of omission. The moral law of God — the eternal standard of right and wrong — is summed up in supreme love to God and to our neighbour as ourselves.

2. *A. H. Strong*: "Sin is any lack of conformity to the law of God, whether in act, disposition, or state." This is a better definition, since it recognizes sin as a condition of human nature. Sin resides in the heart; it is a quality of being.

3. *The Apostle John*: "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 Jno. 3:4b); or, more literally, "Sin is lawlessness". There can be no sin where there is no law. If there is no Lawgiver to Whom we must give account, then there can be no sin, for sin is lawlessness.

Missing the Mark

There is a Bible word which means, "to miss the mark", and it is translated "sin" some 200 times in our Bible. Man has missed the mark — he has missed the purpose of his being. Man was created to reflect the glory of his Creator, but he has missed this aim and has become short of the glory of God. Man is like a clock that fails to tell the time of day; he is like a car that won't run; he is like coal that won't burn. Man is a failure in the greatest and grandest enterprise — he has failed to glorify God.

Man Is Off-Centre

There is another word used to describe sin which means "to turn aside from the straight path". This conception of sin is expressed in Psalm 78:57, where God complains that Israel has turned aside like a deceitful bow. And again in Isaiah we are told that all like sheep have gone astray, and turned every one to his own way. Man is off-centre. Instead of revolving around God, and making God's will his chief delight, man has become a wandering star in the moral firmament.

Competition with God

Sin may be defined as competition with God for sovereignty — competition in the realm of authority. This view of sin is seen in the story of the first sin, as recorded in Genesis three. The word "sin" does not occur in the account, but the fact of sin does, and the nature of sin is also clearly revealed. Satan told Eve that if they would eat of the forbidden fruit, their eyes would be opened, and they would become as God, knowing good and evil. And when the deed was done, God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3:22a).

Now, in what sense did man become like God by sinning? Obviously, it was not in respect to character, for in sinning he lost the good character with which he was created. Nor can it mean that man acquired the Divine attributes such as power, holiness, and wisdom. In sinning man lost the power to live, and died; he lost his original holiness and became filthy or depraved; and he lost the wisdom of his original creation and became a fool. Sin brought death, depravity, and delusion. Sin is consummate folly.

The only possible sense in which man became like God was in spirit and aim — not in reality. Adam and Eve asserted their independence of God; they would make their own laws and do as they pleased. They rebelled against His will for their lives; they rejected His expressed will for what they could have. They would determine (know for themselves) what is good and evil — what is right and wrong. They would no longer be bound by God's word about what they could do. They would be a law unto themselves and do as they pleased. They would do that which was right in their own eyes. Thus they entered into competition with God for sovereignty. In spirit and aim they made themselves God. They would make their own will supreme.

Every sin is competition with God in the realm of authority. If I have the right to determine what is right and wrong, then I am God — I am supreme in the matter of authority. Sin is, therefore, a declaration of independence before God, and this means war, for God has said, "I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 46:9). And again, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). Great Britain could do little about it when the American Colonies declared their independence — she lost the war. But there is much God can do with His rebellious creatures.

The sinner is waging a hopeless war against his Creator. God is a jealous God and will tolerate no rivals or competitors. God is the one and only person in all the universe who has the right and the ability to do as He pleases. He is the only one who has the right to act for His own glory. All that God does, whether in mercy or in justice, is to the praise of His glory. Salvation is primarily to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:1-14).

III.

The Reality of Sin

Is sin real? Ask Adam and hear him bemoan his loss of Eden. Is sin real? Ask Cain and hear him cry, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Is sin real? Ask Abel. He cannot speak, but his blood cries to God for vengeance against his murderer. Is sin real? Ask David and hear him say, "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Is sin real? Ask the rich man in hell and listen as he says, "I am tormented in this flame." Is sin real? Ask Pharaoh and hear him say, "I have sinned," when he discovered a dead boy in every home and a dead animal in every stable throughout all the land of Egypt, Goshen excepted because of the blood of the passover lamb. Is sin real? Ask Peter and hear his confession: "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." Is sin real? Ask Christian parents and hear them as they pray for their godless children. Is sin real? Ask the Son of God and hear Him as He cries out under its terrible load, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Is sin real? Ask the martyrs, and let them tell you the price they paid for resisting sin unto blood.

The holier a man is the more he realizes what sin is. The acts of sin are fewer on the part of those who grieve over the state of sin. A. J. Gordon, the great Baptist preacher of Boston, was a godly man, and yet just before he died, he asked to be left alone. He was overheard confessing his sins so extravagantly that it was thought he was in delirium. Luther was wont to cry out, "Oh, my sins, my sins!" Jonathan Edwards was said to be the holiest man of his day, and yet his diary contains such abhorrence of himself as would make one think he was the most wicked of all.

The Potentiality of Sin

Sin as an act of transgression is only a small part of sin. Nine-tenths of the mass of an iceberg is below the surface, so that only a small part of the total is seen. And there is far more sin in every man than ever appears on the surface in actual transgression. The potential evil is about the same in every man; the Bible says there is no difference, for all have sinned. If we have not sinned outwardly as much as others, it is due to the restraining grace of God and not to anything good in our nature. When our Lord said that out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies, He was not describing any particular heart but the heart of every man. When Paul said that the carnal mind was enmity against God, He was speaking of the mind of humanity.

Salvation Through a Co-Operant

The sinner is God's competitor; the Saviour is God's co-operant. The first Adam competed with God for sovereignty and ruined all of us; the last Adam, Jesus Christ, co-operated with God for our salvation. The first Adam said, "I will"; the last Adam said, "Not my will, but Thy will be done." The first Adam despised the will of God; the last Adam said, "I delight to do Thy will, O God."

And God's will led Him along the rough road of suffering through gloomy Gethsemane to bloody Calvary, where He cried, "It is finished." All men are victims of the terrible tragedy of Eden; all believers are victors through the tragedy of Calvary. And may writer and reader bow in adoring wonder!

GREETINGS FROM A SEMINARY GRADUATE IN THE FRENCH ARMY

Elève Gradé Pourret, 1ère Section—Groupe B
CI Cambetta, SP-87-227
Afrique du Nord, September 22nd, 1957.

Dear Dr. Slade,

Just a few words to tell you that my mind often goes across the ocean to the great church of which you are pastor. Again, I want to tell you what a blessing it has been for me to spend so many years among the Jarvis Street Church people. I have been, and still am, a debtor to every one. Throughout the months and years spent in the Seminary rooms, I have come to realize a little what a great God we have, what a rich Book He has written for us, and what a miserable sinner I am. As I shall surely never forget the happy and fruitful days of my Seminary training, please convey my hearty thanks to the trustees of the institution so dear to their hearts.

I have not had any holidays since I landed on the French soil; far from it! Of course, it was a great joy for me to be with my own again, to renew contacts with my church and its pastors. I found quite a few changes, especially among the young people. The little ones I used to teach in Sunday School are now born again and baptized. The services are very well attended — thirty-five new members having been admitted into the church fellowship during the past years. New families have come from Algeria and Tunisia, having had to leave these countries on account of the insecurity there, and have joined the church.

Part of the month of August I spent in one of our Swiss churches left without a pastor. At the beginning of September I had the privilege to meet Mr. Buhler and his faithful assistant, Etienne Huser, at Mulhouse, and attend the first meeting of our biennial Conference of French-speaking Baptist churches. Unfortunately I had to leave the same night for Oran, Algeria, where I am now stationed as a soldier of the French army. It is quite possible that I may spend the entire two years over here — which is not a very encouraging thought. However, I am convinced that the truth of Romans 8:28 still applies to my case. His will be done!

I have not found yet any Christian fellowship around the camp, built in 1945 by the Americans for "temporary" use. As we are not allowed to go out until the beginning of November, I cannot attend any of the evangelical churches in the city. Only God and his Word are my true friends. The army is the place "par excellence", at least the French army, where one realizes that this world is no friend to God. Selfishness, hypocrisy, and sin in its vilest aspect, are its distinctive marks. What a God we have, who has shown His love towards us and in His grace drawn us from such mire!

It now remains for me, dear Dr. Slade, to send you my very best Christian wishes to you, your family, and your church. Please convey my Christian love to the members of the Faculty and to the students.

Yours in His happy service,

SAMUEL POURRET (Signed)

POPE AND PAGAN

Now I saw in my dream, that at the end of this valley lay blood, bones, ashes, and mingled bodies of men, even of pilgrims that had gone this way formerly; and while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a cave, where two giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old time; by whose power and tyranny the men, whose bones, blood, ashes, etc., lay there, were cruelly put to death. But by this place Christian went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered; but I have learnt since, that Pagan has been dead many a day; and as for the other, though he be yet alive, he is, by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them.

So I saw that Christian went on his way; yet, at the sight of the old man that sat in the mouth of the cave, he could not tell what to think, especially because he spake to him, though he could not go after him, saying, You will never mend till more of you be burned. But he held his peace, and set a good face on't and so went by, and caught no hurt. Then sang Christian:

O world of wonders (I can say no less),
That I should be preserved in that distress
That I have met with here! O blessed be
That hand that from it hath delivered me!
Dangers in darkness, devils, hell, and sin,
Did compass me, while I this vale was in;
Yea, snares, and pits, and traps, and nets did lie
My path about, that worthless, silly I
Might have been caught, entangled, and cast
down:

But since I live, let Jesus wear the crown.

—PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

"YE SAY, AND DO NOT"

These words are from an old inscription in the Cathedral of Innsbruck:

"Ye call me Maker and obey Me not,
Ye call Me Light and see Me not,
Ye call Me Way and take Me not,
Ye call Me wise and follow Me not,
Ye call Me fair and love Me not,
Ye call Me rich and ask Me not,
Ye call Me eternal and seek Me not,
Ye call Me Gracious and trust Me not,
Ye call Me noble and serve Me not,
Ye call Me mighty and honour Me not,
IF I CONDEMN YOU, BLAME ME NOT."

—Charlotte Chapel Record

ENGAGEMENTS OF REV. I. D. E. THOMAS

October 13—

Morning—Oakridge Regular Baptist Church,
Vancouver, B.C.

Afternoon—Cambrian Hall, Vancouver, B.C.

Evening—Ruth Morton Baptist Church,
Vancouver, B.C.

October 14—

Metropolitan Tabernacle, Vancouver, B.C.

October 16—

Marpole Baptist Church, Vancouver, B.C.

When Prayer is Answered

By Charles H. Spurgeon

Text: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—Luke 11:9.

TO SEEK aid in time of distress from a supernatural being is an instinct of human nature. We say not that human nature unrenewed ever offers truly spiritual prayer, or ever exercises saving faith in the living God; but still, like a child crying in the dark, with painful longing for help from somewhere or other, it scarcely knows where, the soul in deep sorrow almost invariably cries to some supernatural being for succour.

None have been more ready to pray in time of trouble than those who have ridiculed prayer in their prosperity; and probably no prayers have been more true to the feelings of the hour than those which atheists have offered under the pressure of the fear of death.

In one of his articles in a magazine, Addison describes a man, who, on board ship, loudly boasted of his atheism. A brisk gale springing up, he fell upon his knees and

Confessed to the Chaplain

that he had been an atheist. The common seamen who had never heard the word before, thought it had been some strange fish, but were more surprised when they saw it was a man, and learned out of his own mouth "that he never believed till that day that there was a God." One of the old tars whispered to the boatswain, that it would be a good deed to heave him overboard, but this was a cruel suggestion, for the poor creature was already in misery enough — his atheism had evaporated, and he in mortal terror cried to God for mercy.

We find a powerful reason for expecting prayer to be effectual in the fact that it is an institution of God. In God's Word we are over and over again commanded to pray. God's institutions are not folly. Can I believe that the infinitely wise God has ordained for me an exercise which is ineffectual, and is

No More Than Child's Play!

It has been objected to prayer that it is not possible that it should be answered, because the laws of Nature are unalterable, and they must and will go on whether men pray or not. Not a drop of water will change its position in a single wave, or a particle of infectious matter be turned from its course, though all the saints in the universe should plead against tempest and plague. Now, concerning that matter, we are in no hurry to make answer; our adversaries have more to prove than we have, and among the rest they have to prove a negative. To us it does not seem needful to prove that the laws of nature are disturbed.

God Can Work Miracles

and He may work them yet again, as He has done in days of yore, but it is no part of the Christian faith that God must needs work miracles in order to answer the prayers of His servants.

When a man in order to fulfil a promise has to disarrange all his affairs, and, so to speak, to stop all his machinery, it proves that he is but a man, and that his wisdom and power are limited; but He is God indeed who, without reversing the engine, or removing a single cog from a wheel, fulfils the desires of His people as they come up before Him.

The Lord is so omnipotent that He can work results tantamount to miracles without in the slightest degree suspending any one of His laws. He did, as it were, in the olden times, stop the machinery of the universe to answer prayer, but now, with equally Godlike glory, He orders events so as to answer believing prayers, and yet He

Suspends No Natural Law

But this is far from being our only or our main comfort; that lies in the fact that we hear the voice of One who is competent to speak upon the matter, and He says: "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you." Whether the laws of nature are reversible or irreversible, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." Now, who is He that speaketh thus? It is He that made all things, without whom was not anything made that was made. Cannot He speak to this point? O Thou Eternal Word, Thou who wast in the beginning with God, balancing the clouds and fastening the foundations of the earth, Thou knowest what the laws and the unalterable constitutions of nature may be, and if Thou sayest: "Ask, and it shall be given you," then assuredly it will be so, be the laws of nature what they may.

Besides, our Lord is by us adored as the Sustainer of all things; and seeing that the laws of nature are only operative through His power, and are sustained in their motion by His might, He must be cognizant of the motion of all the forces in the world; and if He says: "Ask, and it shall be given you," He does not speak in ignorance, but knows what He affirms. We may be assured that there are no forces which can prevent the fulfilment of the Lord's own word.

But another objection has been raised, that prayer can certainly produce no result, because the decrees of God have settled everything, and those decrees are immutable. Now we have no desire to deny the assertion that the decrees of God have settled all events. It is our full belief that God has foreknown and predestinated everything that happeneth in heaven above or in the earth beneath, and that the foreknown station of a reed by the river is as fixed as the station of a king, and "the chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as the stars in their courses." Predestination embraceth the great and the little, and reacheth unto all things; the question is,

Wherefore Pray?

Might it not as logically be asked wherefore breathe, eat, move, or do anything? We have an answer which satisfies us — namely, that our prayers are in the predestination, and that God has as much ordained His people's prayers as anything else, and when we pray we are producing links in the chain of ordained facts. Destiny decrees that I should pray — I pray; destiny decrees that I shall be answered, and the answer comes to me.

But we have a better answer than all this. Our Lord Jesus comes forward, and He says to us this morning: "My dear children, the decrees of God need not trouble you, there is nothing in them inconsistent with your prayers be-

ing heard. 'I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you.' Now, who is He that says this? Why, it is He that has been with the Father from the beginning — "the same was in the beginning with God" — and He knows what the purposes of the Father are and what the heart of God is, for He has told us in another place: "the Father Himself loveth you."

Now since He knows the decrees of the Father, and the heart of the Father, He can tell us with the absolute certainty of an eye-witness that there is nothing in the eternal purposes in conflict with this truth, that he that asketh receiveth, and He that seeketh findeth. He has read the decrees from beginning to end; hath He not taken the book, and loosed the seven seals thereof, and declared the ordinances of heaven? He tells you there is nothing there inconsistent with your bended knee and streaming eye, and with the Father's opening the windows of heaven to shower upon you the blessings which you seek. O ye that believe in Him, your doubts are scattered, ye know that He heareth prayer.

But sometimes there arises in our mind a third difficulty, which is associated with our own judgment of ourselves, and our estimate of God. We feel that God is very great, and we tremble in the presence of His majesty; we feel that we are very little, and that, in addition, we are also vile; and it does not seem a thing incredible that such guilty nothings should have power to move the arm which moves the world. I wonder not if that fear should often hamper us in prayer. But Jesus answers it so sweetly; He says: "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you." Who is it that says: "I say unto you?" Why, it is He who knows both the greatness of God and the weakness of man.

He Is God

and out of His excellent Majesty He says: "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you." But He is also man like ourselves, and He says: "Dread not your littleness, for I, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, assure you that God heareth man's prayer." The words come to us with the harmony of blended notes; the God, the man, both speak to us: "Dread not My majesty, your prayer is heard. Fear not your own weakness; I as a Man have been heard of God."

And yet, again, if the dread of sin should haunt us, and our own sorrow should depress us, I would remind you that Jesus Christ, when He says: "I say unto you," gives us the authority, not only of His person, but of His experience. Jesus was wont to pray. Never any prayed as He did. Nights were spent in prayer by Him, and whole days in earnest intercession; and He says to us: "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you." I think I see Him coming fresh from the heather of the hills, among which

He Had Knelt All Night

to pray, and He says: "My disciples, ask, and it shall be given you, for I have prayed, and it has been given unto Me." I think I hear Him say it, with His face all bloody red and His garments as if He had trodden the winevat, as He rises from Gethsemane, with His soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death. He was heard in that He feared, and therefore He saith to us: "I say unto you, Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Ay, and I think I hear Him speak thus from the Cross, with His face bright with the first beam of sunlight after He had borne our sins in His own body on the tree, and had suffered all our griefs to the last pang. He had cried:

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and now, having received an answer, He cries in triumph: "It is finished," and, in so doing, bids us also "ask, and it shall be given us." Jesus has proved

The Power of Prayer

"Oh, but," saith one, "He has not proved what it is to pray in trouble like mine." How grossly thou errest. The Saviour's trouble was worse than thine. There are no depths so deep that He has not dived to the bottom of them. Christ has prayed out of the lowest dungeon and out of the most horrible pit. "Ay, but He has not cried under the burden of sin." How canst thou speak so thoughtlessly! Was ever such a burden of sin borne by any man as was laid on Him? True, the sins were not His own, but they were sins, and sins with all their crushing weight in them too; yet was He heard, and He was helped unto the end. Christ gives thee, in His own experience, the divinest proof that the asking shall be followed by the receiving.

Remember, too, that if Jesus our Lord could speak so positively here,

There Is Yet Greater Reason

for believing Him now, for He has gone within the veil, He sits at the right hand of God, even the Father, and the voice does not come to us from the man of poverty, wearing a garment without seam, but from the enthroned priest with the golden girdle about His loins, for it is He who now saith, from the right hand of God: "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you." Do you not believe in His name? How then can a prayer that is sincerely offered in that name fall to the ground? When you present your petition in Jesu's name, a part of His authority clothes your prayers. If your prayer be rejected, Christ is dishonoured; you cannot believe that. You have trusted Him, then believe that prayer offered through Him must and shall win the day. May the Holy Spirit impress it upon us all. Amen.

—The Christian Herald

MAN'S MORAL BANKRUPTCY

Sin, like a venomous disease,
Infects our vital blood;
The only balm is sov'reign grace,
And the physician God.

Our beauty and our strength are fled,
And we draw near to death;
But Christ the Lord recalls the dead,
With His almighty breath.

Madness, by nature, reigns within,
The passions burn and rage;
'Til God's own Son, with skill divine,
The inward fire assuage.

We lick the dust, we grasp the wind,
And solid good despise;
Such is the folly of the mind,
'Til Jesus make us wise.

We give our souls the wounds they feel,
We drink the poisonous gall,
And rush with fury down to hell—
But Heaven prevents the fall.

—ISAAC WATTS.

The Sovereignty of Truth

By Dr. A. W. Tozer

2. Truth Is Not Hard to Find

IT IS born in every man to want to dramatize his life and to cast himself as the star of the performance.

Once let a man become persuaded that he is a hero in quest of the holy grail of truth and he becomes a victim of a pretty and pleasant delusion that inflates his ego and blinds him to the very truth he claims to seek. And if he is later forced to admit that he has not found it he absolves himself from all guilt, for has he not searched? Has he not hunted through the years for the precious treasure? Where is the stone he has left unturned? Where has he not drilled or dugged among the philosophies and religions of the world? Why then has he not found?

To him there can be only one answer: The Spirit and Wisdom of the universe has let him down. The great Oversoul has withheld the secret from him. So he tells himself and in wounded dignity walks stiffly into the sunset convinced that he has been deeply wronged in his effort to discover life's *summum bonum*. His is a tragedy worthy of Aeschylus and he himself grand in failure and noble in defeat.

Disillusioning people is a thankless task and quite plainly does not come under the category of making friends and thinking positively. Nevertheless it must be done if we are to rescue lost men from the consequences of their delusions. So let me say boldly that it is not the difficulty of discovering truth but the unwillingness to obey it that makes it so rare among men.

Our Lord said, "I am the Truth," and again He said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Truth therefore is not hard to find for the very reason that it is seeking us. Truth is not a thing for which we must search, but a Person to whom we must hearken.

This is taught or taken for granted in the record of God's dealings with men throughout the Sacred Scriptures. After the sin in Eden it was not Adam who cried "O God, where art Thou?" but God who cried "Where art thou?" as He sought for Adam among the trees of the Garden. Abraham heard God speak and responded, but it was God who was the aggressor. God appeared unto Jacob before Jacob came to appear before God. And in the burning bush God revealed Himself to Moses.

Again and again did God take the initiative. He sought for Gideon and found him on the threshing floor of Ophrah. He showed Himself to Isaiah when there is no evidence that Isaiah was seeking Him. Before Jeremiah was born God laid His hand upon him, and He opened heaven to let the discouraged priest Ezekiel see a vision and hear a voice. Amos said he was not a prophet neither a prophet's son, but the Lord "took" him as he followed the flock. Again God was the aggressor.

In the New Testament things are not otherwise. True, multitudes came to Christ for physical help, but only rarely did one seek Him out to learn the truth; and even that rare one usually turned away when the truth was told him. The whole picture in the Gospels is one of a seeking Saviour, not one of seeking men. The truth was hunting for those who would receive it, and relatively few did. "Many are called, but few are chosen."

The truth in the Person of the Logos, the Word, is seeking to illuminate the minds of men. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." For this reason, when we conceive ourselves to be honest seekers who cannot find the light we are in a state of dangerous self-deception. It is a grave situation. Unless help comes quickly the darkness may close upon us permanently. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

Behind all our failure to find light is an unconfessed and possibly an unconscious love of darkness. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).

We should always remember that we are accountable not only for the light we have but also for the light we might have if we were willing to obey it. Truth is sovereign and will not allow itself to be trifled with. And it is easy to find for it is trying to find us. Obedience is the big problem: and unwillingness to obey is the cause of continued darkness.

—The Alliance Weekly

TRUE UNITY

One hears much, it is true, about Christian union and harmony and co-operation. But the union that is meant is often a union with the world against the Lord, or at best a forced union of machinery and tyrannical committees. How different is the true unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!—J. GRESHAM MACHEN.

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THE ASSURING CHRIST

By Dr. Robert T. Ketcham

National Representative of the General Association of
Regular Baptist Churches

Address Broadcast on the Coast to Coast "Faith in Action" Program of the National Broadcasting Company in Co-operation with the American Council of Christian Churches

THE world is full of fear. As I travel across this continent I find almost every person with whom I come in contact more or less actuated by fear. In Pullman trains, buses, hotels, lobbies, dining cars, barber shops, and in fact wherever one comes in contact with men, this terrible sense of fear pervades the whole atmosphere. Men are afraid of what's coming tomorrow. The tragedy of this terrible orgy of fear is that it has swallowed up a lot of Christians, and they too are fearful of what to-morrow will bring forth. It is to such that I address myself today.

In Revelation 1:17, 18 we hear the risen Saviour say, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." In John 6:20 we hear the Saviour's assuring words to His storm-tossed disciples on the Sea of Galilee, "It is I; be not afraid."

If we are Christians, we not only belong to Christ, but, according to the Scriptures, God views us as actually being in Christ. When Christ died, I died; when Christ arose, I arose; when He ascended, I ascended; where Christ goes, I go. If this is not true, then what do the Scriptures mean when in Romans 6 they declare that I was crucified with Christ; and in Ephesians 2:6 where they declare that I was raised and seated together with Christ; and again in Colossians 3:4 where they declare that when Christ appears, I will appear with Him?

Why should our hearts be filled with fear? Christ is not only the first, but He is the last. He was not only before all things, but He will be here when all things which we now know will have passed away. If we are in Christ, then we will survive the ordeal of existence. Vance Havner says, "He was here before there was any fear, and He will be here when all fear is passed away." Let us remember that He saw everything before there was anything.

If we could stand at His side today and see what He sees, how baseless would be our fears and how excuseless our tears. We cannot see as He sees, or see what He sees. Our vision of the future does not extend beyond our faces so far as certainty is concerned. We live in the mixed and muddled present. We look at the tapestry of our life with its beautiful pattern of variegated colors and there is a particular spot which is woven in deep crimson. It was there that we suffered so terribly. We reach out and tear that crimson spot out of the whole beautiful fabric and say this is life; it's hard; it's cruel. But wait, my friend; put that crimson piece back into the tapestry and stand off and view it in its relation to the blues, purples, and golds which surround it and you will discover that it required just that crimson spot in your life to complete the beauty and the pattern. Without it the whole pattern would have been flat.

So often we tear a page out of the book of our life, that page that was written in scarlet letters of awful agony; and we say, "This is life." No, my friends, put the page back

in the book and read the whole book; begin with babyhood, and read on through childhood, youth, young manhood and womanhood, and then down on through the sunset days of old age, and you will discover that the book would have been terribly dull without it; were it not for such pages, our lives would be rather drab. Our trouble is that we forget all the blues and the golds already woven into the pattern and the pages of pleasure already written into the book, and neither can we see what the future is to produce, and we get terribly afraid of the present. Well, remember, dear friend, that you are in the One who sees it all, and, seeing it to the end, turns to you and whispers, "FEAR NOT."

If we could see what He sees and if we could see ourselves arriving with Him and in Him at the destination of eternity, then our fears would be allayed. No, we cannot see what He sees. But, I'll tell you what we can do. We can hear what He says, in spite of all the tragedy and suffering which His omnipotent eye detects as coming into our life in the days ahead. He sees with that same omniscient eye our safe arrival in eternity. So can we not trust Him, even though we cannot see Him?

If by some means you could be made absolutely certain that you were going to arrive safely and without harm at a certain destination, would not that assurance and guarantee in itself be sufficient to allay any fears which might be occasioned by a bit of rough going *en route*. Well, fearful heart, the One who not only sees the end from the beginning but who also maps out the course and does the driving whispers in your ear today, "I am the first and the last, I was dead, I am alive, I know all the way. I know the end of the way and I'm saying to you today, 'FEAR NOT.'"

To the fearful sinner He says, "Be not afraid, I am thy Saviour." To the one who is afraid of losing his way, He says, "Fear not, I am the way." To the one who is afraid of failing, He says, "Fear not, I am thy strength." To the one who is afraid of death, He says, "Be not afraid, I am the resurrection and the life." To the one who is afraid of hell, He says, "Be not afraid, I am he that hath the keys of hell."

It is this Saviour who is waiting today to come into your life and say, "Fear not, peace be unto you; my peace I leave with you."

—Christian Beacon

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Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 21 Fourth Quarter Lesson 2 October 13, 1957

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

THE MESSAGE OF REBUKE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Lesson Text: Haggai 1.

Golden Text: "Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord."—Haggai 1:13.

Introduction:

The Book of Haggai seems to be far removed from the Book of Ezra, so far as its position in the Bible is concerned, but yet it refers to the same era and the same events.

The work of rebuilding the temple, commenced under favourable auspices, had been effectually hindered through the opposition of the Jews' powerful foes. When a new monarch, Darius, came to the throne of Persia, the Jews might have obtained permission immediately to proceed with the building, had they so desired, but they had become careless and indifferent. They spent their time building splendid homes for themselves, with no regard or interest in the house of God. In love the Lord chastened them, and when signs of repentance appeared, He sent His prophets Haggai and Zechariah to rouse them from their selfishness (Ezra 5:1; 6:14). Haggai preceded Zechariah by about two months (Hagg. 1:1; Zech. 1:1).

The prophecy of Haggai consists of four discourses: (1) chapter 1; (2) Chapter 2:1-9; (3) Chapter 2:10-19; (4) Chapter 2:20-23.

I. The Occasion: verses 1, 2.

The name "Haggai" means "My Feast" and may have been given to him in anticipation of the joy which would be experienced by the liberated exiles. He had probably come to Jerusalem with the first party of returning captives under Joshua and Zerubbabel.

At the opportune moment the word of the Lord came to the Jews by the mouth of Haggai. Our Saviour never leaves Himself without a witness, and He loved His people too much to allow them to drift away entirely from His plan and purpose for them. In times of darkness God speaks to His own believing people through His chosen instruments (Exod. 6:1-8; 2 Kings 19:1-7).

God's message was sent primarily to the leaders, that they in turn might pass it on to the people. Joshua the High Priest was the religious leader and Zerubbabel the Prince was the civil leader (Ezra 3:2). The prophets must themselves be in fellowship with the Lord, then receive His message and faithfully proclaim it to those placed in their charge (Ezra 7:10; Ezek. 33:7; Mark 3:14, 15).

The people excused themselves for their failure to commence rebuilding the temple by saying that the opportune time had not yet arrived. It is possible that they applied the prophecy of 70 years to the temple, as well as to the captivity, alleging that it was then only the 68th year (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10). It may be, however, that they were using the well-worn excuse that the time was not propitious. The Lord's work is frequently set aside on the ground that the circumstances do not seem to be favourable, or that the weather is too hot or too cold (2 Tim. 4:2). The spirit of indifference and neglect is difficult to combat (Amos 6:1; Zech. 1:15; Luke 21:34; Rev. 3:15, 16).

II. The Oration: verses 3-11.

This was a time for activity; it was no time for selfish leisure. It was a time to build the house of the Lord; it was no time to build mansions for their own enjoyment (1 Tim. 6:17-19; Jas. 5:1-5). A characteristic of this age is that men are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:4).

The Lord through His prophet counselled the Jews to consider their ways, to ponder the path of their feet (Psa. 119:59; Prov. 4:26). This is the first step in repentance (Luke 15:17). While going their own way they had been very active, but they had accomplished nothing (Deut. 28:38; Isa.

5:10; Amos 5:11; Mic. 6:15; Zeph. 1:18). They had spent labour and money without profit, as though putting money into a bag with holes in it (Isa. 55:2; Zech. 8:10). Nor did they find satisfaction, for peace and joy come only to those who do the will of God. They must get busy and build the temple, as the Lord had commanded (Rom. 13:11-14; Eph. 5:14). Thus would they bring glory to the name of the Lord (Neh. 2:17, 18; Hagg. 2:9).

The hand of the Lord had been upon them in chastening because of their disobedience (Lev. 26:18-20; Psa. 107:17). They did not take to heart that all was waste where the glorious temple should have been standing, but they had been content that their own homes were intact. Therefore God had withheld the rain and the dew, that His people might remember Him (Rev. 2:5; 3:2, 3; 3:19). National calamities should teach us the folly of forgetting God, to whom we owe all that we are and have.

III. The Obedience: verses 12-15.

The Jews recognized the words spoken by Haggai their prophet as the utterance of the voice of God (Mark 1:2, 3). It would be well if people would realize that the messages brought by true servants of the Lord from His Word set forth the messages of the Lord Himself (Acts 10:33; 1 Thess. 2:13). When we receive God's message through His messenger, we disobey at our peril (Heb. 2:1-4; 12:25).

Zerubbabel and Joshua set an example of obedience and were followed by the faithful remnant (1 Cor. 11:1). Blessing comes to all who obey the word of the Lord promptly and fully (Psa. 81:13-16).

The people feared God; that is, they revered, honoured and loved Him. As they hearkened to the word of God, they realized their sin, repented and turned to the Lord (Isa. 55:7). Then and then only did they receive the gracious assurance of the Lord's presence in their midst (Zeph. 3:17; Hagg. 2:4).

Repentance in this case involved conviction of the sins of lethargy, idleness and selfishness, also a hatred of these sins, a determination to bestir themselves, and an active participation in the work assigned. God by His Spirit through the messages of the prophets stirred up the leaders, and they in turn spurred the people on to new endeavours. In these days of laxity, let not our hands be weary or our hearts faint, but let us arise and build for the honour of the name of the Lord.

Daily Bible Readings

Oct. 7—Rebuke for Indolence	Amos 6
Oct. 8—Rebuke for Indifference	Rev. 3:14-22
Oct. 9—Rebuke for Selfishness	Deut. 8:10-20
Oct. 10—Rebuke for Disobedience	Psa. 81
Oct. 11—Encouragement through the Voice of God	Isa. 48
Oct. 12—Encouragement through His Presence	Isa. 41:8-14
Oct. 13—Encouragement through His Spirit	Zech. 4

Suggested Hymns

How firm a foundation.
To the work.
Break Thou the bread of life.
Go, labour on.
Work for the night is coming.
Rise up, O men of God.

Do not only bend over the Scriptures; embrace them, and keep them upon your minds. Not to know the Scriptures is the cause of all evils.

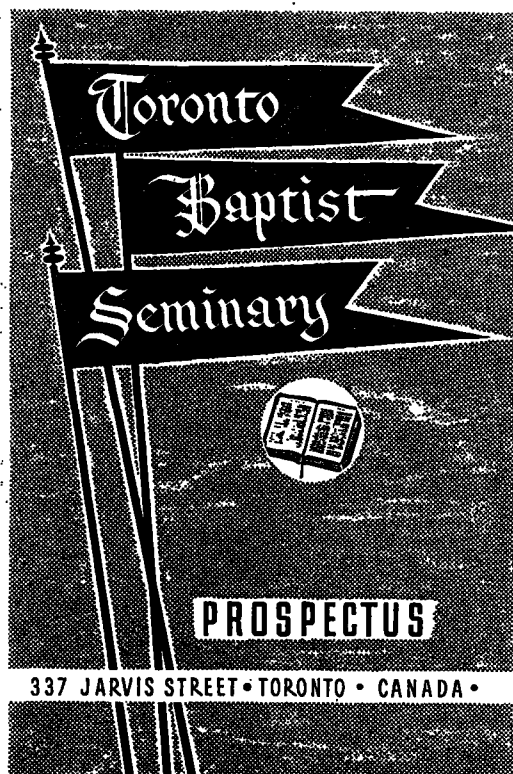
—ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

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