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The Sermons of Dr. T. T. Shields THE REWARDS OF FULL SURRENDER

(Stenographically Reported)

"And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, "And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

"That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

"So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba." Genesis 22:15-19.

Prayer Before the Sermon

O Lord, as we draw near to Thee this morning, we trust we all have a deep consciousness of our need of Thine abounding grace. We have all sinned against Thee, and we are frail children of the dust at best. We are conscious of our limitations. When we would do good, evil is present with us. Though we desire earnestly to serve Thee, we are well aware that we are beset with temptations, and we wrestle against principalities and powers, and we are in need of the energizing of the Holy Ghost, that in all things we may render to Thee an acceptable service. But we come to Thee this morning with confidence because we know that Thou knowest our frame, Thou rememberest that we are dust. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, and we come this morning in this confidence.

We pray Thee to speak to every member of this congregation, to every man and woman, and to every boy and girl. Deal with us, we pray Thee, as individuals this morning, and may heart and conscience be so touched by the Spirit of God that we may all be led to a fuller consecration of ourselves to Thee. We pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. We thank Thee for the revelation of Thyself in this Book, for the record Thou hast given us of Thy Son, for the disclosure of Thine own glory in the face of Jesus Christ Who is the express image of Thy person. For this we thank Thee because we know what Thou art like, since by faith we have looked into the face of the Lord Jesus. We pray therefore this morning that the Holy Spirit by Whom this Book was written, Who Himself has stored away within its pregnant words precious truths which Thou hast designed we should apprehend and appropriate, and to whose sanctifying power we should be wholly committed — we thank Thee that He Who treasured up this truth in this treasure of wisdom is with us this morning to unlock even the secret chambers, if that be necessary; to bring forth to light that we may understand that which is here revealed of the will of God for us. Graciously help us we pray Thee.

Bless the boys and girls this morning, especially those who know Thee, who are Thine own children among them. We pray that they may grow in grace and in Thy knowledge, that they may know something of a life of continuous progress and constant growth in the things of God. Bless any who are not yet Thine, who have not given themselves wholly to the sinners' Saviour. May there be surrender on the part of many this morning. Guide us now, we pray Thee, to Thy praise and to our eternal good, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

NOT infrequently we are tempted to regard the life of faith and of sacrificial surrender to the Lord as though it were a life of serious deprivation, as though the Christian life were always and wholly a journey through the wilderness, marching over rough roads and climbing steep hills, and exploring all the hard places of the earth. The text I have read to you presents the opposite view, and speaks of the rewards of faith. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" — What for? — "that ye through his poverty might be rich." "God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus sent him to" — make you miserable? No, no — "sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Our Lord Jesus came not to narrow and straiten our lives, but to enlarge and deepen and strengthen them. He came not for our impoverishment, but for our enrichment; not that we might be enslaved, but that we might be set at liberty. It is well that we should look not always and exclusively at the offence of the cross, but sometimes consider its superior, its irresistible attrac-

tion; for, properly understood, the religion of the cross is full of blessing. Our Lord comes to us even in His most exacting requirements not to cast us down but to lift us up, not to dethrone us but to enfranchise us, and to crown us with glory and immortality.

The verses which I have read immediately succeed the record of Abraham's great trial when he was called upon to offer up his only son upon one of the mountains that God should tell him of. You will recall how completely Abraham obeyed, how he went all the way with God to the place of sacrifice. He laid his son upon the altar, and stretched forth his hand to slay his son "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." But as he stretched forth his hand to slay his son, the angel of Jehovah called to him out of heaven, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad." The verses I have read to you contain the rich promise which was spoken to Abraham's wondering and worshipping heart when God called to him out of heaven the second time. Now let us go to this old story again this morning, especially that we may examine this promise of abounding grace.

I.

First of all, I want to remind you of THE REALITY OF THE DIVINE COMMUNICATION to Abraham. There is not a shadow of a doubt about it, that God spoke to Abraham and that when Abraham believed the voice to be that of God, he was not mistaken. There is a theory put forward by many of the critics, that Abraham was entirely in error in supposing that God said to him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac . . . and offer him for a burnt offering"; that it was contrary to all that God was and could desire that Abraham should be required to make any such sacrifice; and that when Abraham supposed that the voice he heard was God's he was mistaken; and that God never called upon him to offer up his son. But the fact is, the record tells us that it was the voice of God. Abraham made no mistake whatever, and the surrender of his last and best was really the measure of consecration which God desired of him. Whether you have been burdened with the philosophy of the critics or not, it is a philosophy that naturally issues from the human heart, and when the requirements of God's word run counter to our own desires and to all the tendencies of our nature, it is natural for us to try to explain away those searching requirements and say that after all it cannot be that God requires any such thing of us.

It is a very plausible and palatable suggestion that, when in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord said, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" — I say, it is both plausible and palatable to relegate that to another dispensation and to say, "It does not apply to us." It does apply to us. It all applies to us, and we shall be the losers if we try to explain away, to hand over to somebody else, those portions of Scripture which demand the complete, the unreserved surrender of all we have and are to God. Abraham made no mistake. That is exactly what God requires of us, that there should be no reserve whatever, but that everything should be laid at His feet. The dearest treasures of life, His own most precious and incomparable gifts, husband or wife or child, all possessions, and life itself, every interest — all should be subordinated to His will. That is what He requires of us.

Abraham was right beyond question in so interpreting the voice he heard from above. Now, this word of caution at

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and

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the outset: When turning to your Bible, the Scripture speaks to you, making some great demand upon you, a demand with which it may seem at first blush it is impossible you should comply; when it makes a demand upon you that seems to involve, as it did in Abraham's case, even the blotting out of all that God has done for you, involving the necessity of beginning all over again with God — no matter what He may require, let us accept His word and make no attempt whatever to explain away its severe exactions. Let us yield to it rather, and see what God has to say to the man or woman who keeps nothing back from Him.

I would remind you that the word used here is in the plural form. It was Elohim Who tempted Abraham, Who tried him, Who said, "Take now thy son." It was the voice of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is the testimony of the whole revelation of God that God will not have second place in anybody's life. He will be God, and beside Him there is none else.

How full of comfort is the reflection that it was the angel of Jehovah who interposed and Who made answer to Abraham's faith! It was not a creature angel, but none other than the Angel of the Covenant, Jesus of the New Testament Who spoke to Abraham, when out of heaven He called, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad."

My dear friends, God always has a further communication to make to us when we respond obediently to His call. God always has some answer to make to the response of an obedient faith, and it was the angel of Jehovah Who now spoke.

I touched this morning in our class upon that scholastic absurdity which teaches that the Pentateuch is a composite and is not in its entirety of Mosaic authorship; and of that strange notion which divides and sub-divides this book, as, for example, on the grounds that different names are used for God. Why, my dear friends, were you never called

twice by different names? There is a matter of profound spiritual interpretation involved in the use of these two names. The literary critic who is utterly destitute of spiritual discernment puts the record under his scholastic microscope, and because he finds at one point one name used for God and at another point another name used for God, he says, "This must have been written by two different persons. Here you have something that is derived from different sources and brought together." Why, even the translation of the Bible involves an element of interpretation. This distinction between the names of God is a matter of profound importance. The whole realm of theology, if you like, is involved in these distinctions. It is not a superficial matter of biblical criticism. It requires heart knowledge of God and personal experience of the ways of grace to understand these matters.

It is the angel of Jehovah Who speaks — in mercy? Yes, but let me use a larger Word — Who speaks in grace, and grace abounding to the soul that has answered the call of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and has abandoned himself or herself wholly to God.

How profoundly grateful we should be that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son"! Oh, how graciously He speaks to us in His Son! How tender, how loving, how enriching and ennobling and immortalising is every word of God when it comes to us from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is He Who, when Abraham had answered the demand of God that God should be first in everything, it is through the Angel of the Covenant God speaks, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad."

I think it was at that hour, on that occasion, that our Lord Jesus revealed Himself to Abraham; and it must have been to this experience, in part, at least, He later referred when He said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

Our text says that the angel of the Lord spoke the second time. The difficulty with many of us is that we do not go far enough. We hear the first voice from heaven, the voice that bids us give all, and we fail to hear the other voice, the second time, which bids us receive all. I recommend to you this principle — that, whenever you come in the word of God upon some hard saying, some word that cuts you to the quick, some word that brings you to the cross, some word that crucifies you, some word that lays you in the dust of death before God, do not stop there. Listen, just listen! Go on with God until He speaks to you from out of heaven the second time, and you will find that His further word is a word of promise, a word that pledges blessing.

II.

Then I remind you of THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY OF THIS REVELATION, that God said, "By myself have I sworn." There is a great difference between doubt and unbelief. Unbelief is positive; doubt is always negative. Unbelief denies the truth, and says it is not so; doubt merely says, "I do not know." There is a world of truth in that saying from "In Memoriam" by Tennyson, which has become so hackneyed because of its frequent use —

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

There is such a thing as honest doubt. A man may honestly question and be in doubt about some things; but the man who is thus doubtful is always open to receive the truth.

Unbelief shuts the door, and bars and bolts it against the entrance of the truth.

Now, my dear friends, it may be that there are some people here this morning who are really the Lord's but you are not sure of blessing. You are not absolutely positive of some of the promises of God, or at least of their content, but you want to know. I would remind you that underneath every promise of the gospel, behind every proposal and every pledge of abounding grace, there is the oath of God, Who cannot lie. You and I may take a position of surrender this morning, and be absolutely sure that blessing is on the way. There is nothing in the universe that can be more reliable, upon which we may with greater confidence base our hope, than the oath-bound promise of God, Who cannot lie.

When Abraham has made his surrender, has given his all, God out of heaven speaks and He says, "Abraham, I have something to say to you; and that you may receive it for its full value and rest upon it with comfort to your soul and with everlasting joy, I preface the repetition of My promise with this oath: I swear to you that I am going to bless you."

III.

Do you want to know the blessing? Do you want to be sure of the promise that is bound with the oath of God, that you may go away this morning in that confidence that you are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? Hear what He says. Just look and admire THE WEALTH OF THIS GREAT PROMISE: "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son" — not because you have done a meritorious thing, earning the blessing of the Lord, but because you have proved by your complete surrender that you are in an attitude now to receive what God desires to bestow upon you. It is true that

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

It is for us to yield our wills to God; and when we do, He has a promise for us. First, that it is His will to bless us. What gift would you expect from God?

Your little child of two or three years of age, or perhaps a little more, may bring to you some love offering some time, and that child out of his limited resources may bring the best he can. It may be a bit of the candy he has just bought in the store. It may be a flower from the garden that he has just gathered as an expression of his love. Whatever it is, it simply expresses the child's affection, but it is expressed in terms which are limited by the child's resources. But if a son of yours, grown to adult life, prospered in the things of this world, being himself rich, — if he were to come and bring to father or mother so small a gift as the little child that has scarcely left his babyhood — what interpretation would you put upon that?

When God gives, what are we to expect? When God undertakes to bless His people, what sort of blessing shall we receive when it comes from the hand of God? You remember how David prayed when he had proposed to Nathan to build a house for God. David out of his limited, and yet great, resources said, "I will build a house for God. I have a house myself. I live in a house of cedar, and the ark of God within curtains. I will build Him a house." You remember how the Lord said to Nathan, "You go and tell David that when I want a house I will build one myself. You remind him that I never asked anybody to build me a house yet. Tell David to listen to what I have to say." David listened, and the Lord drew the curtains,

and said, "Look! David. It was well that you had it in your heart; your motive was all right, but your method was all wrong. Just look!" And David looked down the centuries, to see what God would do: The prophet said also, "The Lord telleth thee that He will build thee an house"; and when David saw the divine programme and the infinite blessing that God was going to bestow upon him, he said, "O Lord, do as Thou hast said, for I could not have asked anything like that. That is not after the manner of man. If I had gone shopping, I never should have asked for a blessing like that. If I had given my imagination wings and just flown away and explored all the bounds of possibility, I never should have dreamed of asking the thing that Thou hast now promised." That is what the Bible means when it says that He does "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." You leave the choice to God, dear friend; bring everything you have to Him and lay it in the dust; and say, "Lord, give me back whatever it is Thy will to give." He will speak to you with a promise that is bound with an oath, and the very first word of that promise will be one of blessing. When God goes forth to bless, He will do for you more than all kings and emperors, more than all merchant princes, more than all the rich men of all the earth and all time could do, for He is God, and nothing shall ever come from His hand that is unworthy of His infinite resources.

Then note this: He answers Abraham's consent to subtraction by a *promise of multiplication*. Why, He said to Abraham, "You have one son, your only son, Isaac whom thou lovest; give him to me so that you have nothing left. Keep nothing back. I demand the right to come into your life and take away the best you have." Abraham said, "Thy will, O God, be done. Here he is. Take him away again." "But because, Abraham, you did not object to my proposal to subtract, I will give him back to you and in multiplying, I will multiply him as the stars of heaven."

"Why," you say, "It is a hard thing to be a Christian. It means giving up this and giving up the other thing. It means giving of our money, giving of our time, giving of our energy, giving of our life. It means that God comes into life and takes away and takes away and takes away." So it does. He takes away everything; but having done it, He gives it back again and multiplies it as the stars of heaven.

"I never could understand," says somebody, "that principle of the tenth. There is not an accountant in town that will agree with you — that if a man has ten dollars and he takes one of them away, he has more than when he had the ten. Why, that is not arithmetical." Some superior man says, "Go and ask your little boy, and he will tell you that his school teacher says it is not true. Take one from ten and you have only nine." I tell you, take one from ten and you have a million when God wills it. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" — the firstfruits, not the last — the first; not the poorest — the best; not half — but all of them; — "and see what I will do for you." Have you any faith at all? Who are you dealing with? If you are dealing with man, I will tell you then ten dollars will go farther than nine. The fact is, God does not need your wretched money. What has He? "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

God did not need Isaac, did He? But He said, "I am going to find out the measure of Abraham's devotion, and I am going to put my hand on that which is dearer to him than life itself. I am going to find out what place I have

in Abraham's life." When He had demanded that and Abraham said, "Even that, Lord, shall be Thine," God said, "I swear to you, Abraham, that I will show you what I can do for a man who will trust ME." And He will. Subtraction — consent to it. Whole-hearted surrender to God will be answered by multiplication, and He will give you a hundredfold more than you ever gave to Him. It simply means this: It is the principle of the New Testament — "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." "Put Me first, and I will never forget you. I will never fail you, and in blessing I will bless thee and multiply thee."

"Give me some assurance of that," somebody says. The only assurance I can give you is the promise of God Who cannot lie, and if you cannot accept that, then you are not a child of faith, that is all.

Then let me show you that God *returns often our sacrifice in kind*. Abraham had one son, and the Lord said, "Give him up." When he did it, God said, "Abraham, I will give you so many sons that you cannot count them. They shall be innumerable." "Sons, Lord?" "Yes, sons." I said, "Sons. I gave you one son. He was My gift, and you recognized him and you gave him back to Me; and you let me be God by saying, 'God can raise him from the dead if He will.' Now I will give Isaac back to you, and in Isaac I will give you so many sons that you shall never be able to count them." Up there in the glory, you remember, there is "a great multitude that no man can number", every one of them a child of faith, and being a child of faith, Abraham's seed "according to the promise".

You give up a pleasure of some sort; God will answer you in kind and He will fill your life with pleasure. You yield a talent; and He will multiply your talent. You yield a friend; He will multiply your friends. Whatever you yield, He will answer you in kind. You shall be richer than in the beginning.

Job said a great thing. When his wife said, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die," she did not understand; and he said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. I came into this world without anything, and I shall leave this world without anything; as to material goods. It is all in God's hand. Blessed be His name for ever. He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Read the story. In the end of the day, he had twice as much as he had at the beginning. It is always so. God will never fail to answer the trusting soul.

Then God promised Abraham *victory*, "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." Do not complain to me, and say, "That is not an exact exposition of that text." My dear friends, if you were to live to be as old as Methuselah you could not exhaust that text. Do not expect me to do it. What it means in its entirety the unfolding future may tell, but it means this at all events: that the man who surrenders to God finds the way to a victorious life. The way to victory is not the way of conflict and contest with God. It is the way of complete abnegation, complete surrender, abandonment to God. When you do it, you will find that He to Whom victory is promised and Who dwells within takes to Himself His sceptre and leads you on in triumph. The way of surrender is the way of victory; and it is all in Christ Jesus for us, for "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

There is not a man here this morning, or a woman, who has ever-yet experienced all that is possible for a believer

to experience of the grace of God. No matter what garments you have worn, there are better robes than that in the divine wardrobe. No matter what jewels of adornment you have put on, He will make you more beautiful still. No matter what experience you have had of the blessing of the heavenly places, He will lead you into larger fields, to the appreciation and experience of richer treasure, if only you will obey His voice. I believe, dear friends, that God has in store for us here as a church such blessings as we have never seen. If only our devotion be complete, if only our consecration be without measure, if only we yield ourselves wholly to Him, we shall see here the fulfilment of this promise in larger measure than we have ever seen it yet. Let us forego the pleasures of the world and the plaudits of men, even the favour of those in high places. Let us seek only the will and the glory of God. There is no limit with Him. We are not straitened in Him but only in ourselves, and I pray that we may be led to a full appropriation of all those spiritual blessings wherewith in the plan and purpose of God we are even now blessed in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Is there anybody here who is not a Christian? What does it mean to be a Christian? It means to give up yourself and all that you are to the Saviourhood and Lordship of Jesus Christ, and to receive back from Him a new nature,

a new power, a new name, a new inheritance, a new hope, a new prospect, a promise that He will make all things new and that by and by you shall share even the new Jerusalem, when old things are for ever passed away.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we cannot make visible the things that are invisible. We cannot by any human power make real to the apprehension of men those things which belong to the world of the Spirit and which are unseen, though eternal. But we thank Thee that Thou canst dissolve the obscuring barrier; Thou canst remove all hindrances to a clear view of the Christian's inheritance in Christ; Thou canst anoint our eyes with eye-salve that we may see, enabling us to behold the King in His beauty and the land which is very far off. We beseech Thee to lift us above the limiting, the cramping, the carking conditions of this temporal life. Help us to live largely; enlarge, we pray Thee, the boundaries of life. Help us to walk by faith, not by sight. Help us to ride upon our high places, for there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in our help, and in his excellency on the sky. Give us all the wisdom that will lead us to wait upon God that we may renew our strength, and mount up with wings as eagles. Save and separate us from the clinging things of earth, and lift us into the heavenlies, that in our spiritual Canaan we may gloriously triumph over principalities and powers and be victorious in Him Who never was defeated. Bless our meditation this morning, and lead us into the depths and into the heights, to the glory of Thy great name, Amen.

July 6, 1930.

Seminary Graduate Reports From Nigeria

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Sudan Interior Mission,
Guesheme par Dogondoutchi,
Territoire du Niger, A.O.F.

Kindest greetings to my dear friends. Days have been full of varied activities. The dispensary attendance began to soar in July, and we have had over 200 patients on market days. The last month pneumonia patients have reached almost epidemic proportions. As for my health, I have steadily improved. I could not have managed without the consideration of other missionaries who helped in the dispensary. I will just give you the highlights of what has been accomplished since the station was re-opened. (Note: The station had to be closed during Miss Jackson's illness, through the lack of workers. *Editor.*)

ISAKA, a young man who has been a Christian for three years is entering Bible School at Tsibiri. He is the first one from this area to begin training. He wants to be a minister among his own people here.

BANAU, a lovely young girl, daughter of Amali, one of the first Christians here, is going to be married soon to Dakan, a boy from Dogondoutchi, who is also attending Bible School at Tsibiri. It means so much to have Christian homes established. Banau attended my class for women on Sundays, and later she entered the Dogondoutchi Girls' School. She came back recently to visit her home before her marriage, and it was a thrill to hear her read from the Bible. She has made rapid progress and is a bright testimony to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

TANI, a little girl eight years old, was brought to the dispensary for treatment for a very bad eye infection. Her mother had just died, so she was left with me, as no one wanted to take the responsibility of caring for her, and it seemed as if she would be blind. However, she did recover some of her sight after prolonged treatment, and her father

consented for her to go to the Dogondoutchi Girls' School. She is doing well there. She accepted Christ as her Saviour. A few days ago her father brought her little sister, and he wants her to go there too. She has been staying with me in the meantime.

WALLS FALLING. We are nearly at the end of a heavy rainy season and it has taken its toll of our mud walls. One day one whole wall of our house fell flat and part of another wall crumpled. Ray Pollen fixed up a temporary wall around the kitchen side of the house, and then one morning he came along and said, "Well, we've joined your club. Our kitchen wall has just fallen out."

DISPENSARY. Since the station was re-opened the middle of February we have treated more than 3,675 patients, some of whom have come for long periods of treatment. These patients come from many villages. During the month of August 70 villages were represented, so the Gospel is being spread. The town of Guesheme has become a boarding place for all these sick people, and it has disadvantages in that the residents here do not appreciate it. We hope to build more accommodation for people to live here on the compound. It would enable us to carry on a better spiritual ministry among them, as we did at Tsibiri in the afternoons. Personal work among in-patients proved to be very profitable. Those of you who are interested in the work at Tsibiri will be glad to know that a new dispensary has been built on the hill, so there is no more danger of flooding during the wet season.

Pollens returned from furlough early in June. Miss Schneider, who has been with me, has now gone to Dahomoy where she will be teaching school. Pray for us in our daily contact with the Africans that we may show forth Christ to them in word and deed.

NURSE JOAN JACKSON

Evangelist Armstrong Concludes Successful Mission

"EVANGELISM with dignity." In these words Dr. Slade summed up the two weeks of evangelistic services conducted in Jarvis Street Baptist Church by Mr. James Armstrong of Belfast, Northern Ireland, November 3rd to 17th. God's people have been blessed and inspired, strengthened by the strong meat of the Word, as expounded by Mr. Armstrong. The united effort to reach the souls of men has given to the Christians a new sense of the strategy of Satan and the indifference of the world to spiritual interests, but above all, the power of God and His Gospel has been demonstrated in our midst. At every service the Gospel was presented faithfully and clearly, so as to leave the unsaved without excuse. A number openly confessed faith in Christ as Saviour during the meetings, backsliders were restored, and the hearts of many were deeply stirred. The Word of God is bound to yield fruit in later days.

During the second week of services, Evangelist Armstrong directed his messages to the unsaved, describing with pungent force the various aspects of the Gospel and illustrating the truth with incidents from his own experiences as a policeman in Belfast City. These illustrations were most apt, as they brought home to the hearts of the hearers the magnitude and the guilt of sin, its soul-destroying influence, the certainty of justice and the punishment of the wicked. At the same time, he never failed to emphasize the goodness of God in providing a way of escape for all who would believe: "God loves you, and He is willing to save you; come to Him now." On Wednesday evening members of the Police Christian Fellowship Group of Toronto conducted the service. Their testimonies to the saving and keeping power of the Lord were most impressive, and Mr. Armstrong also narrated the story of his conversion, concluding by urging the unsaved to put their trust in the Lord.

On Sunday, November 17th, the last day of the present campaign, there were two great preaching services, with some responding to the invitation both morning and evening. Large congregations assembled on both occasions, and they heard the Word of the Lord ministered in an impressive manner with emphasis upon the solemnity of the eternal issues involved in accepting or rejecting Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

The morning message was entitled "Heaven and How to Get There" (Rev. 21). Some say that heaven is a state of mind, others an influence, but from the Scriptures we learn that it is an actual place (John 14:2, 3). Where is heaven? As to its locality, it is always referred to as being "up" (Acts 1:11). Heaven is high above the earth. With regard to experience, heaven is at the very end of a Christian life. Once a saint breathes his last breath on earth, he is in heaven, "absent from the body . . . present with the Lord." For the Christian to be absent here is to be present there.

Who are heaven's inhabitants? First, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The angels are there, the Old Testament saints like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the New Testament saints like John and Paul. Those who are there have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. They are a blood-washed people who sing a new song, praising the Lord who redeemed them. There are no Unitarians there, for they reject the blood of Christ, and

no Modernists, who will have nothing to do with what they call "the religion of the shambles". Heaven's people are a redeemed people who have been washed white in the blood of Christ which flowed on Calvary's mountain.

What kind of a place is heaven? In heaven there will be "no more sea". The sea divides, as John the Apostle well knew when he penned these words on the Island of Patmos, banished from his home and separated from his friends. There will be no separation in heaven, no more pain, sorrow or death.

There are names written in heaven, as we learn from the words of the Apostle Paul: "Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel . . . with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are written in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3).

Heaven is a place where the Christian warrior rests and is rewarded. Life is a warfare, for all who live godly in Christ will suffer persecution. On earth we are to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, and then our reward will be great. If we suffer with Him here, we shall reign with Him forever there. The Apostle Paul looked forward to that day when he would receive the crown of righteousness, laid up for him. In heaven God's saints rest from their labours, and their works follow them.

Heaven is a place where God wants you to be for eternity. Could God do more for you than He has done to bring you to that blessed place? He gave His Son to suffer and to die for your sins. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). He makes the way of the transgressor hard, in order that he may turn and walk in the paths of righteousness which lead to heaven. You may be sure of going to heaven if you are a child of God. There are three steps which you must take. You must take the sinner's place, believe that Christ died for you, and receive Christ as your personal Saviour, Sin-bearer and Lord.

The powerful closing message of Mr. Armstrong, "A Destiny-Deciding Question," was broadcast over station CHWO, Oakville, 1250 and was probably heard by a very large number of people. The solemn text, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matt. 27:22), will this week be ringing in many a heart, as the evangelist reiterated it during the course of his sermon. We have read of Moses before Pharaoh, of Elijah before Ahab and of Paul before Agrippa, but this is the strangest scene of all, Jesus before Pilate. The Creator, the One who upholdeth the world, the stars, and all things, stands as a prisoner before Pontius Pilate, His creature. What a wondrous spectacle for men and angels to behold! Pilate had attempted to find an easy way out of an awkward situation by sending Christ to Herod of Galilee, but Herod had merely examined Him and returned Him to Pilate, who discovered that there is no such thing as getting rid of Jesus Christ. Christ is the inevitable Christ: in spite of all your efforts to avoid Him, He will rise up before you, and you will be obliged to do business with Him. The great question for you to decide is, "What shall I do then with Jesus?" You must do something to-night. Will you accept Him or reject Him? Pilate washed his hands, but he could not wash his heart, since "Nothing can for sin atone, nothing but the

blood of Jesus." Jesus is on trial still; He stands to-night a prisoner at the bar in the council-chamber of your mind. Your will, the judge, sits on the throne of reason. As the story is told you must decide the question, and I trust you will do the right thing, make a wise decision, arrive at a true verdict. To help you, I shall call upon heaven, earth and hell to testify on His behalf.

The angel, Gabriel, described Christ as great, the Son of the Highest, the King. At His birth the angels spoke of Him as "the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord". I call to the witness stand God Almighty, who said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." God's advice to *your* heart is "hear ye him."

As to the earth, I call to the witness stand Peter, poor blundering, backsliding Peter, who denied his Lord. "Peter, what do you think of Christ to-night?" Peter would answer: "He is the Christ, the Son of the living God; He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; he bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Peter sealed his testimony with his blood. The Apostle Paul, once a blasphemer, persecutor and injurious, would say: "He is the image of the invisible God; He is the only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; He is holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens; He loved me and gave himself for me." Saint Augustine said: "Too late, too late, too late did I know Him, His beauty so ancient and so new." John Wesley voiced a similar regret: "Ah! why did I so late Thee know, Thee lovelier than the sons of men?"

These were the friends of Christ, but even His foes testify concerning Him. Judas said: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood," and Pilate, the man who condemned Him to death cried: "He is a just man; I find no fault in him." The Roman centurion, that ungodly soldier in charge of the crucifixion, as he gazed on the mangled form of God's Christ on the cross, said: "Surely that man was the Son of God."

What has hell to say regarding the Son of God? "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." In hell they know His name and His character.

You have heard my case to-night. You have heard the evidence of angels, God, His friends and His foes; not one in heaven, on earth or in hell has a bad word to say about Him. What is your verdict? If an innocent man is found guilty, the judge is condemned. Your verdict will decide your destiny; it will be eternal bliss in heaven or eternal torment in hell. We are all sinners, but the difference between the saved and the lost is this; one is a sinner with a Saviour on the way to heaven, while the other is a sinner without a Saviour on the way to hell.

What will Jesus do for you? What He has done for me and for others, He is abundantly able to do for you. Someone says, "I should like to trust Him, but I cannot." What ails you that you cannot trust Jesus? A guide was conducting a traveller over the mountains. They came to a chasm, with but a step needed to cross it. The guide went smartly over. "Come on," he said to the hesitating traveller, "give me your hand and step over". Still the man faltered. Losing patience, the guide said, "Look man, give me your hand and step over. This hand has seen thousands safely travel this way; I have never lost one." The man reached forth his hand to that of the guide, and with one step was safely across the chasm. The hand stretched out to you to-night is mighty. It created the world and upholds the sun, moon and stars. It holds and controls the

breath of every creature. That hand is nail-scarred. Millions have entered the refuge, and yet there is room. He has never lost a case. Place that frail little hand of faith into that strong hand of Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

Sinner friend, what will you do without Jesus which is called Christ? When skies are clear and the horizon bright, when you have youth, beauty, health and friends, you may seem to get on without Him. But when the winds are contrary, the clouds lower, and your frail bark is drifting, drifting, drifting toward the dark, desolate shore; when anchor, haven and hope are gone, what then? When life ebbs to its close, when you have said the last farewell and the doors of eternity open; what will you do *then* without Him?

Ninety years ago, D. L. Moody spoke from this text in Chicago, and he advised his congregation to think of the text, return next Sunday and decide what they would do. Mr. Sankey's selection in song was this:

"To-day the Saviour calls, for refuge fly;
The storm of judgment falls, and death is nigh."

Before the service was dismissed the great Chicago fire had started, and one thousand of that congregation perished. I want to know *now* what you are going to do with Christ. "Now is the accepted time." To-night is the night of destiny for you.

What will you do to be lost? Keep on doing what you are doing now — attend church, read, pray, but don't, don't, don't accept Christ! Keep Christ out of your life. Are you going to heaven with Christ or to hell without Him? What will you do then with Jesus which is called Christ?

At the conclusion of the service Dr. Slade expressed the hope that Mr. Armstrong would return to Jarvis Street at a later date. The evangelist, on his part, thanked Dr. Slade and the church officials for inviting him to minister the Word again from this famous pulpit. He also expressed gratitude to all who had in any way helped to make the meetings possible and successful.

—O.L.C.

THE LORD PROVIDES

The manna only falls where the cloudy pillar broods; but it is certain to be found on the sands, which a few hours ago were glistening in the flashing light of the heavenly fire, and are now shadowed by the fleecy canopy of cloud. If we are precisely where our heavenly Father would have us to be, we are perfectly sure that He will provide food and raiment, and everything beside. When He sends His servants to Cherith, He will make even the ravens to bring them food.

—F. B. MEYER

Monthly FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICE

Sunday, November 24th, 3 p.m.

in Greenway Chapel

The Bible Doctrine of Salvation

By Dr. C. D. Cole

Dean Emeritus of Toronto Baptist Seminary

I. THE NATURE OF SALVATION

SALVATION — the most important word ever uttered, and yet how meaningless to the masses whose minds are set on things on the earth!

SALVATION — the greatest blessing that can possibly come to a human soul, and without which it would be better never to have been born, and yet the most neglected thing in the world!

SALVATION — the blessed gift of God — without money and without price — paid for by His blessed Son — and yet that which conceited men think they can earn with their own puny hands!

Salvation presupposes the fact of sin. And sin involves a Supreme Being Whom we call God. If there is no God, there can be no sin, and if there is no sin, there can be no sinners, and if there are no sinners to be saved, there can be no salvation. Salvation means deliverance, and Bible salvation is deliverance from sin.

Sin consists of a guilty standing and a depraved state before God. Salvation is deliverance from both guilt and defilement. Salvation is to be made safe and sound in relation to the thrice-holy God. Man, as a sinner, is in danger from the wrath of a holy and just God, and is also outside the pale of Divine fellowship. Salvation is deliverance from the eternal consequences of rebellion against the government of Almighty God. Without salvation the sinner is forever excluded from the glorious presence of God and forever exposed to the terrible wrath of God.

I.

The Need of Salvation

In the light of eternity salvation is the *only* need. In comparison all other needs fade into insignificance. All other needs are temporal; salvation is for eternity. All other blessings are for a season; salvation is an everlasting blessing. It is called everlasting life. The opposite of everlasting life is everlasting punishment in the lake of fire, called the second death.

Salvation covers *every* eternal need. It covers the housing problem, for in the Father's house are many mansions. It covers the food problem, for Christ is the bread of life of which one may eat and never hunger. It covers the employment problem, for the saved will serve God day and night in His temple. It covers the social problem, for the saved of all the earth will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God — all language and cultural barriers will vanish. It covers the health problem, for in the new heavens and the new earth there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. Moreover, God Himself shall dwell with His people, and will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Salvation is a *universal* need, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Every normal person has a guilt complex. A New York preacher once announced as his subject, "How to Get Rid of Guilty Feelings." He told the audience he would pause while all who were free of guilty feelings might leave the building. To his surprise

nobody left. He said he would not have been surprised if it had been a small town congregation where everybody would be known to each other, but in New York where all were more or less strangers to one another, he had not expected all of them to acknowledge they were sinners. But that New York congregation were true to their feelings in this matter — every one of them had a guilt complex. This, in itself, is proof of the existence of God. Conscience testifies loudly to the fact that there is a God with Whom we have to do.

The story of religion is made up of the efforts men make to get rid of this guilty feeling. This is the explanation of what is called "conscience money"; the thief is trying to get rid of guilty feelings by returning what he had stolen. This is why the Romanist goes to confessional; he is wanting to get something off his conscience. This is the explanation of Communism; the Communist rids himself of a guilty feeling, if and when he can persuade himself to believe there is no God to Whom he must give account. The very fact that the atheist raves against the idea of God indicates that his own conscience gives him trouble on the question. This accounts for all heathen religions; people are striving to get rid of guilty feelings. It explains the faith of God's elect; they are trusting Christ for acceptance with God and freedom from condemnation.

Human nature is bad. The Bible does not have one good thing to say about man apart from the inwrought grace of God. The Bible says that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and that they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:7, 8). Man, as a sinner, is beyond repairs; he must be born again — there must be a new creation. Donald F. Ackland puts this truth in another way, when he says that sin has created a God-shaped vacuum in the human heart, and that the story of religion is in the way men try to fill that vacuum.

We do not find human nature fully developed in countries where gospel privileges have been enjoyed over a long period of time. Christ said that His people would be the salt of the earth. Salt is a preservative, and saved people will preserve human society from utter moral corruption. Many are blessed temporarily by the gospel who are not eternally saved by it. Humanity as such is safer in a community where there are Christian people.

When Carey went to India about 165 years ago, he found human nature in the rough, human nature fully developed. Andrew Fuller tells us what Carey found in India. He found religions by which the natives were trying to get rid of guilty feelings. These religions consisted in a large part in self-torment. One would hold his hand above his head until it would be so stiff he could not take it down. Another would lie on iron spikes just blunt enough not to pierce him to death. They had what was called the worship of the Juggernaut. A massive wooden god was carried on a huge carriage drawn by many men howling and shrieking, and anyone who would throw himself under its wheels to be crushed to death was counted happy. Another part of their religion was the burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. It

was common to throw new-born infants into the river as offerings to the gods. And the baby that would not take its mother's milk would be placed in a basket and hung in the branches of a tree to be devoured by ants and birds of prey. And that was human nature — the same nature possessed by both writer and reader. God be praised for the grace that made us new creatures in Christ!

II.

Prerequisites to Salvation

There must be a just basis for salvation, else God would cease to be just in forgiving sin. There can be no salvation at the expense of justice. And justice cannot be dispensed apart from the punishment of sin. There is no miscarriage of justice in heaven's court, for every sin shall receive a just recompense of reward. Divine justice must be vindicated and the law of God must be upheld in the case of every sinner. In the death of Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, there is a just basis for salvation. Christ died the just for the unjust. He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us. He was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God through faith in Him. Christ put away the guilt of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. God forgives the sinner for the sake of Christ. As our Surety He paid the sin-debt to the last farthing. As our Substitute He took our place under the law and died the very kind of death which denoted that He was accursed of God (Cf. Gen. 33:13 and Deut. 21:23). Terrible price to pay for our salvation, but it was what the law of God demanded and the only way God could be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:26). "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering" (Heb. 2:10). Christ could not be a perfect Saviour apart from suffering the just demands of the law for His people.

III.

Various Aspects of Salvation

We have seen in previous articles that sin has wrought awful havoc with the human race. It has ruined every man and every part of man. The consequences of sin are manifold, and there is an aspect of salvation for every aspect of sin. And there is a Bible word by which each of the several parts or aspects of salvation is described. If the sinner be viewed as in a state of death, then *regeneration* or the new birth is the Bible word to denote the impartation of life. If the sinner is considered as a child of the devil, then *adoption* is the term which expresses the judicial act of God by which he is made a son of God. If we think of the sinner from the standpoint of his body, being mortal and having in it the germs of death by which it will be turned into a dust-heap, then *glorification* is that aspect of salvation in which the body will be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. If the lost person be regarded as in a state of depravity or moral defilement, *sanctification* is the work of making him holy and pure before God. If we think of the sinner as in a state of spiritual darkness, unable to understand the gospel, then *calling* is the Bible term to express the act of God in giving light by which the sinner can see or understand that Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God in the plan of salvation. If the sinner be thought of as in a position of condemnation — cursed by God's law he has violated — then *justification* speaks of his perfect standing before the throne of God. If salva-

tion be approached from the standpoint of the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously saves sinners, then *election* and *predestination* are the Bible terms which denote the choice and destiny of God's people.

IV.

The Three Tenses of Salvation

Some aspects of salvation are instantaneous, while others are progressive. The deliverance from the guilt of sin is at the very instant of faith; the deliverance from the defilement of sin is a long process, in which the believer experiences pain as well as pleasure. While mourning over indwelling sin, he rejoices in hope — the well founded expectation — of the glory of God. The believer rejoices in Christ, has no confidence in the flesh, and painfully longs to be perfectly whole. Being poor in spirit, conscious of his lack of personal worthiness, he expects God to perfect that which concerneth him. He believes that God who began the good work of grace in him will perform it until the day of Christ. The believer is perfectly justified — no charge can be laid to his account — but he is not yet glorified, and will not be until Christ comes and he awakes in His likeness. It is positively beyond comprehension what God has prepared for them that love Him. And may we not forget that we love Him because He first loved us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood.

V.

Salvation Is By Grace

Salvation is by grace, which means that it is undeserved, and also that there is no divine obligation to save any sinner. Salvation by grace means that it is not of debt or reward, but is the free gift of God. God might have left every one of us to his fate, to perish in his sins. It was love in God and not loveableness in the sinner that accounts for salvation. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Salvation is, therefore, the gracious and sovereign work of God. All our graces are children of His grace and the fruit of His Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

From foreknowledge in eternity past to glorification in eternity future, salvation is all of grace, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). God thinks so much of His only begotten Son that He has determined to make all His sons just like Him. And there is no human merit or human strength at any stage or in any aspect of salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

"Lord, I was blind: I could not see
In Thy marred visage any grace;
But now the beauty of Thy face
In radiant vision dawns on me.

"Lord, I was dead: I could not stir
My lifeless soul to come to Thee;
But now, since Thou hast quickened me,
I rise from sin's dark sepulchre.

"Lord, Thou hast made the blind to see,
The deaf to hear, the dumb to speak,
The dead to live; and lo, I break
The chains of my captivity."

—MATSON, 1833-99.

The Shroud of Fine Linen

"And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre."—Mark 15:46.

IT SOMETIMES takes a crisis to reveal the latent elements of a person's character. One man, hitherto regarded as strong, will suddenly collapse when faced with an emergency. Another man, almost overlooked because of his seeming insignificance, will spring to the front as a hero in the hour of danger. Joseph of Arimathea belonged to the latter class. A rich man and a member of the Sanhedrin Council, although good and just and not consenting with the other members of the Council who had voted to condemn the Christ, was nevertheless classed as a secret disciple "for fear of the Jews". But the false arrest, the trial and the crucifixion of Christ with all the dreadful deeds of the Jews and of the Romans turned this weak follower into a courageous, fearless, lion-hearted champion of the Saviour. With boldness he went to Pilate and asked that the body of Christ be given him for burial. The tender ministrations of burial were thus assumed by an avowed friend of Christ.

Joseph himself purchased the fine linen, customarily used in embalming the dead, and with loving hands he prepared the precious body of his Lord and Saviour for burial in his own new tomb.

Joseph evidently had not the faith of Mary of Bethany, who had anointed Christ beforehand for burial, believing His word that He would rise again, but with whole-hearted devotion he did all in his power to honour his beloved Master, who had been scorned and rejected by the rulers, priests and people. The sad but tender duties involved in the death of a loved one were discharged by Joseph and proved beyond all doubt his great affection for the Lord. It is possible that to him these duties did not have a hidden meaning, but as we ponder his actions in the light of the Scriptures they appear most significant and symbolic of certain great truths.

As we think of Joseph winding the lengths of fine linen about the body of Christ after His decease or exodus (Greek word translated "decease" in Luke 9:31 is *exodos*), we are reminded of the fact that in the days after the Exodus of the children of Israel Moses was commanded to clothe Aaron and his sons with the priestly robes. These various articles of clothing, including the ephod, girdle, breastplate, coat and mitre, were made from fine twisted linen. Perhaps unconsciously, but yet in figure, Joseph's action indicated that the Lord Jesus Christ was now being consecrated as the Priest of His people. He had offered the one sacrifice for sins for ever, and learning obedience by the things which He had suffered, He was now the Perfect High Priest, consecrated for ever more.

The fine linen vestments of the priests were called "holy garments", as they symbolized the holiness or sacredness of the office of those who bore "the iniquity of the holy things," and as they represented the whiteness of character and life which the priests were expected to possess: "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Our Lord Jesus Christ could fitly wear glistening white linen raiment, for He was indeed holy, harmless and undefiled; "Spotless Lamb of God was He." He was absolutely holy in nature, in life, in word, deed and thought. During His earthly life and in His death He had wrought out for us the righteous-

ness which God demanded. That aspect of His ministry had just been completed. To Joseph was given the high privilege of picturing for us that finished work of Christ the Redeemer.

The fine twined linen garments of the Aaronic priests are further described as holy garments "for glory and for beauty". What transcendent glory for the Son of God is implied as Joseph enveloped that bruised body with pure white linen! Finished now all the suffering, the sorrow, the anguish and the shame associated with His whole earthly life and intensified during these last momentous days. To redeem fallen man Christ had stooped to earth, He had put on for a time the mantle of humanity, being made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He had been made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. But that humiliation was now past. At times during His earthly life He had manifested His Deity very briefly, as when He appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration in glistening white, but now His Deity would be fully revealed. He was to be crowned with glory and honour; He was again to be glorified by the Father with the glory which He had before the world was.

And the fine linen shroud was indeed a garment of beauty. As the Man of Sorrows hung upon the cross, His lovely face was marred and scarred by the cruel treatment He had received at the hands of sinful men, so that there was no beauty in Him, no comeliness of form that the natural mind should desire Him. Indeed, His visage was scarcely recognizable. But now, that human form which He had assumed that He might become subject to death was to be fully transfigured and glorified. All the habiliments of glory, laid aside for the period of humiliation, were now to be assumed once more. That precious body would be inhabited by His immortal Spirit, and resplendent in dazzling beauty, He would ascend once more to heaven. Celestial beauty would be His.

The pure white linen garment speaks also of glorious victory. In speaking to the saints at Sardis the Lord said, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." To human eyes, the form of Christ, as He lay prostrate in death, seemed but the body of a victim, but as a matter of fact, He was the Victor in all that had taken place. Voluntarily He had submitted to the enemy, Death, that He might vanquish that foe forever. Soon His deathless Spirit would burst the confining bonds, and Christ would arise as the Victorious One, triumphant over death, the grave, sin and Satan. Yes, Joseph, reverently wrap the fine white linen about that lovely frame of the Son of God, in token of His mighty power, for He has vanquished all our foes.

"His be the Victor's name
Who fought our fight alone;
Triumphant saints no honour claim;
Their conquest was His own.

"By weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown;
Trod all our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down.

"He hell in hell laid low;
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death, by dying, slew.

"Bless, bless the Conqueror slain!
Slain by Divine decree!
Who lived, who died, who lives again,
For thee, His saint, for thee."

Such faith and love as Joseph of Arimathea displayed toward His Saviour and Lord receive a reward. This loyal friend, and all who like him trust in the Christ who lived, who died, who rose again, who ascended and now intercedes, all in turn are clothed with the white robe of His righteousness. They become kings and priests unto God, the glory of Christ is counted potentially as theirs, and the beauty of the Lord our God rests upon us. We, too, through His victory become more than conquerors. Then, in His

good time we shall in reality share His holiness, His glory, His beauty and His victory. We shall walk with Him in white forever, all glorious as He!

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

"This spotless robe the same appears
When ruined nature sinks in years;
No age can change its glorious hue;
The robe of Christ is ever new.

"Oh, let the dead now hear Thy voice!
Bid, Lord, Thy banished ones rejoice:
Their beauty this, their glorious dress
Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness."

—O. L. C.

Solemn Pleadings for Revival

(Part II)

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

"Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength; let them come near; then let them speak; let us come near together to judgment."

—Isaiah 41:1.

I.

AFTER urging the people of God to keep silence before Him that they may renew their strength, the prophet adds, "Then let them draw near." Beloved, you that know the Lord, I would urge upon you to DRAW NEAR. You are silent, you have renewed your strength, now enjoy access with boldness. The condition in which to intercede for others is not that of distance from God, but that of great nearness to Him. Even thus did Abraham draw nigh when he pleaded for Sodom and Gomorrah. May God the Holy Spirit draw us near even now; perhaps the following five considerations may help us in so doing.

Let us remember *how near we really are*. We have been washed from every sin in the precious blood of Jesus; we are covered from head to foot at this moment with the spotless righteousness of Immanuel, God with us; we are accepted in the Beloved; yea, we are at this moment one with Christ, and members of His body. How could we be nearer? How near is Christ to God? So near are we. Come near, then, in your personal pleadings, for you are near in your covenant Representative. The Lord Jesus has taken manhood into union with the divine nature, and now between God and man there exists a special and unparalleled relationship, the like of which the universe cannot present. No actual blood relationship exists between God and any other creature but man, "for verily he took not up angels, but he took up the seed of Abraham." "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee?" and yet hath He said this first and chiefly to the Lord Jesus Christ; and next, in a true but secondary sense, to each regenerate one whom He has of His own will begotten by the word of truth. Come near, then, O ye sons of God, come near, for you are near. Stand where your sonship places you, where your Representative stands on your behalf. Let the slaves of the flesh, and the bond-servants of the law stand afar off from the Lord who speaks

to them from Sinai; but as for us, it is our joy to come very near, for the voice of love calls to us from Calvary.

The next consideration which may help you to draw near is that *you are coming to a Father*. That was a blessed word of our Lord's, "The Father himself loveth you." God forbid that I should make you think less of the splendour and majesty of God; but I pray you to remember that, however great and terrible He is, He is our Father. I delight in those words of our poet:

"The God that rules on high,
And thunders when He please,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas:
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love."

As surely as my earthly father is near akin to me, and I may come to him with loving familiarity, so may I approach the Lord, who hath begotten me again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and I may say to Him, "Abba," "Father," and He will not disregard the cry. Hath He not given us the spirit of adoption? How can He despise that which He gives? Come, then, and speak in your Father's ear. O child of God, you are not talking to a stranger, you are not about to hold a debate with an enemy, you are not seeking to wring a blessing from an unwilling hand. It is to your Father that you speak. Come near to Him, I pray you, and plead this day.

Remember next, that *the desire which is in our heart for God's glory and the extension of His church is a desire written there by the Holy Spirit*. Now, if the Holy Spirit Himself indites the prayer, and He knows the mind of God, if He makes intercession in our hearts according to the will of God, we need have no hesitation to express our desires, because our desires are simply the shadow of the

eternal purpose; and that which always was in the mind of God to give, the Spirit of God has inclined us to ask. True prayer is the intimation of God to man that He intends to bless him. It is the herald of mercy. Plead, then, O child of God, for the Spirit of God is pleading in you. Come and speak out that which He speaks within. He Himself helpeth your infirmities, making intercession in you according to the will of God. When the Spirit prompts, what cause can there be for hesitation? We must speed when He inspires.

Remember that *what we ask*, if we are now about to plead with God concerning His kingdom, is *according to His own mind*. We are at one with God in this matter. If it were not for God's glory for sinners to be converted, we would not pray for it. We desire to see thousands turn to Christ, but it is with this view, that the infinite mercy, wisdom, power and love of God may be manifested towards them, and so God may be praised. Verily, much as our heart is set upon the prosperity of the Church of God, if it were conceivable that such prosperity would not glorify God, we would not ask for it. We desire to see, not our notions, but God's truth prevail. I do not want you to believe as I believe except so far as that belief is according to the mind of God. I pray every believer to search his heart and see whether his desire be a pure one, having God's glory as its alpha and omega. It is God's truth, God's kingdom, God's glory that we want to see promoted. If this be the case, may we not come very boldly? We have not only the King's ear but His heart also, and we may open our mouths wide. When we have a question as to the Lord's will, we are bound to go no further than "nevertheless, not as I will"; but when there is no ground for hesitancy, with what sacred ardour may we press our suit!

Moreover, there is this further consideration; *the Lord loves to be pleaded with*. He might have given all the covenant blessings without prayer; wherefore does He compel us to use entreaties, unless it be that He loves to hear the voices of His children? God has given to the church untold mercies in answer to intercession, for He delights to bless His people at the mercy seat. In this our own beloved church prayer has been more glorious and excellent than all the mountains of prey. Its bow has not returned empty, neither has its shield been cast away. Prayer has been bolder than the lion, swifter than the eagle and has overthrown all her adversaries, treading them beneath her feet as straw is trodden for the dunghill. To this day we live by prayer. The Church of God has never gained a victory but in answer to prayer. Her whole history is to the praise of the glory of a prayer-hearing God. Come, then, brethren, if we have sped so well before, and if God invites us now, yea, if He delights in our petitions, let us not be slack, but enlarge our requests before Him. Oh for grace that we may now this day and henceforward draw very near to God!

II.

I now come to the last point, which is, "LET US SPEAK." Be silent, renew your strength, draw near, and then speak. What have we to say upon the matter which concerns us? Let us first speak in the spirit of *adoring gratitude*. How sweet to think that there should be a Saviour at all; to think that the project of rescuing this poor world from her ruin should ever have been entertained in the courts of heaven; to think that the Spirit should be given to reside among men, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the rebels to obedience to the truth!

To think that there should be a heavenly kingdom to set up, as it is set up; that it should have made such advances as it has made and should still grow mightily! That Jesus Christ should be seen of angels is put down as a wonder, but it is mentioned next to it that He was "believed on in the world." He has been believed on by millions, and however gloomy the prospects of the Church may appear, the kingdom of Christ is not an insignificant kingdom, even now. Those who deride her laugh too soon. She is in her twilight, as Voltaire said, but it is the twilight of her morning, and not of her evening. Brighter times are coming; but even now, up to this moment, the history of the Church cannot be told without adoring gratitude to God. She has been foolish and has lost her strength, but, like Samson's, it will return. Deceived and deluded in the days of Constantine, she suffered that baptized heathen to proclaim an adulterous connection between the Church and the State, and from that day her glory has departed, and her power has fled. When will she repent? The nominal Church goes after her lovers, seeking her corn and her wine at their hands, and she says to the kings and queens of the earth, "Be ye my head, and let your senators rule me." While she does this God cannot bless her in any great degree. When was the ark taken? Never till it was defended by the carnal sword. When did the ark triumph? Was it not when left alone in its own glory that it smote Dagon to the ground? When the visible Church gets back to her chastity to Christ, she will say, "We have nothing to do with parliaments and kings, except to convert them; ours is a spiritual kingdom, and statecraft is foreign to her. We ask not your endowments; we care not for your persecutions; let us alone; all we ask is a clear stage and no favour."

The bride of Christ comes not into the world to toy with the politics of princes, hers is a higher work. She leans upon the Lord alone and yields allegiance to none else. Remove worldliness and you will see bright days; but the grand impediment of the Church now is the arm of flesh, the lofty, high-sounding titles of her prelates, the palaces of her bishops, — be amazed, ye heavens, that the successors of the apostles should be owners of palaces! — the priestliness of her ministers and the lack of gospel simplicity. This hampers her; but cut the Church clear of this, and God's bare arm will soon win victory unto the truth in this land. I for my part bless and magnify the Lord that, though a great section of the visible Church has played the harlot so sadly in the midst of the nation, yet He has not quite cast her away. He keeps a chosen company, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; on whose banner is written, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism;" and whose watchword is, "One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren." As to the world, we will seek its conversion, but we will never enter into alliance with it, much less bow down our necks before its kings and princes. May God grant us grace as we draw near to Him, to speak out in adoration of Him.

Next, let us speak in *humble expostulation*. I would earnestly urge upon my brethren in Christ to expostulate thus with the Lord. "O Lord, Thy truth does not prosper in the land, yet Thou hast said, 'My word shall not return unto me void.' Lord, Thou art every day blasphemed, and yet Thou hast said that Thy glory shall be seen of all flesh. Lord, they set up the idols; even in this land, where Thy martyrs burned, they are setting up the graven images again. Lord, tear them down, for Thy name's sake; for Thine honour's sake, we beseech Thee, do it. Dost Thou not hear the enemy triumph? They say the gospel is worn

out. They tell us that we are the relics of an antiquated race; that modern progress has swept the old faith away. Wilt Thou have it so, good Lord? Shall the gospel be accounted a wornout almanack, and shall they set up their new gospels in its stead? Souls are being lost, O God of mercy! Hell is being filled, O God of infinite compassion! Jesus sees but few brought to Himself and washed in His precious blood. Time is flying, and every year increases the number of the lost! How long, O God, how long? Wherefore tarriest Thou?" In this manner order your case before the Lord, and He will hearken unto you.

When you have spoken by way of expostulation, then turn to *pleading*. Plead with all your skill in argument: "There is Thy promise, O Jehovah; wilt Thou not keep it? Thou hast said unto Thy Son, Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession! We do ask in Jesus' name. Do it for the sake of Thy promise! Lord, Thou hast done great things and unspeakable in times gone by: we have heard with our ears and our fathers have told us the wondrous things which Thou didst in their days and in the old time before them: Thou art the same Lord, therefore glorify Thyself again. By all the past, we beseech Thee, reveal Thyself at this present." Plead with the Lord and lay stress upon His glory. Tell Him that it glorifies His mercy to save sinners, and glorifies His wisdom and His power, yea, every attribute of His divine nature. Then plead the merit of His Son. Oh, brethren, plead the blood, plead the wounds, plead the bloody sweat in Gethsemane, plead the cross, plead the death and resurrection, and come not away from the mercy-seat till with this mighty plea you have won the victory.

I scarcely need remind you at how many points you may get a grip of the covenant Angel; for when wrestling with Him, if you have but the will to do it, you may seize Him anywhere and hold Him fast, and say, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." I wish I could preach like John Knox, but I wish ten times more that I could pray like him, — a man who would not take "no" for an answer, but won Scotland for Christ, and she remains Christ's still through John Knox's prayer. It is not possible for prelacy to flourish where Knox has prayed. Oh for prayer such as that again! King of kings, wilt Thou not stretch out Thy sceptre and save men? Wilt Thou not pluck Thy sword out of its scabbard, and smite Thy foes? There be some men to whom God would almost say, as He did to Moses, "Let me alone." They are favoured to use such forcible arguments and cogent pleas that wrath forbears and mercy yields the blessing. If we can push on as Moses did with renewed pleadings and entreaties, the blessing will come. This is what England, yea, the world wants — men who can plead with God, men who can draw near and then speak.

Again, dear brethren, after we have been silent, after we have renewed our strength, and after we have drawn near to God, let us speak to-day in the way of *dedication*. Now, here I cannot suggest to any man what he in particular may speak. I charge you before the living God lie not unto Him, but if you can say this, I pray you say it — "I give to God this day my body, my soul, my spirit. I have asked that His kingdom may come: I pledge myself in His sight to extend that kingdom by every power I possess or may be able to gain, by every opportunity He may put in my way, and by every means which I am able to use." I do not think Jesus ought to have less than that from us, but I know He gets far less. Perhaps the Lord

may move some of you young men to say, "Lord, I want to see Thy kingdom spread, and therefore I will give myself up to preach the gospel." Perhaps some of you good women here may say, "I will undertake a work of usefulness of some kind or other for Jesus; I am resolved I will." And you who have this world's goods, I hope you will say, "I know that this good work always needs money: I have it: it shall be freely given. When I see that the gospel does not spread, I will not have the reflection on my mind that it is retarded by deficiency of pecuniary means, while I have gold stored up." I will not suggest to any of you more than this — whatever the Lord moves you to do, do it; but I do think when we come to plead with the Lord after this fashion we ought to be able to say, "Lord, do spread Thy kingdom; it is not my fault it does not spread. I do for Thee all I can. I boast not of it, for all I do I ought to do, and I wish I could do a thousand times as much; but still, Lord, during this year of grace I hope to do much for Thee which I may have forgotten hitherto."

Last of all, brethren, let us speak still in the way of *confidence*. However we may complain of the spread of error, the deaths of good men and the fewness of able ministers to take their places; however we may think the times to be dark and dreary, let us never speak as if God were dead. I walked some time ago, with one of the most earnest Christians I know of, a very devout man, and he told me he was afraid that one day the streets of London would run with blood. He was afraid of an educated democracy which, being uneducated in religion in schools, would become educated Atheists and cast off all reverence for God and law; and he gave me an awful picture of what was going to happen. But I touched him on the arm and said, "There is one thing you have forgotten, dear friend: God is not dead yet. What you are dreading will never occur in this land, I am sure. We have an open Bible, we have still some who preach the gospel with all their hearts, and there is still a salt and leaven in the city of London that God will bless to keep down the rottenness and corruption. In spite of all His foes, the Lord reigneth."

What, my friends, the Devil conquer our God? Never. Rome triumphant over Zion? Never. Rome has been very cunning; the Devil has done his best in Roman Catholicism; there is no more wisdom left in the Devil than he has put into that concern, and if that is confounded, he has lost all. That is his *ultimatum*, the course of hellish craft can go no further. He has staked all his power on the Church of Rome, and to a certainty she will be driven before the Church of Christ like chaff before the wind. They shall ask and say, "Where is this harlot city that made the nations drunk with the wine of her fornication, that rode upon the scarlet beast up and down upon the earth, and had written upon her brow, 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots?'" Vain will it be to ask, "Where is she?" for they shall answer, "Did you not hear the splash of the millstone as the angel hurled it into the flood, and said, 'Thus terribly shall Babylon fall, and thus no more be found at all?'" Then shall go up the shout, "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Let us anticipate the hour. Even now let every heart shout, "Hallelujah; Hallelujah," and yet again let us say, "Hallelujah, the Lord reigneth, and all must be well."

"The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

The Christian Is Wiser Than He Thinks

By Dr. A. W. Tozer

IT IS ironic that this generation which more than any other in history preaches the brotherhood of man is also the generation most torn by unbrotherly strife.

War, either cold or hot, has plagued the earth incessantly from the day Cain slew Abel to the present moment; but never before in the history of the race have there been such deep hatreds, such alienation of hearts, such suspicion, such bitter accusations, such threats, such phrenetic competition to perfect and pile up horror weapons capable of wiping out whole cities instantaneously.

For the first time in human history the language of generals and statesmen is beginning to sound like the Apocalypse, and the frightening thing is that science has given the war lords the power to bring apocalyptic destruction upon the world.

Science, the sweet talking goddess which but a short time ago smilingly disposed of the Bible as a trustworthy guide and took the world by the hand to lead it into a man-made millennium, has turned out to be a dragon capable of destroying that same world with a flick of her fiery tail.

The world talks of peace, and by peace it means the absence of war. What it overlooks is that there is another meaning of the word, namely, tranquility of heart, and without that kind of peace the peace of the world will continue to be but an unattainable dream. As long as peace between nations continues to depend upon the shifting moods of choleric old men filled with hatred and frustration at their approaching dissolution, and who are ready to pull the world down with them into the bottomless pit, just so long will there be no peace among nations.

In spite of all the books lately published, inward tranquility cannot be found on the earth. Peace has fled the halls of learning and if found at all is found now among the lowly. Once men sought philosophy as a way of life; from her they learned to be satisfied with their lot, resigned and patient with men and with nature. Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus — these could teach Khrushchev, Nasser and Tito, but from such as these such as they will not learn. Hate, greed, megalomania and the mad ambition that in every generation "o'erleaps itself" drive the leaders of nations savagely to kill and destroy for the furtherance of their incredibly wicked ends.

But we need not look at kings and generals to discover the bankruptcy of the world. Go but to the corner store; drive your car down a busy street; take a quick glance at the crowds getting on or off a bus; try to buy a house or to sell one; in short, engage in any common pursuit and the secret is immediately out. Among the sons of fallen men there is no peace of mind or of heart.

True peace is a gift of God and today it is found only in the minds of innocent children and in the hearts of trustful Christians. "Peace I leave with you," said our Lord at the close of His earthly ministry; "my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

It is time that we Christians came awake to the fact that the world cannot help us in anything that matters. Not the educators nor the legislators nor the scientists can bring us tranquility of heart, and without tranquility what-

ever else they give us is useless at last. For more than half a lifetime I have listened to their promises, and they have so far failed to make good on one of them. To turn to God is now the only reasonable thing to do; we have no second choice. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

It is an ironic thought too that fallen men, though they cannot fulfill their promises, are always able to make good on their threats. For decades they have been promising us a warless world where peace and brotherhood shall sit quiet as a brooding dove. All they have given us is the control of a few diseases and the debilitating comforts of push-button living. These have extended our lives a little longer so we are now able to stay around to see our generation die one by one; and when the riper years come upon us they retire us by compulsion and turn us out to clutter up a world that has no place for us, a world that does not understand us and that we do not understand.

But A-bombs and H-bombs and intercontinental missiles and atomic submarines able to belch irradiant death upon us from below the surface of the sea — these they have perfected and stand ready to use any time the undisciplined temper of some president or prime minister gets sufficiently out of hand.

In view of all this how wise is the man who has made the God of Jacob his hope and has taken refuge in the Rock of Ages. He has repudiated a world that can make good only on its threats and has fled for refuge to the Saviour who waits long before carrying out His threats but is ready any moment to fulfill a promise.

Maybe the great of the world have underestimated the Christian after all. When the big day comes he may stand like Abraham above the burning plain and watch the smoke rising from the cities that forgot God. Neither science nor learning can quench the fires of judgment in that day, but a Christian can steal a quick look at Calvary and know that *his* judgment is past.

—*The Alliance Weekly*

For Younger Readers

FORTY POTATOES

One Sunday in a little church in the country there was to be a missionary collection. Stephen and James Holt were so poor that they had not even a penny to give though they wanted to help the missionaries.

As they were talking things over one day, Stephen saw a big potato lying on the ground. He thought for a minute or two, and then picked up the potato.

"Let us give this," he said.

His brother laughed, "How can we give a potato in the collection?"

"We can't give it next Sunday, but will plant it in the nicest spot we can find, and take care of it, and give every potato it raises to missions."

So they planted it carefully, and you never saw anything grow as that potato did. Their father said, "If all my potatoes grew like that I'd make my fortune!"

When digging time came there were forty good potatoes from that one.

Then they wrote this message forty times in their handwriting: "This is a missionary potato; it is from the best stock known. It will be sold only to someone who will promise that he will plant it in the spring and give everyone of its children to missions. (Signed Stephen and James Holt)."

Every potato had one of these labels pasted on its side. And the potatoes were bought immediately. One gentleman gave a gold coin for one of them, and James and Stephen were able to give quite a lot of money to the collection.

I cannot tell you how pleased and happy they were, but I can tell one thing. They each have a missionary garden now, and the things in them grow splendidly.

—Selected

Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 21 Fourth Quarter Lesson 9 December 1, 1957

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

NEHEMIAH'S ADVERSARIES

Lesson Text: Nehemiah 4:1-17.

Golden Text: "Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night."
—Nehemiah 4:9.

I. Opposition from Without: verses 1-9.

Nehemiah had scarcely arrived in Jerusalem on his mission of reconstruction when his enemies made their first protest (Neh. 2:10). An active spiritual work for the Lord is certain to incite to activity our great adversary, Satan, who ever seeks to frustrate the will and purpose of God (Matt. 16:21-23; 1 Thess. 2:18). Ezra in his day was called upon to face adversaries, and these were for a time successful (Ezra 4:1-6, 23, 24).

Who were these adversaries? We know little of them except their names — Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arabian (Neh. 6:1-5, 12-14; 13:23), but the inspired historian has given us clear portraits of their characters and activities. They have their counterpart in the men and women of our day who are inspired of Satan to hinder the progress of the cause of Christ.

Amidst the general enthusiasm, as Nehemiah encouraged the Jews to commence rebuilding the walls, these enemies, who had heard the challenging call of the Jewish leader, commenced their scornful laughter (Neh. 2:19, 20). They despised the godly Nehemiah and tried to bully him, but he declared his faith in God and his determination to proceed. A courageous stand must be made against such detractors. (2 Tim. 3:8, 9; 3 John 10).

As the building progressed, the adversaries continued their harassing tactics (verses 1-3). Sanballat, with the army at his back, began to mock the faithful Jews. He called them weak and feeble, and accused them of preparing for war and of planning a sacred sacrifice to cover up their secret designs of rebellion. Then he mocked them for attempting what he described as an impossible task. Tobiah alleged that even a fox could easily break through their slender wall (Lam. 5:18).

Ridicule is a powerful, albeit at times a cruel weapon (1 Sam. 17:44), and many who will courageously resist a frontal attack cannot stand up to such subtle persecution (Prov. 17:20; 25:23; Isa. 36:4-20; 37:8-13). Nehemiah took his cause to the Lord in prayer, pouring out his heart before his merciful and powerful Father (Isa. 37:14-20). He prayed with confidence, knowing that these men became enemies of the Lord the moment they fought against His servants (Psa. 35:1; Isa. 37:23; Zech. 2:8; Acts 9:4, 5). In answer to prayer the Lord renewed the courage of leader and people, so that they went on with their work for a time with enthusiasm and vigour. Such opposition can be overcome, when the people have a mind to work.

When the walls were nearing completion, the enemy re-

newed their attack. This time they attempted to overpower the Jews by the sheer force of their anger. They announced their intention of engaging in actual combat against Jerusalem. To meet this new threat, Nehemiah and his company again resorted to prayer, while at the same time they set men to watch day and night. We must continually watch and pray, lest the enemy of our souls should gain an advantage over us (Matt. 26:41; 2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:18). Cromwell used to say to his soldiers, "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry."

"Watch, as if on that alone,
Hung the issue of the day.
Pray that help may be sent down,
Watch and pray."

II. Opposition from Within and Without: verses 10-17.

The water of the ocean is powerless to sink a ship, so long as that water remains outside the ship, but woe betide the vessel if the water gains an entrance into the inside! The adversaries were easily kept at bay, until there appeared a weakness in the ranks of the Jews themselves (Numb. 11:4). The church is impregnable, so long as there is victory in the hearts of the spiritual builders, but once they have yielded to defeatism, the enemy may quickly overpower them (Josh. 7:5-9).

The Jews faltered through discouragement, which is one of Satan's strongest and surest weapons against the saints of our day (Josh. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 4:1, 16; Luke 18:1). To complete their task appeared well-nigh impossible; the workers were weary, and the rubbish was mounting. Had their eyes been upon the goal, which was actually within sight, and upon their Master, instead of upon their dreary circumstances, they probably would not have fainted (Matt. 14:28-30; Phil. 3:13, 14; Heb. 12:1, 2).

Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem were quick to seize the opportunity afforded them by the slackening of effort on the part of the Jews. Their plan was to enter the city by many paths.

Nehemiah met the danger of invasion by first counselling the people not to be afraid (Gen. 15:1; Numb. 14:9; Deut. 1:21; Matt. 28:5). Fear makes cowards of us all, but confidence in God gives courage and strength (Isa. 30:15). In the Christian warfare we must ever remember that greater is He that is with us than he that is in the world (2 Kings 6:15-17; 2 Chron. 32:7; Psa. 55:18; 1 John 4:4). The Jews could conquer fear and conquer the foe, only as they remembered that the mighty God was with them and would fight on their behalf, since they were building at His command (verse 20; Exod. 14:14; Deut. 3:22; Psa. 35:1; Hagg. 1:13; 2:4).

The Jews were to remember God, have faith in Him, and then fight. We must oppose evil with all our might. God would fight for them, but they must also fight for themselves. Moody used to say, "God begins when we begin." It is ever true that "God is ready to do business with those who will do business with Him."

Thus were the schemes of the adversaries brought to nought by the power of the Lord and through the co-operation of the people. Faith and consecrated energy are both necessary to victorious living. From henceforth the Jews used two tools in their building; the sword and the trowel, emblems of two aspects of the Christian servant's ministry, the sword of the Spirit to convict of sin and the trowel to cement together the living stones of the spiritual temple of the Lord (1 Pet. 2:5). The great C. H. Spurgeon recognized the aptness of the symbolism by designating the periodical containing his weekly sermons "The Sword and Trowel".

Daily Bible Readings

Nov. 25—Our Chief Adversary and Our Defence, Eph. 6:10-20
Nov. 26—The Adversary and Ridicule 1 Cor. 1:18-30
Nov. 27—The Adversary and Force of Arms Acts 12:1-4
Nov. 28—The Adversary and Fear Psa. 55; Psa. 27
Nov. 29—The Adversary and Our Foolishness .. 1 Pet. 4:12-19
Nov. 30—The Adversary and Prayer Acts 4:23-31
Dec. 1—The Adversary Defeated Luke 4:1-13

Suggested Hymns

Fight the good fight.
Am I a soldier of the cross?
Christian, seek not yet repose.
A mighty Fortress is our God.
Firmly stand for God.
Stand up, stand up, for Jesus.

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