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The Unfaithful Minister and the Souls of Men

CHARLES H. SPURGEON

"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."—Genesis 4:10.

THERE are many persons whose brother's blood cries to God from the ground. . . . There is the infidel, the man who is not content to keep his sin in his own breast, but must needs publish his infamy, he ascends the platform and blasphemes the Almighty to His face; defies the Eternal; takes Scripture to make it the subject of unhallowed jest; and makes religion a theme for comedy. Take heed, sir, there will be a tragedy bye-and-bye, in which you shall be the chief sufferer!

What shall I say of those men who are more diligent by far than half God's ministers are, whose names we see placarded on every wall, who will go from town to town, especially where in greatest numbers artisans are dwelling, and never seem content unless they are preaching against everything that is pure, and lovely, and of good report; uttering things which would make your cheeks blanch if you heard them. Oh, sirs! the voice of your brother's blood crieth to Jehovah this day. The young men you have deluded, the working men you have led astray, the sinners whose lullaby you have sung, the souls that you have poisoned with your foul draughts, the multitudes that you have deceived—all these shall stand up at the last, an exceeding great army, and pointing their fingers at you, shall demand your swift destruction, because you decoyed them to their doom.

And what shall I say of the unfaithful preacher; the slumbering watchman of souls, the man who swore at God's altar that he was called of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word of God; the man upon whose lips men's ears waited with attention while he stood like a priest at God's altar to teach Israel God's law; the man who performed his duties half-asleep, in a dull and careless manner until men slept, too, and thought religion a dream?

What shall I say of the minister of unholy life, whose corrupt practice out of the pulpit has made the most telling things in the pulpit to be of no avail, has blunted the edge of the sword of the Spirit, and turned the back of God's army in the day of battle?

Ay, what shall I say of the man who has amused his

audience with pretty things when he ought to have aroused their consciences, who has been rounding periods when he ought to have pronounced the judgment of God; who has been preaching a dead morality when he ought to have lifted Christ on high as Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness? What shall I say, brethren, of those who have dwindled away their congregations, who have sown strife and schism in Churches of Christ once happy, peaceful and prosperous? What shall I say of the men who, out of the pulpit, have made a jest of the most solemn things, whose life has been so devoid of holy passion and devout enthusiasm that men have thought truth to be fiction, religion a stage-play, prayer a nullity, the Spirit of God a phantom, and eternity a joke?

Among all who will need eternal compassion, surely the unfaithful, unholy, unearnest minister of Christ will be the most pitiable! What did I say? Nay, rather the most contemptible, the most despicable, the most accursed! Surely, every thunderbolt shall make his brow their target, and every arrow of God shall seek his conscience as its mark. If I must perish, let me suffer anyhow but as a minister who has desecrated the pulpit by a slumbering style of ministry, by a want of passion for souls. God knoweth how oftentimes this body trembles with horror at the thought lest the blood of souls should be required at my hands; and I cannot, and I hope I never may, I cannot understand that lifeless performance of duty, that cold and careless going through of services which; alas! is too common. How shall such men answer for it at the bar of God—the smooth things, the polite and honeyed words, the daubing of men with the untempered mortar of peace, peace, when they should have dealt with them honestly as in God's name? Oh, sirs, if we never play the Boanerges, we shall hear God's thunder in our ears, and that for ever and ever; and cursed of men, and cursed of the Most High, shall we be without end. In Tophet we shall have this wail peculiar to ourselves, "We preached what we did not feel; we testified of what we did not know; men received our witness,

for we were hypocrites and deceivers, and now we go down, richly deserving it, to the very lowest depths of perdition."

When I go down to the villages where I used to preach, and as I look upon the houses, I am apt to ask myself — Was I as earnest with the people as I used to be? I can say I hope I never flinched from telling them all the truth, though sometimes it had to be very rudely and roughly spoken; but yet God knoweth I do sometimes smite myself to think I did not weep over them more to be won to Christ. And you, too, that sit in these pews so often, many of you are joyful converts to Christ, but numbers of you are still unsaved. What if you should be able to say at the last, "We trusted our minister; we hung upon his lips; we were never absent; we loved the Sabbath-day, but oh, he did not tell us of our sin; he did not plead with us to be saved; he left us to ourselves; he was cold when his heart should have been hot; he was a man without tears, and had a heart without sympathy for us!" Oh, sirs! God grant ye may never be able to say that of me. God save you, for my soul longeth for you. He is my witness how earnestly I long for you all in the bowels of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Come unto Him! Come unto Him! Let not your blood cry out against me. Oh, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust Him; trust Him now, that you may be saved, and that at last I may be able to say, "Here am I and the children whom Thou hast given me; Thou hast kept them through Thy power, and they are preserved even to the end; unto Thee be glory for ever and ever!"

REVIVAL — FIFTY YEARS AGO

Mr. Kemp wrote in the February, 1907, issue of the *Record*, an account of the revival movements which began early in 1905 and were still continuing in the church.

From this remarkable report we quote: "Some of the marked features of this movement were the great interest which was evident in the large gatherings. The pulpit and pulpit stairs all had to yield accommodation for the crowds which came. The meetings were rich in blessing to hundreds of souls, and conversions took place at every gathering. Blessing descended upon believers. Many had grown cold, and they were walking 'afar off', but now were brought face to face with the Saviour anew. . . .

"Towards the close of 1906, there were indications that the Lord was about to move in our midst once more. The attendances at our early morning prayer meetings on Lord's Day again increased, and this was followed by the same deepening spirit in the week-night meetings.

"At a prayer meeting held on the evening of 29th December, the fire of God fell. Quite suddenly, upon one and another, came an overwhelming sense of His presence, and of eternal things. . . . Our programme drawn up for the Watch-Night Service and New Year's Day had to give way before the Divine visitation. As the bell rang in the New Year, we vowed by God's grace to press into our lives more service for Him, to be more like Him in spirit and walk, and win to Him our fellow-men."

—Charlotte Chapel Record, February, 1907.

Scripture teaches that the old man is dead, condemned to die for ever; that he is incorrigible and cannot be restored, saved or reconciled. He is hopelessly lost. And instead of gradually becoming himself again, he must be crucified, slain, and buried. Instead of expecting anything good of him, it should be our glory to die to him and be rid of him.

—Dr. Abraham Kuyper.

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The Sermons of Dr. T. T. Shields

"Filled With the Knowledge of His Will"

(Stenographically Reported)

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

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."—Col. 1:9, 10.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the truth that God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We bless Thee that many of us have, by Thy grace, had our eyes opened to behold the face of Jesus Christ; and in Him we have seen the Father, and have learned Who God is, and what He is like. And we rejoice this morning to come into the presence of God through Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and Who has told us, No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.

We draw near to Thee, O God, this morning in the name of the crucified and risen Saviour, Who has entered into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. We thank Thee that in the Person of our Mediator, our great Daysman, we are even now represented in the presence of God. We thank Thee for all that He is to us, for the pledge which Thou hast given us in His resurrection and ascension, that some day our redemption will be manifested: that we shall find its completeness in Christ. We thank Thee that even now Thou art with us for Thou hast said, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Thou didst not leave us orphans, Thou didst come to us, and Thou art in the midst of Thy people, always abiding in their hearts. It is true, we rejoice to believe, that the tabernacle of God is with men, and He dwells with them.

And we desire, O Lord, this morning, above everything else, to realize Thy presence, to hold personal converse with Thee, that we may be conscious every one, of the ongoings of God on our own spirits; and to know that we receive from His hand the grace our peculiar condition this morning may require.

Look upon this congregation in all its varied needs. There are parents concerned about their children; husbands about their wives; and wives about their husbands; friends troubled on account of friends. Some there are burdened with temporal and material cares. Some perhaps have come to the end of all human resources, and are in especial need of a visitation from God. All of us are tempted and tried. We all need Thee, we need Thee every hour. We pray that this morning Thou wilt come to us as we meditate upon Thy word, that our minds may be enriched thereby; that we may be enabled more implicitly to rest in the exceeding great and precious promises whereby we may become partakers increasingly of the divine nature.

Bless us now, every one, and all Thy suffering saints, and all Thy ministering servants the world around. Take this service, and use it for the glory of Thy great name. Amen.

WE SHALL give our thought this morning for a little while to the passage in Colossians, chapter one, verses nine and ten: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

In the preceding verses of the chapter the Apostle Paul gives thanks for the assurance that these Colossians have been genuinely converted. He gives God thanks for their

faith in Christ. And that should always provide us with a reason for thanksgiving, when we know that someone has been saved. But he proceeds farther and gives thanks for the evidence of the genuineness of the work of grace in their souls.

It is one thing for people to profess faith in Christ: it is another thing for them to give evidence of the reality, the genuineness, of their profession. I think at this point we frequently fail. We are concerned that others should be born again, and we do not give sufficient thought to the necessity for their growing up into Christ in all things. But there were evidences in the lives of these Colossian Christians that in their case the Word had not fallen into stony ground, or among thorns, but had fallen into good ground, for the reason that the gospel had brought forth fruit in them, as in others: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Some people have found great difficulty with the Epistle of James, because it lays such emphasis upon good works; and insist that men are justified by works, and not by faith alone. But there are two aspects of justification. We are justified in the sight of God by faith without works. That is to say, if I profess faith in Christ He knows whether my faith is genuine entirely apart from works. And so before God I am justified by faith alone. But the only way by which my faith can be justified before men is that it shall issue in good works. So we are justified before God by faith: we are justified before men by the works which are the evidence of faith. And Paul here gives thanks for these Colossian Christians, because their lives had already been so fruitful as to put it beyond all doubt that their conversion to God was genuine.

In the paragraph from which I have selected the morning text he further prayed for their continual progress in the Christian life. He says, in effect, "I have heard of your conversion; I have been assured that you have given evidence of the genuineness of it, and for this cause since the day we heard it, we cease not to pray for you." We ought to pray not only for the backslider, but for those who are walking with God that they may continue in the way of the Lord.

And here are some of the things for which he prays: "that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" and "that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing"; and further, that they might be "fruitful in every good work"; and still further that they might continually increase in their personal knowledge of God.

I.

So, then, we have here this principle laid down, that **PROGRESS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ACHIEVED**

BY A GRADUAL GROWTH. We do not make progress by leaps and bounds, but by a steady, constant, and ever accelerating growth. There are many people who are unwilling, patiently to build up a business upon a solid foundation, men who cannot be content, patiently, persevering, by honest toil, to build up a competence for themselves: they are anxious to get rich quickly. And there are many get-rich-quick-schemes devised for their undoing. There may be very many spectacular rises in the stock market, and some people may gamble there, as others gamble on the race course. But sooner or later, as all the world has but recently realized, men are brought to a recognition of the fact that there must be a basis of reality in these things. And so his Babel tower is brought into ruin, and men have to patiently rebuild.

So in the intellectual realm, there are some people who hope to get rich suddenly. They want to wake up some fine morning, and discover that they have acquired a new language. "Learn to speak French in twelve lessons"! Would you not like to do it? Did you ever meet anyone who had learned to speak French in twelve lessons? I mean so to speak that a Frenchman could understand what language he was speaking? But there are many schemes devised to catch the unwary, baited for the further deception of people who are unwilling, patiently, to persevere in well-doing. There is no royal road to learning; and if you have any doubt about it, consult with those who engaged in that memory contest last Friday night, and they will tell you that they had to work hard. When it was decided to continue the exercise on Monday, one young lady said, "May we consult our papers again?" Why did she say that? Because she had learned that these Scriptures are mastered by steady memorization. She wanted to go over them again and again so that it should be impossible to erase them from her memory.

Now, dear friends, in the religious realm there are people who want to get rich quickly too; they want to become suddenly perfect. And they speak of sanctification as though it were an instantaneous act of the Spirit of God. It is nothing of the sort. Justification is: we are instantaneously justified when we believe on Christ; the righteousness of Christ, and all there is of Christ is imputed to us, and we are in Him; on, to change the figure, we are born again, we are quickened by the power of the Holy Ghost; a new life is imparted; we are given eternal life; we have a new nature: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." We become babes in Christ, and the babe does not become a man suddenly; he must grow up in the family. And that is what this text is speaking about. Paul says, if I may paraphrase his saying it, "Now that you are a member of the household of faith, now that you have been born into the family of God, now that you are manifestly children of God, for which I cease not to give thanks, I pray for you that you may become educated children of God, thoroughly instructed, that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let me emphasize that principle to you young people. Do not allow yourselves to be caught by that false teaching which tells you that instantaneously you may receive something that will rid you of all evil and make you perfect.

These people had the Holy Ghost, because someone had already declared their love in the Spirit. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The presence and power of the Holy Ghost in the believer's life distinguishes and differentiates him from all others. A Christian is a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, in whom the Holy Spirit

dwells. And if that is not true of you, you are not a Christian. You may receive Him in greater fulness, as I shall show you, but He is with us now.

II.

And now Paul prays that they may be FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL. In spiritual progress our intellectual powers are engaged. The Christian religion is for the whole man, — spirit, soul, and body. The Bible puts no premium upon ignorance. It demands that we should be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us. It requires that our intellects should be engaged in an understanding of the things of God. It requires that we apply ourselves in order that we may be filled with a knowledge of the will of God. And I say to you young people, you cannot become suddenly possessed of a knowledge of God's will. That comes to you by patient application, by becoming a diligent student, that you may know just what God's will is in respect to the duties of life. That is what the Bible is for, so that you may study to show yourselves approved unto God.

I hope all who are Christians here will form the habit of storing the mind with the word of God. It is our privilege to enlarge our intellectual conception of things, to enlarge our minds by giving place to the thought of God as revealed in His Holy word. And that cannot be done in a moment: that is the work of a lifetime. And we must go on — and on — and on — learning more — and more — and more — of God. Therein is the defect, I think, of the modern church, and of much modern teaching; we are but babes in Christ. Thank God if the life of God is in us, imparted by the Holy Ghost — for remember this word is written to those who have already been made partakers of the grace of life.

And now we must go on to know the will of God: we are to be filled with a knowledge of His will. And that is the great matter for all of us. In respect to every duty of life, and to every relationship of life, what is the will of God concerning me? What ought I to do in the premises as a Christian? In the face of emergencies that may arise, and in the presence of the common duty and task of the day, how ought I to behave myself as a Christian? What ought I to do? The question is, What is the will of God? That is instinctive, surely, in the new born soul. When Saul of Tarsus knew whose voice had spoken to him from the skies, he did not longer ask, "What must I do to be saved?" That had been answered. But there are some people who never outgrow that. If I were to talk to some of you this morning for instance on the matter of baptism; and ask you, Have you been baptized? you would immediately reply, "But, sir, do you tell me that baptism is essential to salvation?" That is not what I am talking about. What is essential to obedience? That is the question. If you are a Christian, what is the will of God? Saul of Tarsus, the new born babe, gave evidence of the life that was in him when he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

And here Paul prays that these Colossian Christians may know — not what may be expedient, in view of their circumstances, not what policy would dictate, not where lies a man's temporal interests; not the will of father or mother, or the vogue of the day, in respect to any matter! "No," said he, "I pray for you that you may be filled with the knowledge of the will of God." That is what we need to know.

Now what does it mean to be filled with a knowledge of God's will? How may we thus be filled? Is it possible

to find in the Bible a list of duties which apply to all circumstances, and to all ages, and to turn to the Bible as I would turn to a dictionary and say, "Let me see, I am a salesman," or, "I am a labourer," or "I am a bank manager," or "I am a teacher." or "I am a student, and I am going to see what the Bible says a student ought to do." Is that what is meant; that the Bible will give to us a knowledge of God's will in respect to all these details? I do not think so. I was talking to a man the other day about a garden; and I opened a book to talk to him about a garden. He looked at me, and laughed. He said, "I do not make a garden from a book." Why? Because he was filled with the knowledge of the thing; and he did not need to go to a book for specific directions.

You say, "You do not mean to say that we can ever be so filled with the knowledge of God's will that we shall not need the Bible!" No; far from it! But here is what I mean. Sometimes I try to do a little figuring, but I generally try to do it by myself, because I know that any expert would be amused at my skill in that respect. After all a preacher does not need to know higher mathematics to count all that he will have to count! That is my comfort. But you look at the man who is a master of figures — the accountant. I have seen a man just go down the page, and then go up the page again. And I have said, "Stop, man, stop, you have not done that properly!" "Why not?" "Why, I should have to go over it a dozen times to make sure I was right." But he does not need to. He not only knows the multiplication, but he has been bookkeeping so long that his mind has become a kind of adding machine; and every possible combination of figures has passed through his mind, and he can just look at it photographically, and have the total almost immediately. Why? Because he is filled with the knowledge of the thing. When you write you do not laboriously begin A - B - C - D - E - F - G—and so on. The alphabet is so registered in your mind that your use of it is automatic. You are filled with the knowledge of the alphabet, as you are of the multiplication table.

Now the Bible is a Book of principles, which are capable of endless application. They apply to every possible exigency of life. And it is for us to absorb the principles of this Book, so to live in it that we shall have a knowledge of God's will.

Let me give you an example of what I mean — you had it in your lesson this morning — the story of Abram's going to the rescue of Lot. Now why is that written? Abram is the example of a man of faith, and his biography is there recorded to show us how a man who believes God ought to act. And you come upon a passage like this: "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive" he did certain things. Nobody asked him to do them. He heard that somebody to whom he had certain obligations by the ties of nature, and by the ties of humanity, was taken captive, and although Abram was not a fighter by any means, instinctively he felt it to be his duty to go to the relief of Lot. You read the story; you do not think very much of it at the moment. But sometimes you find yourself in a certain situation, and you find somebody in bondage, in difficulty, somewhere, and being filled with the knowledge of His will, you say, "That is my duty: I must go to the help of Lot."

And so, as we absorb the teaching of the Scriptures, and the great principles of this Book are wrought into the very fibre of our nature, until we think biblically, and talk biblically, we shall by and by, as we grow up into grace, come to view everything from a scriptural standpoint. And it will become natural for us to ask, in respect to any matter, just

what is the teaching of the Word of God. And as we do so, something will be brought to our minds, for as we read the word, the Spirit of God will show us that in the light of that which is written we ought to do thus and so. That does not come — I repeat — in a moment. We must lay away in our minds line upon line, and precept upon precept, until we are filled with a knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Now you know it is possible to have a knowledge of God's will, and to hold it as a theory, to become doctrinaires — fond of arguments in respect to the letter of things. We are not to underestimate the value, the importance, of the letter. When the Scripture says "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" it does not mean that we are to ignore the letter, and expect to have the spirit of it, the spirit of the teaching of God's word, while we violate the letter. But it does mean that we are not to content ourselves with the mere letter of things; we are to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, in all wisdom. We are to know how to do God's will, not merely to do it, but know *how* to do it, and *when* to do it.

III.

WE ARE TO HAVE WISDOM. Mr. Spurgeon used to say to his students, "Now, young gentlemen, if you are lacking in education, if you will apply yourselves here, we can supply that defect. And if you be deficient in grace; if you ask God for it He will give you grace. But if you have not common sense, neither God nor man can do anything for you."

Now what is this wisdom? Well, it is sanctified common sense, a spirit of discernment, spiritual understanding. I heard Dr. Dixon tell a story once of a very zealous man who was walking down the street in the city of Oxford. He had his pocket full of tracts. And he had one that was all true, and it was on dancing. And as he walked along the street he met a man on two crutches, a lame man, hobbling along the street. And so this good brother took out of his pocket the tract on the evils of dancing, and he handed it to the lame man. I have not any doubt at all that what was in the tract was in accord with the will of God; and I have not any doubt at all that it was the will of God that that good man should hand that tract to somebody. But if he had had a knowledge of God's will, with wisdom, and spiritual understanding, he would have had more sense than to give that particular tract to a man on crutches.

It is one thing to have a knowledge of God's will; it is another thing to have that indefinable something that is communicated by the Spirit of God which will teach us what to do, and when to do it, and how to do it. I tell you, my dear friends, living is not a science, it is an art; it is not something that can be described by rule and compass. We must have the knowledge of God's will. But in addition to that, we need wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Oh, I have been amazed sometimes to observe the skill which some people have displayed when they have approached people in difficult circumstances with consummate art — made wise by the Spirit of God! With a spiritual understanding that goes beneath the surface of things and discovers that which is underneath, they have been enabled to apply the teachings of Scripture to particular circumstances in a way that leads one to worship the Spirit of God, and to desire a fuller experience ourselves of His holy ministry.

You see, therefore, we have a great matter before us, to which it is necessary we address ourselves. Tuesday we shall begin lectures at the Seminary, and students will apply themselves diligently to study. Perhaps there is somebody here who says, "Well, I wish I had the opportunity of giving myself wholly to the study of these matters." That is an advantage when that is possible. But there is a sense in which we must all be students. We must all go to school. We must desire to be filled with a knowledge of His will.

Now I did intend to speak on the next verse, but I will leave that for another time. Oh, how I covet all you young people for the Lord! Many of you are the Lord's. But how I covet all your powers, all your talents for His service! I wish that the Lord might help me to make it clear to you that the biggest business in life is the business of being a Christian. I do not mean that we are to do things in the energy of the flesh. Do not misunderstand. And I do not say that you may learn to be Christians. We are to receive Christ, and thus be born again. But, being Christians, we are to learn what Christians ought to be, and ought to do. What manner of men and women, and boys, and girls, ought we to be, seeing we are members of the Royal Family!

I had intended to speak to you of that, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing"; that you may be careful of your deportment, of the witness of your life; when the name of Christ is named upon you. But I content myself with laying down that simple principle this morning, that being Christians, these are our school days. And it is our business diligently to apply ourselves to the mastery of the lessons which are daily set for us by our great Teacher.

Does that simplify matters for some of you, who are not Christians? Is there somebody here this morning who says, "But, sir, I supposed it was all to be done in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. I supposed that being a Christian meant being so completely changed that every bit of evil would be taken away from us, and I should be suddenly, instantaneously, made perfect." No, my dear friends, it does mean that a new life is implanted, which is the beginning of perfection, which will unfold by God's decree, and by God's blessing, at last into the perfect image of Jesus Christ.

Will you not come to school then? Will you not receive Christ as your Saviour, that your sins may be blotted out by His precious blood, and that you may become a member of His family; and that you may come under the tutelage of the Holy Ghost, with this great Book for a text book, and go on in His school, go on through time and eternity increasing in the knowledge of God? May the Lord help us to apply ourselves as Christians to this great study.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that Thou art such a patient Teacher; that though we fall in the learning of life's lessons again and again, Thou dost give us another opportunity. And we go back to the first book and begin it all over again. We thank Thee for the story of which we read last week in our lesson: how Abram came back to the altar, to the place of the altar which he had made at the first, and there called upon the name of the Lord. O Lord we pray that everyone who has already begun with Thee may go on with Thee, walking before God. And we pray that any who have not begun with Thee may this morning begin. Oh, may there be many who will just yield themselves to Christ, and many others who have been truants from the school of Christ, who will return to Him to learn of Him. We ask it in His name, Amen.

September 28, 1930.

Christmas is Coming!

Do You Have Some Shopping
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The Bible Doctrine of Salvation

By Dr. C. D. Cole

Dean Emeritus of Toronto Baptist Seminary

III. JUSTIFICATION, OR THE DIVINE ACQUITTAL

DEMOSTHENES well says that knowledge begins with definition. Every teacher needs to remember this, and be careful to define his terms. The Bible abounds in big words — words of tremendous import — and we should exercise much care in defining these words.

The book of Job is full of questions. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (11:7). "If a man die, shall he live again?" (14:14). "How can he be clean that is born of woman?" (25:4b). "How should man be just with God?" (9:2). And this last question is repeated in Job 25:4a: "How then can man be justified with God?" This last question is to have our attention in this article. Let us fix the question in our mind: How can rebellious man, who has tried to dethrone the God of all the earth, find acquittal with God?

A man was once asked if he would not like to be saved. He replied: "Yes, but I do not see how God can save me without doing wrong." This man was a thinker. He went on to say that he had sinned; that God's word declares the wages of sin to be death, and that as a sinner, he must receive what he had earned. He confessed that he deserved to be punished, and could not see how God could remain just without punishing him for his sins. Job's question was this man's question.

There were no questions until sin entered the world. Eve was deceived into thinking that the forbidden fruit would make one wise and thus resolve all future questions. But this attempt to become wise resulted in separation from God with resultant darkness in the face of innumerable questions. Adam and Eve had been walking by faith — by faith in what God had said — but in disobedience they embarked upon a career of walking by sight, which means to believe what one sees. Eve saw that the fruit of the forbidden tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes. Now, in salvation, the sinner is restored to the principle of walking by faith, which means to believe what God says. "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4; Heb. 10:38). And faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. If sin reigned by bringing questions into the world, then grace reigns by giving answers to these questions. How can man the sinner be acquitted before the holy and righteous God? This is a big question, but there is a blessed and infallible answer found in the Bible. We will consider,

I.

The Nature of Justification, or What Justification Is

Justification is that particular aspect of salvation which consists of deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin. It is the legal aspect of salvation in which one has right standing before God as Lawgiver. So far as guilt and condemnation are concerned, the believer is as perfect as if he had never sinned. Paul challenges the whole universe to lay anything to the charge of God's elect (Rom. 8:33). At Antioch in Pisidia, the apostle preached the crucified and risen Christ, saying, "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

Justification is a forensic or law term. It does not refer

to any inward work of grace as regeneration does. It has nothing to do with moral improvement, but with judicial standing. It means acquittal, vindication, acceptance before a judgment seat. The Council of Trent (1547) gives the Roman Catholic view of justification, in which the term is defined as "not the mere remission of sins but also sanctification and renovation of the inner man". But such a definition confounds justification with regeneration and sanctification, other aspects of salvation.

Take the word in its every day use, and it will be obvious that it has nothing to do with improvement of character or moral change. To justify one's views does not mean to change them or to correct them, but rather to vindicate them. To justify a course of conduct does not mean a change of conduct, but the vindication of what one has done. To justify a friend does not imply any change in your friend, but the vindication of him before some judgment seat, it may be, the bar of public opinion.

Take a clear illustration from Scripture: "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked" (Deut. 25:1). Here it is plain that no moral improvement is implied. The judges were not to make anybody better, but to declare who was right in the eyes of the law. A human court or judge can only maintain justice by justifying the innocent, but God maintains justice and magnifies grace by justifying the ungodly (Rom. 4:5). There are no innocent people for God to justify, for all have sinned. The next question is that concerning the author of salvation.

II.

The Author of Justification, or Who Is the Justifier?

This question finds explicit answer in Rom. 8:33: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." There is no salvation through self-justification. In Luke 10:29 we are told of a certain lawyer who was willing to justify himself, but he was not saved thereby. Paul said, that even though he might not have anything against himself, he would not thereby be justified, for it is the Lord who judges (1 Cor. 4:4). There were Pharisees who justified themselves before men, but that did not mean salvation. To be justified before God one must be justified by God. One might have a clean bill of moral health from his friends and neighbours, but to be saved he must be pronounced righteous by God. God Himself must pronounce the acquittal, else we stand condemned before His righteous law. One's conscience may not condemn, but the question of guilt and penalty is not left to the conscience. Nobody's conscience would consign him to hell. It is not the human conscience but a holy God who must first be satisfied before there can be justification. This leads on to another question:

III.

The Source of Justification, or What Causes God to Justify the Ungodly?

The grand answer to this question is found in Rom. 3:24: "Being justified freely by his grace." The adverb

"freely" means "without any cause or reason in the sinner." It is the same word used in John 15:25, where Christ says, "They hated me without a cause." There was nothing in Christ to merit the hatred of men, and there is nothing in any sinner to cause God to justify him; the cause is in God Himself. It is not *good* in the sinner but *grace* in God that moves Him to justify. In Rom. 11:6, the apostle says, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." To mix anything of human merit with divine grace is to destroy grace. It is either all of grace or none of grace. There is no conjunction joining anything with grace as the source or cause of justification. And yet, men dare to mix something of man with the grace of God as the moving cause of justification. This is to divide the honour and praise of salvation between the sinner and the Saviour, between man and God. Men may do that here on earth, but in heaven all honour and praise are ascribed to God. And this calls for still another question:

IV.

The Just Basis, or Meritorious Ground of Justification

On what ground can God justify the ungodly and yet remain just? It is on the ground of blood atonement, "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9). "Christ and Him crucified" is the only righteous ground for the justification of any sinner. And there is no "AND" anywhere in the Bible connecting anything with His blood as the just basis of justification.

The only way God can justify a sinner without doing wrong is to charge the sinner's sins to Christ and credit Christ's obedience to the sinner's account. This is called imputed righteousness, or the righteousness of God. It is the righteousness Christ wrought out on the cross when He was obedient unto death. God justifies the penitent believer on the ground of the obedience of his Surety and Substitute, Jesus Christ. Obedience is always necessary to righteousness. And as the sinner has no record of obedience, he is therefore unrighteous on his own record. If the sinner is to become righteous before God it must be by the obedience of Christ, whose obedience is reckoned to the sinner's account. The sinner is saved by obedience, but it is by the obedience of Christ, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

Let us remember that the Lord Jesus came to this world as a public or representative person. He was God before He became man, and as God He had no personal obligations to the law except to enforce it as Lawgiver. He Who gave the law was made under the law for the purpose of redeeming them that were under law, that we might be adopted as sons of God (Gal. 4:5). Having no personal obligations, Christ could assume the obligations of a Surety. A surety is one who assumes all the legal responsibilities of the principal — of the one who contracted the debt. As the Surety for His people, it was Christ's duty to die. He Himself said that He ought to have died. After His death and resurrection, He joined Himself to the two as they walked to Emmaus, and said to them: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" . . ." (Lk. 24:26). It was in grace that He took upon Himself suretyship engagements, but when He did, He was duty bound to die for sinners. Even

yet, we are not through with questions relating to justification. Let us next consider:

V.

The Way of Justification, or What the Sinner Must Do To Be Justified

The sinner is justified by faith and by faith alone. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). "It is of faith that it might be by grace" (Rom. 4:16). To add anything to faith on the sinner's part is to add something to grace on God's part. And since faith looks to Christ for salvation, to add anything to faith would be the same as adding something to Christ. Perish the thought! He must have all the glory.

Saving faith is much more than the mere assent of the mind to gospel truth, or to the acknowledgement of gospel facts. Trust in, or dependence upon Christ for salvation is a necessary element in saving faith. I believe in George Washington, that is, my mind acknowledges certain facts about him, but it has never occurred to me to trust him for salvation. This might be termed historical faith — the kind of faith nearly every one has in God and Jesus Christ. But a necessary element in saving faith is reliance or trust.

"Not saved are we by trying,
From self can come no aid;
'Tis on the blood relying,
Once for our ransom paid;
'Tis looking unto Jesus,
The holy One and Just;
'Tis His great work that saves us,
It is not try, but trust.

"No deeds of ours are needed
To make Christ's merit more;
No frames of mind, or feelings,
Can add to His great store;
'Tis simply to receive Him,
The holy One and Just,
'Tis only to believe Him,
It is not try, but trust."

The virtue of faith lies in the worth of its object. Jesus Christ, in His death and resurrection, is the only object of saving trust. Faith, however strong, in any other object cannot justify. This makes faith a thing as different as possible from merit. Richard Hooker says: "God doth justify the believing man, yet not for the worthiness of his belief, but for the worthiness of Him which is believed." It does not make a beggar worthy of food to take it from the hand of his benefactor. Nor does it make a sinner worthy of salvation to receive it as a gift from Jesus Christ. It rather implies his unworthiness. The sinner is justly charged, but freely forgiven. It is not our faith, as a thing of merit, that is accounted for righteousness, but Christ the object of faith. The Lord Himself is our righteousness. We are not saved on account of our faith; we are saved on account of Christ. We are forgiven for Christ's sake. We must not trust our faith, but Him. And now in closing, there is a final question:

VI.

The Evidences of Justification, or What One Does to Prove His Faith

We are justified evidentially by works, and by works alone. The only evidences of saving faith are our works. And this

includes baptism as a work of righteousness. Any man who claims to be saved and refuses to be baptized, when properly taught the significance of baptism, has a mark against him, in my judgment. We are saved by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone, for faith without works is dead. The man who has saving faith also received a holy disposition in the new birth — a disposition or nature that seeks to please God. Saul's first question after his conversion was, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Saving faith works by love. In the new birth there were a triplet of graces brought into being: faith, hope, and love — and these are inseparable.

There is no real difference between Paul and James on the subject of justification. They complement, but do not contradict each other. They deal with different classes in their treatment of justification. Paul writes about the justification of a sinner; James writes about the justification of a saint. Both of them illustrate their teaching by the same person: Abraham. Paul takes Abraham as a sinner and writes about justification in the sense of salvation; James takes Abraham, after he had been saved many years, and shows that he was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. Paul writes about God receiving a sinner; James writes about God approving a saint. Paul speaks of justification of persons; James speaks of justification of profession. One's profession of faith is justified by his works. James challenges the faith of the man who says he has faith, but has no works — can faith, the faith he talks about, save him? Every saved person is justified, both by faith and also by works. As an alien sinner, he is justified by faith in the blood of Christ; as a professing believer, he is justified, again and again, by his works. There is no way to show our faith except by our works. The saved man is one who is depending upon Christ alone for salvation and who, out of love, is daily seeking to please Him. The saved man is poor in spirit, mourning over his sins, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and longing to be perfectly whole. The saved man anticipates perfection, but does not claim it. And may both writer and reader be able to join Paul in saying, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

For Younger Readers

THE SAFEST PLACE OF ALL

By Mrs. Howard Taylor

On the rocky coast of Cornwall, not far from Land's End, there is a fishing cove that runs down to the sea about which I have heard an interesting little story.

To supplement their gains from the sea, the Cornish fishermen cultivate the spring flowers for which their country is so famous — daffodils, narcissi, anemones, etc. Staying in a cottage just above his own, two friends of ours became acquainted with H. J., one of the best-known and loved of the men who put out their boats from that little cove. He had a small hut on the sheltered side of the cove in which he stored his gardening implements and fishing tackle. It was guarded by the cliff from the open Atlantic.

"Come," he said to our friends one day, "I want to show you something."

For some time past he had noticed a little bird, a tiny wren, fluttering around the hut, and had wondered what was the attraction. Then he found that a small piece of

glass had been broken out of the window, leaving a tiny hole at one corner. Looking further into the matter, he discovered traces of the little bird inside, and finally came upon her chosen retreat.

Hanging from the low roof was a ball of string with which he tied up his flowers — the usual kind of a ball with a hole running through the middle.

"Now just put your finger in there," he said, "and see what she has done."

And oh! there was the cosiest, softest little nest with five baby birds in it. It was all a mother's heart could desire for warmth and safety from drafts and dangers of all kinds. A more sheltered nook it would be hard to imagine and the sweet suggestiveness of it all came home to our friends' hearts, especially when the rugged fisherman said, with real tenderness, "I never let anyone come in here," as if he were guarding a most precious possession.

The little scene has often come back to me — thinking about the love of God and the provisions He has made for His own.

Three special passages come to mind in this connection, showing as they do the love within the love, the care within the care, with which they are guarded. All these are in the Gospel of John, that wonderful revelation of the heart of Christ toward His people.

First then, likening them to the sheep in the Good Shepherd's care Jesus says (John 10:28-30): "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" — one in keeping grace and power.

How safe, how calm, how satisfied,
The soul that trusts in Thee.

And then with regard to the deeper things, the fellowship of love in which such souls are held (John 14:21, 23): "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him . . . my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

And deeper, more inclusive still (John 14:20): "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" — not *with* you, but *in* you.

What a picture — the tiny bird inside the ball of string, within the little hut sheltered by the cliff, and, above all, in the care of the good man to whom its confidence appealed so much.

There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God,
A place than all beside more blessed,
Near to the heart of God.

So near, so very near to God,
Nearer I cannot be,
For in the person of His Son
I am as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God,
Dearer I cannot be.
The love with which He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me.

Take refuge there, my heart—take refuge there!

—The Reaper.

The City of God

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

(A Sunday morning Sermon preached in Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh)

"I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and beheld a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me. To measure Jerusalem to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof."

—Zechariah 2:1-2.

"GLORIOUS things are spoken of thee, O city of God." This was the theme of our last hymn; this, too, was the theme of Zechariah's prophecy. Zechariah was raised up to be a prophet of hope to a dejected people. Seventy years ago Jerusalem had been captured by Nebuchadnezzar and her leaders carried away as prisoners-of-war into Babylon. A few years later King Zedekiah foolishly rebelled and roused Nebuchadnezzar to such savage revenge that he gutted the city. For fifty long years the City of God was left derelict: its people deported, its gates charred and broken, its walls and temple and palace like the rubble of a quarry, blackened with fire and overgrown with weeds. It was this hopeless sight that confronted the first batch of Jews that returned from exile under Zerubbabel and Joshua. To rebuild Jerusalem and restore it to its former glory was a colossal and almost impossible task. But the gallant exiles set about it with high hopes, and by the second month of the second year the foundation stone of the temple had been laid and rebuilding commenced.

Then came a shoal of disappointments. For one thing, the Samaritans did all in their power to harass and discourage the young community in Jerusalem. The builders lost heart and for fifteen years not another stone was laid on the temple walls. And it was when the work of rebuilding had come to a standstill that God raised up Haggai and Zechariah to urge the people on to complete the temple, to restore the walls and rehabilitate their capital. This Zechariah did by a ministry of encouragement. He inspired the despondent builders to entertain greater and grander views of Zion, the City of God. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." That, from first to last, is Zechariah's message.

It is a word for us too as we think of *our* City of God, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. For Jerusalem is a type of the Church, as Hebrews reminds us: "But ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . to the general assembly and church of the first-born."

The Church's Expansion

We need to entertain greater and grander views of the Church's expansion.

Here in Jerusalem the prophet would no doubt have watched the surveyors busy at their work, measuring the city streets, the gates and the walls. And this is what God gives him to see in his vision: a young surveyor with a measuring tape in his hand. The prophet asks him his business: "Where are you going?" "To measure Jerusalem and see what is its breadth and its length," comes the reply. But before the surveyor could disappear down the street an angel appears on the scene and runs after the young surveyor to tell him not to waste his time! His measuring tape is far too small for the job of measuring the City of God, no stone walls will ever be big enough to encompass Jerusalem. So great is the future that awaits her that her

population in days to come will burst every builder's walls and fill all the countryside. "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and cattle therein."

And has not this prophecy been fulfilled in the Church of Jesus Christ? A world Church has grown from Jerusalem. An upper room in Jerusalem was the Church's birthplace, when on the day of Pentecost the Spirit fell upon the Apostles and set their hearts and tongues on fire to tell the good news of redeeming grace.

And ever since her momentous birthday the Spirit has defied every attempt to set a human wall about the Church. The first Christians almost made the mistake of trying to measure God's Church with a Jewish footrule. It was only a Jewish Church they were thinking of at first: "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to *Israel*?" But then the Spirit revealed to Peter on the housetop in Joppa that God was no respecter of persons, and Christ called Saul of Tarsus to announce that every middle wall of partition, every national barrier, had been destroyed for ever at the Cross. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

William Carey had to contend with another attempt to limit the Church. When Carey urged upon his fellow-believers the obligation to preach the Gospel to every creature there were those who replied that if God wished to evangelize the Indians He would see to it Himself. These eighteenth-century surveyors were ready, in effect, to make the Church of Jesus Christ no bigger than Christendom; Western civilization was for them the outer wall of the Church. But, thanks be to God, Carey and his fellow-missionary pioneers pressed on, and now Christ is confessed as Lord in every land in the East too. Well may we praise God for our brethren and sisters from every nation and kindred and tongue who join us to confess. "Thou, O Christ art all I want. More than all, in Thee I find!"

And in these recent months our hearts have thrilled over the attempts to reach the savages of the South American continent. The epic of the Auca tribe, for instance, where five young men braved torture and death to tell savages of the Stone Age that Christ had died for all; savages who regarded every stranger as a foe and a victim for their poisonous darts. Alas that their bodies were found speared to death after their first attempt at evangelism! And with these martyrdoms comes another great story of missionary adventure among Stone Age tribesmen in New Guinea. When Einar Michelson, the pioneer missionary there, was about to take off for the dark treacherous valley where 60,000 savages lay hidden from all contact with civilization, a Dutch official is reported to have exclaimed: "I wouldn't go into that valley with anything less than a regiment of soldiers." But the herald of the Cross went with no weapon but the sword of the Spirit.

We rightly thrill over these stories, for we believe that

the world for whom Christ died includes every tribe and every type of human being; we believe also that every man, however savage or sunken in sin, can, through God's grace, respond to the love of Christ and enter into the Holy City. It would be manifestly wrong and sinful to build any wall around the Church of God which would exclude any race or tribe.

Yet, do not these stories of evangelism condemn us? Is it not a fact that many of us are setting our own unbelieving bounds to the Church of Christ? We have in effect built our own walls.

We do not need to go further than Britain to confront paganism; only ten per cent. of our population is said to have any contact with a place of worship. What are we doing about the other ninety per cent.? Every congregation in our country shows a majority of women: the number of men in most of our congregations is pathetically small. What are we doing about the manhood of Britain? What steps are we men taking to reach the men who rub shoulder to shoulder with us day by day and who evince no concern for eternal realities? It cannot be that men are any less welcome in the City of God than women. And then our neighbours. How many in your street are at church this morning? Have we any right to assume that the walls of God's City are too small to include all our neighbours? And have we not unwittingly built the wall in our family circles? When did we last cry to God to bring in our own loved ones? We are far too ready to acquiesce in our modern paganism, to settle down in it; we are in a rut; we don't expect God to act. God give us a greater spirit of faith and expectancy!

At our church prayer meeting the other Monday evening, one of our members hit the nail on the head when he said in prayer: "O Lord, Thou knowest we ask our friends and families to come to church with us, but Thou knowest too that if they came we would be surprised, and if they were converted we would be shocked." Too true. The Lord forgive us our unbelief. Glorious things are spoken of Christ's power to save! Christ died for all men. Therefore nothing less than All Men can be the reach of our prayers and witness.

The Church's Defences

Zechariah also sets before his timid, dispirited people a glorious vision of their city's defences. The angel might well have expected a protest from the young surveyor. "A city without walls? That would never do. Stone walls are our defences; without them we should fall a prey to every invading horde." But before the objection could be voiced the angel made his reply: Jerusalem's defences are made of more impregnable stuff than stone walls. "For I, said the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about her." A wall of fire. Here is a defence which is far safer than stone walls. Intrepid soldiers have been known to climb the highest walls; the Persians marched under Babylon's proud walls; the cunning Greeks wheeled their wooden horse through the stout gates of Troy; and disease finds its way through stone and timber. But a wall of fire, who can scale it, or undercut it; what wooden horse can survive it? And what plague can find its way through a burning furnace? A people who stand immured behind a wall of fire are secure against all foes.

This is our impenetrable defence to-day: the holy presence of God like a consuming fire thrown around us on every side. We must not make the mistake of thinking that human defences will avail us anything in spiritual warfare. What are the defences of the Church in this hour of attack?

Money? Learning? Organization? Ecumenicity? It is being said again and again that the churches should unite to meet the common foe of Communism. And if the modern Ecumenical Movement enables the churches to drink more deeply of the wells of salvation and to give a deeper obedience to Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature, then all is well. But please let us not fool ourselves into thinking that the mere aggregation of numbers will provide any defence against the satanic forces of Communism.

Our only defence against the atheism of Karl Marx is in Christ's presence enveloping us as individual Christians like an unassailable wall of fire. The attack of Communism is no longer on the physical level as in earlier persecutions: it is no longer a matter of killing men's bodies by the sword or the scaffold or at the stake. It is far more subtle and sadistic. The technique is to wear down the victim's resistance, to break his spirit, to disintegrate his personality. The pattern is: to keep the victim awake with hunger and loud blaring music day and night, or to consign him to terrible spells of loneliness in a small bare room; then to cross-examine him hour after hour until his will is broken and when he is too weak to resist any more to hypnotise his mind until the poor victim becomes the puppet of his Communist inquisitors. These terrible ordeals of "confession", "brainwashing" and indoctrination are searching tests of a man's spiritual stamina. And can Christ offer a defence to His own that will keep them strong, unbroken and triumphant? Geoffrey Bull has put his own victorious testimony on record. His book, "When Iron Gates Yield," is a moving testimony to the truth of this prophecy here: "For I," saith the Lord, "will be unto her a wall of fire round about her." Nothing, not even the Satanic psychological attacks of Moscow and Peking, can penetrate the burning walls with which Christ girds His own!

But have we laid hold on our defences? Are we not paralyzed by things far less than Communistic indoctrination? Somebody else is given our job in the church, or somebody criticizes what we do, and maybe slanders us into the bargain. And our ego is so vulnerable that we flame with resentment or eat our hearts out with wounded pride and self-pity. We are far too easily hurt. What do we know of Christ's presence thrown around us as like a wall of fire?

The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me
And can I be dismayed?

"I will not be afraid of tens of thousands of people who have set themselves against me round about, for Thou art a shield unto me, my glory and the lifter up of my head." Can we say this with David in Psalm 3? Our defences are such as to make us completely invulnerable; when we walk close with God we are beyond the reach of all hurt.

This truth is repeated twice in this chapter. God will always defend His people against their foes and will surely make an end of their enemies. As Communism has appeared to have wasted the church in Eastern Europe and Eastern Asia, so it seemed to these Jews of long ago that God had allowed Babylon to waste His own city. But God explains that Babylon's victories were only for the chastening of His people. And Communism to-day has been allowed to raise its head only to chasten the Church. Already Communism has rebuked our theological liberalism, our worldliness and complacency and forced us back again to the Bible and the faith once delivered to the saints. But Communism

must like Babylon fall, whilst the City of God moves on to her eternal destiny. See what the prophet says here in verse 8. "For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." How we protect the pupil of our eye. The eye is the most sensitive and the most protected part of our body. The bone structure of our faces, our eyelids, our eyelashes, our tear ducts — all are calculated to protect the eye from harm. Our whole body moves involuntarily to defend our eye. We bend all we have to protect our eyes from harm — it is no easy matter to damage a man's eye. And what of God's eye? The Almighty, the Omniscient — is it possible that anything should ever be permitted to hurt His eye? And God protects His Church like that: the apple of His eye! Never fear for the ark of the Lord, the body of Christ, the Church of God. God is pledged to our protection. By the price He paid for her redemption in the death of His Son and by the intercession of her Great Head at the right hand of the Father, the Church is secure. Our personal reputations, our human organizations, our honoured traditions — these may go. The Gospel, however, is indestructible. The Church of Jesus Christ is eternal. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The Church's Attraction

The people in Jerusalem thought they had another reason for depression. David's palace lay in black ruin, Solomon's temple was gone for ever. All they could hope to build in these days of austerity and "credit squeeze" was a Nissen hut compared with Solomon's temple. The Queen of Sheba came all the way from Ethiopia to see the glories of Jerusalem in Solomon's day, but what was there now to bring anybody to Jerusalem?

The prophet replies that Jerusalem's real glory — for all her loss of silver, gold and marble — still remained intact! It was God's presence in her midst. "I will be the glory in the midst of her." And because God was in His holy temple the nations of the world would flock again to Jerusalem. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee."

How much we need this reminder that the Church's only magnetism, her only power to draw in the unbelieving world, is God's presence seen and felt in her midst; in her worship and fellowship, in the life and character of her individual members. We have all heard it said that if the Church would attract the world it must organize a giddy round of dances, plays and parties; in a word, that the Church should copy the methods of the world. "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" All too many of us have tried the methods of this world, and with what success? The prodigals have remained with their husks in the far country. Only the vision of the Father's banqueting house revealed through the Church will avail to bring home the prodigal. The only magnetism we can ever hope to possess is in our holiness, our likeness to our Lord.

Remember what the Apostle Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 3:16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" — and the word used here for "temple" means "residence", the Holy Place where God dwells. The climax of all spiritual vision for the Jew was the shekinah glory of God. And we are meant to be that, now that the Spirit of God dwells in us! This is

the real attraction of the Church: your and my heart and mind and personality transformed into God's Holy Place, from which He shines forth upon the world in the beauty of holiness and love.

How the presence of God in the midst of His people draws! This is what adds to the Church — during the 1904 revival numbers increased six to ten times over. Let us then put the accent where this scripture puts it. When our individual lives become the Holy Place where God's presence is seen and felt, then men and women will believe and, in the words of the prophet, will run unto us because of the Lord of God and the Holy One of Israel.

—Charlotte Chapel Record

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD IN JARVIS STREET

THE Word of God in all its purity and simplicity was sounded forth in Jarvis Street once again on Sunday, December 1st. Dr. H. C. Slade, the honoured Pastor, preached with power at both services.

The morning sermon on "Overcoming the World" (1 John 5:4) was a message of encouragement to believers and of warning to unbelievers. The text describes a Christian as one who is born of God (John 1:12, 13). He is a twice-born person, born of the flesh and then born of God: "Ye must be born again." We need to be born again of God's Spirit, who has moved upon the soul. First, the soul is made to feel his guilt in God's sight, and then the Holy Spirit reveals to us the Lord Jesus Christ as the God-appointed Saviour of the world. Now the soul longs for salvation, and God enables that one to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have not been born again, we are not Christians.

The Christian life is a warfare; the one born of God "overcometh the world". The world is at enmity with God; there is something in the world to be overcome. There are but two classes of people; Christians and non-Christians, or believers and unbelievers. Those who are not Christians walk according to this world, but the Christian is to withstand the world. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

See the Christian's victories. The Christian enters the conflict the moment of his new birth. Light is contrary to darkness, and darkness is contrary to the light. The Christian is against the world, and the world is against the Christian, who is commanded not to love the world, or the things that are in the world (1 John 2:15). The Lord is not speaking about the natural world with its trees, mountains and streams, nor about the souls of men, but He says that we are not to love the spirit that is in this world which is opposed to God. There are things in this world which fascinate the carnal mind and the corrupt heart.

What is this world which we are not to love? "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Eve was guilty of all three of these. Some may be guilty of one, and some may be guilty of all. The Christian is to fight against these things, and the one who overcomes them is overcoming the world, enjoying victory.

"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." This was the motto of the great D. L. Moody. Similarly, Martin Luther said, "I yield to none; here I stand, so help me God. I can do no other."

The overcomer must be born of the Spirit, he must be a believer, he must be a man of faith. Faith is the Chris-

tian's weapon; he has the power of God within. Those who believe the Word of God hold loosely the things of time, but they hold tightly to eternal things. We must see the world as it is, and set our affections not on things of earth, but on things above. We have faith in God's promises, as did Moses, who "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Faith in God makes us mighty.

The world is overcoming you, or you are overcoming the world. There is a reward for all who overcome. Are you born of God? Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? You can be, if you will accept Christ as your Saviour.

The text for the evening sermon was also taken from the First Epistle of John (1:7). This glorious message on "Fellowship with God" was broadcast over station CHWO — Oakville, 1250. Believers in Christ have been exalted to a lofty position; even now they are regarded as "seated with Christ in heavenly places," and there is more to follow.

A Christian is one who is in the light. Once we were in darkness, which is the token of ignorance and sin; but now we are in the light, which is the token of knowledge, purity, truth, happiness and prosperity. When we walked in darkness we could not see our way; we were without spiritual discernment to understand the nature, the guilt and the consequences of sin; the sacrifice of Christ; the glory of God, His love, power, justice and holiness. The natural mind cannot grasp these truths, for they are "spiritually discerned," and the god of this world has blinded their minds. Believers have been brought into the marvellous light of God; Divine life has been created in our souls. The first work in creation was this: "Let there be light." The first work in the new creation is similar: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

A Christian is one who is in fellowship with God. This argues the reality of the light we profess. Do we as God's people walk in that light and enjoy that fellowship? We as Christians are brought into agreement with God; we agree with Him respecting the truth, respecting His Gospel: We love His truth and the Gospel, and desire to promote this Gospel. On the other hand, we hate sin, falsehood, error.

A Christian is one who has become partaker of the Divine nature. Christ died on the cross and rose again that He might share His Divine life with us. We have the very life of God throbbing in our souls. Do you know anything of this fellowship with God? Enoch walked with God. C. H. Spurgeon spoke of being able to look back over twenty years of abiding, unbroken fellowship with God. Do you know this fellowship in your business, your home, your daily life?

Notice the nature of this fellowship with God. The original Greek words translated "fellowship" centre about two ideas; communion with God, and partnership with God. This word carries with it the idea of friendship. A friend is one you know well, who has been tested, and whose faithfulness, veracity and loyalty you have discovered. We have in our God and in Christ such communion, companionship, fellowship and friendship. To Him we can safely go with all our problems, difficulties and sins (Phil. 4:6, 7). This fellowship is also a partnership, an association; we have mutual interests. God is interested in us and places at our disposal all His resources of wisdom and power. He cares for us and gives to us what we may require. We also are interested in God, in everything He does and loves, in His

Church and in lost souls. All we have is His; we are not our own. God has made wonderful provision for us, for our pardon and cleansing in the blood of Christ.

For the sinner, this is his only hope, the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses from *all* sin. These sins are all taken away by the blood of Christ. A Christian is a pardoned sinner. There are two kinds of sinners; (1) saved sinners, (2) unsaved sinners. Those who believe on Christ are pardoned sinners, but "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Our debt has been fully paid, and we have the receipt in God's Word. What a relief to know that our debt has been paid in full! A Christian's attitude toward sin is the same as God's; He hates sin. But the blood of Christ is continually operative; it keeps on cleansing us every day, every hour, every moment. If we confess our sins, He keeps on cleansing us and making us acceptable to God. One day we shall stand in the presence of His glory, without fault, clothed in the righteousness of God's dear Son.

The musical portion of this service was most appropriate. During the broadcast the choir sang "At Peace with God", and the hymns were "There is a fountain filled with blood," and "I need Thee every hour." The Monthly Communion service followed the evening message. Five new members were received.

—O.L.C.

AMONG OURSELVES

Our sincere Christian sympathy is extended to the loved ones of Mrs. G. Cullington, who was called to higher service November 20, 1957. She will be greatly missed around Jarvis Street where she has been a faithful member for over 30 years. Former students of the Seminary look back with gratitude to God for the devoted service of both Mr. and Mrs. Cullington.

ETERNITY WILL REVEAL TO SINNERS THEIR FOLLY

We are in darkness till we are converted; because we are blind — and that not by accident, but by nature — born blind. There are animals, both wild and domestic, which by a strange and mysterious law of Providence are in that state when born. "Having eyes, they see not." Apparently unripe for birth, they leave their mother's womb to pass the first period of their being utterly sightless. But when some ten days have come and gone, time unseals their eyelids, and they are delivered from the power of darkness. But not ten days, nor years, nor any length of time will do us any such friendly office. Not that we shall be always blind. Oh, how men shall see, and regret in another world, the folly they were guilty of in this! Eternity opens the darkest eyes, but opens them at last too late.—GUTHRIE.

"REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT"

Dr. H. C. Slade's sermon, entitled, "The Prince of Preachers", appearing in last week's issue deals with the blasphemous infidelity of Dr. D. Soper, missionary of the United Church of Canada, who recently held meetings in Toronto. Will you help us give this issue wide circulation? People need to be warned and awakened. Christians must arise and continue to contend for the faith. Send for extra copies to distribute among those who might be influenced by such infidelity.

Evangelical International Sunday School Lessons for 1958

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First Quarter

- January 5**
The Word of God—John 1:1-8
G.T.—John 1:14
- January 12**
The Lamb of God—John 1:19-34
G.T.—John 1:29
- January 19**
The Miracle at Cana—John 2:1-11
G.T.—John 2:5
- January 26**
Jesus Rebukes Mercenary Religious Leaders—John 2:13-25
G.T.—Mark 11:17
- February 2**
The New Birth—John 3:1-21
G.T.—John 3:16
- February 9**
The Saviour of Samaria—John 4:1-15
G.T.—John 4:14.
- February 16**
Jesus Heals a Nobleman's Son—John 4:43-54.
G.T.—John 4:50.
- February 23**
The Saviour of the Helpless—John 5:1-14
G.T.—John 5:24
- March 2**
The Bread of Life—John 6:1-14
G.T.—John 6:35
- March 9**
The Water of Life—John 7:14-24, 28, 29; 37-39
G.T.—John 7:37
- March 16**
Jesus Rebukes Apostasy—John 8:31-47
G.T.—John 8:32
- March 23**
The Light of the World—John 9:1-11, 35-41
G.T.—John 8:12
- March 30**
The Good Shepherd—John 10:1-18
G.T.—John 10:11

Second Quarter

- April 6**
(Easter Lesson) The Resurrection of Christ—John 20:1-18
G.T.—1 Corinthians 15:20
- April 13**
The Raising of Lazarus—John 11:1-15, 41-44
G.T.—John 11:25
- April 20**
Mary's Gift—John 12:1-8, 20-27
G.T.—John 12:24
- April 27**
Christ Washes the Disciples' Feet—John 13:1-17
G.T.—John 13:35
- May 4**
Christ the Way—John 14:1-15
G.T.—John 14:6
- May 11**
Christ the True Vine—John 15:1-16
G.T.—John 15:7
- May 18**
The Holy Spirit Promised—John 16:1-15
G.T.—John 14:16
- May 25**
Christ's Prayer for His Separated Ones—John 17:1-17
G.T.—John 17:14
- June 1**
Peter Denies His Lord—John 18:15-27
G.T.—Jeremiah 17:9
- June 8**
The Trial of Jesus—John 18:28-40
G.T.—Isaiah 53:5
- June 15**
The Crucifixion of Jesus—John 19:16-30
G.T.—Isaiah 53:6

- June 22**
Jesus Appears in Galilee—John 21:1-14
G.T.—Colossians 3:1
- June 29**
Temperance Lesson—Prov. 23:29-35; 1 Cor. 3:16-17
G.T.—1 Corinthians 3:17

Third Quarter

- July 6**
How the World Began—Gen. 1:1-19
G.T.—Gen. 1:1.
- July 13**
The Creation of Man—Gen. 2:7-25
G.T.—Gen. 1:27
- July 20**
How Sin Entered the World—Gen. 3:1-19
G.T.—Rom. 5:19
- July 27**
Cain and Abel—Gen. 4:1-16
G.T.—Heb. 11:4
- August 3**
Noah and the Ark—Gen. 6:8-22
G.T.—Heb. 11:7
- August 10**
God's Covenant with Noah—Gen. 9:1-17
G.T.—Gen. 9:13
- August 17**
The Tower of Babel—Gen. 11:1-9
G.T.—Titus 3:5
- August 24**
Abram's Call to Separation—Gen. 12:1-19
G.T.—Gen. 12:1
- August 31**
Lot's Choice—Gen. 13:1-18
G.T.—2 Cor. 6:14
- September 7**
Melchizedec Blesses Abram—Gen. 14:8 - 15:1
G.T.—Heb. 5:9, 10
- September 14**
God's Covenant with Abraham—Gen. 15:5-7; 17:1-18
G.T.—Gal. 3:7
- September 21**
Abraham Pleads for Sodom—Gen. 18:16-33
G.T.—Matt. 5:44
- September 28**
God's Judgment on Sodom—Gen. 19:12-29
G.T.—Rev. 18:4

Fourth Quarter

- October 5**
The Supreme Test of Abraham's Faith—Gen. 22:1-19
G.T.—John 3:16
- October 12**
A Bride for Isaac—Gen. 24:32-51
G.T.—Psa. 48:14
- October 19**
Jacob and Esau—Gen. 25:19-34
G.T.—2 Cor. 4:18
- October 26**
The Stolen Blessing—Gen. 27:1-17
G.T.—Rom. 6:23
- November 2**
God meets Jacob at Bethel—Gen. 28:10-22
G.T.—John 1:51
- November 9**
Jacob's New Name—Gen. 32:9-12, 24-31
G.T.—Rev. 2:17
- November 16**
Joseph's Dreams—Gen. 37:1-11
G.T.—1 Peter 5:6
- November 23**
Joseph Sold into Egypt—Gen. 37:12-28
G.T.—Gen. 50:20
- November 30**
Joseph in Prison—Gen. 40:5-23
G.T.—Psa. 25:14

December 7

Joseph Exalted—Gen. 41:25-43
G.T.—Prov. 22:29

December 14

Joseph Forgiving His Brethren—Gen. 45:1-15
G.T.—Rom. 12:19

December 21

Review and Temperance Lesson—Isaiah 5:11-24
G.T.—Prov. 23:29, 30

December 28

Christmas—The Birth of Jesus—Matt. 1:18-25
G.T.—Matt. 1:21

(Note: In the above, the letters G.T. indicate the Golden Text for the day.)

Bible School Lesson Outline

Volume 21 Fourth Quarter Lesson 11 December 15, 1957

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

GOD'S LOVE SLIGHTED

Lesson Text: Malachi 1.

Golden Text: "The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel."—Malachi 1:5.

Introduction:

The Book of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, is probably also the latest in date. The fact that the restored temple is depicted as being completed, and the sacrifices as being offered once more, would imply that this prophecy was subsequent to those of Haggai and Zechariah. It may have been written during the period of confusion when Nehemiah was absent from Jerusalem (Neh. 13).

The name Malachi means "My messenger". Of the prophet himself we know very little, except what may be learned from his written messages. The Book may be divided into two sections:

1. The Extent of the Sin and Apostasy in Israel: chapp. 1, 2.
2. The Outcome for the Sinner and for the Repentant: chapp. 3, 4.

I. The Love of the Father: verses 1-5.

The word "burden" is frequently used to describe particular messages of the prophets (Isa. 15:1; 17:1; Habb. 1:1; Zech. 9:1), indicating the solemn nature of the truth disclosed and also the heavy responsibility imposed upon the messengers (1 Cor. 9:16; 2 Cor. 4:8-18; 6:3-10). These messages were usually messages of warning, rather than comfort. Too many preachers and teachers take their work lightly (1 Tim. 6:11-15).

By word and action the Lord had manifested His love to Israel, His chosen people (Deut. 4:37; 7:7, 8). His love to the children of Israel, descendants of Jacob (Rom. 9:4-13), was so strong that His attitude toward the Edomites, the descendants of Esau (Gen. 25:30; 36:1, 43), seemed as hatred (Luke 14:26). God had sovereignly ordained that Jacob, later named "Israel" ("Prince with God"), should be the heir of the promises made to Abraham (Gen. 28:13, 14), the progenitor of the chosen line, rather than Esau, described as a carnal or profane man, since he was interested only in the things of the flesh (Gen. 25:34; Heb. 12:16, 17). Jacob was chosen, but Esau was rejected. The Edomites, Esau's descendants, would never be permitted to prosper, but would ever rest under the wrath of God (Nah. 1:2). God's love for Jacob and His rejection of Esau were not arbitrary, but were based upon the individual attitude and actions of these two (Exod. 33:19; Rom. 9:14-18).

The sovereign purpose of God in setting Jacob apart for Himself and in placing Esau apart from Himself would in His good time be revealed to the people, who would then be compelled to acknowledge the glory of His great name (Mic. 5:4). His name would be exalted from one end of the land to the other. Although the human intellect cannot always comprehend the ways of God, our hearts should submit to His gracious will (Isa. 40:18-31). The time will come when we shall fully understand and appreciate His wisdom, love

and power (1 Cor. 13:12) and give to Him the glory due His name (Psa. 29:12; 96:8; Rom. 11:33-36).

II. The Ingratitude of the Children: verses 6-14.

Instead of joyfully accepting the revealed love of God (John 1:11; 1 John 3:1; 4:16), the Jews first questioned the reality of that love: "Wherein hast thou loved us?" Such an attitude of questioning, complaining, arguing and doubting the Word of God was characteristic of the people at this time (verses 6, 7; Mal. 2:17; 3: 7, 8, 13).

A father expects to be honoured by his children (Exod. 20:12; Matt. 15:4-8; Eph. 6:2), and a master expects to be esteemed by his servants (Isa. 1:3, 4), but God had been dishonoured by His people (Rom. 2:4) and especially by the priests (Lev. 22:2; Mal. 2:1). No amount of formal service can take the place of a personal passion for our Master (Hos. 6:6). His love toward us is everlasting (Jer. 31:3; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16); let us ever adore Him (1 John 4:19).

The priests had sinned grievously against the Lord by disobeying His commandments in reference to their official duties. Their light regard for the honour of the Lord took away from the sacredness of the tables at which they served, the tables whereon lay the shewbread, the symbol of the Lord's sustaining power as the Bread of life (verses 7, 12; John 6:50, 51). Instead of the perfect, unblemished and holy sacrifices commanded in the law of Moses, they had offered to the Lord animals which were imperfect, blemished and unholy (verses 8, 13; Lev. 3:1; 22:18-25). Moreover, the offerings were not accepted, since the offerers were not acceptable in God's sight (Gen. 4:7; Isa. 1:11-15). Again, the priests served for profit, not for love (verse 10; Ezek. 34: 2, 3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 3). There are those who devote the major portion of their time, talents and money for their own selfish interests, and offer to God only that which is left (Eccl. 5:4, 5). Our Saviour, who is also our Redeemer, Lord and Master, should have our very best (Eccl. 11:9, 10; 12:1; Rom. 12:1).

Those who present an inferior offering to the Lord, while pretending to give their all to Him, will find themselves under the curse of God; rather than in the sphere of blessing (Josh. 7:11, 15, 20-26; Acts 5:1-12). Let us honour Him in all places and at all times (Phil. 1:20; 3:7-14).

Daily Bible Readings

Dec. 9—Love Everlasting	Jer. 31:1-15
Dec. 10—Love Manifested	Rom. 5:1-11
Dec. 11—Love Rejected	Isa. 53:13-53:12
Dec. 12—Love's Cost	John 3:1-16
Dec. 13—Love Necessary	1 Cor. 13
Dec. 14—Love Tried	John 21
Dec. 15—Love Perfected	1 John 1:5-2:6

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