

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

IN THE INTEREST OF JARVIS STREET BAPTIST
CHURCH, TORONTO, AND OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH.

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PASTOR AND EDITOR

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Romans 1: 16.

SATURDAY, JUNE 10th, 1922

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THE FINAL CHAPTER.

IN the historic Jarvis Street Baptist Church, on the evening of Wednesday, June 7th, 1922, at a very largely attended meeting of the church, there was written the final chapter in the record of the attempt to silence the conservative testimony of the Pastor in Jarvis Street pulpit, and so to discredit him in the estimation of the Denomination as absolutely to destroy his influence in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. This, beyond all question, was the sinister motive behind the events which, for the past two years, and particularly since March, 1921, have brought Jarvis Street so prominently into the public view. To tell the story of this closing chapter, and briefly and plainly to explain the means employed in effecting the great cleavage in this historic church, is the purpose of this article.

MEMBERS DISMISSED.

At that meeting the following resolution was unanimously carried:—

"That the request of the members of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, bearing date of April 12th, 1922, over the signatures of 'Gideon Grant, Chairman, Evangeline Watson, Secretary' (but received from Mr. Gideon Grant, May 24th), for dismission from membership in this church "for the purpose of organizing a new Regular Baptist Church within the Convention of Ontario and Quebec," be and is hereby granted; and that the Clerk of this Church is hereby instructed to prepare and send a letter certifying such dismission, which letter shall bear the names of all those applying whose names were on the church roll; and that the said letter shall be in a form which shall indicate the standing of each member dismissed, in respect to the date and manner of admission into the church, and attendance at the Lord's Table."

By this resolution 341 members were dismissed, who with the passing of that resolution ceased to be members of Jarvis Street Church.

The members of Jarvis Street Church entertain only the kindest feelings toward those who have withdrawn from our fellowship. They have prayed that God would in His mercy deal with the whole church; and for that reason, we have refrained from any effort to retain in the membership of the church any who were being importuned to leave us. We longed to visit some upon whom

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"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; tremendous pressure had been brought, to secure their names for the list. But we refrained from doing so, because we had asked the Lord to order the whole matter according to His will.

Now that they are gone, and there remains no danger of our being misunderstood, we are free to say that we follow them with our prayers, and with the conviction that many of them will some day come to see how they have been misled; and will discover that they have yielded to influences which were not from God. And we want to assure our separated brethren and sisters who were once faithful members of this church, that we cherish only sentiments of affection for them, and pray that God may lead them in such a way that they may experience the fulness of His grace in all the years to come.

Letters were granted to 341 members. Our membership until then was 1,271, so that 82 less than one third of the membership applied for dismissal: Even on the basis of our membership on March 31st, 1921, shortly after which the first vote was taken, and even if, by the circulation of lists, such as they have circulated to obtain these 341 names, they could then have secured the same number of votes as those names represent, they would still have been twenty-seven short of one third, as our membership was then eleven hundred and four.

The withdrawal of 341 is a serious cleavage all will admit; but surely no one will deny the right of the remaining more than two thirds of the membership to determine the affairs of Jarvis Street Church. The number of withdrawals, however, is sufficiently large to require some explanation.

HOW THE DEFECTION BEGAN.

The movement resulting in this serious defection showed itself openly by the announcement in a Toronto evening paper of the formation of a "Men's Committee of Jarvis Street Baptist Church," in April, 1921.

The leading spirit in this campaign, which it was asserted was to preserve "Old Jarvis Street," became a member of the church only five months before the beginning of the present pastorate. He is a member of the Senate of McMaster University, and is the friend of, and acted in conjunction with, one who has managed to represent McMaster alumni on the Senate for many years; he was an opponent of the late Dr. Elmore Harris, and as a newspaper man, has had at his command unusual facilities for attacking the opponents of Modernism.

This newspaper man led a small company in opposition to the present Pastor's being called to Jarvis Street, most of whom took up that attitude, as some of them later acknowledged to the Pastor, in response to this man's persuasion. His opposition to the Pastor was based wholly upon the Pastor's theological views, for at that time they had never met personally. This person soon ceased attendance at the services after the Pastor's settlement, and after some years transferred his membership to another church. But from the beginning he has never ceased his antagonism; and left in the Jarvis Street Church, in the person above referred to, one who continuously, but under the surface, exercised his mission of being "a thorn in the flesh" to the Pastor.

After the Ottawa Convention of 1919, the little group of Modernists in the Denomination passed sentence upon the Pastor of Jarvis Street Church, as did Haman upon Mordecai, and decreed that his influence must be destroyed. There are members of the church who have stood loyally by the Pastor through all the terrific conflict, who were approached by some, whose names afterwards appeared as members of the so-called "Men's Committee," six months before the

public attack upon the Pastor began, in an effort to seduce them from their loyalty, being warned that they would see what would happen the next spring.

In the ex-deacons' letter to the churches of the Convention, issued last October, the Pastor was contemptuously described as having been engaged in fighting a "stuffed lion" in his opposition to Modernism at Ottawa and elsewhere. But loyal Baptists throughout the Convention know that the thing that has been prowling and growling around during recent years, and which, having left Truth prone and bleeding in the folds of other denominations, has also been endeavouring to break down all barriers which stand in the way of its predatory roamings over our Baptist fields and flocks, is something more than a "stuffed lion." It is the sort of lion which, if any one must attack, he will be wise to take unto himself the whole armour of God.

Modernism, as touching the inspiration and integrity of the Bible; **Modernism** in the matter of amusements; **Modernism** in vaudeville performances in Sunday School entertainments; **Modernism** in opposition to the Regular Baptist position in the matter of the ordinances; **Modernism** in church choirs; **Modernism** hydra-headed, and in its many-colored forms, raised its head in Jarvis Street Baptist Church—and **Modernism** was vanquished! Hallelujah!

Beyond all peradventure this is where the Jarvis Street conflict originated. Of course other elements entered into it. No pastor of a large church can please everybody, particularly in the matter of pastoral visitation. In every church there is always a certain amount of inflammable material awaiting the touch of a tongue "set on fire."

MEMBERS' STANDING.

In the letter granted June 7th, the standing of each member in respect to date and manner of admission to the church, and attendance at Communion Service was indicated. Four general classifications were mentioned, as follows: "Regular," signifying eight or more attendances per year; "Fairly Regular," six or seven times a year; "Irregular," less than six and more than two; "Very Irregular," twice or less per year; when more delinquent than indicated by "very irregular," the attendance or non-attendance was particularly specified.

Of the fifteen members of "The Men's Committee" only three were "regular" in attendance at Communion service; three "fairly regular"; two were "irregular"; six were "very irregular"; and one had attended the Communion six times in seven years prior to January, 1921—and not at all since.

This "Men's Committee," in April, 1921, began the canvass of the membership. Thoroughly organized, they visited every home where they thought there was the slightest possibility of turning the members against the Pastor's ministry. Every conceivable effort was made to seduce the members from their loyalty. How many times the members were visited we dare not attempt to say. We know of at least one home which was visited five times in one week. And every one who called went to inject poison. There was no possibility of supplying an antidote, for no one could tell where the poisonous fang had struck.

What wonder is it that many good people, who hitherto had been loyal to the Pastor's ministry, became disaffected! What pastor in the world could stand against such insidious attacks without suffering some loss? Is it surprising, when a succession of callers insisted that the honor and prosperity of "Old Jarvis Street" depended upon the Pastor's removal, that even some of his best friends should have been persuaded to oppose the Pastor "in the interests of Jarvis Street"? The wonder is that they turned so few!

"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us:
"Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:
"Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:
"Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
"Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth.
"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is
broken, and we are escaped.
"Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

SECESSIONISTS DECIDE TO ORGANIZE A CHURCH.

The story of the several votings is well known. On September 21st the so-called "Men's Committee" learned that their utmost efforts had failed, and they, with those whom they had persuaded to follow them, withdrew; and have since been meeting at the Central Y.M.C.A. for religious services.

On April 12th, 1922, this company of members decided to organize themselves into a "new Regular Baptist Church within the Convention of Ontario and Quebec," and so advised the Jarvis Street Church by special delivery letter received April 13th, in which it was promised that the list of withdrawing members would be forwarded within ten days." No further communication was received until the list of applications was delivered at the church office, May 24th. What was done in the intervening forty-one days? A large part of the membership was again canvassed, a letter was sent to not a few of the loyal members (as was publicly testified at the business meeting of the church, June 7th) with a form appended for use in applying for a letter from Jarvis Street to join the new organization. Thus, right to the end, the spirit and method which marked the beginning of the cleavage persisted. It was not the result of a spontaneous expression of dissatisfaction on the part of a large number of members; but rather it has been the result of the determined efforts of a small group of men actuated by a general distaste for a Biblical ministry, inspired by one who was the willing tool of those elements in the Denomination who were determined to destroy the Pastor's influence in the Convention in order to put an end to his opposition to their Modernist propaganda. And these fourteen months of unremitting labour resulted in the sending to Jarvis Street Church of a list of 341 names of members applying for letters of dismissal to organize another church. (The total list contained 345 names, but four had already been dropped from the roll for long-continued neglect of the services of the church.)

This article would not have been written had the list contained the names only of those who of their own volition had been meeting at the Central Y.M.C.A. But when this last determined effort to make an impression upon the Christian public, and particularly the Baptist Denomination, by advertising in advance the withdrawal of "350" members has been made, this explanation of how the names were obtained, and what religious interest they represented, has been rendered a necessity.

We have already explained that the 341 names represent the utmost the unremitting labour of fourteen months could do to destroy the unity and effectiveness of Jarvis Street Church.

It must now be acknowledged that the present ministry is supported by eighty-two more than two thirds of the entire membership of the church. No one, we think, will contend that 341 people had the right to govern 930. (For there was not one of the 930 whom there was the slightest chance of persuading to leave who was not either visited or written to.)

THE APPLICATION ANALYZED.

What proportion of the 341 were vital members of the church, and what proportion were induced to join the seceders for the sake of the impression the announcement of so large a number would make?

We ask our readers to refer to the paragraph on page 3 of this article for the signification of the terms "regular" to "very irregular." Of the 341 dismissals, ninety were "regular" attendants at Communion; thirty were "fairly regular"; sixty-three were "irregular"; and forty-seven "very irregular." That is to say 230 attended Communion service once or oftener in a year. But the "very irregular" attendants represent some who attended in 1921 for the first time for some years, and are so classed to avoid even the semblance of injustice. Only 183 of the 341 attended oftener than twice a year. And it must be remembered that Jarvis Street Church observes the ordinance of the Lord's Supper every Sunday, that is, fifty-two times a year. Yet only 120 of the 341 observed the Ordinance as often as six times a year or once in two months.

But what of the one hundred and eleven who were even more delinquent than is described by "very irregular"?

Space forbids our telling the full story of the one hundred and eleven. A few samples must suffice. But here let us explain that we have a complete record of every monthly Communion attendance for the past forty years, and for several years back, of the weekly Communion also.

And in tracing the record of some we had to go back nearly 30 years. One had been twice in 27 years. That is to say, that person out of 1,404 opportunities to remember the Lord's death took advantage of two! Another had attended once in 20 years; three, attended once in 13 years; another, once in 12 years; another, once in 10 years; another, once in seven years; another, once in six years; one attended twice in 16 years; one, twice in 15 years; one, twice in 12 years; one, twice in 11 years; two, twice in nine years; one, three times in twelve years. The record of others shows their attendance scattered over the years, with here and there, three or four attendances close together, followed by extended periods of absence; such as twelve attendances in sixteen years; fourteen attendances in twenty-two years; fourteen attendances in nineteen years; twenty-four in twenty-two years; seven in eighteen years; six in eleven years; nine in twelve years; and many others such as four times in eight years; five times in seven years; seven times in twelve years. In this list of those who have been so irregular as to defy general classification, there are no less than forty-four names. Whatever the present Pastor's shortcomings, he cannot be made responsible for the neglect of the Lord's Table by so many extending over periods of from thirteen to twenty-eight years. One of the leaders of the secessionists, who until three or four years ago was the treasurer of the church, attended the Table twenty-three times in twenty-eight years; in which time there were periods showing years of continuous absence. Out of 1,456 opportunities to attend Communion this brother had availed himself of twenty-three. In addition to these, in the list there is the name of one who, though resident in the city, has been continuously absent from the Lord's Table for thirteen and a half years; two who have been absent for twelve years; two for ten years; and several others for periods of two years or more.

Readers will bear in mind that among those responsible for assembling these names are several former deacons and the former clerk of Jarvis Street Church. These former officers must have known that many of these names

have for years meant nothing to Jarvis Street Church but names on a book; and they cannot possibly have desired the transfer of these names to the books of the new organization for any other purpose than to make the defection bulk as large as possible. We are persuaded that among the 341 there must be some who, had they known it, would not have consented to have had their names included in a list containing the names of so large a number who have for so many years neglected the ordinance of the Lord's Supper,—especially as that list was to represent the charter members of "a new Regular Baptist Church" organized "for the purpose of observing the ordinances of religion."

WHEN SOME BECAME MEMBERS

We now come to another phase of the matter. The secessionists have contended that they were "old Jarvis Street." The impression has been created that they have been dispossessed of a building in which they had some sort of proprietary right. But the Jarvis Street building was dedicated, by those who built it, to certain principles,—not to any persons. And those who hold those principles are the only legitimate heirs. Of the 341 only eleven were members of the church when the present building was opened. In the parlor of Jarvis Street Church there is hanging on the wall an illuminated address presented to the late Senator McMaster, January 8th, 1879, expressing the thanks of the church to him for having paid off the last cent of indebtedness on the building as a New Year's present on January 1st, 1879. Of the 341 only sixteen were members of the church prior to that date; and it is certain that most of the sixteen were either so young or otherwise so conditioned that their contributions to the building, if any, must have been very small.

Only 182 of the 341 were members when the present Pastor began his ministry in Jarvis Street in May, 1910, and of the 182 the records show, 39 were among those who were more delinquent than "very irregular," thirty were "very irregular," twenty were "irregular," while sixteen were either aged and infirm, or prevented from attendance by duty to others; thus accounting for 106 of the 182 who were members when the present pastorate began. It follows, therefore, that only seventy-six of those who were members prior to May, 1910, when the present Pastor began his ministry in Jarvis Street, out of the 341, were either "regular" or "fairly regular" in attendance at the Lord's Table—that is, only seventy-six attended as often as six times, or over, in a year.

THE BLESSING OF THE PAST YEAR.

For the sake of those who may not have read elsewhere of what God has done for us, we here again record to His praise, that during the year in which the church has been fighting for her very life, while an organized force has openly and avowedly sought by every means within the law (and the letter issued by the ex-deacons before the Convention last October, was not within the law, but was unquestionably libelous) to ruin the Pastor's reputation and utterly destroy his usefulness as a minister of the gospel, Jarvis Street has held on her way. The people have, through it all assembled five times a week for prayer; the average congregations have been larger than ever before during the present pastorate; conversions have been frequent and numerous; 219 joined the church during the year, 90 of whom were baptized; and for the six months following the withdrawal of those who have now been dismissed from our membership, our income for general expenses exceeded the income for the corresponding period of the year before, by \$40.99 per week, and we closed the year with a cash balance in current account of \$1,575.75.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Until now we could not hold out the olive branch. There were some among those in opposition whom we had no desire to see return unless and until they should bring forth fruits, meet for repentance. The liberty and spiritual fruitage which immediately followed their departure forbade our jeopardizing the church's future spiritual usefulness by holding out any inducements to return. But there were others in whose sound Christian characters, and deep and self-sacrificing spiritual interest all who know them intimately must have the fullest confidence. Peter, even after Pentecost, "withdrew and separated himself" from the Gentiles, "fearing them of the circumcision;" and for this Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." And it is said, "the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabus also was carried away with their dissimulation." And since that day many more have been "carried away" with others' "dissimulation." We can well understand how social and family influence "carried away" a good many. We pray that God may bless them where they go. And we venture to hope, that as they have prayed for God's blessing to rest upon Jarvis Street in the past they may continue to do so; even as we assure them, that many of us will breathe their names before the Throne. And if, as their thought turns affectionately toward the place around which for them, as for us, so many holy and happy memories gather, they should feel the desire, even if only as a visitor, to tread once more the loved and familiar courts, we beg them to believe, that there will always await them the most loving welcome; and all others too, who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. And if God should continue to favour us, as we believe He will, and blessings should, of His grace, be multiplied to us, we believe they will share our rejoicing as in former years. And if the time should come when any of these, hearing that the Lord has visited His people in giving them bread, should, like Naomi, turn again toward their loved Bethlehem, we want them to know that we have written nothing in our books, even as we have allowed enmity to write nothing in our hearts, to prevent such a reunion. Meanwhile we can only pray that He who makes even the wrath of men to praise Him, who permitted the church at Jerusalem to be "scattered abroad" that they might "go everywhere preaching the word," may graciously cause the things which have happened to Jarvis Street to "fall out unto the furtherance of the gospel."

In closing this chapter of our history we venture to express the earnest hope and belief that the members of Jarvis Street, new and old, will and do now join, in sending to our former fellow-members this message: "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

N.B.—Since writing the following we have been advised by one member that the inclusion of the said member's name as an applicant for a letter to join a new church was unauthorized; the member expressing the strongest disapproval to the proposal to form a new church, but requesting a letter to another church partly on the ground of its being near by. For this reason the letter which was authorized June 7th will not be sent for a few days pending further inquiries. The name here referred to appeared on the list "per Gideon Grant," the name being in the same handwriting as the signature.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

To-day the **Rev. E. E. Shields**, the Pastor's brother, Pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Brantford, will preach. Next Sunday, the **Rev. E. A. Brownlee, B.A.**, known and loved by all Jarvis Street, will preach. June 26th, **Rev. P. W. Philpott**, of Hamilton, will preach. **Mr. George Greenway** will, as usual, conduct the prayer meetings during the Pastor's absence. **Open-air Services**—See calendar. **Home Department Visitors**.—There will be a meeting of the visitors in the church parlor at 8 o'clock Tuesday evening, June 13th. The Superintendent, Mrs. Walker, is very anxious to meet every visitor. Will visitors please make every effort to be present. **A Church and Sunday School Picnic**—The Sunday School will hold its picnic at Centre Island July 11th. This year, however, it is proposed that it shall be a picnic for the whole church. We appeal to every man, woman and child in the whole church to endeavour to spend the afternoon of July 11th at Centre Island. Let us have the biggest picnic ever held in the history of Jarvis Street Church. What a family! And all out of doors! What an open-air meeting we can have! What singing, too, when all the Island hears! And what a happy time with the children! Remember, July 11th is the date when you are to be a "kid" again! The **Parliament Street Branch** will hold their annual picnic at Centre Island June 27th. This will be a fine opportunity for many of our new members to make the acquaintance of the Branch and its workers. Fuller particulars of both these picnics will be published later.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH DIRECTORY.

- T. T. SHIELDS**, Pastor, 72 Lowther Avenue. Tel., Hill. 563.
A. W. RECORD, Treasurer, 41 Victor Avenue. Tel., Ger. 5273.
VIOLET STOAKLEY, Church Clerk and Office Secretary. Tel., M. 5570.
WILLIAM FRASER, Pastor's Secretary, 64 St. Alban's Street. Tel., N. 5714.
C. LEONARD PENNEY, Director of Music, 36 Earls court Ave. Tel., Ken. 7086W.
W. J. HUTCHINSON, S. S. Superintendent, 295 George Street. Tel., M. 3321.

The Church Calendar

For the week beginning Sunday, June 11th, 1922.

SUNDAY

- 10.00—Prayer Service in the Church Parlor, Mr. George Greenway.
10.30—Communion Service.
11.00—Public Worship. The Rev. E. E. Shields will preach.
3.00—The Bible School will meet.
Lesson for the day: Jeremiah cast into prison. Jer. 37: 1-38; 13.
2.30—Open-Air Work with the Gospel Car, starting from Jarvis Street Church.
3.00—The Parliament Street Bible School, at 250 Parliament Street.
5.30—Open-Air Service on Gerrard Street.
6.00—Prayer Meeting in Church Parlor.
7.00—Public Worship. The Rev. E. E. Shields will preach.
Service at Parliament Street Branch, Mr. W. L. McKay.
MONDAY—8.00—Prayer Service in the Parlor.
WEDNESDAY—8.00—Prayer Service in the Lecture Hall.
FRIDAY—8.00—Choir Rehearsal.
SATURDAY—8.00—Prayer Service.
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY and SATURDAY—8.00—Prayer Service.
FRIDAY—8.00—Choir Rehearsal.