

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.

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

BELIEVING WITH THE HEART.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday evening, Feb. 18th, 1923.

(Stenographically reported.)

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

"Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."—Romans 10: 6-10.

"We may not climb the heavenly steeps,
To bring the Lord Christ down:
In vain we search the lowest deeps;
For Him no faith can drown.

"But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He:
And faith hath still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee."

IT is not necessary that we should ascend into heaven to bring Christ down, or into the deep to bring Christ up; for He is here: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach." The brother who was baptized this evening was converted last Sunday evening. These miracles are occurring weekly; and we are here this evening, not to entertain you, but to bring the gospel to someone who is not saved, that he may be saved. We are expecting God to visit us with an overflowing blessing. We have been asking Him for it as we have gathered together in prayer these many months, and many are asking for it every day and many times a day; and we are sure that God has heard us and that He will answer in His own good time. We rejoice in the conversion even of one soul; but we see no reason why we should not have a Pentecost. And as I face each evening service I ask

the Lord to give me the simplest message possible that He may use it to bring some soul from darkness into light.

Therefore, I bring you this text, which we have quoted here so often; and I trust that every Christian here this evening will pray that the Holy Spirit will take this word to-night and make it a means of grace and salvation to unconverted persons present. I want to talk to you as though I were sitting down beside you; I should like to talk to everybody here this evening as though you were the only person present, and we were having a personal conversation about the things of God.

This text tells you that "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus—or Jesus as Lord—and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I shall ask two questions: What does it mean to believe with the heart? And what does it mean to confess with the mouth? For if we can understand these two simple things we shall be saved. That is the promise of the Word of "God, that cannot lie."

I. First of all, then, WHAT IS INVOLVED IN BELIEVING UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS? We must be careful in the matter of our analogies; we must be careful in our endeavour to illustrate the gospel that we do not lead people astray. I want to explain to you, therefore, at the outset, that while the faith that relates the soul savingly to Jesus Christ in principle has much in common with the faith which we exercise in each other; yet, in some respects, *it is different from every other kind of faith, because it is reposed in a Person Who transcends all others.*

This faith is vastly different from mere mental acquiescence in a certain statement of truth. As for instance, you read in the papers of the wonderful discoveries made by Lord Carnarvon and his associates in Egypt at Luxor. And when you read the story of their entering into that inner chamber and finding it ablaze with glory after having been sealed for more than three thousand years, finding the elaborate furniture of the Egyptian court, and all the evidences of the king's station surrounding his dead body, you say, "It is an extraordinary story;" yet you do not doubt it at all. There is no reason why you should. In this instance there is no moral element in your faith at all. It is easy to believe a matter of geography, or of history, which does not affect our characters or conduct: it concerns a truth that is apart from ourselves. The statement is there; it is made by reliable witnesses; and as an intellectual act we accept the statement: we say, "Yes, I have read it. I believe it." But there is something vastly more than that involved in believing the record which God has given us of His Son, in believing unto righteousness. If it should later transpire, when examination has been made of all the contents of that Egyptian king's splendid resting place, that there is something there, for instance, which bears directly upon the truth of Scripture,—if there should be found within that which would tend to establish the truth of certain disputed passages of Scripture; you would be surprised to discover how many people would immediately say, "We must accept these reports with reserve." As long as it is a mere matter of history that has no bearing upon moral and spiritual issues, it is comparatively easy for the sensible man to accept a well authenticated and substantiated story. But there is vastly more than that in the faith which we are required to exercise in Jesus Christ; hence the difficulty of believing in Him.

Why should salvation be conditioned upon faith? Everywhere you meet with men who speak disparagingly of creeds. They say a man's creed is of no consequence: it is his conduct and his character that matter. Let no one imagine that men who reason thus are leading them into intellectual depths; because I do not care who the man is who talks thus, he has not learned the

alphabet of correct thinking; he has not learned how to think who says, "It does not matter what a man believes." One says, "It is what we are and what we do that will determine our destiny." And you are perfectly right in saying that. It is what you are and what you do which will determine your destiny; but what you are and what you do will inevitably, in the nature of the case, be determined by what you believe. A very wise man long ago said, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." It is what we think in our hearts, what we really believe, determines what we are, how we live, what we say, what we do. The fundamental thing is the thing we believe; and everything else depends upon that.

I want to take for example a very ugly subject, to illustrate the question of whether it makes any difference what a man believes. Let us take for example the Mormon doctrine of Polygamy. Does it make any difference whether a man believes it is morally right, to have half a dozen wives or not? "Why no," a man says, "it does not make a bit of difference what he believes, as long as he does not practise it. It is what he practises, not what he believes, that matters." But go and talk to his wife about it. Find out whether she cares what he believes. She may be absolutely sure beyond all peradventure that so far as his practice is concerned he has but one wife; but if she knows that he believes he might rightly have more, and desires to have what he believes he is entitled to, do you suppose she could be content? It is what a man is in his heart that matters; it is the thing that has entered into his very being as the deepest conviction of his soul that determines what a man really is, whatever his practice or profession may be. And the man who believes the thing that is wrong, given the opportunity, will invariably practise the thing he believes.

Well now, let me ask another question: *What is salvation?* I am considering faith in relation to the matter of the soul's salvation. The text says, "Thou shalt be saved." What does the Scripture mean when it says, "We shall be saved." I am assuming that we none of us deny that we have sinned:—"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"—and that we need to be saved from the consequence of our sin; we admit that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death; that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Therefore, *salvation must have in it this provision that it will save me from the consequence of my sin.* It will save a man from hell, whatever that may mean; it will save a man to heaven, whatever that may mean. But salvation is more than salvation from hell to heaven: it is salvation from hellishness to heavenliness. Salvation is not merely a condition, nor is it a place: *salvation consists in a relationship;* salvation consists in oneness with God, agreement with the Holy One. He made us for Himself; and if I am to dwell with God, then I must be akin to Him; I must be partaker of the divine nature. Who is God? What is God? Will you define God in terms of human relationships? Will you say, "God is my Father"? Will you say, "Christ is the husband of the Church, the bridegroom of the soul"? Yes; but He is more than all these things: "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Now, suppose it were possible for us to discern each other's thoughts. I do not know what is to happen in days to come. We are getting so clever we may be able to do that after a while. It may be possible some day that when you call someone by telephone, you will not only hear him, but see him too. Although, perhaps, sometimes you won't! But I do not know what we shall do if ever we come to the time when we can accurately read each other's thoughts. Concerning a man who is very polite to you, and who shakes hands quite cordially with you, as some honeyed speech drops from his lips, and in this present condition you would say, "He is a most amiable man;" but if you had the ability

to read behind his countenance and to know that he was only approaching you in that amiable way in order to win your confidence with a view to cheating you out of everything you have, what then? Suppose it were possible for any two people to know each other so intimately, to come into such relationship to each other that it would be impossible for one to have a single thought that the other did not know instantly? Might it not be rather difficult for most people to live together? Now come, be honest: it would, and you know it. Comparatively few people have learned to govern their tongues: they ought to learn. But if in addition to the mastery of the tongue, it were necessary to master our thoughts so that we should never entertain for one moment in our hearts an affection, a thought, that we would be unwilling for all the world to know, and for every solitary individual of our acquaintance perfectly to understand; if that condition were ever to obtain, we should all have to be made new creatures, or there would be no living with each other.

But, my friend, *that is just exactly the truth of the spiritual realm.* The Psalmist said, "Thou understandest my thought afar off . . . Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain unto it." How shall I ever be fitted to dwell in the presence of a holy God, Who knows every thought and intent of my heart, and of Whom it is said, "Thou are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." Once realize that, and hell is an accomplished fact for every man and woman born unless God finds some way to make a new man of him! I am aware of that superficial practice of calling people to the front and urging them to join the church, which act often passes for conversion. But we are dealing with God, we must be brought into right relationship to God; we have to be fitted to stand before God, and so cleansed and purified that we can dwell happily in the light of His holy countenance.

If that be true, does it make any difference what you believe? If that is what salvation is, does it make any difference what you believe? Somebody says, "I had not thought of it in that way. I thought it was believing something in a book." There is in the faith that saves the soul a moral element: it is not primarily an intellectual matter: the intellect is involved; all the faculties of the soul are involved; the whole man is involved in the act of faith. In conditioning salvation upon faith, God has conditioned salvation upon the thing that regulates the whole man; in conditioning salvation upon faith He has demanded the absolute surrender of every faculty of the soul to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners.

The faith by which my soul speaks, has to do with moral judgments; faith is a faculty of the soul that chooses between certain moral values, that makes choice between light and darkness, between good and evil, between heaven and hell, between God and the devil: it is the faculty of the soul that unites a man with one or the other, and determines whether he shall go down into everlasting darkness or dwell in the eternal light: "He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Simple, yes; but so profound that it will take all eternity for you to discover the content of that word, what it means to believe the Son.

We believe that, therefore, which engages our affections "With the heart man believeth." We may read and believe the reports, to which I have referred, of the excavations yonder, because they have nothing to do with us; we believe it in an intellectual way because there is nothing in our hearts to protest against the acceptance of that truth. But it is with the affections men believe; and until Jesus Christ has engaged the affections of the soul no man will ever believe on Him. Somebody says, "Yes sir, I accept the Bible as the Word of God. Why I was brought up to that. My father and mother were the most devoted Christians, and they always trained me from my youth to believe that

this Bible from the first word to the last was really the Word of God. I believe it with all my heart; I am not at all disturbed by these modern problems; I accept the written record of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ without any question at all." Are you a Christian? "Well no, sir, I would not like to say that; but I believe the Bible." You do not believe the Bible. "But sir, I do. I was brought up to it. I have always believed it." Are you a Christian? Have you passed from death unto life? Have you been born again? "No, I cannot say that." Then you do not believe the Bible. "But I do, sir." I repeat, you do not believe the Bible. It is impossible that any man should believe that Word and ignore it. And you do not do what it says. You have not submitted to its authority. "But I still do not understand you, sir. I think I do believe it. I never question it." Yes, you believe the Bible just as you believe the newspaper story of the excavations in Egypt: you believe it with your head; you yield an intellectual assent to the truth; but until your heart is engaged you really do not believe it in a true sense at all: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness"; and the faith that saves, I repeat, has in it a moral content; it has to do with what a man is in his deepest nature. And it will change his whole character and conduct and make him a new creature when he really believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can I make that plain and simple? What does believing with the heart involve? "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead"—He could not raise Him from the dead if He had not died; He could not die if He had not been born: I take it that the inspired writer means that in our personal acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that parenthesis marked by His descent from the Father, His birth of a woman, His life under the law, His death on the cross, His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand—that is the thing you have to believe to be saved. But you say, "I believe that. Did I not tell you I believe the Bible? I have always subscribed to that." Let me tell you what it means: believing in the Lord Jesus thus certainly means coming to His point of view, and accepting His own estimate of the character of sin. Why did Jesus come from heaven? Why was He made under the law? Why did He go to the cross, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God?" Because He knew what sin was, and because He knew that that was the only way by which sin could be put away.

What does it mean to believe on Jesus? It involves the changed attitude of one of the thieves upon the cross. While one railed on Him, the other said, sharing the agony of Jesus, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." That penitent thief said, "I share the cross with Him, and I deserve to share it with Him. I have sinned unto death, and as God is my judge, I deserve every bit of it." Is that your estimate of sin? Do you believe what Jesus believes about sin?—that it is a damning thing, that it is a thing that would overturn the very Throne of God, that it is a thing that God can never pass over without dealing with it, even the evil thought as much as the spoken word, or the sinful action; do you accept Christ's estimate of our sin?

Why am I speaking thus? *to show you that faith without repentance is an absolute impossibility.* Some evangelist cries, "Believe, believe, believe." Believe what? Believe whom? Believe for what? Find salvation at the end of a syllogism, as somebody has said: "All have sinned, therefore you are a sinner; He died for all, therefore He died for you. But whosoever believeth in him hath everlasting life. You believe in Him, therefore you are saved." Is that salvation? No: not by any means. Many people have been swept into the church by that superficial kind of teaching, who have never been partakers of the divine nature; they have never come to see what a damning, hellish thing sin is; they have never understood the cross; and they have never really believed. "Believing unto righteousness" means accepting that cross with all its implications: yes, and it means accepting, too, the adequacy of the atonement. I have not believed on Jesus so long as I think I can do anything to add to the value of His precious blood. O no.

"O why was He there as the bearer of sin,
 If on Jesus thy guilt was not laid?
 O why from His heart flowed the sin-cleansing blood,
 If His dying thy debt has not paid?"

Very simply, believing on Jesus means accepting God's bill without dispute, —not doing as you do when you get your electric light bill or your gas bill, when you declare it is all wrong, so that you call up the office and tell them you want another meter put in. We are disposed to be always finding fault with the bills that are sent to us, and to insist that there must be some mistake somewhere. But when God renders His account, believing on Christ means believing that God's bookkeeper makes no mistake, and that when He says you are a sinner and a condemned sinner, and a hell-deserving sinner, He means what He says, and there is no escape from it. That is what it means on the one hand. On the other hand it means that when His Word declares that "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"; that when Jesus on the cross, knowing that all things had now been accomplished, cried, "It is finished," that you accept His Word as final, that you have not another word to add, but to say, "Praise God! That is true. My debt is paid."

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow."

One other thing: "And shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead"—to believe not only that my account is accurately rendered, but *to believe that the prison is open, and that in the person of his Substitute, the sinner has been judicially acquitted, and raised to walk "in newness of life."*

To believe on Him "unto righteousness,"—how can I? I know that He died for me, that He paid my debt; but "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Though that is done objectively, and my books are balanced, how shall I be so changed, and so cleansed, and so purified, and so transformed into the image and likeness of God, that I may stand without fault before His Throne at last? How can I believe that in a world so full of temptation, and with a nature like mine that is so full of evil, always dragging me down—that I can ever be sanctified as well as justified? It seems so hopeless. If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" and if thou dost really believe thou wilt believe that what He did for my substitute, He will do for thee. If I was in Christ when He died, and when He was buried, and when He rose from the dead, and when He ascended into the glory; to believe that is to believe that I shall be like Him in God's good time, and see Him as He is. That is very different from taking a pen and writing something down, and saying, "I believe it." Only the Holy Ghost can enable us to believe in the way I have described; for only when He quickens the soul do we desire the Lord Jesus and really trust Him.

I would like to *identify the faith that is in you.* I wonder if there are people here who have the beginnings of this saving faith and do not know it? Let us enquire for just a moment. You remember what the leper said to Christ? He had been to the priest and he knew that the infallible signs of leprosy had been recognized. He was under sentence of death, separated from his fellows, and walked on the other side of the road, crying, "Unclean." But he saw Jesus, and he said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst save me from going down into the grave." No, he did not say that. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst put an end to my banishment from my friends, the separation from all I love." No, he did not say that either. What was the deep longing of his heart? What did he believe that Jesus could do for him? He said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." As though he had said, "I am not afraid of death, I court it; I would rather die than continue to live as a leper. Nor do I ask to be restored to my family, while I am still a leper. But I know that nature of my own disease; I know my own plague, and I loathe myself; I cannot get away from myself: I am a leper; I am unclean to myself, no matter what other people say. If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Thou canst cleanse the very blood that flows from my heart; and thou canst take away this leprosy so that I shall be unashamed in my own presence." Is that what you say? There are men and women who are not ashamed of their fellows, but are ashamed to look them-

selves in the face; people who are never in such bad company as when they are alone. Has the Spirit of God put within you a desire to be clean; yes, cleansed through and through in the sight of God? "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"—that is the beginning of faith. The man that cries thus shall be saved.

II. I need spend only a minute or two on the other question. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus," or Jesus as Lord. Brother Fraser told me that he was in a restaurant last night and he heard a group of men talking. They were taking the name of God in vain, and taking the name of Christ in vain, cursing and damning everybody and everything of whom they spoke; and he went to them and asked them if they knew what they were talking about. He told me this in the vestry this morning after the service, and they said, "Who is God? I do not believe there is any God. Who is Christ?" Not thus vulgarly do all people express the thought of their heart; but that is the thought of the natural man always. It is the answer of Pharaoh to Moses, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus," or Jesus as Lord—not the confession of the mouth only; that is the beginning, but there should be the confession subsequently of the whole life. It is simply an outward confession of the thing you have believed. Now mark this, you young men who perhaps are attending university! As you look through your microscope you are amazed at the wonders there revealed. A friend told me of a conversation he had with Dr. Banting, how after many experiments one night he thought the problem through, and he said, "I think I know where I can find the thing I want." In the small hours of the morning, and he could scarcely wait for daylight, he got on his bicycle and away he went to the place where he could find the animal for dissection, to find the thing that he believed God had put there. He had observed the operation of God's laws; he could not counteract that law; he was only observing the operation of that law; and he wanted that substance, that element, that would neutralize the deadly thing that produced diabetes, and he said, "I believe I know where I can get it at last." At last, like a gold-digger who comes upon his vein of gold, he found it. How wonderful when the astronomer has figured out that there ought to be, by the law of probability, in a certain region, a new star! He cannot see it, but he thinks it ought to be there. He has reasoned the thing through, just as Dr. Banting thought he ought to find what he needed in the body of the animal. And at last he brings that distant world within his view; and if he were a religious man he would say, "I was so sure of God's law that I knew it ought to be there." And so in all the material universe, you may see God working, and take your shoes from your feet and say, "This is holy ground." Science and religion have no quarrel. True science is the handmaid of religion always. It is only the science, falsely so-called, that conflicts with this divine revelation. To what am I leading you? Why am I reasoning thus? "To confess Jesus as Lord" means to confess what we instinctively feel, that in Him we have the incarnation of the great Law-Giver; that He is Lord of the infinitesimal the Creator of it, and that as well, in those far-flung spaces myriad worlds obey His command, that the Jesus Who died is Lord over all, blessed for ever! To confess Jesus as Lord in all realms, especially as Lord of this little life of mine, to recognize publicly, to acknowledge that it is His personal right to command me, that is what God requires. If I could make my confession to-night, it would be simply this: That I recognize in all the universe no higher law than the command of the Lord Jesus Christ. I will put Him before science; I will put Him before all religious leaders; I will put Him before kings and above everyone and everything in all the world.

We are to confess that "God hath raised him from the dead," and confess Him as Lord. Why was He "the firstborn from the dead"? "That in all things—not in some, and Paul had been speaking about thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, things visible and invisible, in all realms—that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." And to confess Jesus as Lord is to accord Him that solitary place: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Do you believe that with your heart? Men, how many are ready this evening to confess with their mouth Jesus as Lord?

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Last Sunday evening at the Communion Service the names of thirty-seven new members were called to receive the hand of fellowship. Not all were present on account of the Easter holiday, but twenty-five were welcomed, five of whom had been baptized at the earlier service. There was a very large attendance, and the occasion was one of great joy. Thus another church year was begun with a substantial increase. Why should not our increase for every month of this year be equally large? Let us pray that it may be so.

The Pastor in New York. The pastor will preach in Calvary Church, New York (123 West 57th St.) from April 8th to 18th. Sundays 10.30, 3.30 and 7.30, and week-days 12 noon and 7.30 p.m. except Saturday. Calvary Church has its own broadcasting equipment so that those interested who have radio receivers may hear the services in Toronto. Information re wave length is expected from New York and will be given at the office, M. 5670. Above all the Pastor earnestly requests that these services be made a subject of special prayer by the whole church.

The Prayer-Meetings will be conducted as usual by Mr. Geo. Greenway. The attraction of these meetings is the presence of the Lord. The Pastor hopes that the prayer-meetings will be even more largely attended in his absence than when he is at home. He will endeavour to send a message from New York to every prayer-meeting.

Rev. E. E. Shields of Brantford will preach April 8th and 15th, and will probably be at the prayer-meetings Saturday April 7th and 14th.

Dorcas Notice. The closing meeting of the Dorcas Society for the season will be held on Thursday, April 12th, at 2 p.m. in the church parlour. A very cordial invitation is extended to all our ladies to come early to sew and quilt, as there is much unfinished work to be completed, and some new work to be undertaken. The business meeting, which is also the Annual Meeting, will be held at 5.30 when the Annual Report of the year's work will be given and the Officers and Committees for the coming year will be elected. This is a very important meeting. The Dorcas Tea will be served at 6.30 to which the congregation are cordially invited. The Officers are very anxious that this tea should be the best of the season in point of attendance and sociability. The new members are cordially invited to take advantage of this way of getting acquainted with each other, as well as with the older members of the church. The prevalence of sickness during the winter has very materially affected our finances, and a liberal offering is desired when the collection is taken at the table.

JARVIS STREET CHURCH DIRECTORY.

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The Church Calendar

Sunday. For the week beginning Sunday, April 8th, 1923.

10.00—Prayer Service in the Church Parlor, Mr. George Greenway.

10.30—Communion Service.

11.00—Public Worship. Rev. E. E. Shields will preach.

3.00—The Bible School will meet. Open session.

6.00—Prayer Meeting in Church Parlor.

7.00—Public Worship. Rev. E. E. Shields will preach.

Monday—7.00—Junior Dorcas. 8.50—Young Women's Mission Circle.

The Life-story of three of our Missionaries in India will be given by Misses Gibb, Davis, Barham.

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday—8.00—Prayer Service.

Wednesday—Junior Mid-Week Service—7.15.

Thursday—Mission Circle—3.00.

The Parliament St. Branch, 250 Parliament St. Sunday: Bible School, 3.00; Evangelistic Service, conducted by Mr. W. L. McKay, 7.00.

Wednesday, 8.00, Prayer Meeting. Friday, 7.15, Junior Service.