

# The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

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

T. T. SHIELDS  
PASTOR AND EDITOR

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

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No. 52

## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

SINGERS AND SOLDIERS.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday morning, Oct. 22nd, 1922.  
(Stenographically reported).

"And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth forever.

"And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten."—11 Chronicles, 20: 21-22.

**W**E read in the New Testament concerning our Lord Jesus that He is "the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever." It is said of God, "Thou art the same, and thy years do not fail." God does not grow old with the years. He is not impoverished by the expenditure of His grace. He is as well able to help His people to-day as He ever was.

I. If you read either the Old or the New Testament, you will find that GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS HAD SOME OBJECT OF DREAD BEFORE THEM. In this story, "the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle." I wonder sometimes where some people get their conception of the Christian life as being divinely designed to be one long and uninterrupted day of ease. There are people to-day who are always crying, "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace. We are advised to shake hands with the world, the flesh and the devil—not in so many words; but we are to have peace at any price. And yet there is nothing in the Word of God to justify that attitude. You will find in the Old Testament that God's people had always to fight their way to victory. The Lord Jesus from the beginning was opposed. It was said, "They are dead which sought the young child's life"; but they sought to extinguish the Light of the world as soon as He began to shine upon this darkened earth. And after He had gone home to glory, having commissioned His disciples to preach

the gospel to every creature, they found exactly the same experience. Some of them had to lay down their lives; but you will not find anywhere in the Old or the New Testaments that the life which God gives, which comes from Him, and which is nourished by Him, is ever permitted to unfold and come to perfection without the most strenuous conflict.

Now it may be that there are some here this morning, some Christian people, who wonder why their circumstances are so difficult; who wonder why it is that the road should seem to be always uphill and unpaved; why they should meet contrary elements at every turn; why, perhaps, the evil that is within them is not instantly overcome by the grace of God: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

I am not going to attempt to say why for the moment. I simply remind you of the fact, that if you follow the Lord Jesus Christ you will have to take up your cross; you will have to deny yourself; you will have to struggle all the way through. And if you are not struggling, then it must be because you are not going in the right direction. If you have no conflict in your own life, if you have no battle to fight, then it simply means that you have lifted the white flag; for if God's word be true, it is always characteristic of the Christian that he must fight his way through to victory and to peace.

You will find *the most diverse elements in opposition*. There were "the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir"; and the Christian will very often find a strange combination in opposition. You will remember how Herod and Pilate shook hands where Jesus was concerned. There is a proverb which says that "Politics make strange bed-fellows." That is true whether it is in the ecclesiastical, political, or in any other sphere—you will find that Herod and Pilate will always shake hands, and unite their forces in order to oppose the truth; and men who, naturally, have nothing in common with each other, frequently come together in an effort to oppose the progress of the truth of God.

Sometimes it happens that we find ourselves—just as the people of Judah did—facing *difficulties for which we feel ourselves to be responsible*. "And now behold the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and destroyed them not." And now Jehoshaphat said, "The very people whom we spared; the very people whom we helped; are the people who have come up against us in battle."

Every minister finds that in his own church again and again. It is a heart-breaking experience to any man or any woman, who ever tries to do good, that those whom they have sought to help are frequently the very ones who conspire against them when it seems expedient to them to accomplish their destruction. But if you are sure you have done right, you need not trouble about that. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

"He always wins who sides with God,  
To him no chance is lost;  
God's will is sweetest to him when  
It triumphs at his cost."

That is very commonplace. You all have your difficulties. I do not know what they are. It may be that you have some domestic trouble: the children perhaps are not Christians: there may be some wife here who is troubled because her husband is not a Christian; or a husband because his wife is not a Christian. Perhaps your difficulties are of a pecuniary kind. Business is not going as favourably with you as you desire. It may be that your battles are moral and spiritual; that you are conscious of powers within that are too great for you; and of temptations without. I do not know what the particular battle may be; but I am sure if you are a Christian "the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir" are gathered together against you; and you are going to have a hard time. I hope you will enjoy it; because that is what we are here for.

I used to know a man whom I telephoned about once a year. I could not afford to do it often; because he always replied, "I am very busy." I used to feel like saying to him, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself if you are not. Why tell us about it?" And there are some people who grumble and complain about their hard times. That is what you ought to be having. If you are having an easy time you ought to be ashamed of yourself, and ask God to forgive you. This vile world is not

"A friend to grace,  
To help us on to God."

II. Notwithstanding, THE CHILDREN OF GOD ALWAYS HAVE A SUBJECT FOR PRAISE, as well as an object of dread. In Jehoshaphat's case, it began with prayer. As soon as he found himself in difficulties, he "set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord." The whole company went to prayer-meeting. That was an extraordinary thing. They were "the prayer-meeting crowd" in Judah. They gathered together to pray. That was a most unusual thing, and not a practical thing, of course. They ought to have sharpened their swords, and put on their armour, and spent their time re-organizing their forces; but Jehoshaphat was shrewd enough to see that there were forces against him that were greater than any he could command on the natural plane. Instantly he said, "I will get in touch with heaven; I will get reinforcements from up there." And so he began to pray; and called all the people to pray. That is how *he began to praise, by praying!*

I do not think any man can pray long without breaking out into praise; because when we come into the presence of the Lord, somehow or another our difficulties are dissolved. They may seem as big as mountains; but God rends the heavens and comes down, that the mountains might flow down at His presence. And the impossible things seem to be the easiest things in the world. We have seen that here in this church repeatedly.

I was talking to a company of people in another city not very long ago; and I said, "It is part of our business to demonstrate the truth of the supernaturalism of this Book. If anybody tells me that God did not drive back the Red Sea, that the children of Israel did not go through on dry land; then I can tell them I know He did, because I have seen Him do it." Or if another says, "That was just a fantastic notion of the prophet's, or of the writer of the record. Elisha never had horses and chariots of fire round about him to

take care of him." My answer to that is this: "I have ridden in one of the chariots; and I am absolutely sure that 'the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.'" God is the same to-day; and if you begin to pray you will soon see the horses and the chariots of fire; and instead of worrying about "the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir," you will begin to praise the Lord. While Jehoshaphat prayed the Spirit of the Lord came upon one of the prophets, and he prophesied; and he gave the people a promise: "Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. To-morrow go ye down against them: behold they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them; for the Lord will be with you." That is all—just a promise! Out yonder are the great hosts of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir—just as real, just as formidable as they ever were; and all Jehoshaphat got in answer to his prayer was a promise! But when he received it, he bowed his head and worshipped; and he consulted with the people. He appointed singers to go out before the soldiers, and to begin to praise; and Jehoshaphat sent the singers out before the soldiers to praise God for His promise.

Why brother, in the Army uniform—I forget your name—it was like a Salvation Army procession, with the band in front going before into the battle, praising the Lord for victory! How absurd it was! How presumptuous of these people, praising God for victory before it was given! But we have seen that too. I remember there were times when I believed these things; but it was in some measure theoretical. I believed that some day I should see them translated into actual experience; but we have seen it. Will some of you ever forget a certain Monday night prayer-meeting that lasted until past eleven o'clock, when we were engaged in this very thing, saying "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever."

I came to a certain meeting here a little over a year ago; and a lady who was an Anglican put in my hand a big fat envelope. I did not have time to read it then, so I put it in my pocket; and while we were holding a certain interesting meeting here, I went back to the parlor where a lot of people, who were not members of the church, were gathered. They had been asked to withdraw; and I found the parlor full, and they were on their knees praying under the leadership of this woman, who had been praying with us all summer. And you know what happened that day. When I got home after midnight, I felt this letter in my pocket. I had forgotten it; and I opened it; and it was just page after page of praise to God in the language of Scripture. She said, "I have been praying for you for months; and the Lord gave me absolute assurance of victory three months ago. I enclose five dollars as a thank-offering toward the new work that God is going to do in Jarvis Street Church." And that was written before the victory was won. On the ground of the promise, we have a right to begin to praise the Lord. I hope you are praising the Lord with all your heart this morning. I confess that I am.

III. I want to go on now to show you that after all THESE THINGS ARE FOR OUR GOOD. "And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir." The Lord said, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle—I will attend to Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir. Just leave them to Me and I will—

"Confound their politics;  
Frustrate their knavish tricks,"

I will see that the thing is done"—and He did. If you will give the devil rope enough, he will hang himself always. I have said it again and again; and we have seen it done. "Ammon and Moab and mount Seir," they may unite as Herod and Pilate did for the crucifixion of Jesus; but with what result?

I was sitting at lunch the day before the Fundamentalists' Convention a year ago last summer with Dr. Laws, of the "Watchman Examiner," and some others. I think it was Dr. Riley, of Minneapolis, who said, "You know, brethren, considering the long experience he has had, the devil is a bit of an old fool: he always defeats himself." "Ammon and Moab and mount Seir," when they get arguing among themselves, are sure to come to naught. The Lord will set ambushments as soon as the people of God trust in Him, and leave the matter to Him. I do not know how it happened; but I would like to remind you that there was something wrought in the hearts of the Ammonites and the Moabites and the children of mount Seir. There was no material weapon used first of all; but they were set one against the other. God destroyed the unity of the opposition, and gave the victory to those who trusted in Him.

And that is always true! Iron doors are opened of their own accord; Peter is brought out of prison: the Lord has His own way of bringing about His purposes.

And then I want to assure you that as a result of it *these people were greatly enriched*. "And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much."

I am sure that I speak that which the experience of every Christian here this morning will confirm when I say, It is a good thing for us to have hardships; it is a good thing for us to have to walk a rough road; it is a good thing for us to have to fight our way; it is a good thing for a man to have to work for a living: is it not? There is real wealth to be found in situations like these.

There is a passage which says, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us"; and I think most of us are inclined to think that that means that God will give us such a super-abundance of grace that we shall have an easy time; that the enemy will melt away from before us; and that we shall be able to do with him, as I have heard boys say when I was a lad, "I can fight you with one hand behind my back: it only takes half of me to deal with a chap like you." That is what we used to say; and that is the way some of us would like to fight—so that we could get through life without any very special effort. That is not what it means to all: "In all these things we are more than conquerors." It means that through these very experiences we not only conquer, but we are enriched by the experience itself.

I fancy that the Hebrew children who went into Nebuchadnezzar's furnace learned lessons there which never could have been learned anywhere else. If you had talked with them afterwards, and said, "That was a very hard experience you had; I sympathised with you greatly when I heard of it; I was so sorry that you were cast into the furnace of fire," they would have said, "But

we were not: we had a fellowship with the Son of God in that flame which we never could have found anywhere else. We learned more of God in those few hours that we spent in the furnace than we could have learned in a whole life-time anywhere else. It was the richest experience we ever had; and if God would teach us in the same fashion again we would gladly go into the furnace for the sake of the lessons we could learn."

Or if you had said to Daniel, "It was too bad, after you had lived such a noble life, in the evening time to be cast into the den of lions"; he would have said, "But that was the best time of my life: I was never so happy as when God sent His angel and shut the lion's mouth." God can shut the lion's mouth; He can shut man's mouth too—and that is still more difficult; but He can. "Every tongue that is raised against thee thou shalt condemn." See that you do not talk in such a way that God has to send an angel after you to correct you. Let us rather see to it that our mouth is filled with His praise all the day long.

And I wonder if David was not a little fretful under his experience, out there in the wilderness, with just a few sheep—there was nothing heroic about that, just keeping his father's sheep. But it was there he learned his great lesson; and if you had come to him later and had said, "David, we did not understand why God kept you in the wilderness looking after sheep when you were such a mighty man of war," he would have said, "Well, if that is in any measure true of me, it is because I kept sheep; because that is where I learned how to trust God. When I was keeping my father's sheep there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth. That is what strengthened me for the day of the great crisis of my life; so that I was able to say, 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.'" The giant is no bigger in the sight of God than a lion. He can deal with Goliath as easily as with a lion; and He did. Do you not see that David found a development of character, an enrichment of soul; he gathered spoils from the field of battle, such as he never could have found anywhere else.

So was it in the story of the text. There were the dead bodies; but there too were the spoils of war. And they were three days gathering, it was so much. And they were longer gathering the spoil than they were praying for victory altogether. It is the old story of Samson slaying the lion, and finding in the carcass of the slain lion the honey. If you do not slay your lions, you will find no honey. A brother said to me the other day, "I am going to have my people gather together for two whole weeks to pray." I felt like saying to him, "All right, brother, I hope you will; but if you really pray for two whole weeks—if you really pray, God may put you into the furnace for two whole years." Sometimes we ask for a revival; and we fancy that it can come all in a minute. It is like a man going to a doctor and saying, "Doctor, I do not feel very well; and I want to regain my full measure of health." The doctor examines him, and he says, "I think you can; but you will have to have an operation first. I shall have to cut you to pieces before I can make a man of you."

And I verily believe that God has to do that sometimes with some of us, with the individual, and with the church: He may literally have to cut it in pieces until somebody will say, "Look at the destroyed church!" If you were to go into an operating room, where the most expert surgeon in the world

has been operating, you would feel like running away to call the undertaker. There is the patient upon the operating table; and you would call the doctor a murderer because you do not know any better. But he knows that that sharp knife was absolutely necessary to health. And it is true that God must lead us on to the battlefield before we can have the spoils of war.

Now first of all they feared; then they prayed; then they praised; then they triumphed; then they were enriched, and gathered the spoil. And how did it all happen? God had His own appointed leader. I never read of this good Jehoshaphat without remembering the greater than he, the Captain of the Lord's Host. Jehoshaphat prayed; and then the people prayed. "And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee." And that is our confidence—that our Jehoshaphat has prayed for us; and God never says "No" to him. Under His leadership they were led to victory.

Well that has been a rambling sort of talk about this chapter; and all I have done is to show you some of the wells of salvation out of which you may draw water with joy. If you have time this afternoon I wish you would take that twentieth chapter of the second of Chronicles and read it over and over again before the Lord, until He makes His promise burst into glory before you.

I remember a brother getting up in prayer-meeting some years ago in a church—not here in Toronto—and saying that his wife had told him one morning that she had a dream that she was going along a certain street and she passed a shoemaker's shop—a cobbler's place—and it was very real to her. She knew the shop. The shoemaker was a Christian; and he had hung a text in his shop window that the people passing might see it. And there was nothing extraordinary about that; but she said that when she passed by this shop in her dream, she saw a light behind the text so that she could read it from across the street.

And when we do as Jehoshaphat did, when we begin to pray, promises that have been hanging in our memories for years, and which we know as well as we know our own name, God will put a light behind them and they will blaze with heavenly fire until we shall say, "That is God's word to me to-day"; and on the strength of it we can go forth praising the Lord.

Let us, therefore, pray that we may praise, and praise that we may triumph through the grace of our God.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

**The Pulpit To-Day.**—Rev. Newcombe Goad, of London, England, will occupy the pulpit morning and evening. Mr. Goad is a speaker of ability and power, as was evidenced by his address last Saturday evening at our prayer service.

**First Birthday Anniversary.**—With this issue The Gospel Witness is one year old. Begun on a small scale, its circulation has grown through faith until the scope of its ministry has surpassed even the most sanguine expectation. It not only brightens the sick-room, and brings joy to shut-ins, who otherwise might have no opportunity of hearing the Gospel, but has found its way into almost every corner of the earth, where it has been used by the Spirit to the salvation of sinners and in strengthening and upbuilding of the saints. Will not

our readers join us in prayer that God may continue to bless The Witness as He has during the past year?

**Young Women's Mission Circle.**—The regular monthly meeting of the Young Women's Mission Circle will be held Monday evening at 8 o'clock, when Mrs. B. Klochkoff, of the John Street Mission, will tell of the splendid work being done there. John Street Mission has a warm place in all our hearts because two of the resident missionaries, the Misses Whitelock, are members with us; also many of our members teach night classes. We hope there may be a large attendance of the young women of the church and congregation.

**McMaster University Closing Exercises.**—The Commencement Exercises will be held in Castle Memorial Hall, Tuesday, May 15th, at 8 p.m. Degrees will be conferred, and short addresses delivered by Dr. E. W. Parsons of Rochester, Professor New, and the recipients of honorary degrees.

**The May "Open" Meeting** of the Women's Home Mission Board will be held at Waverley Road Baptist Church on Thursday, May 17th, from 10.15 a.m. to 3 p.m. The King car stops at Waverley Road. Walk one block north. Bring sandwiches. Tea and coffee provided. The women of the cast count on all members of other Circles to make the meeting and fellowship outstanding. **Your** interest and prayers are needed.

**The Pastor in the Southland.**—The Dallas press reports great blessing on Dr. Shield's ministry in Texas; also the telegrams received from the Pastor for each Prayer Meeting have told so much of what God is doing, as to fill the hearts of those gathered for prayer with praise to the Lord for His faithfulness.

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### JARVIS STREET CHURCH DIRECTORY.

**T. T. Shields**, Pastor, 96 Winchester Street. Tel. North 628.  
**George Greenway**, Treasurer, 28 Broadway Avenue. Tel. Hudson 910.  
**Violet Stoakley**, Church Clerk and Office Secretary. Tel. M. 5670.  
**William Fraser**, Pastor's Secretary, 65 Homewood Avenue. Tel. N. 6047.  
**C. Leonard Penny**, Director of Music, 1139 St. Clair Avenue W. Tel. Ken. 557.  
**W. J. Hutchinson**, Sunday School Superintendent, 295 George St. Tel. M. 3321.

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### The Church Calendar

**Sunday.** For the week beginning Sunday, May 13th, 1923.  
10.00—**Prayer Service** in the Church Parlor, Mr. George Greenway.  
10.30—**Communion Service.**  
11.00—**Public Worship.** Rev. Newcombe Goad will preach.  
3.00—**The Bible School** will meet.  
6.00—**Prayer Meeting** in Church Parlor.  
7.00—**Public Worship.** Rev. Newcombe Goad will preach.  
**Monday**, 8.00, Young Women's Mission Circle.  
**Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday**, 8 o'clock—**Meeting for Prayer.**  
**The Parliament St. Branch**, 250 Parliament St. **Sunday:** Bible School, 3.00; Evangelistic Service, conducted by Rev. A. H. Carr—7.00.  
**Wednesday**, 8.00, Prayer Meeting.