

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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No. 2

The Jarvis Street Pulpit.

WHY TROUBLE COMES.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, April 29th, 1923.
(Stenographically reported.)

"And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

"And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes."—Genesis 42: 23-24.

WE have often turned to the story of Joseph to find therein illustrations of the doctrines of grace, for it is a story which illustrates in the most striking way God's method of dealing with His children. I have frequently suggested to you that it only confirms one's conviction of the inspiration of Scripture, to find the ultimate revelation of God's purpose of grace, as contained in the New Testament, illustrated in the Old. It is impossible to understand how the principles of the Gospel could have been anticipated so long in advance, apart from the assumption that God is speaking in Genesis as in Revelation, and in every chapter between.

There are few sections of Scripture with which we are more familiar. The children know the fascinating story of Joseph and his brethren; how he was sold for silver by those who envied him and who resolved that his prophetic dreams should never find fulfilment. He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of others; but he was promoted to great honour and to a position of great authority. The day came at last when the lives of all men were in his hand, and they were dependent upon his grace for their sustenance.

The chapter before us is one that I think may be taken to illustrate God's way of bringing His own children into closer fellowship with Himself.

I. I want you, first of all, to take the point of view of these ten men, who, driven by the barrenness of their own country, the emptiness of their own granaries, the urgent need of their own families, go down into Egypt because they have heard that corn may there be obtained. And they come into the presence of him who is governor over all the land. To them *He is A Stern-faced Governor*. They do not know his name; they feel no affection for him; they have no desire to commune with him; they find no pleasure in his presence; they have no desire to enlist in his service; they come into his presence and find him merely a governor of great power and of rough speech. Is not that comparable to the view which many have of Him Whom we know to be our Saviour? Why is it that so many regard Him as having "no form nor comeliness; and when they see him there is no beauty that they should desire

him"? They speak of God as "the Almighty," as One Who is to be regarded at a distance, and Whom it were impossible to love. How grossly, how terribly misrepresented God has been! From the very beginning the tempter whispered his lie, and man believed it; that God was unwilling that men should be happy, that they should enter joyously into the use of all that He has given in this beautiful world: "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And he has ever suggested to men that God has arbitrarily locked doors against us, that He has shut away His most valuable treasures from our possession; and that He is not to be loved nor His will to be adored. I take this story as illustrative of God's way of dispelling the mists, of scattering all the Yogs, God's way of leading us into an understanding of His plans and purposes for us.

"They knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter." He did not speak to them in their own speech, nor did they know that he was able to understand their speech. He was a stranger, as God is a stranger to many. He was, however, a *stranger with whom they were compelled to deal*. They came into his presence because they could not help it. Their wives and their little ones were starving; the earth refused to yield her fruit, and they were driven by sheer necessity into the presence of this stern-faced governor. Thus do men come to God. -- I know it is popular to-day to say that the way to win men to God is to preach the love of God. These men were won at last by the governor; but it was not love which, first of all, brought them into his presence; even as I venture to say that it is not love which, first of all, brings us into the presence of God. We come because we have to come; we think of God because we are compelled to think of Him, because there are circumstances in life which drive us into His presence. Just two weeks ago this morning, I met at the close of the service, a gentleman in New York, a fine-looking man he was, of about fifty-five or sixty. And you could not see him without feeling that he was a man of commanding presence, who would be sure to find some influential sphere. And I was introduced to him by a man who was a member of the Calvary Church, and about his own age; and this Christian business man put his arm around the shoulder of the other, and as he introduced me to him said, "I have just been talking to this brother about the joy of serving the Lord. I have lived the past two years myself more than I have lived in all the other years that went before. And," he said, "you know this brother is not on the Lord's side avowedly as yet." And this other splendid man said, "Well, for ten or fifteen years, I never crossed the threshold of a place of worship. But," he said, "I wandered in here about a year ago and the word of the Pastor found my heart somehow, and I have been coming ever since." He said, "I have a son, and he was terribly wounded in the war. And—oh, well, sir, I suppose it is the old story, that we think of God when we have to. And," he said, "I have just had to think of Him." He was a man of means. And this other man said, "Now the Lord wants you, He wants to claim you, and He wants to use the rest of your life for His glory." I trust he may yet come. But that was a great truth: "It is the old story," he said, "we think of God, I suppose, when we have to." You will remember the old hymn:

"I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die."

That is how most of us came, saying, "My soul is hungry, my granaries are empty, the fields I tilled with all my might yield nothing that can satisfy the hunger of the soul. I have come down to Egypt because I heard there is corn here: I turned my thought toward religion because I found nothing else to satisfy, and I just have a faint hope that perhaps I may find something that can nourish this immortal part of me, as I can find no nourishment elsewhere."

They came then into the presence of the governor *only for his corn*; they came with empty sacks; they came as proud merchants from a far country with money in their scrip ready to pay for all they received. They asked busy that of the fullness of Egypt's storehouses they might receive and return to their own country, and hold no further converse with the governor of the land. They had no interest in him personally. Salvation, to them, was not in the governor, but in his corn. Ah, that is the conception many people have of religion—that it is merely a way to satisfy the soul, that it is a kind of insurance against the future, an insurance policy providing certain sick benefits, and salvation

after death; but the Person in whose Name the policy is issued is a stranger; he has no interest in Him. How often you hear people saying, "Is it essential to salvation?" What do they mean? Simply this: "What is the price of corn, please? How much have I to pay? Name your price, and I will pay the money; I want to save this soul of mine." Multitudes of people have never passed beyond that. And when you talk to them about the delight of the Word of God, about the joys of communion and fellowship, about the luxury of prayer, they look at you in blank amazement, as though they would say, "We are not interested in the Governor. We have not come for that. All we want is His corn. Tell us how we may escape the consequences of our sin, our folly—that is all. Tell us how we may be saved. What are the strict terms upon which we may pass within the gates of pearl? And when you have told us that you have told us all the Gospel we need. We do not care anything about the Governor." But the idea of salvation consisting in a personal relationship to God, in personal fellowship with God, in delight in the presence of God, in a real vital and everlasting union with God, O they have no such conception of salvation as that. But they will have to have it before God is done with them. This Governor has something to say to any man or woman whose religion has not led them beyond that: There they are, these selfish, scheming sons of bargain-driving Jacob, and over the door of entrance into the governor's presence they see inscribed the words, "Positively no admittance except on business"; or like those gilded tools that you see hanging up in a glass case in a railway car, "For use in cases of emergency only." We think of God when we have to thing of Him.

They communed with him, the story tells us; they talked with him and he talked with them through an interpreter. They did not understand him, and they did not know that he understood them. *It was a joyless communion*; it was the most uncomfortable hour they had ever spent in their lives. Long ago, perhaps more than twenty years ago, something had happened. They had seen their own brother coming to them wearing a coat of many colours, significant of heirship and of the fact that he was their father's well-beloved. And they said, "Behold, this dreamer cometh." And you know the story, how they first of all cast him into a pit, and then changed their minds and sold him to the Ishmaelites. And as they saw him going away there in the dim distance in a caravan into a far country, they said mockingly, "Let us see what will become of his dreams". And in that day God answered and He said, "You shall see what will become of his dreams". God always answers the challenge of unbelief. He always vindicates His Word.

And now, as they come into the governor's presence, the past is forgotten. And this stern-faced governor asks them, "Whence come ye? And they said, From the Land of Canaan to buy food. . . . And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. . . . And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not". "You say that the youngest is this day with his father, and one is not—what about him?" "Well, he passed out of our lives twenty years ago, and we have not thought of him since. It has been agreed among us that we should never mention that day. When we came home there was the coat red with blood, and our father took it and examined it, and he said, 'Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. . . . and he said, I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.'" "Ye are spies," said the governor again. And they said, "No, we are true men; we are not spies." And I can almost fancy their standing up and saying, "We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan—and that is the whole family history." And then one of them, he did not know why, turned to the others, and, suddenly, the years rolled away and that long-distant day was in the present, and he said, not knowing that the governor understood it, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." You can almost imagine their saying, "But Reuben, what possible connection has this with that? What possible relation has this day to that day of twenty years ago?" Mark, to-day always has a relation to every other day in which sin was committed, which is unrepented of and unconfessed. It may be twenty years ago, it may be fifty years ago; but you cannot come into the presence of our Governor without remembering the past. Do you know why some people do not like reading the Bible? Because it speaks with rough speech, like Joseph; because it imputes iniquity; because it charges us with being spies, with

insincerity; calls us sinners. Do you know why some people do not love to pray? I will tell you why. Because it is impossible to come into the presence of that stern-faced Governor without saying what Reuben said, "We are verily guilty". I cannot tell you how it is, but I know it is so. There is a remembrance of sin when we come before Him, if the only reason for our coming is to get corn.

"And he put them all together into ward three days." And these proud and free men were deprived of their liberty. They said, "When we came down to Egypt we were free men, and now we cannot move; we are just fettered in every direction". Somebody came to church because somebody else invited them. And if it was a place where God was, they had this experience: they came into the presence of a Governor, and He had something to say to them. And when they went away from church, they said, "I have not been comfortable since". I did not read the letter, but somebody told me that there was a letter in the paper some months ago objecting to that text our Brother Davis has painted on the wall of the Yonge Street Mission: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God". He said that it was outrageous that anybody should be permitted to put a text like that before him. It made him uncomfortable all day, when he went down to his business in the morning. Why, of course, "he put them all together into ward three days". They could not be other than uncomfortable when they came into the presence of the governor.

And further: He "took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes," as though he would say, "You say you are all the sons of one man. This will make you one less. Now go home and your brother will stay here until you come back again." And as they went home, I fancy as they took down their sacks and they found their money, every man in his sack's mouth, they said, "We wanted to pay him but he has thrown it back". And another said, "Ah, yes, but you have to pay pretty dearly when you go down into Egypt. We were ten men going down but we are only nine coming back, and we had no power to resist him. His strong hand was laid upon us and here we are. True, we have got corn, but, oh, we have had to pay a fearful price for it". Did you ever feel the hand of the Governor in your life like that? He took from you some Simeon and bound him before your eyes. It may have been your money; it may have been some pecuniary trouble; it may have been a reverse in business; it may have been the loss of somebody's friendship; it may have been an empty chair—and sometimes an empty chair means an empty world!—and to-day, perhaps you cannot see that the darkness of His providence is starlit with benign intent. You say, "I have no doubt whatever that there is a Power beyond me, apart from me, that controls human life and destiny—call it fate, call it what you will. But a Hand came out of the unknown and came into my life and I had no power to resist it, but—

"I cannot so forecast the years,
To find in loss a gain to match;
Nor reach a hand through time, to catch
The far-off interest of tears."

My Simeon is gone, I am bereaved! That is all I know about your God, that He has dealt harshly with me." How often I have heard men talk like that!

Now, that is one point of view—the view of these men with the empty sacks who looked into the face of the stern-faced governor, in whom they did not recognize a friend.

II. But let us just draw aside the veil. The text tells us that he understood everything they said—not a word fell from their lips but he understood them. And when he could endure it no longer, "he turned himself about from them and wept". Behind the scene, the heart of the governor overflowed. Tears rolled down those stern cheeks, and he was convulsed with emotion: "He turned himself about from them, and wept." Oh, if they could have seen him then! *There is always another side to what we see God doing before our eyes.* If we could see behind the scene, what a different view some of us would get of our Governor. Somebody will ask, "Well, why did the governor weep? He had it in his power instantly to dispel all their doubts, and to introduce himself, and to right the past." Ah, no, this governor had something to do with them; for I want to remind you that *there was nothing in Joseph's past that was inconsistent with those tears.* We may call him by his name now. He is Joseph now, the long-lost brother, and they will find him out some day. And there was nothing in his past, I say, inconsistent with his tears, as he turned about and wept. He had been true in his attitude toward his brethren in all the years gone by. You

will remember how he "brought unto his father their evil report". How do you interpret that? It was not in the spirit of a malicious tale-bearer that he told the story of his brothers' sin. But thus early God had implanted within him that love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity which he so nobly expressed when, at a later day, he said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And, my friend, the love of God is such that it cannot look upon our sin without abhorrence. Can a mother look upon her child afflicted with some fatal malady and love the thing that promises to bring that body down, a mass of reeking corruption, to the grave? I have known mothers who almost shuddered at the very mention of some diseases. Go into the presence of some woman and just mention the word, Diphtheria. She hates it, because it left her cradle empty, perhaps because it left two or three chairs empty. God hates sin because it emptied heaven of its glory, it bereaved God: and He cannot, because He loves us, look upon our sin without dealing with it.

It cost Joseph more to bind Simeon than it did Simeon to be bound. I do not think Joseph ever did a harder thing than when he "took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes". I think he said in his heart, "Oh, that the hours, the days, the weeks would flee away, that I might have them where I want them, that I might fall upon their necks and cry, "I am Joseph, your brother." But not yet! Thus, my dear friends, I venture to believe that Jesus the Sanctifier suffers more than Jesus the Justifier. Mark what I say. In justification, the pain is His alone; in sanctification, the pain is ours, and therefore it is doubly His. For He suffers in our suffering: "And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha." Associated with that cry was the sigh of his loving heart. It costs our Lord Jesus many a sigh, oh, many a sigh, to open our ears to His Word, and our eyes to His glory, and our lips to speak His praise. I called one day at a home and found a father in terrible distress. One might have supposed that he was bankrupt, that he had been bereaved of his family, that everything was wrong. You could see that his eyes were red and that the whole man was shaking. Why? Because he had a willful boy. He had postponed the day of chastisement for a long, long time, but at last out of love for the boy he had taken the rod into the hand of love and he had applied it. But for every stroke he had laid upon that boy he had laid one hundred upon his own back; his heart was bleeding because he had to do it. That is the story of the text. "He turned himself about from them, and wept." And some of us are making Him weep every day; some of us are causing Him such grief—I had almost said, as He had never experienced save at the cross. My brethren, our God wants us to know Him. And I remind you that behind all this discipline of life, these heavy burdens, these afflictions, these overwhelming sorrows, these bitter and inexplicable bereavements, these overwhelming floods of grief, our Governor is weeping tears of love: it is because He wants to separate us from our sin.

III. THE EXPLANATION is the best part of my story. They came to him without confession of sin. They said, "Now, let us forget it; it is buried in the past, and we will leave it there." And during those twenty years if anyone ever referred in the presence of the others to the action of that day, I feel sure they said, "Do not mention that. Let us not talk about that. We went home to our father, and we told him that Joseph was dead, and we gave him the blood-soaked coat, and he believes it. Let it remain buried." Ah, you have not done with it, my brother. You never will be done with it until that sin is buried in the grave of the Lord Jesus. There is no other place where you can bury it. There is no other place from which sin can have no resurrection, but in that grave from which the sinner's Substitute was raised. "When I kept silence," said the Psalmist, "my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into drought of summer.—it is famine with me; me is blighted and blasted; its greenness, its beauty, its fruitfulness—it is all gone, because I kept silence." That is why famine came. Don't you see that famine came to make them break their silence? And God will send famine to you, or to me, to compel us to break our silence.

And as I said at the outset, they came thinking of corn. I do not suppose they ever asked the question as they came down to Egypt, "I wonder who has the key of the storehouse." I do not suppose they ever stopped to enquire what sort of governor it was who dispensed the riches of Egypt. But they came into its presence, they communed with him, and they turned their faces homeward. What are they talking about now,—on the way home?—the glories of Egypt, the

great storehouses, all the wonders of the land? Not a word. What are they talking about? About that governor: he is more than all Egypt. And God will deal with us until we have learned thus to speak of Him; He will deal with us until he has taught us to speak of the Lord Jesus. Oh, the gospel of grace, the doctrines of the Word are all important. Let us not underestimate their value. But remember, we have not been brought to where God would have us to be until we have learned that

"The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land."

Have you learned to talk about the Governor? People talk about their church about their Pastor; about all sorts of religious institutions; they will talk about the Bible; but turn them aside from all these things and press home upon them this question, What think ye of Christ? What do you know about Him? What have you to say about Him? What is your experience of Him? Do you walk with Him? Do you live with Him? Is He your all? What is your answer to such questions? If you are His, He will put you to school until you have learned that lesson, my brother. You will cease to talk about the sacks of corn; you will get away from that meagre, mean, impoverished conception of salvation expressed in the habit of asking what is essential. They did not care how much the corn cost. After a while they talked only of the governor.

And then, *he kept Simeon there to make sure they would come back again.* There is the human side of it, you know. I fancy Joseph said, "Well, I have got them now. They have come for corn. It may be that they will be so afraid of my presence, so uncomfortable—because he had heard them talking, he knew they had been reminded by his presence of the past—maybe they will not come back again. Maybe they would rather die than come back again. I will keep Simeon." And he "bound him before their eyes". And Joseph said, "I will keep Simeon here, and they will come back again." And that is how the good Shepherd does. They say that yonder in the East sometimes when the shepherd wants to lead the flock from a piece of outworn pasture to a pasture that is green, he goes into the flock and gently lifts a lamb and puts it on his shoulder and walks ahead into the new pasture, and then the sheep follow. A few months ago we saw the Good Shepherd do that here. There was a father who cared nothing for God. And the Governor laid His hand upon his little Simeon and carried him away into the glory. And that unconverted father followed that child up to the gates of pearl, and he said that day, "I will go to him, though he cannot return to me." That little boy's home-going resulted in the father's conversion. He was baptized the next Sunday, and the next week left the city but became the centre of a prayer-circle in the village where he went to live and soon a revival broke out in which seventy souls were converted. He "took from them Simeon". Are you going to see your Simeon again, my brother?

But that was not all. He kept Simeon *because he wanted to see Benjamin.* "Now," he said, "take your corn and go, and the next time you come down to Egypt bring your youngest brother with you, for except your brother be with you, ye shall not see my face." And so they went back home, and when the corn was spent, their father said, "Go again, and buy us some corn." "Well," they said, "we will go if you will let Benjamin go." "O no," he said, "Benjamin shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. I cannot let Benjamin go." "Well," they said, "we cannot get any corn without Benjamin. We cannot buy corn with money down in Egypt. The governor said, 'Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.'" "Well," said the father, "why did you tell him you had a younger brother?" They said, "Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down. We had no idea that he had any interest in us." "But why did you tell the man all your family history?" I think Reuben would say, "Father, we do not know. We did not intend to; but he just made us. Somehow or another, when we got into his presence he seemed to know everything, and we felt so uncomfortable that we were glad to be away." And you know why Joseph wanted Benjamin. He was his youngest brother, the son of his own mother, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh: he yearned over him. It is the old story: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." And some of us perhaps have been coming with our empty sacks to the storehouse, and we have brought much money, and we have prayed, and we have worked, and we have done a hundred things. And we have said, "I get no rest, no joy in my salvation; I cannot be happy in the Christian life; and I do not know why it is." I will tell you why it is. You will never see the face of

the Governor until you bring your Benjamin; never until you bring your last and best,—your all—will He reveal Himself to you. And He is going to deal with you until you do it, and you might just as well do it now. If you are truly a child of grace, He will never let you go until He brings you there.

What about the twenty years of separation? Oh, how lonely Joseph had been, how his heart had yearned for his brethren when he went down into the prison house! He said, "It will not be to-day that I shall see them. But I remember my dream, and somehow or another, in the plan and purpose of God, it is all for the best." And then when at last he came into the presence of Pharaoh and interpreted his dream, he saw God drawing the veil—revealing the years of plenty and the years of famine. He made his proposal, and when at last Pharaoh took the signet ring from off his hand and put it on the hand of Joseph, and the gold chain about his neck, and exalted him to be the first in the land, I think Joseph looked upon that signet ring and he said, "The authority that represents is all for them. He has given me authority that I should give life to those whom I love, and some day they will come." And then when the years of famine began to come, I can fancy that Joseph said, "I wonder if this is the day they will come?" Then at last the messenger came and said that ten men had come from a far country. They were ushered into the presence of the august governor, and as he looked upon them he knew them: "Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him." And oh, how he longed to put his arms about them! That is the picture of my Lord Jesus. He yearns after us. He is not content with an occasional visit: He wants us to come and live with Him. He said, "Abide in Me, O stay with Me, stay with Me. That is why I died, that is why I loved you with an everlasting love. I want you to come and live with me." When shall we get away from the idea that the Lord Jesus is merely a merchant selling corn? He is the Lover of our souls, and He will never be satisfied until He folds us to His loving breast.

And so the old man said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. Me have ye bereaved of my children—this is the blackest, darkest day that ever was." However, Benjamin went, and when at last the governor saw them—not ten, but eleven—we read that he commanded a feast, and he set them all in order of age, and gave a double portion to Benjamin. Then he sent them away again, their sacks full, but with a special measure for Benjamin. But soon a messenger was sent after them, and they were overtaken, and charged with the theft of the governor's cup, and when they took down their sacks the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. So they came back again. And the governor said unto them, "What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" And you remember what Judah said, "I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren." "No," said the governor sternly, "the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." Then Judah drew near, and he told the story of how he had become surety for Benjamin and he said, "Thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever." "And now," he said, winding up his great argument, "how shall I go up to my father, if the lad be not with me? I won't go. I will take Benjamin back, or I will not go." Interpreted, he said, "I did it once. I went into his presence with the blood-red coat, and we lied to him, and we said that Joseph was dead. We bereaved him of Joseph, but we will never bereave him of Benjamin. I will never go and face him again the second time. I will never repeat that sin of twenty years ago. I will die before I will do it. How shall I go up to my father, if Benjamin be not with me?" Then Joseph knew they had repented, that they would never repeat their former sin. I do not wonder that Joseph could not refrain himself: "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren." He said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." And you know the rest of the story. He gave Simeon back, he gave Benjamin back, and himself esides. And when at last Jacob came down into Egypt, the day came when he crossed his hands and laid them upon the heads of Joseph's sons, whom he had never seen, and said, "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." May the Angel redeem us from all evil, and bring us at last, without spot or blemish or any such thing, into the presence of Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. Amen

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

Last Sunday, May twentieth, Dr. Shields began the fourteenth year of his ministry in Jarvis Street Church. Lack of space prevents us telling of the gracious time we had together when, at the morning service, Deacon Brownlee read the following resolution, which was unanimously carried by the whole congregation rising and singing "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." Thus to Him was given the glory for all we have accomplished in the past, and in His power we entered unitedly upon another year of service:

Dear Mr. Shields:

It is with a sense of deep gratitude to God that we as a church and congregation contemplate your entrance upon the fourteenth year of your Pastorate in Jarvis Street Baptist Church. We could not allow this anniversary occasion to pass without placing on public record our deepening regard for the one who, for so many years, has faithfully and powerfully ministered to us in the things of God, and also furnished us with such able leadership in all things pertaining to His kingdom. The bond of attachment formed in the earlier years of your work among us has been strengthened as, through later days of stress and testing, we have prayed and laboured together in our common task. We rejoice with you, with a great joy, at the manifest blessing of the Lord upon your ministry, particularly during these latter days. We believe it to be the result, above all, of exalting Christ in His church. Together we face the future with buoyant hearts, a future bright with the hope that is born of faith; faith in the power of the Gospel of Christ to regenerate and sanctify when, in demonstration of the Spirit, it is fearlessly proclaimed in its entirety, as is your constant practice among us. We wish unitedly to pledge to you our hearty co-operation and support as together we continue in the service of the coming days.

It is a matter of gratification to us, as well as cause for thankfulness, that your ministry is being exercised over an ever-widening sphere. We rejoice in the weekly issue of The Gospel Witness, through whose pages many of the spiritual messages that have brought strength and vision to us are made available to thousands far beyond the immediate touch of our church life. We have followed with keen interest your recent labours in Boston and New York, in Fort Worth and Kansas City. It is our prayer that as the favour of the Lord has rested upon your work among us, so His abundant benediction may fall upon these and other efforts put forth in distant places.

As an expression of our esteem and regard, and believing that the support of its accomplishment would give you true pleasure, we have, during your recent absence, attended to certain renovations in this our house of worship, including the re-decorating of the Pastor's vestry and of the church parlour, as well as the laying of new matting on the stair at the Gerrard Street entrance. May we express the hope that as thus a safer path is laid for our feet when we tread the courts of the Lord's house, and more beautiful surroundings furnished us wherein to worship Him, so may His light and loveliness illumine and beautify all our hearts and lives as we tread that straight and narrow way wherein are trod with safety the footsteps of the saints.

Not would we close without expressing our deep appreciation of and esteem for our Pastor's wife, whose quiet, helpful influence has consistently been a benediction in our midst. Our sympathy goes out to her and to you in the matter of her recent prolonged illness. Our hearts are gladdened by the fact of her recovery as it is thus far accomplished. It is our prayer her restoration to good health may be speedy and complete.

Finally we would, as a church and congregation, join in the prayer that your ministry in our midst may be long continued. We have the conviction that your great service in this place is only begun, and that, with the blessing of the Lord, we shall yet see mighty things wrought, to the glory of God and of His Christ.

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts, and our cares.

The Church Calendar

Sunday. For the week beginning Sunday, May 27th, 1923.
10.00—Prayer Service in the Church Parlour, Mr. George Greenway.
10.30—Communion Service.
11.00—Public Worship. The Pastor will preach.
3.00—The Bible School will meet.
6.00—Prayer Meeting in Church Parlour.
7.00—Public Worship. The Pastor will preach.
Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, 8 o'clock—Meeting for Prayer.
The Parliament St. Branch, 250 Parliament St. **Sunday: Bible School, 3.90**
Evangelistic Service, conducted by W. L. McKay—7.00.
Wednesday, 8.00, Prayer Meeting.