

The Gospel Witness

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Pastor and Editor.*

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A YOUNG MAN'S EXPERIENCE IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

(The Fourth Sermon in a series on "The Adventures of a Modern Young Man")

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 14th, 1924.

(Stenographically reported)

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

"And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him."—Luke 15: 14-16.

THERE is, perhaps, no more familiar passage in the entire New Testament than this matchless story of the Prodigal Son. And yet, like all the wells of Inspiration, it is always full; it is impossible to exhaust its teaching. It means far more than that a young man took what money belonged to him, and went to a foreign country and spent it all, and came to want. There are in this parable great principles which abide; and which have a place in every human life. It is, in fact, a photograph of every one of us,—the early part of the story at least. I trust its conclusion may be equally true of all of us.

But we have seen how this man, this young man, fretted under parental direction, and demanded his liberty, as all young men do; and as we all have done in relation to the Lord Himself. He received the portion of goods that was his own; and he exercised that liberty by using all his endowments to put the greatest possible distance between himself and his father;—as men have ever used the powers with which God has endowed them, not in His service, but in rebellion against Him. We saw last Sunday how prodigally he expended his powers; how he lived the life of a spendthrift, as though he were a child of infinity, as though there were no end to his resources.

I.

Our text this evening tells us very simply how he came to the end of his bank account, and what followed. It suggests that **THERE IS A LIMIT TO HUMAN RESOURCES.** It is possible for a man to spend his all, and to become in all the realms of life utterly, hopelessly, bankrupt. That is the truth of this text—that he came to the end of his powers.

We have seen men do that, physically. It is amazing what the human frame can stand. Verily, we are fearfully and wonderfully made! The wonder

is not that men die, but that they live. The marvel is that these human bodies are able to endure such abuse, such dissipation, of one's physical powers. A number of years ago—I won't tell you how long—I was hurrying to a train; and I ran into a jeweller's shop—I had only about five minutes—and I bought a watch, a very cheap one, just a silver thing. I paid only eleven dollars for it. I won't tell you how long it has run. I have had several others since; and when they all fail, I fall back on this cheap thing. It has cost me about two or three dollars to have it repaired; and I have looked at it sometimes and have said, "That is a marvellous piece of mechanism to endure through all these years". But it is a very short space of time. I have seen watches that have been handed down through several generations. But Methuselah lived longer than the oldest watch has run. We laid a dear sister away a few weeks ago, who was a member of this church, whose watch within her breast had been ticking for over ninety-six years.

How wonderfully we are made! And yet you see men and women spend their powers, physically, as though there were no end to them. But it is possible for a man to spend all until he has nothing left, like poor Barzillai when king David said, "Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king, 'How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old; and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink?' In that realm he had spent all. There was no enjoyment there. "Neither," said he, "can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women". The daughters of music were brought low. He had spent all; and in that sphere there was no further enjoyment. "And those that look out of the windows be darkened." He could no longer see clearly; and I think he shook his head as he said to the king, "No, no, I am an old man; and", he added, "wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? It is beyond my power to make any contribution to human life, to the world's weal; I have come to the end of my physical resources; I have spent all."

And we are all doing that day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." No, my friends, there is a bottom to your purse in that respect: there is an end to your bank account. "To be carnally minded is death"—minding the things of the flesh is death. In this brief span of three score years and ten, we soon come to the end, and find we have spent all.

It is equally true of our intellectual powers. There are limits to the explorations of the mind; there are limits to a man's intellectual possibilities; there are some doors to which he has no key; he has no vessel strong enough to brave the storms of some oceans. Men may boast of their prowess, of all that they have accomplished; but their mental pennies will be spent after a while, and they will discover that they have reached the end of all possibility of human discovery. Listen! "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" It is possible, as Darwin confessed before his death, so to concentrate one's powers upon the things of earth, upon material matters, as to lose all power to see God's stars. We can spend all; we can come to the end of all possibility of enjoyment in that realm, also.

Then, let me touch on one of the principal elements of our endowment—the thing of which we are most proud; that is, that we have a will,—a will to will that which is right, or that which is wrong; that which is good, or that which is evil. I read an article last night in one of the papers, an editorial, in which the utterances of famous criminologists were quoted in explanation of the criminal careers of those two Chicago youths—a philosophy that eliminates the human will altogether; and relieves a man absolutely of all responsibility for any kind of evil. Oh, no, my friends, we are endowed with the power of choice. It is true that God has divided unto us His living; that He put a crown upon our brow, and a sceptre in our hands; and made us to be kings, subject to Him. But you may throw your sceptre away. For you have known men and women who have lost their power of choice; who have so yielded to sin that sin had become sovereign over them, and they could not choose between right or wrong—bound to the chariot wheels of their own lusts. They

had spent all in the realm of the will; were bankrupt, and they no longer had power to choose.

How true this is of the passage of time! How we fritter away our time as though there were no end to it! People talk about "pastimes". My friends, why should any sane man or woman want to "pass" his or her time? We have little enough of it. Nay, we are to "redeem the time"; we are to buy up the time, to buy up the opportunity because the days are evil. Napoleon once said to one of his officers when he had issued an order, "Now, sir, use dispatch; ask me for anything but time, and I will give it to you; that is the one thing over which I have no control". We are none of us millionaires in respect to time. We cannot afford to squander the days and the years. Indeed, the very moments are precious. If you would have a lesson: to-morrow, somewhere, you may hear the scream of the fire engine as it dashes along,—the one privileged vehicle in the city to travel at sixty or a hundred miles an hour if it can. Why? Because it is running a race with a devouring element that will not wait for time. So it is with us; we have no time to lose. How terrible to come to the end of our probation, and to have spent all!

Now mark this juxtaposition, will you, of poverty and famine. It is very inconvenient to be poor at any time. It is especially inconvenient to be poor in the time of famine, when prices are abnormally high. Here was a man who had spent all; and just as he got to the end of his resources, the country in which he lived found the end of its resources also: "There arose a mighty famine in that land". This lower realm in which are found the things which are seen, and which are temporal, also has very clearly defined limitations. And just as a man loses power to command the resources of the visible and temporal realm, so does the world lose its power to respond to his command. There are men and women in this city who have spent all, only to discover that there is something within them which cries out for something which the world has no power to supply. There is a mighty famine in this land. "When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want."

Now, the union of these two principles—the end of human resource, and the end also of the power of terrestrial things to satisfy the longings of an immortal soul—when these two things come together, the want begins. Talk about the inspiration of Scripture! Hear this pregnant saying; weigh every word: "He began to be in want"—in want—in want—no store at which he could purchase that which would satisfy him, even had he the money; but even if there were such a store, he had not the price to pay—limited at both ends! "He began to be in want". Not a completed experience, not written in the past tense; but the beginning of a long, of a continuous, experience, with no prospect of ever finding satisfaction for the want that was within him. What a picture of the soul away from God! In want, in the beginning of want! Let me anticipate a later message by setting over against that—just for a moment to suggest to you that this is not the word of a pessimistic preacher,— "He began to be in want". That is one word.—Set over against it, this: "They began to be merry". No end to the want on that course; and, praise the Lord! no end to the merriment in the other direction. Which are you going to begin to-night, the life of want or the life of abounding satisfaction?

II.

Look, then, at HIS EFFORT TOWARD REHABILITATION. What is he going to do? He has done nothing so far but spend that which has been given to him; he has received nothing in return; he has come to the end of the resources with which he was endowed by his father; he has come to a condition of want. And he says, "I will assert myself; I will see what I can do". What did he do? "He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country." He was a foreigner, unacquainted with the ways of the land in which he lived. He did not belong to that country; he ought never to have gone there. But being there, he adopted the methods of the country; he "joined himself to a citizen of that country". In other words, he determined to get out of the far country all that it was possible for a man to extract from its barren fields. Did you ever see a man do that?—temporarily, at least, put behind him all thought of better things, put behind him all regret for a wasted life? And say, "I will try now on another plane", just like the man under the sun of whom I read to you

last Sunday evening—"I am going to get everything that this world can possibly give me. I will adopt the citizenship of the country." Have you not seen men live like that? They don't go to church; there is nothing religious about them. Here is a picture of a man who reaches a state of utter ungodliness. He has cut himself off from God. He says, "I am going to work out something, some sort of salvation for myself on this lower earthly plane".

And all that he got was a job feeding swine, which was most obnoxious to a Jew. "He sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat". What does that mean? Does it mean that, had he been permitted, he would have eaten swine's food? I think not. I think it means that he had descended so low, that he began to desire that he might be able to find satisfaction on the same plane as the animals. Did you ever see a man who tried to forget he had a soul? Did you ever see a man who tried to stifle, to smother, his conscience; and to divorce himself from any sort of moral consciousness? He fain would have found satisfaction on the low plane of animal living! I have seen that; so have you—the philosophy of pessimism, "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die". If you have had any wide experience of the depths to which men can descend, you will have met men who have envied the beasts their satisfaction, who have wished that they might sleep like a dog, without thought of their yesterdays; that they might die like a dog, without thought of the future. But it was of no use. He could not satisfy himself there.

III.

Then comes this tremendous word, and with that I have done for to-night. Listen: "No man gave unto him". HE LIVED IN A LAND WHICH HAD NO DICTIONARY THAT COULD DEFINE THE PRINCIPLE OF GRACE. It was foreign to the idiom of the speech of that land. Grace is a word that relates to the infinite; grace is a word that is heaven-born; grace implies infinity always. Think of it! You read of a man, for instance, like Ford, with an income of one hundred and twenty-five million dollars a year, according to press reports. It may be two hundred millions by this time. Some of you have been helping to increase his income. But sit down with pencil and paper and try to reckon that out—one hundred and twenty-five million dollars a year. "I would like to have his income for a day", someone will say. "An hour or two would satisfy me", another would say. No, it would not. I read last night about the inter-allied debts, billions of dollars owing by different nations. Henry Ford could not pay them off. A man once came to the Duke of Wellington, and managed to break into his presence, and asked for help. The Duke said, "On what grounds?" He said, "On the ground that I am your brother, sir." The Duke put his hand into his pocket and took out an English penny; and he said, "Get all your other brothers to give you as much as that, and you will be a richer man than I am". So he would have been.

On the other hand, if the richest man were to try to give everyone a penny, he would soon be a poor man. You cannot deal with your fellows on the principle of grace. You cannot afford to be giving—giving—giving—giving—giving all the time. You will come to the end of your resources, too. And, this man lived in a land where everyone was subject to limitations—everyone's income was limited, everyone's resources were limited. No one was able to give to him; and he had nothing to give, therefore he continued to be in want.

I don't wonder—but we will deal with that more particularly next Sunday—I don't wonder he failed to understand the principle obtaining in his father's house. You will see it next Sunday. And when he came to himself, he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" And when he came back he did not dare to ask that anything be given to him; for he had been in a country where no one gave anything. And he had forgotten there was any place where things could be given away. It was the most difficult lesson for him to learn, that there was another realm where the storehouses were always full, where there was no end to wealth, where one could afford to give—give—give—give—be always giving, and none the poorer for his giving. "No man gave unto him"; and he came back and said, "Please give me a job; make me as one of thy hired servants; let me earn my own living"—as every poor sinner says when

he comes back home. He has been so long in the far country that he has forgotten the speech of his father's house.

I have often wished in these days for plenty to give away. But it requires not only infinity of resource, but infinity of wisdom, too, to know how to give. It may do a man more harm by giving him things than by letting him continue to be in want in some circumstances. But you see the principle, my friends, that sin has brought us all to the place where grace is unknown. But I come to you with this message—and I must repeat it again and again—that though we have had our portion of goods; and we gathered it all together and took everything with us, and left ourselves without justification for ever coming back again; now that we have spent it all, and we have nothing left, nothing to give, nothing to show for our expenditure, still, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God". "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Some years ago I was on a holiday; and I went to hear a famous preacher—that is, he was locally famous. He came from a big city; and he was supposed to be a great man. I had just begun to preach, and I was very much interested in hearing other preachers. That night I went to hear this famous preacher; and I sat back in my seat expecting to hear a great sermon. He began in the simplest way, by announcing this text, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men". And he said, "You sometimes hear it said that there is only one way of salvation; but I am going to tell you to-night of four ways of salvation. The first is the innocent way; the people who say, 'I never did any harm'." And he soon showed us that that led down a blind street, and there was no way out; you had to come back again. There was no salvation that way. "Then," he said, "there is another way, the legal way, the way of self-righteousness." And he carried us along that road for a while, but we found an obstruction there. And he showed us we could not get through by that road to God; so we had to right about face, and come back to the place of beginning. Then he said, "There is a third way, and you call it 'do-the-best-you-can'. A man says, 'I am not innocent, I don't say that, and I don't say I keep the law in every respect; but I do the best I can'." And we travelled that road; but soon found that no one was doing the best he could. So we had to turn right about and come back and begin once again. Then he said, "There is just one other way I know, and that is the way of grace", and he showed us that that was the only road going through to the gates of pearl.

Then he told a story that I, in my inexperience and folly would not have told; I should have supposed it was too simple; but it has remained with me for over twenty years, and I pass it on to you. He said: "Once upon a time a father had three sons; and he called them to him and gave them each a beautiful peach. They thanked him, and went away. Some time after he called them to him, and he said to the first, 'John, what did you do with that peach I gave you?' 'Why, dad,' he said, 'what did you expect me to do with it? I ate it, of course. Have you got any more like it?' 'No,' said the father, 'I have not any more like it.' And he called another son; and said, 'Charlie, what did you do with that peach I gave you?' 'Why, I ate it; and it was so good I saved the stone and planted it in the garden. I hope to have a tree of fruit like that some day.' So he called the third and said, 'Robert, what did you do with your peach?' And he said, 'You know Johnny So-and-So, a little cripple boy, lying on his back all the time?' The father said 'Yes'. 'Well,' he said, 'I went down to see him, and I talked with him for a little while; and I just took out the peach and said, Johnny would you like this peach?' He said, 'Is that the only one you have?' I said, 'Yes.' 'Well,' he said, 'I could not take that. I could not take all that you have.' 'Oh, yes, you can, I want you to have it.' But he said, 'No, I could not think of accepting it.' And then he paused, and his father said, 'What did you do in the end?' 'Oh,' he said, 'I just changed the subject for a little while, then I slipped the peach on the chair by his bedside and left it with him'." "So," the preacher said, "I cannot tell you how it was that when God had only one Son, He could give Him; but I know He did, and that with Him He will freely give us all things." I bring Him to you, and in His name I leave Him with you.

The publication of this paper as a missionary enterprise is made possible by the gifts of members of Jarvis Street Church and others, and is sent to subscribers by mail for \$2.00 (under cost) per year. If any of the Lord's stewards who read this have received blessing, we shall be grateful for any thank-offering you may be able to send to The Witness Fund at any time; and especially for your prayers that the message of The Witness may be used by the Holy Spirit for the defence of the Faith, the salvation of souls, and the exaltation of Christ. As our funds make it possible, we hope to add to our free list, from time to time, the names of ministers at home and missionaries abroad.

EDITORIAL

REVIVE US AGAIN.

Whoever will make a careful study of religious conditions obtaining in this country, and on this continent, if he has any appreciation of spiritual values at all, will be compelled to acknowledge that our most urgent need is a revival of spiritual religion. Here and there are to be found fruitful spots in the garden of the Lord; but the general condition is one of spiritual barrenness. Thousands of churches seem to have ceased to expect that the preaching of the gospel will effect a change of heart and a transformation of life. It is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of pastors are finding their burdens almost greater than they can bear. They seem to be plowing upon the rock; and most of the seed they sow apparently becomes food for the fowls of the air.

Substitutes for Spiritual Blessing.

In the face of these conditions, all sorts of human devices have been, and are being, employed, in an attempt to better conditions. Lacking the power to effect spiritual results, many churches have turned aside to various temporal ministries,—many of them good in themselves, but falling short of the main object of the church's ministry—the regeneration of men. The tendency in many churches to concentrate the church's energies toward some form of what is called "social service", when carefully analyzed, is only an advertisement of spiritual impotence; the efforts to entertain and amuse those whose souls are perishing for want of spiritual food is but another manifestation of the same spiritual helplessness.

We have little doubt that there is a wide-spread recognition of the urgent need of a genuine revival of spiritual religion. As we face this fact, however, we do well to remember that it is possible to seek a good thing in a wrong way. The Old Testament is replete with illustrations of how God again and again brought home to His people the need of turning whole-heartedly back to Him; and how, in the face of that need, they sought relief from the ills which their spiritual declension had brought upon them in almost every other but the one and only way in which relief can be found. Thus we have sought revival by means of great mass movements; and have substituted weight of numbers for the power of the Holy Ghost. Revival has been expected also to come from great preaching; and with the aid of some evangelist of ability, we have endeavoured to compel the garden of the Lord to bear fruit. Music of all sorts also has been substituted for the work of the Spirit; and by massed choirs, and magnetic leadership of song, endeavours have been made to soften human hearts and make them responsive to the gospel. In spite of all this, the simple and unalterable truth remains, that spiritual quickening comes from above: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

As we write these words we are disposed to ask ourselves whether it is worth while once again to put the commonplace in print? Surely we know Whence and how the revival we need must come! It is one thing, however, to know these things; but still another to do them.

A Two-fold Prerequisite to Revival.

There is a two-fold prerequisite to revival. The first is prayer. This does not mean that we must study long and elaborate treatises on how to pray: it means that we must pray. Whether we know how to pray or not—pray. One woman in the Scripture cried, "Lord, help me." That was true prayer! Another cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." That was true prayer! Prayer is talking to God. He will forgive us if our speech is crude, and if we blunderingly ask for the wrong thing—if only we pray. We shall learn how to pray by praying. There must be private, individual prayer. When you read this, don't buy a book on prayer; nor wait to hear an address on prayer. Go to your room—and pray. Begin at once and determine that you will continue to pray until a revival comes to your own heart.

Then carry that forward into your own church. If you are a pastor, give the first place to the ministry of prayer. Neglect everything and anything rather than the prayer meeting; by your preaching and example, magnify the privilege of prayer. Don't trouble about numbers: if there are only yourself and the janitor, let the prayer meeting be a time of prayer. Forget all about your watch when you pray; hold tryst with your Beloved; don't insult Him by being impatient to depart out of His presence. A real prayer meeting will grow. Do not spoil it by giving addresses—pray; do not let others spoil it by giving addresses—let everybody pray. Multiply your prayer meetings. If there are but one or two people who pray, encourage them to have fellowship with you in this high ministry. Resolve that you will subordinate everything to this one matter of prayer. Let your preaching emphasize what God has done, and what He has promised to do. The ministry that magnifies divine grace will inspire people to pray: out of the sense of their own need, out of a sense of their own spiritual destitution, they will cry unto God.

Pray! Pray! Pray!

But if you are not a minister, but only a private member of the church, and there are no evidences of revival in that church, begin to pray. You will almost certainly find other hearts in your own church inexpressibly longing for seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Invite them to pray with you. Remember the promise is not to a multitude, but to two or three. The promise could not be made to more than one and less than two. Perhaps the conditions are already fulfilled in your own home? A husband has a wife who can pray with him, or a wife, a husband; and two thus may gather in His name. Do not be afraid of being called fanatical. Urge everybody to pray.

Prayer An Attitude As Well As An Act.

And when you pray, expect God to answer. Many prayers publicly offered, are not offered to the Lord, but to the people. More people believe in the exclusively subjective influence of prayer than may be supposed. It is true, there is a subjective side to it: prayer does bring us into fellowship with God. But prayer moves the arm of God: prayer casts out devils; heals disease, stills the tempest, calls down fire from heaven. When we have prayed, let us

maintain an attitude of faith; lean upon God's Word—not only before and while you pray, but after your petition has been presented. Let your soul's attitude be of faith, and thus press home your petition to the Throne of Grace. That is what is meant by the exhortation to "pray without ceasing". It does not mean that we should be talking all the time; but that the soul's expectant attitude is itself a ceaseless prayer. The spirit of importunity does not necessitate continuous knocking at the door; but, having knocked, it refuses to leave until the door is opened.

We have seen this spirit manifested in church life in such measure that people come expecting the presence and power of God in the service of God's house just as they expect to see the preacher walk into the pulpit; and when that spirit of expectation takes possession of a church, God never disappoints it: heaven hears the cry of the thirsty ground, and the rain of blessing descends.

God Speaks When Men Pray.

Wherever people pray, God speaks. A praying church will find a new interest in the Word of God. Bible-study and prayer always go together. In this way, the beginning of revival comes; the sword of the Spirit is unsheathed. Revival may not come over night; it may not, first of all, appear in conversions. Indeed, instead of additions to the church, there may be subtractions by the sword of the Spirit beginning to do its work in the lives of believers. When the Word of the Lord begins to exercise its searching ministry, there may be much trouble. Many a church has been brought to the beginning of blessing; but has proved unwilling to receive the answer to its own prayers.

Going to Gethsemane and Calvary?

It may mean—it must mean, Gethsemane and Calvary. There is no possibility of proving the power of His resurrection without having fellowship with His sufferings, and being made conformable to His death. Out of an experience in which we feel scarcely the alphabet of the possibility of spiritual blessing has been learned, we would pass on to our brethren this suggestion, that we should resolve that we will pray for revival; and refuse to be satisfied with anything less than a revival from heaven, though we spend the rest of our natural lives in waiting for it. Let us put everything else aside; abandon all efforts toward popularizing the religion of Christ by amusing or entertaining. Let us accept the plain teaching of the Word of God that the gospel, in the nature of the case, unless it be preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, must be the most unpopular thing in the world.

The gospel calls men to repentance, to the renunciation of sin and of a sinful life; it calls men to Gethsemane and to Calvary; it conditions discipleship of Christ upon taking up the cross,—and the cross never means anything less than crucifixion and blood. The second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles can never be made to change places with the nineteenth chapter of John: there can be no open heaven without an open grave, and no grave without a cross. But what abundant compensations are to be found in the ways of the Lord! What glorious victories over principalities and powers! What happy and holy ministries to the suffering sons of men! What gladsome companionship with the angels of the Lord! What joyous communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

The Christian Church, made up of regenerated persons, called out of the

world, and separated unto the gospel of Christ, is not commissioned to undertake a political programme; nor to engage, primarily, in temporal ministries: it is sent into the world that it may cease not to teach and to preach Christ Jesus. Let us get back to the New Testament programme; let us read our Bibles with our souls on their knees; let us cease to depend upon any other power than the power of the Holy Ghost,—Then God will visit us; and the Acts of the Apostles, which were the acts of the Holy Ghost, will be repeated in our day; and God will add to the church daily such as are being saved.

The Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course

Lesson LXV.

December 28th, 1924.

JUDAH'S DOWNFALL AND CAPTIVITY.—II Kings, Chapters 24, 25.

The downfall and captivity of Judah is illustrative of the downfall and captivity of sinners in general.

I. A Lesson in Divine Providence.

The Bible is a revelation of God from God. It reveals His ways with men. These inspired histories which we have been studying are more than mere chronicles of passing events: they constitute a philosophy of history; they show why certain things come to pass. (1). This story shows that God is not removed from His world; He is not indifferent to the life men live; His hand is upon the affairs of men and of nations. The idea of a God locked up in the cosmos, and imprisoned by His own laws, finds no support in the Scriptures. (2). We have here a proof that the moral government of the universe is in the hands of a personal God, it shows that the events of history spring from moral causes. (3). These chapters teach that the Lord is sovereign even over those who do not know Him. The instruments of Judah's punishment were the Chaldees, the Syrians, the Moabites, and the children of Ammon: "Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did." Thus God speaks in circumstances; and His hand is upon all our material affairs.

II. The Harvest of Sin "When It Is Finished".

(1). This history shows that nothing can prevent the fulfilment of the Word of the Lord: His laws are inexorable; that which He promises always comes to pass. (2). This history shows also that God is no respecter of persons. Sin in His own favoured people is no less offensive than in others; sin bears the same fruit irrespective of the soil in which it is sown. (3). The destruction of the house of the Lord is an illustration of the principle that sin would drive God from the earth. (4). Sin brings its votaries into bondage. This proud people upon whom the divine favour especially rested, determined to have their own way, find themselves slaves in Babylon. (5). Sin always brings great misery to its victims: pleasant to the eye, and to be desired to make one wise as it may appear in the beginning, "when it is finished" its fruit is always death. (6). No one is proof against its power (vs. 14-16). All classes of men in Judah went down under its strong arm. (7). Zedekiah, (ch. 25: 7) as representative of the whole nation, illustrates the end of the transgressor. The last use of his eyes was to witness the death of his sons—then he was himself blinded, and bound with fetters of brass, and carried into captivity.

LAST SUNDAY'S SERVICES.

Last Sunday was a day of extraordinary blessing. It was the first really cold Sunday of the winter. Many people had not supplied their cars with anti-freeze; and they were afraid to leave them standing any length of time. Then, too, a warm bed is much more hospitable of a cold morning than when the weather is mild. Notwithstanding, the attendance at the Bible School was only forty less than a thousand—nine hundred and sixty—and ninety-five down from the Sunday before. The extraordinary feature of the Bible School attendance was that the Cradle Roll, Beginners', and Primary Departments had the largest attendance on record. The Cradle Roll was the winner for the day, with one hundred and eleven per cent. of the number enrolled in attendance; the Beginners' came next, with one hundred per cent.; and the Primary next, with ninety-six per cent. The adults in the Pastor's class seemed less willing to face the cold than the members of the Cradle Roll: while the Cradle Roll was up, the Adult Class was forty-eight short of the record of the previous Sunday. But if it was cold outside, it was warm inside; and the service was one of blessing to everybody.

The evening service was held in Jarvis Street Church; and notwithstanding the biting cold a great congregation was present. The singing of the great choir, assisted by the orchestra and organ, all under the leadership of Mr. Hutchinson, was a mighty inspiration. At both services there were responses to the invitation; and not a few, we are sure, were gloriously saved. At the evening service, three were baptized.

NEXT SUNDAY MORNING.

Beginning next Sunday, our morning service will have added interest by reason of the presence of the orchestra to assist in the musical service. In addition to this, the different departments of the School will take it in turns to provide some object for a five minute object lesson sermon which the Pastor will give, especially for the benefit of the younger children. The Pastor will not know what the object is until he goes to the pulpit.

The evening service will be held again in Jarvis Street Church, with the great choir and orchestra in attendance. The subject of the sermon will be "Getting Home-sick", the fifth in the series on "The Adventures of a Modern Young Man".

CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICE.

Last year a number of friends suggested the advisability of our holding a service Christmas morning. We yielded to their importunities, we confess, with some misgivings. We were, however, delighted to be greeted with a large congregation; and we had a service of much blessing. This year we have been reminded of the success of last year; one brother writes that "eight hundred of your auditors of last Christmas morning will expect a repetition of the service this year". We should hardly like to say there were as many as eight hundred present; but we are grateful to know that somebody felt as though the congregation were about eight hundred. We shall, therefore, hold a service Christmas morning at eleven o'clock, when the Pastor will bring a Christmas message. In view of the morning service, there will be no service in the evening.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS FOR CHRISTMAS OR NEW YEAR.

Some weeks ago we suggested a year's subscription to *The Gospel Witness* as a useful Christmas present which would visit the recipient every week, thus bringing the giver to memory fifty-two times in a year. Although the suggestion appeared only once, it has met with a large response. We repeat the suggestion here. If it should be too late for Christmas, send *The Gospel Witness* to your friend as a New Year's present, beginning with the first issue of the New Year. A card will be sent to each person for whom *The Gospel Witness* is ordered, sending Christmas greetings from the donor and *The Gospel Witness* together. Subscribe at once at the office; or, if this should meet the eye of persons out-of-town, send a telegram, and the money can be sent later.

DOES JARVIS STREET NEED A REVIVAL?

On our editorial page we have an article this week on "Revival". We are grateful to God for the blessings which have so abundantly been bestowed upon us in Jarvis Street; but we are in constant fear lest anyone should count Jarvis Street to have "apprehended". We would urge every member of the church to give special thought to this week's editorial; and then to make application of the principles there expressed. Let us resolve as we approach the New Year that we will pray for a revival more earnestly than ever, and do all our work with due regard to the admonition, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

THE FIRST OF OUR CHRISTMAS FESTIVALS.

Wednesday evening, the Primary, Beginners' and Cradle Roll Departments had their Christmas supper, followed by the Christmas trees. Covers were laid in the beautiful B. D. Thomas Hall for three hundred and twenty-eight. Every seat was occupied, and at least fifty waiters were in attendance; so that the total number was not far short of four hundred in actual attendance. A still larger number gathered in the Lecture Hall, which was crowded in every part, for the entertainment that followed. But wait till you see us next year!

JARVIS ST. AND YONGE ST. MISSION.

We were told by one of the elders of the Moody Church, Chicago, some years ago, that Mr. Moody once described that church as a great fish pond. It was a place where the holy art of fishing for men was practiced with great success. We question whether there is any place in Toronto which has proved in this respect, a better fish pond than Yonge St. Mission. From the beginning it has been a mission of faith. The present superintendent is the founder of the Mission. He began the work with the promises of God as his only guarantee. But they have never failed him. In the years of its gracious ministry, Yonge St. Mission has been the birthplace of hundreds of souls. And if ever the Mission was needed it is needed now. "Happy" Davis is as happy as ever, and is still ablaze with zeal for the Lord and the souls of men. Mr. Davis is a member of Jarvis St., and our work has a large place in his prayers. But sometimes we have had an uneasy feeling that Jarvis St. has not always shown

the interest in Yonge St. Mission which its great work deserves. Our own immediate needs, perhaps, make greater demands upon the personal workers in our membership than ever before. But we have now more workers than ever, and more members, so that we ought to be able to overflow more generously into Yonge St.

The Young Men's Class of Jarvis St. are responsible for the conduct of meetings in the Mission every Friday evening except the second Friday of each month. They are assisted by many of the young women of the church. Why should not the young people who are not in the choir concentrate on Yonge St. Mission Friday evenings? There ought to be at least twenty-five or thirty Jarvis St. workers in Yonge St. Mission on these evenings.

ABOUT CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

The Christmas season has long been the favourite time of the year for making gifts. That is because the first and greatest gift this bankrupt world ever received was the gift of God's Son. Yet we seldom hear of Christmas being observed by presenting thank-offerings to the Lord. Christmas is observed as the anniversary of the birthday of the King of kings. Shall we not remember Him with a present?

PRAYING FOR MONEY.

Sometimes Sunday School buildings are erected before there are scholars to occupy them. Sometimes people imagine that a good building will insure a good school. Jarvis St. already has a great building. But we are rapidly outgrowing it. To provide accommodation for the phenomenal increase in our Bible School attendance we have had to incur a large expenditure in order to make necessary alterations in our building. But the end of possibilities in that direction are soon reached.

There is absolutely no reason why we should not have an attendance of two thousand before the end of 1925, providing we can find room for them. We had better begin to accustom our minds to the fact that a new great Sunday School building to house the largest Bible School in Canada will have to be projected in the very near, if not in the immediate, future. But our God can always find clothes for His growing family—may we reverently say, He has not so many children as to know not what to do. We have no idea through what many and varied channels the money for this great undertaking will come; we only know that God Himself will send it.

Shall we ask the Lord to use us to demonstrate what He stands ready to do for all who will trust Him wholly? If we had members with millions of money who could give tens of thousands of dollars for such a building its erection would afford little inspiration to others. But, if we lie at His feet, and invoke His aid, and receive from Him money to accomplish the humanly impossible, it will inspire thousands to attempt great things for God, and to expect miracles at His hands in these modern times. Let us all begin to pray now for money. Five hundred thousand dollars would not be more than we shall need within the next three or four years. With God all things are possible.