

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

"SHOULD THE CHURCH MIND ITS OWN BUSINESS?"

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 8th, 1925.
(Stenographically reported).

"Now then ye are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—II Cor. 5. 20.



MY subject this evening might have been stated in the question, Should Christian ministers mind their own business? Should the Christian church mind its own business? What is its business? What are we here for, as Christian people? There are some ministers who seem to profess to be expert in almost every branch of knowledge except in that in which they ought really to be expert. There are some ministers who are familiar with many books, familiar with most of the best sellers,—but apparently least familiar of all with the one book which they are commissioned to expound. There is a conception abroad that it is the church's business to uplift the masses, to educate, to reform, to be a sort of advisory counsel to the government, of the day. How far removed are all these things from the simplicity of the divine commission as given in this Holy Book! Believers are a colony, they are representatives of another kingdom than any of the kingdoms of this world; they are the subjects of a Prince Whose sovereignty mankind in general do not recognize. The church is a divine workshop where God the Holy Spirit works, made up of men and women who are being added to the church, and are being saved.

A minister is a shepherd of the flock: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which"—not some Stationing Committee, nor even a Deacons' Board, but "over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." And in relation to the world about us a Christian minister is an ambassador for Christ. His chief business is to represent his Lord, to communicate to rebellious men the message which he has received from his Sovereign.

I.

What then is the ambassador's mission? It would help us much if we could learn to simplify that; and to keep to first principles, to do the thing that we are sent to do. An ambassador is appointed to mediate between, to be the medium of communication between sovereign states. It is a tremendous compliment to rebellious men when the pen of divine inspiration describes a minister of the gospel as an "ambassador"; because it recognizes that certain powers reside with us. It is true that salvation from beginning to end is of God; that it is of grace and of grace only. I will yield to no one in my absolute conviction of the sovereignty of our God. He could have made men machines had He so willed; but when He said, "Let us make men in our image, after our likeness", if I may reverently say so, He limited Himself; He constituted a man, within prescribed limitations, himself a sovereign: He put a crown upon his brow and a sceptre in his hand, and said to him, "Have dominion". "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

"For man, as man, retaineth yet,
Howe'er debased, and soiled, and dim,
The crown upon his forehead set,—
The immortal gift of God to him."

That is perfectly consistent with what I conceive to be the true description of the doctrine of total depravity. The kingdom of man'soul has come to bankruptcy. Even our wills are insolvent; and yet strange and paradoxical as it may seem, there does reside within us the power—I cannot tell where, I cannot tell how—but there resides within us the power to yield to God, to say "Yes" to God, or to rebel against God.

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood Thou;
Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

And an ambassador is accredited as a representative of his king to another king; who has power to receive or reject his testimony.

On the other hand, my dear friends, be it remembered that the King Whom the ministers of the gospel represent has not laid His sceptre down. Let it never be supposed that He is dependent upon human suffrage, that the progress of the cause of truth, that the ultimate establishment of His kingdom, is in any sense dependent upon human consent: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." His kingdom will be established. But it is our privilege to come into happy and harmonious relationship to Him, and to yield a glad and joyous consent to the exercise of His sovereignty everywhere. An ambassador, then, is sent to communicate the will of the king to others who have the power to yield to it, or to continue in their rebellion.

An ambassador, moreover, is always strictly limited in his powers. He is the mouthpiece of another; he is the messenger of another; it is his business to communicate the will of another rather than his own. It is not the minister's business to supply a new gospel: it is not his business to work out some other means of bringing men into happy relationship to God than the means which God has Himself devised. I wish all our theological schools could come to an understanding of this great fact that their business is to teach men not

what men have said about God, but what God has said about men, and what He is saying to men. It is not our business to think our own thoughts, but to receive from Him His message—and to deliver it.

So, my friends, if I may magnify my office, it is my duty as I shall answer to Him who sends me, to seek the clearest possible understanding of the spiritual import of the gospel, and to bring that message to the hearts and consciences of men, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. We are not concerned with the good pleasure of men: it is not our task to make the gospel palatable. It is our task to deliver it! My message is especially to you this evening, my unconverted friends. I magnify my office. I am afraid the ministry in our day, and it has largely itself to thank for it, is almost without authority. If I close this Book, and begin to think my little thoughts, and plan what I think men ought to do, and what God ought to say, my folly ultimately will appear to all men. Moreover, men with reason will have to inquire, What will this babbler say? But if a minister be the mouthpiece of the Word of God; if he does nothing but quote Scripture to you, for that testimony you shall give an account at the day of judgment. Our Lord says, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

"When war is declared between two states, the ambassador is handed his passport; he is rejected; he is sent across the boundary line into his own country. And when any state thus rejects an accredited ambassador—that means war! If you reject the testimony of any true witness for Christ who comes to you in the Master's name, with the Word of the truth of the gospel, you can never be the same man or woman again. As God lives, when the judgment is set and the books are opened, it will be found written that you had your opportunity—a message from the King. The context of this verse that I have read to you assumes the existence of a state of war—man at variance with God, in an antagonistic state of mind toward him, alienated from Him, a great gulf between them.

Is that true? Is a word of reconciliation needed to-day? Is it a fact that human nature is biased against God? This apostle says, "We are made manifest to God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." Have you ever thought of what that means? Here is a gospel preacher who comes in the name of the Lord, and tells a man that he is a sinner, that he has unsheathed his sword against the Most High, and the whole set and bias of his life is against God,—and that man goes out in a rage. I am not at all disturbed when a man is made angry by my preaching. We all like to please men. I would rather please people than otherwise at any time. But, my friends, when the Word of the Lord finds the hearts and the consciences of men, when they are pricked in their hearts as we were saying this morning, there may be an uprising of the old man in opposition to the testimony of God's Word; and a man may stamp out of the church, and say, "I will never go and hear that preacher again." I have had hundreds of people say that. A great number of you who are here to-night said it—but here you are notwithstanding. And why did you not stay away? If I were to turn this service into a testimony meeting I have no doubt I could find scores who have gone out of that door, and said, "I will never enter Jarvis St. Church again." But here you are, and you are going to keep on coming! And here is the philosophy of it in part: you did not like the preacher, but when you got alone with God, he was manifest in your conscience, and you said, "That preacher told me the truth, and I did not like it—but it is true. It is true! A state of war exists between me and God; I have

no communication with Him: I don't pray, I am not in fellowship with Him, I am alienated from Him." You know that is true.

II.

But what is the message of the ambassador? It is to advise the rebel that war should cease. Many a man when he has got into a fight would like to get out of it, if he could get out of it without loss to himself. There are many people here who have had a little war on their own account. You have lost your temper, and your relationship with some other people was strained. In your better moments you knew that you were wrong, and you would like to have peace—but you had not the courage to humble yourself, and admit that you were wrong. You say, "I would like the war to end, but what will be the terms of peace? Does it mean just bowing down and admitting that I was wrong?" I rather think that Germany wanted peace before she had been at war very long; she discovered that she had undertaken a task that was too great for her. And when the Kaiser made the first famous "peace offensive," as it was called, it was just an effort on his part to extricate himself from a very difficult situation on the best terms possible. But he feared—he feared—his government feared, the day of reckoning.

And what is the cause of disagreement between the nations of Europe to-day? What is the great bugbear that keeps European statesmen awake at night, and even disturbs some on this side of the sea? It is just this: it is all summed up in that great word "reparation". I do not wonder that France wants to be paid something. I saw a little of what she suffered myself. One can scarcely understand how it could be possible for anyone to pay what was really owing for that unparalleled crime of which Germany was undoubtedly guilty. But, if there were someone who could come and say, "I will adjust the balance; I will pay for the damage; I will be responsible for all the reparation; I will give a guarantee for future security; I will be responsible for the maintenance of peace between these states—if there were some superman possessed of illimitable wealth who could himself bear the cost of the war, what a blessing it would be to the world! If all the world could come together, and shake hands, and say, "The debt is paid, now we can go on together." What a blessing that would be, would it not?

But in this war between God and man, there was one great catastrophe, one great crime committed, for every thought of man was directed against God, every word and every act—all found its ultimate expression in a murderous attack upon the Son of the King Himself. And this war laid the King's Son low in death.

How is it possible, under such circumstances, that there can ever be peace between these warring states? The Christian ambassador's message is to say that the King against Whom men have rebelled, has Himself provided a Way whereby all the cost of the war can be paid: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself". It is profoundly true, as we sing in that simple chorus, that

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

And the minister's business is to bring this glorious, good, news: that we need no Treaty of Versailles, that we need no Paris conferences, that we need no Dawes' Commission, that we need no council of experts to answer the question, How can man be just with God? God answered it at the place called Calvary—

answered it for ever! There he cried, "It is finished!" The one and only way is to receive from Him pardon, forgiveness, entire absolution. Peace is offered through the blood of Christ.

I said at the beginning, that while man is permitted to say "yes" or "no" to God, yet God is Sovereign; and I said also, that the climax of the war between God and man was reached in the death of God's Son, that the cross is a revelation of man's enmity toward God: "Golgotha, a place of a skull", is the place where sin is finished, where it brings forth death. And yet the sovereign grace of our God has turned that fact to our salvation, and made the very blood which man's sin shed, to be the means of reconciliation between God and man. Oh, the wonder of it!

What, then, should be the minister's attitude? I bring you this message of the simple old story. I have been preaching from this pulpit nearly fifteen years, and have never had any other story to tell. I never expect to have any other story to tell. I expect to go on preaching this same gospel in the millennium. I believe we shall use this Bible in the millennium. If we have not actually the material Book, we shall know all that is in it. We shall meet each other morning after morning, and say, "Is it not glorious to see the Word of the Lord being fulfilled?" And forevermore we shall see God fulfilling in Christ "the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." That will be our occupation. I am sorry for you folks who are not preachers. You had better get into the ministry, for after a while the preacher will be almost the only man in the universe who will not be out of a job. There will, of course, be a place for you choir folk up there. (Laughter). We will sing and preach of Christ and His glory forevermore.

It is the same old message. But how should we bring it to you? We "beseech" you. The Lord might have commanded His ambassadors to deliver an ultimatum, to demand instantaneous surrender, on the threat of absolute destruction. But this is His day of grace: He does not send us with a harsh message like that. He bids us come to you as though He were dependent upon your suffrage; He bids us come to you with tender spirit and loving speech, and beseech you "in Christ's stead; be ye reconciled to God." I wish I were able this evening to persuade you. Paul said in this chapter, "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Behind his earnest entreaties, behind his mighty logic, behind his irresistible argument, there was a background of the knowledge of what God is. He said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord", knowing what is in reserve if men reject—we persuade men, we beg them to come to Christ, we beseech them to be reconciled to God.

And we come to you in that spirit, dear friends, this evening: and beseech you, for your own sakes, to be reconciled to God. There can be no peace while in opposition to Him. Just as the members of my body are so related to my mind as to act easily, without friction, almost unconsciously, in obedience to the telegraphic directions of the brain, and as I can be at peace, and without pain and in rest, just in the measure in which these members obey the direction of the head, as my hand now closes without pain when I close it naturally. It cannot be turned backward without pain. It was not made that way—so your soul was made to live in right relationship to God. It was made for Him! And it would be as easy, to use a very homely metaphor, it would be just as

possible, rather let me say, for you to live normally, in the exercise of all the powers of your manhood, apart from God, as it would be for one of the finned creatures of the deep to be at home upon the dry land. God is your element: "In him we live, and move, and have our being"; and separated from Him there is no peace, there is no joy, "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." In the nature of the case, it is impossible. Why try it? Why continue the experiment? We beseech you, for your own soul's welfare, be ye reconciled to God; come into right relationship to Him through Jesus Christ, and find salvation there. It is impossible that you should come to a realization of the fulness of life's estate in any other way. It is useless to try to fight it out with God.

I have often thought of those early days of the war. I had in my mind a picture, and you had too, of those battalions of Germans in a seemingly endless procession rolling through Belgium as though there were no end to it at all, thousands upon thousands, hundreds of thousands, with all their death-dealing instruments. And one could imagine the helpless Belgians standing by and saying, "It is no use! It is no use! We cannot fight against that." No wonder the Kaiser spoke of General French's army as "the contemptible little army." But you see, he set himself against the cause of righteousness, and when he declared war, he declared war upon the whole moral order. It was long in coming. France stirred herself, and spread herself across the plain; and then the lion roared, and other thousands crossed the channel. They left stores, and factories, and offices; they put off the emblems of civil life, and put on their uniforms. Then across the sea another nation ultimately awoke; and against those armed millions of Germany, there arose at last a great army. I remember visiting the British Admiral at Queenston during the latter part of the war. His housekeeper was his niece. And the old sea dog told her to tell us what a fix the Germans were in; and she took us to the war map. They were getting telegraphic communications every hour, and she had made a careful study of the whole situation: he told me that she knew as much about it as any field-marshal. She showed us the outlay of the land that had been crossed by the Germans and over which all those millions had to go back again, how they were being hedged in, and driven back. She said, "You see, we have got them here; and it means peace in a short time, or the surrender of an army of millions. It is a physical impossibility for them to get out, or to get back."

Oh, my friends, if you could see God's war map! "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." All the resources of Deity are arrayed against the soul that will rebel against God. We beseech you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. There is no chance of winning the war from your side. There is nothing to do but yield to Him. I remember during the closing months of the war I was in Ireland, and I sat one afternoon in the study of Mr. John Dillon, leader of the Irish Nationalist Party. His room was full of newspapers; they were all filed by some industrious secretary, or by himself, I don't know which. He was gathering from all the newspapers everything they could get against the "British oppressors". He was determined upon war. And as we talked together, I said to him, "Well, Mr. Dillon, human nature is full of faults; and because human governments are made up of faulty men, any government is defective, and we have to learn by experience." And I continued, "Why do you not take your coat off? You have double the representation of any other part of the Empire, you have two members to every one that the British elector has, why do you not go to Westminster, and by reasonable means, seek to translate into legislative action your view of

what a government ought to be?" "Why," he said, "no Irish Nationalist could survive who would do so." I said, "Do you mean you would not accept any responsibility for the government of Ireland under the Crown?" "Absolutely none, sir," he said. "Well," I replied, "what do you go to Westminster for?" (I prefaced that question by saying that I did not want to be rude, but that I could not quite understand his view, if he would accept no responsibility, if he would make no attempt to better things and yet continue as a member of parliament, and the leader of a great party.) "What do you go to Westminster for?" He drew himself up and said, "To raise a row! The function of the Irish Nationalist Party is to present a critical opposition to the Government of the day."

One of the chief characteristics of the carnal mind is that it is enmity against God. I have told you of the little boy in the house where I boarded years ago. His mother was trying to correct him. He was only about four years of age, and he said, "Now, see here, Ma, I ain't got to do nothin' except what folks don't tell me I ain't got to do." If you can untangle that combination of negatives you have an illustration of what the Scripture means when it says, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." You laugh at John Dillon, you laugh at that little boy, but that is just exactly your position if you are not a Christian, you are opposing God for no reason at all. The prodigal wanted his own way, his own will. "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." But when he got his way he went to beggary and bankruptcy. And he had to come back to his father, and say "I have played the fool. I thought I knew how to map out my own life and spend my own money; but if you will only let me in at the back door I shall be thankful." But he came back as a son, ready to do his father's will. And when at last we submit to Him, dear friends, we don't regard Him as a despot who breaks our wills and takes from us all the pleasures of life, but will rejoice to sing:

"The King of Love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His,
And He is mine forever."

I beseech you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Take the joy of God home with you.

You have heard that story of one of Napoleon's officers, one of the French admirals who was defeated in a naval battle by Nelson, and came on board the British flagship to surrender. He advanced with all the Frenchman's politeness to Nelson, and extended his hand in greeting. The British Admiral made no response. He did not even smile. Stern inexorable justice, he seemed to be, as he said to the Frenchman, "Your sword first, if you please, sir." Then the French officer unbuckled his sword, and laid it down at his conqueror's feet. "Now," said Nelson with a smile, "give me your hand"; and he gripped it in friendly greeting. And when you come to God it is, "Your sword first, if you please." But when you lay it down, and say, "I yield, I yield, I can hold out no more," He will give you His hand, and He will pronounce His benediction upon you. He will say, "I give unto you eternal life, and you shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck you out of my hand." Oh, may we find salvation in Him to-night! (A large number came forward and confessed Christ.)

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

"PUT OFF THY SHOES FROM OFF THY FEET."

When, in the exercise of his simple daily duty of keeping his father-in-law's sheep, Moses "led the flock unto the mountain of God, even to Horeb", it is likely that he walked in a path which he had often trodden before. But this time Horeb was invested with a new charm, with a new brightness, and the silence of its solitudes was broken by an angel's voice: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." And often since Moses' day the desert of duty has, for the faithful, glowed with the light of the divine presence, and has become vocal with divine revelations.

"And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." A presumptuous Midianite, proud of his familiarity with the desert, would perhaps, not have been restrained from closer examination by the Voice, nor held back even by the Fire. It may be that he would have been without eyes to see the Fire or ears to hear the Voice. Your modern "scholar" who prides himself in his affinity for "profound" things, would have dug up the bush by the roots to discover the "sources" of the Fire and the Voice, and probably would have written a lot of learned nonsense to prove that the bush had been transplanted from the garden of some heathen king, that many of the branches had the appearance of having been grafted on the original stock "at sundry times and in divers manners" by some ancient Burbank who, it was believed, was not a mythical character; that the supposed fire could not have been more than a reflection, and that if a voice was heard at all it could have issued from only a few, of the branches, and certainly ought not to be thought of as issuing from or being associated with the bush as a whole.

"And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." Certain learned Egyptian contemporaries might have called him ignorant, they perhaps would have said that it was easy to shut one's eyes, that he was opposed to "research" and "investigation," that his temper and spirit could make no contribution to the solution of "problems" by which many Egyptians were vexed. Although "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," in the face of their taunts, while that Fire was burning and that Voice was speaking, he would still have "hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."

Is anything more needed in these modern days than a revival of "the fear of the Lord"? It is perhaps too much to hope that the brazen impudence of

much so-called "profound scholarship" will ever hide its face until its cheek shall be blanched by the flaming brightness of the Great White Throne, and its impious tongue, shall be compelled, by the sentence of the Judge, to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Apostles and prophets may fear, and, even the seraphims with their six wings may use but two to fly with, while with twain they cover their face, and with twain they cover their feet, in the presence of the Lord of hosts, and in the consciousness, that not only the Temple, but "the whole earth is full of His glory"; but this human ignorance, that calls itself "scholarship" is not afraid of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. It is not afraid even of facts, of facts that are engraven in stone, facts that are imperishably written on the pages of history, facts that are incarnate in a countless multitude of regenerate human beings,—such facts are supposed to be annihilated by a stroke of the pen of "scholarship"! It is time the children of faith rejoiced at least in anticipation of the triumph of the truth. While many "imagine a vain thing" thinking to break the divine bands asunder, and to cast away His Words from them, let Faith but listen, and she shall know that "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision"—and she will learn to laugh with God!

Meanwhile, let us not be afraid of being likened to an ostrich because like Moses, we hide our faces. The fire is still burning upon the altar, the bush still burns with fire, the Voice still speaks for those who will put off their shoes, and hide their faces.

The Bible is a very natural book. No one claims that it was written by angels. Its roots are in the soil of human experience, its branches bear fruit in the heavenly places; and it is aglow with the fire of the divine Presence. The attitude of your soul toward God is of more importance to the understanding of this Book, even than your intellectual equipment. Are you "afraid to look upon God"? Do you hide your face? Do you put off your shoes? If that be your attitude and spirit you shall see the Fire, you shall hear the Voice, you shall be reminded of the covenant, you shall hear the promise of deliverance from Egypt into a land that floweth with milk and honey, you shall join with Moses, the man of meek and humble spirit, who was "afraid to look upon God," and say, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

THE EDITOR ABROAD.

Further Observations On Conditions In the West.

Our last letter was dated at Vancouver, February 14th. We are now writing on the way between Winnipeg and Toronto, March 3rd. These lines will be read by people in many parts of the world, many of whom have never seen Canada. Looking from the window at this moment we have reflected that if we were one of a jury selected to decide whether Kipling was guilty of misrepresenting Canada when he called her "Our Lady of the Snows," we should vote emphatically for a verdict of "Not Guilty." For more than two thousand miles we have seen nothing but snow. But what a country this is! Notwithstanding it is wintertime, and trains must battle with the elements, in these three weeks of continuous travel the Canadian Pacific Railway trains have been on time to the minute. We have been away only twenty-two days and expect to be at home for breakfast to-morrow. But when our journey is completed in the morning we shall have covered over six thousand two hundred miles in two

hundred and twenty hours of travel, including eleven nights on the train and two nights on a boat; visited five great cities; delivered twenty-nine public addresses; held numerous conferences and committee meetings; addressed an aggregate of over ten, and possibly twelve, thousand people; personally greeted many hundreds more,—and all in less than twenty-three days. And the territory covered but a small part of Canada. We invite our friends from afar to come and live in a real country where there is plenty of room to move.

Perhaps we had better tell our distant friends a little about our wonderful climate. Toronto is a beautiful summer resort—not quite all the year around. When we left February 9th it was raining, with plenty of snow on the ground; and from then until within a couple of hundred miles or less of Vancouver, snow was everywhere, except about Medicine Hat where a recent Chinook had taken it nearly all away. But Vancouver weather was delightful; there was no snow except upon the tops of the mountains, and a temperature which made a light overcoat comfortable. There was bright sunshine nearly all the time we were there. The skies wept a little, as was fitting, when we were about to leave—whether of joy or grief we will not record.

Returning from Vancouver to Calgary for most of the first day we sat out on the rear of the observation car, and were quite comfortable. The temperature in Calgary was most pleasant, almost like spring; but Edmonton was like a beautiful lady of fine form and features with rather an icy manner until she smiles and takes you by the hand,—and then “you don't feel it”—that is, the ice! Edmonton temperature was thirty-three below zero; but we are compelled to acknowledge that Edmonton we found to be one place in the West where they tell the truth—when they say, “You don't feel it.” We didn't! But Winnipeg at twenty-seven below zero ought to be sent to bed and made to stay there until she learns better manners. When Winnipeg smites you with a breeze at twenty-seven below, the passage from the hotel door to a closed car is quite long enough, thank you!

Were we to write of the country itself, of how the prairies awe you with their vastness, and enchant you with their silence, and inspire you with their inaudible prophecies of the millions who will some day fill these almost immeasurable spaces to extract the incalculable wealth of yellow gold to feed the world, whose potentialities even now await the appropriation of labour and enterprise beneath these silent stretches of snow; or were I to attempt to describe the majesty of the mountains, the mysterious depths of those vast canyons, the wonder inspired by the human daring which dreamed so heroically and engineered so skilfully and wrought so indomitably as to master the mountains and achieve this incomparably glorious highway to the sea—were we to write further on that theme, we should have to fill *The Witness*'s pages with descriptive articles for many weeks to come. We must be content in the meantime to say, “Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of Heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath. And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the Moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush.”

We have just come back to our little compartment from the dining car. We went in as a duty, and found it a pleasure. These C. P. R. men are wonderful! From whom are they learning their courteous and attentive ways? We have been entertained royally throughout this journey; but these men seem determined to serve the best wine at the last—not literally, of course, for we are now in Ontario! They brought breakfast and lunch to our compartment; and this

evening made us feel as though we were President of the road. We are beginning to wonder what it would feel like to be C. P. R. President. We had a feeling we must be very careful to conceal our identity, lest these courteous servants of the Company should recognize the ferocious Baptist disturber—the bete noire of certain Baptist Ministerial Associations, who apparently are filled with apprehension whenever they hear he is coming to town. To our astonishment, however, these C. P. R. men called us by name at dinner. They cannot possibly have learned that this passenger is looked upon as more dangerous than several cars of dynamite. By the way—about Baptist Ministerial Associations—more anon and bime by!

At Vancouver.

Now we must slip back in our thought to Vancouver. The Baptist cause in Vancouver is, in some respects, flourishing; and in some respects it is quite critical. The Baptist churches and pastors, as far as we know, are sound in the faith. But British Columbia has been much exercised as to its place in the Baptist Union of Western Canada. The Union's endorsement of Brandon College and the general conduct of the Union's affairs have created profound dissatisfaction among a large and influential number of British Columbia Baptists.

We were impressed with the solid character of a large number of Vancouver Baptists whose love of the gospel is of a very vital character. They love the gospel enough to contend for it. A study of the Vancouver situation has confirmed a view we have held for some time, namely, that no one can be a really honest and straightforward Baptist in these days without fighting. The attack on the faith is so general that if one has any knowledge of religious conditions at all, he must either fight, or surrender, or else take the middle course and play double and compromise. We have come to the conclusion that the middle-of-the-road Baptist is always a Mr. Facing-both-ways. We had abundant evidence that Vancouver Baptists have among them a few preachers who would run with the hare and hunt with the hounds; but the majority of Vancouver pastors we believe to be true to the faith. It was our melancholy duty, in two instances, to expose this double-dealing. It is painful always to have to differ from brethren; but in wartime ordinary risks are too hazardous to be lightly incurred.

The interests in the services in Vancouver were maintained to the end. Friday evening, February 20th, when we spoke on "The Christian Attitude Toward Amusements," the house was packed, including the School-room; and when the invitation was given to declare one's readiness to put Christ first by abandoning the things which cause weaker ones to stumble, it was estimated about one thousand responded. We are inclined to think that the actual number was slightly less than that.

Among the ministers who supported the services were the President and Secretary of the British Columbia Convention, Rev. D. G. McDonald, and Rev. F. W. Auvache, respectively; also Rev. A. F. Baker, Rev. Ernest J. Plenderleith, Rev. A. W. McLeod, Rev. H. L. Kempton, Rev. Andrew Grieve, and Rev. M. Van Sickle, while several others were frequently in attendance.

The Sunday services were all largely attended, and the last day was a day of great spiritual blessing.

We had many committee meetings and conferences; and met scores of old friends from all parts of the Continent and from the Old Land, including some from Spurgeon's Tabernacle.

During the Conference many joined the Vancouver Branch of the Baptist Bible Union of North America, the membership now numbering over two hundred and fifty—including a large proportion of leading men and women in the various churches. We are sure that the Baptist Bible Union will be an influential factor in Baptist affairs in British Columbia.

We reached Calgary Tuesday, the 24th; and there had a happy meeting with many old friends, including Rev. T. J. Bennett, Dr. H. H. Bingham, Mr. L. S. Haines, and others. The meeting was held in the Crescent Heights Baptist Church. There was a good congregation, filling the church downstairs, with a few in the gallery. The subject was "The Supernatural the Stormcentre of Christianity." We were told that the meeting was a very representative one, practically all the churches having some representatives there. We were glad to learn that the Rev. Christopher Burnett, the former Pastor of Crescent Heights, now of Detroit, is to return to Crescent Heights in the near future.

Brother Burnett is a strong man; he did excellent work years ago as Pastor of Parliament Street Church, and was Pastor there when that church was amalgamated with Jarvis Street. He is a strong preacher of the old-fashioned gospel, and a fearless defender of "the faith once delivered to the saints." The West is urgently in need of men of Brother Burnett's caliber; and we congratulate Crescent Heights and the West generally on his return to Calgary.

At Edmonton.

In the small hours of Wednesday morning—1.35, to be exact—we left for Edmonton. We have already referred to its comfortable temperature of thirty-three degrees below zero—but that was the only cold thing about Edmonton. We went out in the morning at 11 o'clock to give an address to the students of a new Bible Training School conducted by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It is only about a year old, but it has twenty-one students in residence. Mr. Woodward, the pastor of the Christian Alliance Tabernacle, and Principal of the School, we found we had met before when he was in the army. The story of the rapid rise of this Bible Training School is a religious romance. They have prayed for larger quarters; and the Lord sent someone along with a cheque for five thousand dollars, which enabled them to procure another building.

We rejoice in the prosperity of this work, for Brother Woodward seems to be a sane and well-balanced man. We have in our mind, however, in this connection a question. We learned from several sources in the West that young people were coming forward offering themselves for service on the foreign mission field. They had applied to our Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board, and had been told that the Board would not entertain the thought of sending them until they prepared themselves by taking a full university course. The result had been that these young people had turned aside to other institutions. We believe in a thorough educational training by ministers and missionaries; but we do not believe in making a cast-iron rule of that sort. Very probably most of these young people would have been encouraged to take a university course if they had been wisely dealt with. Ought we not to have some place where young people who cannot see their way quite through to the end, may begin? By feeling their way, they will come to see the importance of taking the most thorough training. There will, of course, be some of exceptional strength who will pursue their own courses, and some others without the capacity to appreciate the importance of a thorough mental equipment; but we venture to suggest that our Foreign Mission Board ought to deal very sympathetically with applicants for foreign service. This flourishing institution at Edmonton proves that there is room for a Bible Training School in that part of the great West.

By the kindness of the Rev. A. C. Bingham, pastor of the McDonald Baptist Church, about twenty-five were assembled for luncheon, including most of the Baptist ministers of the city, with several laymen, and some ladies whom we had known long ago in London. We had a very happy time together. In the evening the church was packed in every part; and we had a service in which we believe there was a very definite blessing for many. Mr. Alloway, Managing Editor of the Edmonton Bulletin, took care of us at the McDonald Hotel, a magnificent hotel of the Canadian National Railway. Brother Alloway has not been long in the West; and his going to that city will be a great strength to the Baptist cause there. Rev. A. C. Bingham evidently has a fine grip upon the situation in McDonald Church; and is spoken of by many of his brethren as one of the really strong men of the West.

At Calgary.

We left Edmonton after the meeting and returned to Calgary. There we had the opportunity of meeting many other old friends again,—and then on to Winnipeg.

At Winnipeg.

Saturday evening, February 28th, at Winnipeg, a group of men, twenty-five in number, came together after dinner and we had a long and interesting discussion of Baptist affairs in the West until midnight. These men, for the most part, constituted a Laymen's Committee by whose invitation we were to preach in Winnipeg, March 1st. On that Committee there were representatives of practically every Baptist church in Winnipeg. Two of the pastors met with us—Brother P. Cundy to whom we before referred, who is an outstanding champion of the faith in the West, and the Rev. Mr. Williamson, pastor of Nassau Street Church.

Brother Williamson felt a little bit sensitive about a paragraph occurring in our first letter, in which we spoke of the hunger of the men of the West for the Word of God. The laymen present saw no fault in the paragraph; and felt that it was justified in the premises. When it was written we did not know that Brother Williamson was a pastor in Winnipeg, and certainly had no intention of reflecting upon his faithfulness to the gospel. Brethren there who know him well, cheerfully testified to the fact that Brother Williamson was perfectly orthodox in his preaching; and recognized that the paragraph in question was a general statement which had to do with conditions everywhere.

Sunday morning we preached in Elim Chapel to a congregation which filled the place, on "The Coming Revival." In the afternoon we spoke on "The War in the Churches" in the Garrick Theatre, to a great congregation, notwithstanding the very cold weather. In the evening we discussed the question of Church Union to a congregation that practically filled the great auditorium. Leaders of the Unionist and anti-Unionist forces were present; and the occasion gave us the opportunity of setting before the people a spiritual interpretation of the church and its mission.

Monday afternoon we had another conference with the Laymen's Committee which was attended also by Rev. Mr. Gunn, Pastor of the Tabernacle; Rev. W. E. Matthews, Pastor of Broadway Church; Rev. C. R. McNally, Pastor of First Church; and Rev. Percival Cundy. We had a very frank discussion about conditions in the West, and about the necessity of taking a firm stand if the work in the West is to be saved from further disintegration. (In a later article we purpose to discuss the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Western Canada, to show how utterly unbaptistic it is; and how impossible under such an organization it becomes for the churches to register their will. We shall have some very straight and strong things to say in our analysis of this strange machine.) In this connection we have before us in the leather binding of the C. P. R., a copy of Harper's Magazine, March, 1925, in which there is an article, "Shall I Remain in the Church?—A Minister's Dilemma," by Fred Eastman. We quote the following paragraphs. It is so true to the experience of many ministers to-day, we feel it is not without relation to conditions in the West. We would recommend our brethren to read the article in full:

"Ringing in my ears to-day are not the voices of prophets, but the din of a myriad denominational secretaries and financial agents. Once the cry was, 'For God's sake, save the world!' Now it seems to be 'For God's sake, raise the budget.' I have heard little in the churches these last years about saving souls, but much about campaigns for more and ever more members. There is an idea abroad that if we can accumulate more noses in the church and raise more cash, all will be well. What we may do to the human beings who live behind the noses seems to be a matter of secondary importance. Once Christ called men, individual men, and sent them out to labour and die for His cause and with power to accomplish the impossible. To-day the church which claims His name organize Committees, and the Committees pass resolutions and go home. We do not feel that we can accomplish anything without a majority. Some folks, as Gerald Stanley Lee has said, can never understand how Jesus of Nazareth accomplished so much without being a committee.

Again: "One of our most poignant memories is the remark of a wise woman at the close of a church service which had been devoted largely to an appeal for more community activity: 'It is all very well,' she said, 'and it may be good sociology, but I came to church for spiritual food, and you didn't give it to me.'"

The writer closes this striking article with these words: "Christ had a power beyond the measure of man's mind. This much, however, we do know: He did not leave the synagogues—the synagogue left Him. He drove the money-changers from the temple but He did not desert the temple. They had their revenge on Him at last; but His final plea to His Father was, 'Forgive them for they know not what they do.'"

"Contemplation of that sublime Figure sheds a light upon the way. If I follow in His steps I shall stay in the church unless the church will not have me. I shall scourge the money-changers and the institutionalists and the denominationalists as I have opportunity and a scourge;

but I shall cling to the spiritual purpose which constrained me to enter the ministry. That much seems clear. Is there a place in the church for me? A place for one who wants to be an individual rather than a cog in a machine, who has learned to care more for spiritual value than for denominational prestige, more for the individual than for the institution? If no such place beckons, what then?"

One of the brethren present at Monday's Conference expressed his appreciation of the personality of Professor Harry McNeill of Brandon College. He expressed the view that he believed that he was truly orthodox at heart, but that he had become somewhat twisted intellectually by contact with Chicago University. We ventured to say in reply that we knew nothing at all about Professor McNeill except what we had learned through the Commission's report adopted by the Baptist Union of Western Canada, and that that report constituted the most sweeping condemnation, although not intended to do so, of anyone supposed to be a Christian teacher. We pointed out to the brethren that if Dr. McNeill is perfectly orthodox at heart but without ability so to express himself as to be easily understood by the people, he is therefore unqualified as a teacher. If, on the other hand, Dr. McNeill really believes what the Commission represents him as believing, he is on doctrinal grounds disqualified for his office. So that, in any event, it is time for a change.

We were informed of another incident in connection with Brandon College. There is in Brandon a young professor—less than thirty—named Richards, who comes from Rochester Seminary. This professor was expounding the chapter on the resurrection of Lazarus; and explained to his students that Lazarus was really not dead but in a swoon, and that our Lord had said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." One of the students, however, called his attention to the fact that later in the chapter it was written, "Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead"; and that the sisters feared to have the stone rolled away because he had been dead so long that they were sure decomposition had set in. We are told that the professor then admitted these things, and said he was glad his attention had been called to it. But what a travesty! Jarvis Street would not permit one who knew so little of the Word of God to teach a beginners' class, to say nothing of teaching a body of students. Surely Brandon is urgently in need of a change!

We believe that the group of laymen whose guest we were in Winnipeg will be heard from in connection with Baptist affairs in Western Canada. There is now a strong organization in Vancouver who are prepared to stand like a British square against the enemies of the old faith; and we believe that in a very short time we shall hear of a solid organization being effected in Winnipeg for the same purpose. When laymen come together, as they did in Winnipeg, absolutely without the leadership of their pastors, because of the hunger of their own hearts, and because of their consciousness of the need of a more heroic type of Baptist faith, to say the least of it, it is very significant.

We have spoken of their assembling without the leadership of their pastors. We ought, in fairness, to say that from the beginning of his pastorate, Brother Cundy has sounded no uncertain note in these matters. He has nailed his colors to the mast, and everybody knows exactly where he stands. We met hosts of Baptists in Winnipeg who were longing for better days; and who are coming to see that better days can never come by the substitution of compromise for conviction, and policy for principle.

We had a very cordial meeting with Rev. C. W. Gordon (Ralph Conner), who was present at our Sunday evening service when we discussed the question of Church Union. Dr. Gordon very courteously put before us some inside information respecting the conflict in the Presbyterian Church. From the information received we should judge that both sides need to pray very earnestly that they may not forget their manners as Christian people. At the same time, our general view of the principle of Union was not changed by the information conveyed by Dr. Gordon. We are not able to see that the principle upon which this Union is founded is strictly just to all concerned. Our discussion of Union, however, was mainly designed to afford an opportunity to set before some of our Western friends, once again, the old-fashioned Baptist interpretation of the spiritual mission of the church.

We left Winnipeg Monday evening, we shall have to confess, a little bit weary. We arrived in Toronto Wednesday morning only to find waiting for us the duty of issuing another copy of *The Witness*—and here it is!

The Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course

Lesson LXXVI.

March 15th, 1925.

DANIEL'S WISDOM.—Book of Daniel, chapters 1 and 2.

I. We Have Here the Story of a Man With Heart Religion.

There is much religion that is nothing more than a thought of the mind or a passing emotion. It is with the heart men believeth unto righteousness, and as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.

1. In many respects Daniel was not in the most advantageous circumstances. He was among captives, a stranger in a strange land. It is often so that God's great men begin their careers amid great hardships. 2. Yet in the very straitness of his circumstances, Daniel found his opportunity. He is an example of the principle that all things work together for good to them that love God. Like Joseph in Potiphar's prison, he found his opportunity amid great difficulties. So do God's men always. We ought not to pray for easy circumstances or for smooth roads, but for grace to endure and strength to conquer. 3. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would be true to his deepest convictions. It is thus we may strengthen ourselves against the hour of temptation. It is doubtful whether a man is ever suddenly overcome of evil: there is a long preparation either for surrender or conquest. Daniel settled it in his heart what he would do under certain circumstances. 4. He is remarkable for this also, that he had the courage of his convictions. He did not hesitate to express his purpose. So ought we to do. 5. He put God to the test. It is evident that God was a real factor in Daniel's life; and he believed that obedience to His commandments could only bring blessing in the end. Therefore in spite of contrary influences, he took the right course; and God vindicated his trust. He always will:

"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."

6. Daniel and his companions excelled all the wise men in their knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and in understanding in all visions and dreams. It is popularly supposed that intellect belongs in superabundant measure to the children of this world; but the truth is, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. And whoever will put God first and act in the fear of the Lord, will find his understanding opened and will be made wise in a thousand matters where others are without knowledge.

II. A Religion of Divine Revelation.

This chapter is altogether too full to attempt exact exposition within the limits possible to a Sunday School lesson. We suggest only certain general principles which are of value. 1. There are secrets which are undiscoverable to human wisdom. The king's demand of his wise men was certainly most unreasonable. Yet the fact remains that the mysteries of the future are in other than human hands; and with all our wisdom and learning we cannot put aside the curtain and tell what the future has in store. It would save us much embarrassment could we recognize the principle that there are some things which may be known only as God is pleased to reveal them. 2. Daniel and his companions prayed for divine illumination, and God revealed to them the secret whose knowledge they desired. Our experience may be different in degree to that of Daniel; but it is still true that the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, may be revealed unto us by God's Spirit. 3. Daniel was careful to give God all the glory for the revelation—as we ought also always to do. 4. Into the particulars of the five kingdoms represented in Nebuchannezzar's image we cannot here enter, as many historical matters are involved which would be beyond the compass of the majority of Sunday School classes. On thing particularly this vision teaches, and that is, that the stone cut out of the mountain without hands will supplant all other kingdoms. Beyond all peradventure, the kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.

SUNDAY EVENING COMMUNION.

On account of the Pastor's absence the Monthly Communion Service was postponed from last Sunday till next Sunday. A large number will be baptized at the evening service, and there will be little time for a sermon. Last month we had the largest Communion Service ever known in Jarvis Street. The service of next Sunday evening will be the last Monthly Communion and Reception Service of the Church Year; and we hope that it will exceed in numbers and interests, all other services that we have ever held. The Pastor will preach morning and evening.

THE PASTOR AT HOME.

The Pastor returned from the West Wednesday morning, March 4th. He would like to express his personal appreciation of the splendid way in which everybody has carried on during the three weeks of his absence. The Bible School has been magnificently sustained, all the prayer meetings have been largely attended, and the Sunday's services, from all reports, have been full of blessing. We are greatly indebted to Doctors Hoyt and Maguire and Walker for the great service they rendered on the three Sundays in which they occupied the Pastor's place. It is a great thing for a church to be built around the Lord and established upon the Rock, and not to be dependant upon the personal ministry of any one man. If the members of the church will carefully read the letters on his Western trip which have been printed in *The Witness* and the others which will follow, they will see that Jarvis Street's ministry is extending to the ends of the Continent. We are meeting pastors and people who had come almost to feel that the days of great spiritual movements and of abounding spiritual blessing were passed; but we are learning that what God has done in Jarvis Street—and is still doing—is proving an inspiration to tens of thousands of people who have never been within our walls.

The ministry of *The Gospel Witness* in these distant places is simply marvellous. We have simply thousands upon thousands of friends whom we have never seen, receiving blessing through the printed page, and who are inspired to pray. And so the labour of the people, and the sacrificial efforts which make the publication of *The Gospel Witness* possible, are being abundantly rewarded.

COLLEGE STREET AND FIRST AVENUE.

A few weeks ago our College Street friends sustained a great loss in the destruction of their splendid building by fire. This week the fire-field claimed another victim in the First Avenue Church, which was also completely destroyed. The sympathy of Jarvis Street Church goes out to these two stricken congregations.

Dr. Vining and Dr. Graham are both men of heroic mould; and no doubt will lead their people ably in such steps as they may find it wise to take. In the meantime, we assure our fellow-Baptists of these two churches of our profound sympathy and of our earnest prayer that God's blessing may be upon them, and that out of these calamities some good may eventually come.

Dorcas Society, Thursday, March 12th, 1925. Ladies of the church who are interested in the Dorcas work are invited to meet in the church parlor, Thursday, March 12th, at 2 o'clock. Please bring thimbles and scissors. Hot supper will be served at 6.30 to which we welcome all Jarvis St. friends, especially the gentlemen and young people. Preparations are being made for a large gathering. An offering is taken at the tables to defray expenses of the supper, and any surplus is used in our Dorcas work.

Young Women's Mission Circle—The regular meeting of the Young Women's Mission Circle will be held on Wednesday, March 11th, at 8 o'clock. This is to be an open meeting; and everyone interested in missions is promised an enjoyable and instructive evening. Mr. Fred Bell will tell of the work in Tibet; and will show lantern slides illustrating the work carried on there.