The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

IN THE INTEREST OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH, AND SENT FOR \$2.00 PER YEAR (UNDER COST), POSTPAID, TO ANY ADDRESS, 5c. PER SINGLE COPY. TO NEW SUBSCRIBERS DURING 1926 \$1.00 FOR ONE YEAR. RENEWALS \$2.00.

T. T. SHIELDS, Pastor and Editor.

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

Address correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto.

Vol. 5. No. 10

TORONTO JULY 15th, 1926

Whole No. 220.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"AND PETER".

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto.
(Stenographically reported)

"But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."—Mark 16:7.



HE operation of the supposed law of the survival of the fittest, or natural selection, in what Herbert Spencer called "the social organism" would effect the subordination of the interests of the individual, to the interests of society in general. Thus in that scheme of things, the individual would be of only minor importance. But notwithstanding his championship of the principle of evolution, Spencer contended that "the corporate life in society must be subservient to the lives of the parts, instead of the lives of the parts being sub-

servient to the corporate life." But this, it was held by others, was tantamount to an interruption of the evolutionary law, and involved an admission that the individual had succeeded in arresting the characteristic effects of natural selection in society.

And I am not sorry that men of science, quite apart from its religious bearing, have found some difficulty among themselves, in accepting the principle of natural selection, or the survival of the fittest, as a law of universal application. My own difficulty in the premises is a very practical one: I should rather like to survive, and I am unable to find any very convincing evidence that I am among the fittest.

The conception of the universe as automatically fulfilling its functions, repairing its wastes, and affecting its endless transmutations without any special intervention on the part of the Creator, would not be difficult to entertain, or at least would not be an unwelcome conception, if the human element could be excepted. But you and I know that we are more than mere automatons. Each human soul is a world in itself; and where you find moral and volitional powers, you must make room in your philosophy for a personal God, acting independently and sovereignly. And when you admit that, no miracle is impossible or even improbable.

The doctrine of the survival of the fittest is very flattering to those who are fully convinced of their fitness to survive. But, as between the scientific dogma of natural selection, and the theological doctrine of supernatural election,

the latter is by far the more comforting to those who feel themselves to be but poor sinners.

Look at Peter. Three times he has declared that he was not a disciple. He has forfeited all right to answer a call addressed to the disciples of Jesus. But in the resurrection he is specially mentioned and called by distinguishing grace. And my purpose this morning is to remind you of some of the characteristics of distinguishing grace: It is mighty to restore, it makes it easy to return, and completely redeems.

II. THE GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST IS MIGHTY TO RESTORE.

It is well to keep always in mind that Jesus was the Word of God Incarnate. It was His special mission to reveal God to those who could not of themselves His voice speaks with authority as testifying what He cerdiscover Him. tainly knows concerning God. To say that He spoke authoritatively on matters of religion, but was subject to error in matters pertaining to other spheres of knowledge, is not only to place unwarranted limitations to the bounds of religion, but logically involves a denial of that infallibility which is inseparable from His divine Sonship. One thing is certain, that we shall never learn more of God than Jesus is able to teach us. And if there is one thing He clearly taught concerning God, it is that we are not to think of Him as having shut Himself within the laws which govern the operation of a perpetual mechanism which we call the universe. Orderly, and beautiful, and mighty, as are the divine movements in the material universe, God did not exhaust Himself in the making of the worlds. And Jesus conceived of God as carefully watching over His great machine, able to stop it, or vary its movements at will; and even in its regular operation, personally superintending all, and supplying the operating energy. And we need to remind ourselves of this aspect of Christ's revela-tion of God. It is vain to pray to a steam-engine, or to an electric dynamo. We can never be happy if we lose faith in One Whose Hand is on the throttle, or on the switch to vary its movements to save a foolish child from being ground to pieces beneath its pitiless wheels. When we take Christ's view of God in relation to the world of things and of men, we shall be able to comfort ourselves with His beautiful words:

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

He does not bid us worship or trust inexorable Law,—"your heavenly Father feedeth them", "God clothes the grass of the field".

But the grace of God not only flows from a personal Source, but is distinguishing in its operations. "Tell his disciples, and Peter". The Good Shepherd "calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out". In a large city one may feel himself to be merged in the mass, as only a drop in humanity's infinite sea, but with God we count for one. Even in a church, when it is very large, we may feel ourselves to be lost in the organized body of "disciples"; but to the Head of the Church each member of the body has its own peculiar function, and Peter is distinguished from the crowd.

And our religious life will be healthy only as we think of Christ as distinguishing us each from all the others. Whatever may be the demand for indirect generalization in the pulpit, you will always have to deal very directly and personally with Christ. "Tell his disciples, and Peter", is the rule He observes. To believe that God Himself can call a man by name, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me", may betray an alleged unscientific attitude of mind, but of this I am sure, there is no vital religion where that distinguishing voice has

not been heard and obeyed. Life will have a new significance when we have fully learned, that notwithstanding the orderliness of the divine movements, God does individualize His human children and call each of them by name,—"and Peter".

And the next thing to observe is that grace distinguishes not the fittest but the faintest. It lays hold upon those who cannot be included in a general class, who are outside any general estimation because they are all different: "We have turned every one to his own way",—"and Peter". When Jesus stood up in the synagogue of Nazareth, and He knew they were all asking in their hearts why He had come, and what He had come to do, "when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord". It is the province of grace to be "The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in". The poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind and the bruised, these are they whom grace makes to survive.

Moreover, grace distinguishes between what we say and what we feel. Among the things for which we ought to be thankful let us write the fact that God so often refuses to believe what we say or to take us at our word. Peter had said he was not a disciple, but his Lord knew better; and because he would not answer a general call, He sent him a particular call. That principle may well comfort us. On more than one occasion it was shown that Jesus knew Peter far better than he knew himself. And He knows us. If all that we have said since we so boldly declared our readiness to follow Christ even to death, were held against us, it would be enough to bolt the door of heaven before us. But God does not believe the bitter things which, in our despondent and despairing moods, we have said against Him and against ourselves. Therefor He sends His angels to say, "Tell my disciples I am awaiting them, and tell Peter that I want to see him too. He will know why I have specially mentioned his name."

Thus you see grace specially reaches out after the undeserving and the untoward: "and Peter". If you proudly glory in the survival of the fittest, and feel yourself specially fit, you will feel no need of grace, and will not complain that grace issues no special call to you. But if you are often overwhelmed with a sense of personal unworthiness, and feel that mighty forces are arrayed against you, you will welcome the message of grace which is that Christ has come to be the Restorer of those who have failed, who have, so to speak, excommunicated themselves. Then you will know the sweetness of that psalm which extols Him Who "restoreth my soul".

II. But considering the wages of grace which is mighty to restore, we behold THE GRACE WHICH MAKES IT EASY TO RETURN.

Christ's way with Peter is full of instruction. Behold *His welcome*, in what *He did not say*. When no one, or only one at most, was there to understand, "the Lord turned, and looked on Peter":

"The Saviour looked on Peter. Aye, no word,
No gesture of reproach! the Heavens serene,
Though heavy with armed justice, did not lean
Their thunders that way. The forsaken Lord
Looked only, on the traitor. None record
What that look was; none guess: for those who have seen
Wronged lovers loving through a death-pang keen,
Or pale-cheeked martyrs smiling to a sword,
Have missed Jehovah, at the judgment-call.
And Peter, from the height of blasphemy—
"I never knew this man"—did quail and fall,
As knowing straight THAT God,— and turned free,
And went out speechless from the face of all,
And filled the silence, weeping bitterly".

And now that He sends for him He only mentions his name. No word of reproach, nor rebuke, nor even admonition. How mighty is grace to restore!

Only a look and the mention of his name! When we would bring the wanderer back how clumsily we set about it. But with what consummate skill Christ ever deals with human hearts! Perhaps all that needed to be said had been said in that look? Is Mrs. Browning right in her conjecture?—

"I think that look of Christ might seem to say, Thou Peter! art thou then a common stone Which I at last must break my heart upon, For all God's charge to His high angels may Guard my foot better? Did I yesterday Wash thy feet, My beloved, that they should run Quick to deny me 'neath the morning sun, And do thy kisses, like the rest, betray? The cock crows coldly.—Go and manifest A late contrition, but no bootless fear! For when thy deathly need is obdurest, Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here—My voice, to God and angels, shall attest,—Because I know this man, let him be clear."

At all events, Peter needed only to be named. Christ's sheep hear His voice. It is not so much what is said as Who says it that counts in spiritual affairs. To be called by our own names in strange and unexpected places may be to receive a message speaking volumes. The elaborate sermon may not be the most effective instrument in restoring the wanderer. Some simple word from God Himself which reveals the divine knowledge of some secret betrayal, and at the same time the divine longing for restoration of fellowship is all that is required. "And Peter" may be a mighty appeal.

Did this special appeal lead Peter to hope for a private interview with his Lord? Did Peter understand it as an invitation to be alert and watchful for a special appearance? I believe that lies behind His special message often. Do you not think Peter desired it? Hearing that He has risen, do you not think he would say, "Oh, that I could see Him alone! that I might make my confession only into His ears!" That I might weep again for my sins until He Himself should dry my tears!" Do you not feel that need? Can you live all your life

in public? "Pray to thy Father who seeth in secret."

Peter had a secret audience with his Lord. No one was there to witness what occurred. No word of what passed is recorded. We only know that it occurred and that everybody knew they had met: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon". Go, you backslider, and meet your Lord in secret. I enter a plea for that private meeting. You will never learn to pray in the prayer-meeting. The most you can hope will be to exercise there the art you have learned elsewhere. We must take time and make occasions to be holy. We must answer the special call of the Lord by a private and personal meeting. Simon was all the happier at the prayer meeting, that he had met his Lord somewhere in private before.

This secret meeting was arranged by Christ Himself. It must have been so. How considerate, how gracious of Him so to do! And He is always willing to meet us so. And you will make more progress with Him alone than if John were there to try to help you. Direct dealing with God is the need of the hour. Happy the soul who is directed by the Holy Chost to "the secret

place of the Most High"!

III. HOW COMPLETELY GRACE REDEEMS AT LAST.

First, in the confession it orders. How fully Peter corrected his denial by his thrice repeated confession. Our confession ought to be as public as our denial. Here is where many lose blessing. The private reconciliation should be followed by public confession. What blessing it brought to all around! What blessing would come to this church if we could follow in Peter's steps!

And does not Peter's story show what God can do with a backslider, how He can restore him and redeem him from his special weakness and besetting sins, and make him a mighty power for good. I know the saying of that is a commonplace, but only let us translate the commonplace into actual experience and there will be nothing common about it. When you think you have no future as a Christian worker because of your frequent failure to testify

the grace of God, let it inspire you to new effort to remember that the champion of Pentecost was the same who was afraid of a servant girl.

Or if your disappointment has been rather on account of lack of development of Christian character rather than of ministry, reflect on the transformation of character in Peter's case. Hold in your mind his bold confession and his subsequent cowardly denial, and his ultimate restoration, and in the light of these events, read his epistles again, and see how grace has triumphed.

And then remember that this call "and Peter" was sent forth by the risen Christ. He is still the same. Still He calls and waits to meet with us, and so to abound toward us in grace as to enable us to serve Him and grow to be like Him, and in life and in death to glorify Him. Having the resources of divine grace in view, we may say,

"I hold it true with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things."

SUNRISE AT MIDNIGHT.

A Sermon by the late Dr. W. B. Hinson.

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter."-John 13; 7.

Jesus was nearing the end. His mind was full of His approaching death. He was washing His disciples' feet, and when He came to Peter and stood before him with the basin of water and the towel that He had twisted about Himself, Peter pulled in his feet and said, "Lord, doest Thou wash my feet?", and Jesus said, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter."

There are two things in that text that I shall talk about in your hearing. The first is the asserted ignorance of the present, "What I do thou knowest not now;" and the second is the assured revelation of the future, "Thou shalt understand hereafter."

The ignorance of the present! How mystery surrounds this life we are living. The whole horizon is banked with fog; and on it there are question marks as innumerable as flakes of snow in a storm. And each one of us appears to be like a separate island surrounded by a sea of mystery. And if we cry out, we get nothing back but the echo of the cry. And if we push our little boat out on this sea, we sail fearfully and uncertainly and wonderingly. For as I have intimated, we seem to be living in a silent land. We ask the meaning of this and of that, and we listen and there comes no reply. And there are some among us who have been asking the same question over and over with every surrise and every noontide and every twilight for twenty years. And when we asked that question this morning, there was no more indication of an answer coming to us than when we asked the question first. Oh there comes to me some lines I wrote down many a year ago—

Waking one morning in a pleasant land, By a river flowing over a golden sand,

'Whence come we waters, o'er your golden sand?'
'We come flowing from a silent land.'

'And whither go ye waters o'er your golden sand?'
"We go flowing to a silent land.'

'And what is that fair world?' 'A grain of golden sand, In the great darkness of the silent land.'

The land of the great silence is the land in which we live and move and work.

And in this land no one of us understands the life that each one of us is living.

"Life I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And where, or when, or how we met,
I own to me's a secret yet."

This is what we say when we are thoughtful of that life we are living, and with which one would imagine we ought to be well acquainted. But we are not acquainted with it, for the larger the diameter of the light of knowledge that we possess, the wider is the encompassing circumference of the darkness that conceals things from us. And if life is a pilgrimage, then we are treading a winding road. And what is around the next corner no man knoweth. And we approach those corners very diffidently, and we hold our breath as we turn around them, because we do not know whether there will be a landscape of unspeakable glory, or a fire belching volcano; whether when we get around that corner we shall see the little crib, or whether we shall see the narrow coffin. And if life is a voyage, then we sail under sealed orders, and no one knows the course we have to take; but just hour by hour we open those sealed orders and find out what we must do at the present moment and under the existing circumstances.

And you know there are people who have pondered the mystery of this life until they have gone to drink and narcotics and suicide; and stronger, wiser men have studied this mystery until they have evolved philosophies of fatalism suggesting that we are like driftwood on the wave, and that we have no choice; philosophies of agnosticism, that we can know nothing at all; philosophies of atheism that there is nothing in the world that is real or that can be known. And did you ever ponder the significant fact that the largest of all the false religions of the world has been so impressed with the mystery that environs human life, that its highest utmost longing is for Nirvana, to go out of existence and know nothing at all, be lost as is a dewdrop sliding into the sea. "What I do thou knowest not now."

In my earlier ministry I perpetrated many a blunder because I thought I knew some things that I never have known; and I used to be versatile in explaining things to people, for you see I had never read and understood the book of Job. When his friend went to see him in his overwhelming trouble they sat there stlent day after day like wise men. But when they opened their mouths and began to explain things, then they became fools. Oh but I have said to many of you people, "I do not know, and I cannot tell." Why the life was cut off in the bubbling waters the other day, I do not know. Why deprivations starve the mind and the heart and the soul, I cannot tell. And in the presence of a hundred questions I am silent and for them have no reply. "What I do thou knowest not now."

"But thou shalt understand hereafter." iAh, does not that sound good? The coming years will bring revelation that explains very much. I remember Saul-like I kicked against the pricks when I was trying to acquire an education and was in such grinding poverty that I was cold and hungry three-fourths of the time. And I wanted to know why other men had got money and why I lacked it, why they were warmly clad and I shivered, why they were well fed and I was hungry. But I understand that now. We cannot go to school to-day unless we have a guarantee of money and a trunk full of clothes. No! I sometimes wish we had to do the thing as some of us did it in the bygone days. We might not be quite so sporty, but we would be a hundred times more sensible! We might not have little badges and medals that told of our prowess on the campus, but we would not be quite so empty headed! The coming years reveal the meaning of a great deal.

I planted some pansy seed last Friday, and I talked to those seeds—as I always do. And I said, "This looks bad, does it not; throwing you down in the earth, and then covering you over as if I had no care for you at all. And pretty soon Seed the pelting rail will come upon you and you will think it is Noah's flood. And then the cold nights will come and you will think you are having a lot of trouble. But do not worry and do not lose heart, for next March you will come up in the sunlight, and next April you will bud and blossom, and then people will look at your varied beautiful color and praise God, and they will inhale your perfume and feel thankful, and your little face-like

blossoms will remind them of their children who went to heaven in the by-gone

days. You will know hereafter."

And then Friday afternoon I buried another kind of seed—for I buried a body. And I put the body down under the ground and I said, "Do not be frightened. It looks strange—it does not look right—I grant it. But there is a day coming when a great noise will go rumbling over all the earth, and every sleeping Christian will hear that noise and recognize it, and come out in incorruptibility, in immortality, in power, in glory. Thou shalt know hereafter."

But this is the only way we can know very many things, even by the passing of time and the progress of the years. I do not know what put a strange fancy in my head yesterday, but I caught myself thinking about my mother's wedding ring. It is down under four feet of earth in an English graveyard. I think it occupies a very honourable position. For it is still on the finger of my mother. It is down there the pledge of a vow kept, in spite of circumstances strenuous and difficult. But how did that gold get there? Well there was the shock of the blast, and out it went into the sunlight. And then it was pulverized in the mill and separated from the quartz, and then burned in the fire, and hammered into shape; and thus it came into its honourable position on my mother's finger; but it did not know of this glory at the time. "Thou shalt know hereafter."

"We'll know why clouds instead of sun Hung over many a cherished plan; Why song has ceased ere scarce begun, Not now, but then we'll understand."

Sometimes after I have climbed a hill and looked back on the road travelled I have seen the reason for all the turning and twisting of that road. It turned this way to avoid a pitfall, and then it turned a little farther on to reveal a beautiful landscape. I did not know why the thing was so crooked as I progressed upon it; but when I reached the hilltop and looked back, I could see the meaning of all that devious travelling I had to do. I guess Abel now knows why Cain was permitted to slay him! And then I thought of Joseph who had the flashy coat that excited the envy and hostility of his brethren so that they wanted to kill him. But one brother persuaded them to put him in a pit where he might die of starvation, but from thence, he was sold into slavery and through Potiphar's house passed into jail. And that must have looked very strange to Joseph because he was a good man. But we know the pit, the slavery, Potiphar's house, and the jail, were all necessary to his becoming the third ruler of the kingdom and sitting on a golden throne. And when Joseph got upon the throne he would understand the meaning of that which had been so mysterious before.

Are you getting any comfort out of this, my people? I am. For I have been God's oak, I have not been His orchid, and I have felt the swish of the hail, been drenched with the rain, stung by the frost, burned by the heat, and sometimes I have said, "God do you know what you are about?" But I have come to see that you cannot have an oak without exposure in the open. For you never saw an oak tree grown under glass. And who would not prefer to be an oak to being an orchid? I recall how in my old church I was asked to go and see a sick woman. And when I entered the room on that Sunday afternoon, she suddenly had a spasm of pain. And never but once in my life have I seen a human countenance so contorted with agony. And I stood there silent like a fool, for I could not think of a word to say. And that woman was twisting in the convulsions of pain. But when after a while it subsided a little and I found my tongue, I said, "My sister, I do not know why you suffer so; and you do not know; and nobody knows. But God knows; and some day God will explain it to you, and then you also will know and be quite content." And I walked out. And when I came to myself on the street, I said, "You are a pretty preacher, are you not? You went there to see a woman who is going to die. You read her no Scripture, prayed no prayer, and here you are going home. The best thing you can do is to go farming and quit preaching." But three days after when that same member came to me and said, "Would you"

bury the woman you visited last Sunday?" I answered, "Yes." And she said, "I want to tell you something before you go down to the undertaking room. After you left, that woman looked up and said, "Thank God for that man, for he told me I did not know, and I have been trying to find out the reason; and he told me God knows, and God will some day tell me why I had that cancer and why I am dying in this awful pain.' And she said, 'I can trust God now, and I can die in peace, for I am going to heaven'." "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Oh I do not know, and I never will say I do when I do not. And I do not understand, and I cannot see why God has let some things happen to me, and I do not know that there was any reason why they should happen. They did not happen to me because I was worse than other people, for I was not; and I would so say if I saw the judgment throne in front of me. And I did not bring them down upon myself, but they came, and I do not know why. I know the meaning of a good many things that have happened to me, but I do not know the meaning of all the things that have happened. And I have got where I do not want to know. For if I had known in January what would come intomy life during this year I should have died of shock. But I did not know. I am glad I did not, and I do not know what will come into my life next week, and if God said, "There is the scroll of your life, do you want to read it?", I would say, "God, I would rather go blind than read it. I do not want to see it." But I am glad Jesus Christ knows. I should be a very sad man this morning if I thought Christ was as ignorant of my future as am I. For He knows where in the darkness I shall go up against the big boulder, and just before I get up to it He will say, "Better turn to the right," and so I shall miss it. And He knows where the venomous snake is in my pathway, and just before I put my foot upon it and might receive the poisonous fang, He will say, "Stop a minute," and the snake will get out of my way! Nothing is going to surprise Him. He knows, and He is going to tell me some day.

But I am not so glad of that as I used to be. For I used to get a tremendous lot of comfort out of God saying, You sit on that chair and I will tell you why you were disappointed, lonely, and so miserable. Yes, I used to get so much comfort out of that. But now I do not want to sit down on any chair and have God explain Himself to me, for I am willing for Him to do as He likes with me, and give no explanation at all. And therefore I am the more sure He will give me the explanation. Oh I am not going up to God to say, "Now you explain yourself," but I am going up to God to say, "Any revelation you have to make to me will be very acceptable, because it is a revelation from God to man, and from my Father to me; but you need not say a single word unless you want to." I have got there now. I like however to think that those who have gone ahead of me know such a lot they did not know before; though I do not think God takes them one by one and explains things to them, but I think they walk into a larger light and in that larger light they see the meaning of their tears, and the reason for their pain. "Thou shalt know hereafter."

"Not now but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears
Sometime, up there, we'll understand."

Shall I now tell you what I know? I know the attributes of God. I know God is infinite in power, and I know if God liked He could make as many mountains like Mount Hood before I finish this sentence as there are stars in the sky; and I know if God saw fit he could dry up the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans before I draw another breath. He has infinite power. And I know He has infinite wisdom. I know He can never make a mistake, I know He never did, and never will. And so my life is being shaped by infinite power and infinite wisdom. I know that.

But I know a better thing yet. For I know God's character. I should be afraid of a God who had nothing but infinite power and infinite wisdom, but I know the character of God and I know He is love. And the God who is love, and who possesses infinite power and infinite wisdom, is taking care of me.

If He sees fit to lead me down into the dark places, that is the very best thing that can happen to me. If He sees fit to have me make my bed in graveyards of lost hopes and lost illusions, that is the best thing He can do for me.

But I know the best thing of all, for I know God in Jesus Christ; and I can trust Jesus Christ with my soul; and I can look up off the operating table at Christ and say, "I have not a doubt, or a fear, or a tremor, for I know it is all right because I know you." Ah yes, I do know Him! For I know Christ, and I know God in Christ; and I know no evil can ever come to me from Christ who is God and the God who is Christ, on ocean or on shore. "Thou shalt know hereafter."

"I know not if the dark or bright Shall be my lot; If that on which my hope's delight Be best or not.

It may be mine to drag for years
Toil's heavy chain;
Or day or night my meat be tears
On bed of pain.

Dear faces may surround my hearth With smiles and glee; Or I may dwell alone and mirth Be strange to me.

My bark is wafted to the strand By breath divine; And on the helm there rests a hand Other than mine."

So I come to you this morning with this message that is seething hot out of my heart in order that you may learn to trust. Do not speculate too much. There has nothing good come of it so far as my experience goes. Do not try to understand before God gives the explanation. It is a waste of time and labour. Just learn to trust. That is why religion is so difficult to some people. For it is not natural to us. I remember when my children were small and I was away from home, I used to think that if I could only get home, they could be saved by me if the house got on fire, or if a burglar entered, or if a deadly disease struck them. And it took me a long time before I could trust in God. Oh this great fog bank of mystery surrounds us. And God help us if we are depending on the answers we get from the world to our poor questions. But you know if, as we sail over this mysterious sea with all this implinging darkness, we had just learned to say—

"One who has known in storms to sail,
I have on board,
Above the roaring of the gale
I hear the Lord"—

we should not care a bit about the mist; we should not care about the depth of the sea, or about the fury of the hurricane. Yes, I do not know what is around that next turn in this winding trail of life; but I know this, whatever there is around that corner, I shall have my hand in another hand when I go and face it. And if I feel a little bit disturbed, I shall move my finger around in the palm of that hand till I find the scar, and then I shall know that Jesus Christ, who on the cross was wounded for my sins, is not going to leave me, no matter what corner I go around on the winding road of life.

Now this is not philosophy. For the philosophies of the world would laugh at it. And this is not poetry. But this is prose done up in a drab colour. Yet this is faith, trust, belief. It is saying the Breton prayer with a little addition—

"God, have pity on me, Thy sea is so big, And my boat is so small." What is the addition to this? Ah, this—"But I have got Christ on board this little boat, and I shall not drown till He does; and so whatever wreckage comes to me will come to Him."

"Safe to the land, safe to the land, The end is this, And then with Him go hand in hand Far into bliss."

O people get so identified with Jesus Christ that His loss is your loss, and His gain your gain; your pain His pain and your problem for His solution. Now if anybody were to ask me why I have preached this sermon, I should have to say I do not know. And if anybody should ask me what result I expect from this sermon, I should still say I do not know. I thought it out in faith; I stood up to preach it in faith; I have preached it in faith. But if any woman goes back to her home to-day saying, "I can trust and not be afraid;" and if any man can pick up the burden of life again saying, "I can bear it and stand up under it," then all the pain I felt last week in thinking out the sermon, and all the pain I have suffered while preaching it will not have been in vain. Men, you cannot understand it now and here. Sometimes I look this church and congregation over when I am alone, and I pray for this one, and the other one, and the next one because I know you cannot understand your life. And women, to whom I give less attention than I do the men, you cannot understand your life. It is a problem that will drive you mad if you persist in trying to find it out. But just trust! Be the world's fool and God's wise man and wise woman, and hear Him say to you very often, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION MEETING IN HAMILTON.

A fine meeting under the auspices of the Niagara-Hamilton Branch of the Baptist Bible Union was held in the Gospel Tabernacle, Hamilton, Thursday evening, July 8th. There was a large attendance especially when it is remembered it was July. The speakers were Rev. Sydney Lawrence, of Freelton; Pastor W. S. Whitcombe, of Second Markham Church; Revs. J. G. Connor and C. J. Loney, of Hamilton; W. M. Robertson, of Liverpool, England; and the Editor of this paper.

Mr. Lawrence was Chairman, as President of that Union. He told a very touching story of how a member of his own family had been turned from the faith of Christ through the influence of McMaster. Mr. Whitcombe told what he knew of Professor Marshall's teaching from having sat in his classes from the beginning of the Professor's work in McMaster. Rev. J. G. Connor had attended the summer session of McMaster University, and declared that even there, when Professor Marshall was under such strict observation, his teaching was unsound. Of Mr. Connor's reference to Dean Farmer we speak more directly in another article.

Rev. W. M. Robertson lifted the audience to the heights in a brief but thrilling message based on the text, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." We venture to believe there was not one in that audience who heard Mr. Robertson who believed that such a man could be "obscure" in any city in the world. It was a great meeting all the way through.

Three large bus loads went to Hamilton from Toronto.

THE ALTON BAPTIST CHURCH BUILDING FUND.

Last week we published an article entitled, "A Modern Miracle", reciting the wonderful work of grace accomplished in Alton, Ontario, under the ministry of Pastor James McGinlay. We refer our readers to that article again. We offered to receive contributions for the Alton Building Fund, and they have already begun to come in. The amount is not large as yet, being something less than \$200.00. We are grateful to those who have responded, and hope to hear from hundreds more. Don't put it off—send us your contribution to-day.

Editorial.

THE GLORY AND SHAME OF THE MINISTRY.

The Bible is ever abreast of the most advanced thought and of the most forward movement. It is the word of the Author of the nature of things, and is itself a light which illumines such darkness as the sun cannot penetrate, and searches with its piercing ray even the innermost and blackest recesses of the maze of human nature. Its most ancient pages are replete with historical incidents, which, in the warp and woof of the human material of which they are composed, are as modern as the report of the last meeting of a Baptist convention.

A most instructive piece of history is contained in the second chapter of the first book of Samuel. Families, like individuals, grow old, and degenerate. Governments, when too long in office, become decrepit, and the prey of every self-seeking human parasite. Human history is a record of decaying systems. This tendency finds many an illustration in degenerating organizations and institutions of our day. That which is often named "progress", in reality is progress toward disintegration and decay.

The family of Eli was a decaying family. Of ancient origin, and possessors of high privileges, the members of this priestly family had sacrificed God to their own lusts: "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

Following this pronouncement the Lord predicted that Eli's house should pass, and He would establish for Himself a faithful priest who should be a minister of spiritual things in his stead; and respecting that faithful minister God said, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

But what has this bit of ancient history to do with us? The Priest Whose coming is predicted can be none other than Christ. Believers are a spiritual priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. As Christ combined in Himself the offices of Prophet and Priest, so believers are priests and prophets, too. We are not of those who hold that the minister of a New Testament church is merely one of the congregation selected by his brethren to be their minister. On this point some of our friends may disagree with us, but we believe the New Testament teaches that the ministry of the church is divinely ordained. The Old Testament priests were not more certainly divinely-commissioned than the New Testament pastor. To the elders of Ephesus Paul said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

A true pastor is an "overseer", and he is made so, not by any theological college, or settlement committee, but by the Holy Ghost. What an exalted position the true pastor occupies! Baptists have too often degraded the min-

istry. Some modern Baptist churches do not allow their pastor even to be chairman of their meetings, but appoint a moderator and vice-moderator, to superintend the church independently of the pastor. It would be difficult more emphatically to declare their view that their minister is only an hireling. But the divinely-called and commissioned preacher will have none of this. He is the King's ambassador, an overseer of the Holy Ghost's appointment, whose business is to feed the Lord's sheep. We believe that if ministers will recognize the Headship of Christ, and see in Him the One Who walks amid the candlesticks, they may be independent of all human ecclesiastics. The Lord will not forsake His true servants. If they will put Him first He will not suffer them to be ashamed. The world needs preachers who will be God's mouthpieces; and when preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power the gospel of God's grace is the power of God unto salvation still.

It is a sad story the Scripture to which we have referred tells of Eil's declining house; it is sadly suggestive of a decaying ministry so generally witnessed to-day. How pathetic the divine complaint, "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?" Eli is charged with honouring his sons above God, and they with making themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel, God's people. The priesthood had become a mere means of livelihood. What else may be said of a large part of the ministry of our day? We know of one pastor whose wife said to him as he was about to leave for the meeting of the Convention of Ontario and Quebec, "Now, remember you have a wife and children to support"! Such men cast about them to see which way the wind blows, they study the roads to see which one leads to preferment and prominence.

We will not insult the intelligence of some Baptist ministers of Ontario and Quebec by believing that they do not know beyond all peradventure that Frofessor Marshall's message is not the gospel of Christ, and that McMaster is drifting into the educational tide of Modernism. They know it—but do they care? We believe they do. But there are men in some of their churches who want an easy-going religion; and some of these pastors fear that when they reach the end of their tether in their present church, unless they take McMaster's side, the hierarchy will lock and double-bar the door of every church against them. We would not censure such ministers unfairly: ministers are only men, and a Baptist minister out of a church is the most helpless creature on earth.

Nor are these ministers mistaken when they believe that McMaster would endeavour to prevent any other church from calling them if they take sides against her. The Home Mission Board resolution is proof of the "spirit" of the thing we are fighting in this Convention. But is it not a shame—a crying shame—that a minister of the gospel should be subject to such ruthless powers? What was the recent Summer Conference at McMaster University but an attempt to bribe men into submission? If a man finds himself one of many guests in another's house, and a fellow-guest should propose a vote of thanks to the host, what can he do but vote for it? We do not suggest that the ministers who attended this Conference had any consciousness of accepting bribe, but that that was the intention of the session no one can doubt. Someone will object that there have been other sessions at times when there was no special issue before the Denomination—that is quite true; but we have heard these Conferences discussed officially on more than one occasion, and their object was always stated to be to enlist the co-operation of pastors in the work of the University. Such benefit as pastors might derive was only incidental to the main purpose. This sort of thing drags the ministry down to the level of the priesthood in Eli's day.

We are confident that the men who will take a firm stand on these matters on New Testament ground, can afford to be entirely independent of such mercenary considerations; but the ministry that so lowers itself as to become subject to such influences is bound to be ultimately discredited. It was in this very connection, and in this chapter from which we have quoted, the Lord said, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." On the other hand, a true minister has nothing to fear:

"I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever." In contrast with a ministry thus divinely established, the remnant of this time-serving priestly house is thus described: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." It seems to us the ministry in some quarters has descended almost to this level already—"Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

REV. W. M. ROBERTSON.

Last Sunday was a great and glorious day in Jarvis Street. There were great congregations, and morning and evening the place was filled with the presence of the Lord. Toronto heard Rev. W. M. Robertson, of Toxteth Tabernacle, Liverpool, for the first time. This is the man whose letters precipitated the McMaster-Marshall controversy! This is the man whom Professor Marshall described as "an obscure Baptist minister who counts for absolutely nothing in the Baptist denomination in England"! This is the man whom Rev. W. S. Edgar of Gilmour Memorial Church, endeavoured to belittle in the same way!

The writer of this article has been Pastor of Jarvis Street Church for more than sixteen years. During that time he has had the privilege of having in his pulpit many men who are ranked among the world's greatest preachers: within that period Jarvis Street pulpit has been occupied by such men as Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury; John Clifford; Russell H. Conwell; the world-famous John McNeill (John McNeill of Scotland); R. S. McArthur, and many others of equal or even greater calibre than these, who, in these days, are known as "fundamentalists". But we believe Jarvis Street never heard greater preaching than on Sunday last. Mr. Robertson is a mighty prophet of God. He is an expositor of the Word; his diction is chaste, his thought profound, his logic convincing, his persuasiveness irresistible, his voice and manner delightful in the extreme. We half him as a mighty prophet who has come to the kingdom for such a time as this. But Mr. Robertson's chief charm is his modesty, his child-like simplicity, his absolute sincerity. He is obviously set for the defense of the gospel, and has no other end to serve than the cause of truth, and to glorify Christ.

Sunday morning Mr. Robertson preached from, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." It was a perfect contrast to the sermon from the first part of the same text preached by Professor Marshall in the Central Baptist Church last Christmas time. Professor Marshall, of course, ignored the principle of the virgin birth, and had nothing to say about Christ's having come to redeem them that were under the law. Mr. Robertson's subject was, "Born to Bleed." It was a strong exposition of the principle and purpose of the Incarnation. In the evening Mr. Robertson preached on, "Heaven's Hallelujah Chorus"— "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." On this occasion the infinite love of God was represented as displayed through the Cross, and the background of that great tragedy was the awful fact of human sin; while the reason for the Atonement and the whole scheme of redemption was found not in man but in God Himself -not only in His love, but in His justice and His truth, or in one word, in His infinite holiness.

The great audience was obviously thrilled with the message, and when the invitation was given a large number came forward confessing Christ.

Mr. Robertson's ministry on Sunday was attended with such blessing that there and then we decided that if possible we must have him for the whole month of August. To this proposal the congregation unanimously agreed, and Mr. Robertson accepted our invitation. The present programme therefore is that Mr. Robertson will conduct a great evangelistic campaign in Jarvis Street

throughout the month of August, and we are confident there will be showers of blessing.

At the close of the evening service we held our first open-air meeting at the rear of the church next the Park. The Pastor preached, and there was an enormous gathering. We are changing the location of the out-of-door platform so as to make more room and avoid any obstruction of the street.

DEAN FARMER ON THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

One of the most startling statements we have heard for some time was made by Rev. J. G. Connor in his address at the Baptist Bible Union meeting in Hamilton. He told us of a conversation he had had in Hamilton with Dr. Farmer, in which some of the leading American Baptist preachers had been discussed, among whom Dr. Fosdick had been mentioned, when Dr. Farmer declared that he liked Dr. Fosdick's "spirit". This, of course, was not new, for we have ourselves heard Dr. Farmer say the same thing. Mr. Connor told us that Dr. Farmer said to him,

"I would rather have a man who does not believe in the virgin birth of Christ and does not use tobacco, than a man who does believe in the virgin birth of Christ and does use tobacco"!

We hold no brief for men who use tobacco, and we are inclined to the opinion that it is at least a "weight" which Christian men might profitably lay aside; but we remember the apostolic injunction, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink"; and that it is written, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." But Dr. Farmer sets this incidental and external matter of using tobacco over against a great fundamental truth respecting the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The denial of the Virgin Birth involves inevitably the denial of the Deity of Christ—indeed, it involves the denial of the authority of Scripture, and, by implication, invalidates every doctrine of the Scripture. But Dr. Farmer apparently believes the use of tobacco is a deadlier sin than the repudiation of the inspired Word of God; for surely no one can deny that the Scriptures teach that Christ was virgin-born, therefore the rejection of that truth involves the rejection of the Scriptures which teach it.

We remember that our Lord Himself said something about a man's being defiled, not by what goes into him but by what comes out of him: it is with the heart man believes, or refuses to believe. Apparently Dr. Farmer regards an evil heart of unbelief as a lesser evil than a smoking pipe. We shall have more to say about this later. We only hope Dr. Farmer will not forget having said it. We are informed that Mr. Connor is not the only one to whom this remark, in substance, has been made; and some things may be established in the mouth of two witnesses. Whatever opinions man may hold about the tobacco habit, for one to regard it as meriting greater condemnation than the unbelief which denies the Deity of Christ, betrays an attitude of mind toward the great verities of the gospel of Christ that is alarming, especially when it is remembered that the author of this opinion is Dean of the Theological Department in a "Christian" university.

Dr. Farmer claims friendship and fellowship with many of our Southern Baptist leaders. We have observed that pipes and cigars are not altogether unknown to Baptist circles in the South. We hope some of our Southern papers will publish this article, for if Dr. Farmer is correct, some of our great orthodox Southern Baptists are greater heretics and more deserving of Baptist repudiation than Fosdick or many other modernists.

It is our own opinion that Dr. Farmer's remark would be positively silly if it were not vicious. Does the use of tobacco usually accompany belief in the Virgin Birth? or when men get so modern as to reject the Virgin Birth, do they usually put away their pipes? Why link the two together at all? The only effect of such a remark is to belittle the value of doctrinal conviction. We only wish the proof that Dr. Farmer made this remark were not so incontrovertible: as we write we have before us the signed statement of Rev. J. G. Connor that Dr. Farmer made this remark to him personally.

THE HOME MISSION BOARD RESOLUTION.

It is contended in some quarters that the Home Mission Board resolution will not be enforced by the Board! Let us examine this contention: Such a resolution as this has somewhat the force of a law. It is true that many laws are put upon the statute books that are never enforced; but with decent people, and with all but the lawless, a law enforces itself. The newspapers tell of a few people brought into the police court for infractions of the law; but they say nothing about the tens of thousands of whom no penalty is ever exacted, for the simple and sufficient reason that by them the law is obeyed. The Home Mission Board expressed a desire that Home Mission pastors should refrain from any discussion of the preent controversy, and we have no doubt that the overwhelming majority of Home Mission pastors, in deference to the Board's request, will do as they have been told. Thus the Home Mission churches will be deprived of the advantages which must follow the discussion of these great issues.

THE WAY OF THE CANADIAN BAPTIST.

Our denominational organ week by week breathes the spirit from which we may well pray to be delivered. It has apparently sent truth and honour upon a long vacation. For an utter disregard of fact, and a shameless perversion of what is written in other journals, we sincerely hope our contemporary has no equal in the world. Howbeit, God is not mocked: whatsoever a man, or a denominational paper, sows, that shall he or it surely reap.

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

VOL. 1. T. T. SHIELDS, D.D., Editor, Toronto, Ontario, Canada No. 4.

Lesson 6. THIRD QUARTER. August 8th, 1926.

Application for entry as second-class matter is pending.

THE FIRST MIRACLE.

LESSON TEXT: John, chapter 2.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him" (John 2: 11).

II. THE MARRIAGE AND FIRST MIRACLE AT CANA.

1. Jesus was invited to the marriage and accepted the invitation: thus (1) He sanctified marriage by His presence, (2) set an example, and offered encouragement. He ought to be at every marriage, otherwise happiness will be impossible. 2. It is not unusual for there to be a shortage at a marriage and after. He is sorely needed always; and He delights to be a family friend. 3. Jesus did not accord pre-eminence to Mary: He said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee"? 4. But Mary accorded the pre-eminence to Christ. "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it". 5. How true it is that it is the way of the world, the flesh, and the devil, to offer the best fare in the beginning, to put the best goods in the shop window, the best fruit on top of the basket, the merry jingle of the thirty pieces of silver. But when men have well drunk there follows always that which is worse. 6. Where Jesus provides the entertainment it continually improves in quality. poorest fare He offers is always better than the world's best. "The pa "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day". 7. Our Lord provides the better fare by strange and miraculous ways. He makes wine of water intended for purification. Whence are these jars filled? One from the brackish waters of poverty, one from the turgid stream of trouble, one from the stagnant pool of monotony, one from the raging cataract of strife, one from the sobbing waters of bereavement, and one from the deep, dark well of pain. And from these water pots of stone present in a human life for purposes of purifying, our Sovereign Saviour and Sanctifier

"Who shall separate us from the love of draws forth the choicest wine. Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?? 8. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory". "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby".

II. THE JESUS OF THE TEMPLE IN CONTRAST WITH JESUS OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST-Vss. 13-17.

1. A house of worship may become a house of merchandise. This is true of the human heart, which was intended as a temple of the Holy Ghost. This may be true also of a Christian church, and of a Christian denomination. 2. Making a whip of cords, Christ drove them out in anger. Holiness, and truth, and love, do not mean mere sentimentality and moral weakness. We need the whip of cords to day; and if we yield ourselves to His Word, He will cleanse the temple as of yore. 3. Scripture was understood by the disciples in the light of the character and work of Jesus. They remembered that it was written, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up". Thus Christ lights up the whole Bible, even as He is the Light of the New Jerusalem.

111. THE OBTUSENESS OF THE CARNAL MIND—Vss. 18_21.1. They could not see the Antitype in the type. The Temple was typical of all that Christ was, and of all that He came to be and do. But His hearers were without spiritual discernment, which enabled them to understand His speech. 2. They came, however, to understand the sayings of Jesus in the light of their own fulfilment (vs. 22). There is a principle here which may guide us in the interpretation of the prophetic Word. While the great principles of Scripture are intended for present application, the ultimate meaning of many a prophecy will be understood only in the light of its own fulfilment, and by that means believers will be confirmed and established in the faith.

IV. THE MUTUALITY OF FAITH-Vss. 23-25.

1. Many believed on Christ because they saw the miracles, and yet it would appear that theirs was only a partial trust. Thus it is possible to yield a mental acquiescence to the truth without a real heart surrender to Him who is the truth. 2. Such faith as was here exercised in Christ did not justify a mutual trust. Jesus did not commit Himself, or trust Himself to them. We speak much of trusting Christ. How far can He, trust us? Think through the Scriptures of the number of people whom God trusted: Abraham, Moses, and many others will occur to the mind. Can God commit His honor to us? Can we be trusted to take care of His Name? 3. The reason Christ did not trust Himself to these professed believers was "because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew that was in man". Knowing what was in man, He knew that it was evil and not good. 4. In contrast with this, it may be observed that in the measure in which we know Christ we shall be able to trust Him. "They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee".

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

One Dollar per year to all new subscribers during 1926. (Regular subscription, \$2.00 per year). This paper contains weekly a sermon by the Editor, an exposition of the Whole Bible Sunday School Course, and Editorial matter dealing especially with the battle between Fundamentalism and Modernism. (\$1.50 in Toronto).

SPECIAL OFFER.

A Volume of Sermons by Dr. Shields entitled "The Adventures of a Modern Young Man." being a series of eight sermons on Luke 15, The Prodigal and his Brother, will be sent with The Gospel Witness for one year for One Dollar and a Half.

Send your subscription to:

THE GOSPEL WITNESS - 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto 2, Canada.