

McMaster's "Exclusive" Policy

Page Eight

The Gospel Witness

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T. T. SHIELDS, *Editor.*

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE WAY HOME.

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, May 22nd, 1927.

(Stenographically Reported.)

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

"Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

"For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

"Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule; which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

"Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about."—Psalm 32.



OMEWHERE I have read that a temperature of sixty-four or sixty-five degrees may, for some people, be a dangerous temperature: it is not cold enough to cause one to bestir himself, and it is not warm enough to be perfectly safe—it is a kind of temperature which gives many people what we call a "cold", la grippe, influenza, and a great many other ailments. When the house becomes very cold you immediately inspect the furnace; if it is very warm you open the windows and let in the fresh air; but if it is lukewarm, a little bit below being quite comfortable, you may find yourself indisposed, and scarcely know how you caught the cold.

Likewise there is a religious temperature that is dangerous. When one is really cold in his love toward Christ, when he has abandoned even his profession, it is sometimes possible to approach him and tell him that he is bringing reproach upon the Name which he once professed; you may treat him as a backslider, and earnestly expostulate with him, and exhort him to return to the

Lord. But when a man is lukewarm, you find him at the church frequently—perhaps not quite as regularly as formerly; you find him, possibly, discharging his religious duties, teaching a Sunday School class, or engaged in some other form of religious service—doing it in a perfunctory fashion, but doing it, without the Spirit, without the accompaniment of spiritual power, or of spiritual results.

Much attention is given in some quarters to a "preventive" ministry in medicine. I have been told that in Japan physicians are paid, not so much to cure disease as to keep people well, to guard their health, and to instruct them in right ways of living. And I think it is necessary that a pastor should exercise such a ministry. Sometimes, especially when certain spiritual ills are epidemic, we need to exercise the greatest care to keep ourselves in good spiritual health, lest we fall a prey to the prevailing ills. So it seemed to me it might be profitable for us to study a little while this morning the experience of one who was a backslider in heart, but whose sin was not openly known. The Apostle Paul brings this Psalm into the New Testament, and teaches us the great fundamental principle of the gospel of Christ, namely, justification by faith, which is plainly set forth in this Psalm.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven". That is an exceedingly important matter, that there should be for us no "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." It is a blessed thing to know that all our debts are paid, that our transgressions are forgiven, and that we have no reason to fear a coming judgment. That is one of the elements of a Christian's happiness: when the prospect before him is perfectly clear, he sees no day of terror then; his sins have been laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ; an adequate atonement has been made; the price has been paid to the uttermost farthing; the Just has died for the unjust "that he might bring us to God"; and our sins are forgiven. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven."

Are you sure of that? Is there any question in your mind about it? If there is such a question, it is bound to disturb your peace, to mar your happiness, to impair the completeness of your joy. You may, perhaps, for a time succeed in crowding out of your recollection the terrible future that is awaiting the unjust, but some time or another it will assert itself, and will demand consideration; and when it does there can be no peace to the wicked. Therefore, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven."

But there is a distinction between the forgiveness of sin and the covering of sin. It is one thing to escape the consequences of sin—it is another thing to be justified, and to be delivered, ultimately, even from a sense of guilt; it is a blessed thing to know that there are no prison gates yawning for us—it is a still better thing to be assured that we are not "ticket-of-leave" men; we are not prisoners on parole, but that our sins have been covered. I know there is a theory abroad that is akin to the suggestion of the Cornishman, that God might "do a generous thing and forgive a fellow." But even if He did forgive us, if He did not cover our sins, there would be no happiness in the future. When the blind man came to Christ, and He asked him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?", he did not say, "Save me from death", but said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." His correspondence was limited, he felt there was a larger life beyond, to which, if sight were given, he would be introduced, and he desired to have life in its fulness, in its completeness. The leper said, not, "Lord if Thou wilt Thou canst stay the progress of disease and deliver me from death", but rather, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean"—he loathed himself, he wanted to be delivered from that self-loathing, from the disease itself, to be made clean, and to enjoy the consciousness of cleansing.

And what if God—if it be lawful even to think such a thought—what if God should forgive our sins without covering them, who of us could ever be comfortable in His presence? We shall not walk the golden streets as prisoners on parole, we shall not appear in the Divine Presence as those who have barely escaped hell; we shall be there as those who have a right to be there, we shall be there as those who are one with Him Who sits upon the throne. We shall be there as those who share His nature, who have been made "partakers of the divine nature", whose sin has been so effectually dealt with that it has been utterly removed, and completely covered.

Do you know what it is to go into the presence of God when the Sacrifice of Calvary is so real, and the blood of Jesus Christ so efficacious, and the righteousness of Christ so unmistakably imputed, that you consciously stand before God as though you had never sinned? hearing Him say, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee"? "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven"—blessed is he who has no reason to fear the resurrection of his past, no reason to dread the future; but more blessed is he who is so clothed with the righteousness of Christ that his sin, even to God's omnivident gaze, is completely covered. There is one thing, and one thing only, through which God Himself cannot see: "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"—the blood of Jesus Christ covers our sin so that God does not even see it.

I know of no more striking illustration of the principle of justification than the famous Captain Dreyfus case of some years ago. Dreyfus was a French Jew, one whom they said had betrayed his country. He was a captain in the French army, and was accused of having sold certain military secrets to a foreign power. The power with whom he was supposed to be in negotiation was Germany, and we can well imagine the attitude of Frenchmen toward any man who would betray his country to Germany. Dreyfus was tried by court marshal and found guilty. His regiment was paraded, and Dreyfus was brought before his comrades, and in their presence all the marks of rank were stripped from his uniform, his sword was taken from its scabbard and broken in pieces and thrown at his feet—he was thus disgraced before his fellow-soldiers. Then, by sentence of the court, he was exiled to Devil's Island. But there were some in France who believed that injustice had been done, and after some years, under the leadership, mainly of Zola the novelist, a movement was inaugurated which resulted in a re-trial of Captain Dreyfus. Notwithstanding, for the honour of the army he was a second time found guilty, but the next day the President pardoned him. Captain Dreyfus said, "You may have your pardon, sir. It is not pardon I want, it is justification. I am not a traitor". I suppose he may have said in his heart, "I would rather live in Devil's Island all my life than live in Paris and be esteemed a traitor. Paris is not Paris to me while all my fellow-countrymen point the finger of scorn at me and say, 'He betrayed his country'." Nothing short of complete justification would satisfy, and ultimately the case was re-opened, and Dreyfus was declared, "Not guilty". And there was another great day when his regiment was paraded again, and he appeared before them: the marks of rank which had been so ruthlessly torn from him were restored, his sword was given back to him, and he became a commissioned officer of the French army, again enjoying the confidence and respect of his government, and of all his fellow-citizens, a completely justified man.

Oh, my brethren, this is the wonder of grace—Dreyfus was innocent—that you and I who were guilty should not only be forgiven, but that our sins should be covered at the same time. Only God Himself could provide a salvation like that; only He could find a way whereby He could "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Our sins may be forgiven and covered, and we can come into His presence now with confidence because we stand in Christ, and He has put into our hearts His Spirit, teaching us to cry "Abba, Father". We are now His children, children of God, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Are you glad that we have a salvation like that? I look forward to the day when we shall live in the presence of God, in complete forgetfulness of our sins, or only as we remember them in Him Who is the "Lamb as it had been slain". Everlastingly shall we praise His name, because He took our sins upon Him. It is the privilege of the believer thus to come into the presence of God. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Is there anything this side of heaven quite equal to that—to be before God, and to know that He does not impute iniquity to us, but, instead, imputes the righteousness of Christ? There is nothing more delightful than to know that before Him we can be perfectly sincere in the prayer, "O Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips."

David had had that experience, and I think the rest of the Psalm is a com-

mentary upon these opening verses. "Oh, the joy of it," he says, "the supreme blessedness of it! But—

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His Word?

"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed—
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill."

The Psalm tells us about the aching void: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." "When I kept silence—nobody knows it, I will not tell anyone about it, I will not make a clean breast of it to God; but just keep silence, forget it." And perhaps he succeeded in forgetting it—but something came upon him, and his bones grew old suddenly.

I have seen a young man of twenty-five become old over night, I really have! I used to have a man in this church who counted the day ill spent that did not give him four or five religious services. Early in the morning he was out at some mission teaching the boys and girls about the Lord Jesus; he was always at church in the morning; then at Sunday School in the afternoon; and, if possible, a street meeting—two or three meetings, if he could crowd them in, at night; the day was full of work for God. He was looked upon as one of the greatest personal workers in this city, always about the Master's business. I knew him a little later—when he was still a young man—and he had two or three motor cars, a chauffeur to drive him, and he was able to drive himself—yet, poor fellow, he could hardly get into the car! One service was all that he could possibly endure—poor old man! His "bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long."

Yes, there are a good many "roaring" Christians. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." There are a great many people who are groaning all the time. They never have a hallelujah, are never able to praise the Lord—they are young in years, but their bones wax old through their roaring all the day long. When asked to do a piece of work, they say, "I am so sorry, Pastor, but I have to look after my health"! Why, there are some young people who are almost dying for want of exercise. Shame on you, looking after your health—eighty years old, and only twenty-one! And that applies to the women, too. Whenever you see that spiritual declension, that putting off of duty, when you find the service of God irksome, while there may be no open sin, something is wrong. You say, "Mrs. So-and-So is a most excellent lady", or, "Mr. So-and-So is a most exemplary character", or, "They all say that So-and-So is a fine character"—yes, but he is keeping silent about something; and while he is silent, he is getting older. We are to put off the old man and put on the new; and somehow or another the man who is always putting on the new man grows younger the older he gets; whether he is eighty or ninety, it is his great sorrow that he cannot fly for the Lord. But a young man or a young woman who is not growing up into Christ in all things, who does not put on the new man, but instead puts on the old, is a cause for alarm. And you can put on the old man very fast—and all the bobbing of your hair, and powdering, and all the rest of it will not cover up that old man, let me tell you! "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long."

Have you a kind of spiritual rheumatism about you, aches and pains? With some people age shows itself in another way—they simply cannot get their hands into their pockets: they cannot give to missions, they cannot give to anything; they are getting so old they have got to lay up something for a rainy day! There are some people I know who might reasonably be expected to spend the rest of their lives in Manchester—where it rains nine days a week! They are always laying up for a rainy day; you would think they never expected to see any more sunshine all the rest of their lives! "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night, thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."

The modern pulpit has almost forgotten the doctrine of divine providence. A few years ago I was down in Indiana where there had been a terrific cyclone, and I preached a sermon on my return on the subject, "Does God Control Earthquakes and Tornados?" Later someone sent me a copy of *The Christian World*, of London, with an editorial on this sermon entitled "Fundamentalism gone mad." It is assumed to be perfectly preposterous in this late day to suppose that God had anything to do with earthquakes or cyclones. God is crowded out of His universe, He is a Force. He is Something to whom we cannot pray; He is not the personal, transcendent, God. Let me tell you He is a personal God in respect even to the sinner; and to such as are His children He is a Father Who chasteneth His children: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me."

My friend, if you are really the Lord's, He will not spare the rod. Some parents do, but He will not. If we are really the Lord's, genuinely His, His children by birth from above, He will not suffer us to stray without going after us; day and night His hand will be heavy upon us. And perhaps that explains something that has gone wrong in your life. You say, "Everything has gone awry; I do not know how it is, but nothing succeeds with me. I have had sickness in my family, I have had trial of all kinds." Has it ever occurred to you to get down on your knees and ask God to show you what relation these things have to your inner life? Day and night His hand will be heavy upon you, and your moisture will be turned to the drought of summer. Oh, how often you have seen a Christian like a fruitful branch of the True Vine, leaves and luscious fruit, and you felt like saying, "What a glorious thing it is to be a Christian!"—how often you have seen a beautiful life, green and fruitful, suddenly wither, and you have said, "What strange thing has come over that man?" What is it? He has lost his joy; he has lost his love for the Word of God, and for the assemblies of the saints; he has lost his passion for souls; he is doing nothing for God. He is like a bare, barren field; his moisture is turned to the drought of summer, because he kept silent; there is a worm at the root that will wither us, and bring us to moral and spiritual bankruptcy unless we get rid of it.

But I must hasten. David said, "I acknowledge my sin." Will you not come back to the Father and say, "Father, I have sinned"? Will you not do it this morning? Is there anyone here—let me be very personal—is there anyone here who looks back to a day when he rejoiced in the Lord Jesus, who now says, "I cannot rejoice to-day, I am not happy to-day. I am not fruitful to-day"? And if I ask you the reason you will say, "Well, it is because"—Oh, you will multiply excuses. But I must brush them all aside and tell you there is just one reason: you have got out of fellowship, out of touch, with God. That is the only reason. No one can possibly break your fellowship with God but you yourself. Hell itself cannot interrupt your communication with Heaven; you only can do it, yourself. If you are lacking in spiritual blessing and power, it is because you have got out of touch with God; there can be no other cause. If that is where you are this morning I would make you as uncomfortable as I can. I roll the whole burden of responsibility upon you. Some foolish man may say, "It is because someone did not call on me." Poor baby! Why should you need to be called on? "Someone said something to me"—what did they say and do to Christ? People may have injured you, I do not know. But that is no reason for your leaving Christ: that is an excuse. The reason is that the silent life has become very barren, and while sin is unconfessed His hand will be heavy upon us—even for twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty years; He will make us confess at last.

"I acknowledge my sin." When Nathan went to David and preached that sermon of his, relating a parable, you know what a fine sermon David thought it was. He enjoyed it, he really did. I think if you had asked David what he thought of Nathan as a preacher he would have said, "He is the greatest preacher I have ever heard. I pronounced judgment upon the man of whom he spoke!" But when Nathan pronounced judgment, that was an entirely different thing. To condemn sin in parabolic preaching is not objectionable, if only one does not apply it. But when Nathan applied it, and said, "Thou art the man," David acknowledged, "I have sinned." And Nathan said, "The

Lord hath put away thy sin." We may all have our sins forgiven. You do not need to move out of your seat, but just where you are, say, "Lord, I will make a clean breast of it, I will break the silence—I have sinned." And into your heart will come the consciousness of His favour, He will forgive your sin and cover it, and you will be restored to favour and fellowship as a child of God.

"Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him," I do not believe God's people are finally lost, any of them. "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." They may get into trouble, but in a time when He may still be found, everyone that is godly at heart will call unto Him; He will never let you go. We had better come to Him now if any of us have lost our fellowship with Him.

What about the future? Someone says, "To-morrow will be Monday, what shall I do to-morrow?" "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." In other words, "I got into the mire, but I got out again, and my clothes are clean. I have confessed my sin, and I am one of the Father's children at His table." What then? "Thou art my hiding place. I have learned my lesson, I have learned that there is enough of sin in this heart of mine to re-ignite the flames of hell if they were all put out; and I am going to keep close to Him, and He will preserve me from trouble."

We ought to pray for preserving grace, and for preventing grace: "Deliver us from temptation." We should pray that He will keep us from it in the future, we may live a victorious life. Someone says, "Do you believe in the victorious life?" Yes, I do; I believe that we may live victoriously in Him. I do not mean that there is not the disposition to sin within us, but we may, by God's mighty power, be so delivered as to be compassed about with songs of deliverance, to live victoriously in His presence, always to triumph in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Then what follows? You have quoted this text when you had no right to do so, we all have. The Lord answers, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." You do not need to go to the Orient to know what that means, for good servants turn their eyes to their masters in this country as well as in any other. I travel a good deal, and I have sometimes thought I should like to establish a school for waiters; I should like to instruct them myself, and tell them how to wait on table. When you are in a big dining-room and there is just one waiter looking after you, and after he has served you with half your meal he goes away to another part of the room, forgets all about you, and you have no bell, and you cannot call, and no other waiter will look at you because that is not his job—it is annoying. But I have seen another kind of waiter, who after he had attended to one's order, though he might go to another part of the room, always keeps his eye upon the person he is serving. You do not need to call, simply lift your finger and he is there. "I will guide thee with mine eye."

Whom will He guide with His eye? The man who has broken the silence and confessed his sin, and made this confession, "Thou art my hiding place." That promise is made to the man who abides in Christ; and as we abide in Him, He will instruct us and teach us in the way that we shall go.

But "be ye not as the horse, or as the mule"—do not forget that—"which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle lest they come near unto thee." There are a great many people who talk about divine guidance, who seem to expect that the Lord will, by sheer force of circumstances, direct their way. He does sometimes, sometimes He does drive even His own children with bit and bridle—but it is only when they play the horse or the mule that He does it. He prefers to guide them through their understanding, teaching them the principles of His Word, illuminating their minds so that they may understand God's thoughts, and be guided by His Spirit. I remember being in a place once where a certain man said to me, "I tell you, sir, no preacher can drive me." I said, "Did any preacher ever try it?" "Yes, sir." "Well," I said, "I am sorry for you—and sorry for him. The things that need driving usually have four legs instead of two". "Be ye not as the horse"—it is the tendency of the horse to get the bit in his teeth and gallop away; "or as the mule"—you know what a mule is like? I have never

had any experience with one, but I have heard a great deal about them; and the tendency of the mule is to put his feet down and not go at all! I have known some Christians who were like horses, they were always running away, skittish. Do you know what a skittish horse is? Do you know the origin of that famous sermon of Doctor Chalmers', "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection"? He was driving along the road one day in a trap when a piece of newspaper on the side of the road was blown by the wind, and the horse saw it and shied. The driver, an experienced horseman, cut the horse sharply with the whip and said, "I will give you something else to think about, sir"—and the horse attended to the whip instead of to the paper. Now when we are like the horse we may expect to feel the whip, to make us think about something else.

"Or as the mule"! What a great many mulish Christians there are! That is not polite, but it is just as polite as many Christians who play the mule. They are so fixed and stubborn they do nothing. They are "immoveable" though by no means abounding in the work of the Lord. Let us abide in Christ, so that with His eye we may be guided in the right way.

"Many sorrows shall be to the wicked"—yes, there are two roads—"many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous"—and he closes his great song on the note on which he began: "Blessed", said he, "is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile"; then he goes down to the depths, but he comes up again into the sunshine, and before he closes he says, "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."

I wish we could all go home to-day, shouting for joy; I wish every man and woman, every boy and girl, could go out of this house to-day just shouting with a spiritual shout, because they are upright in their hearts and rejoicing in the Lord. Shall we not do it? If we have wandered away, shall we not come back again? If we have kept silent, shall we break it?

Let us bow a few moments in silent prayer: O Lord, wilt Thou not speak to us this morning. These words are powerless to accomplish anything unless they are energized by the Divine Spirit. We pray that the truth of Thy Word may be received, for "the entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." May we have light this morning. There may be many in Thy presence who are saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner. I have sinned; I have lost my first love." Thou art willing to receive us; help us all to come back again, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

OPEN AIR SERVICE.

Weather permitting, the first open air service for the summer will be conducted by the Pastor from the out-of-door pulpit at the rear of the church at 8:45 Sunday evening. The platform has been extended to accommodate the entire orchestra. Invite your unconverted friends to this service.

REV. T. I. STOCKLEY IN ENGLAND.

Rev. T. I. Stockley, who has exercised such a rich and helpful ministry during the Pastor's absence, leaves this week for a couple of months in England. He will return for the seminary opening in September.

THE PASTOR AT HOME.

The Pastor, who has been in New York city the last three Sundays, preaching in the First Baptist Church, of which Dr. Haldeman is Pastor, will be in his own pulpit next Sunday. Baptism will be administered in the evening, and the regular monthly Communion and reception service will be held at the close of the evening service.

Editorial

THE "EXCLUSIVE" POLICY OF THE McMASTER-CONTROLLED CONVENTION EXECUTIVE.

Readers of *The Gospel Witness* are informed of the legislation secured at the last session of Parliament by the Executive Committee of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec for the amendment of the Convention Constitution. The argument being advanced in support of this legislation is that certain churches (Jarvis Street Church, of course, in particular) have ceased to contribute to Convention funds. Dr. MacNeill and others have repeatedly denied that the question at issue in the Ontario and Quebec Convention, and involved in the amending Bill, is a religious one. How these brethren are able to reconcile their denials with their consciences, or their intelligence, we are unable to understand. The amendment to the Constitution of the Convention would empower the Convention to expel a church from membership by a three-fifths vote. We shall deal in this article with the bearing of this proposed amendment upon Jarvis Street Church. Many other churches are standing for precisely the same principles, and with these we shall deal in a later article.

Why then has legislative authority been sought for the amendment of the Convention Constitution so as to enable the Convention constitutionally to exclude Jarvis Street Baptist Church from its membership? What has Jarvis Street Church done? For some years, indeed ever since 1919, its Pastor has protested against McMaster's Modernism. For a long time it was denied that there was any Modernism in McMaster, but the appointment of Professor Marshall, and his defense by the Board of Governors, has served only to bring to the surface what people of discernment have long known was the attitude of the Governing Bodies of that institution. It is utter folly to hold argument with any one who now denies McMaster's Modernism. It would be just as foolish as to argue with a man who persisted in calling midnight, noonday: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Our opponents contend that the amendment to the Constitution has been sought to enable the Convention to deal with those who do not co-operate. The question therefore resolves itself into this, What is co-operation? On pages forty-three and fifty-six of the Year Book for 1926 it is recorded that the resolution which the Executive alleged gave them authority to apply to Parliament for this amending Bill, was passed at the morning session of the Convention, Thursday, October 21st, 1926. Our friends the enemy insist that the resolution then passed authorized them to obtain the legislation which they secured at the last session of Parliament. That being so, they must admit that the reason for legislation was then existent.

We would point out that up to that hour Jarvis Street church was a contributing church, and had regularly contributed to Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Western Missions, Grande Ligne, and Superannuated Ministers Fund. It is true we contributed nothing to Social Service, nor to the so-called Religious Education Board, nor, for the last two or three years, to Christian Education; but the principal funds of the Denomination we loyally supported up to the First Avenue Convention last October. Even after the Home Mission Board passed its muzzling resolution in the spring of 1926, we continued to support it; and passed a resolution only to the effect that if any of the Home Missionaries were penalized for their convictions, we would divert certain of our Home Mission Funds to their support. *But at the time the Executive asked for authority to seek an amendment to the Constitution, empowering the Convention to expel us, we were a contributing church.*

We have looked into the reports of certain other churches in the Toronto Association, whose pastors have been active in their persecuting attitude toward Jarvis Street. We selected five churches for purposes of comparison: College Street Church, of which Dr. A. J. Vining is the Pastor; Immanuel Church, Dr. Bowley Green, Pastor; Indian Road Church, Rev. H. B. Coumans, Pastor; First

Avenue Church, of which, until a few months ago, Dr. W. T. Graham was the Pastor; and Temple Church, Rev. W. E. Hodgson, Pastor.

The aggregate membership of these churches is approximately equal to that of Jarvis Street, their membership being, according to the 1927 Associational Report, 2,195; and that of Jarvis Street, 2,219. It would, however, be reasonable to suppose that 2,195 people divided into five companies, each led by a pastor, would be able to accomplish more than 2,219 led by one pastor. Moreover, seeing that Messrs Vining, Green, Coumans, Graham, and Hodgson, so keenly desire the expulsion of Jarvis Street, on the ground of its non-cooperation, one might expect to find that the churches led by these brethren are making a great contribution to our denominational life.

Such considerations as these led us to a somewhat careful examination of the record of these churches. The contributions of Jarvis Street Church to the four funds referred to last year, as reported in the Association Minutes, were as follows: Foreign Missions, \$1,034.44; Home Missions, \$1,073.08; Western Missions, \$996.10; Grande Ligne, \$718.68, or a total of \$3,822.30. But that amount represented only five months' giving, with the exception of Grande Ligne, which Jarvis Street Church is still supporting. The reason we supported the other three Boards for only five months, or up to the end of August rather than the end of September when the Convention Books closed, is shown in the following letter:

September 22nd, 1923

Mr. R. D. Warren,
Treasurer, Baptist Mission Boards,
223 Church St., Toronto.

Dear Mr. Warren:

I enclose our cheque for \$428.13, covering offerings for July and August received through our funds, as follows:

Home Missions	\$161.21
Foreign Missions	162.70
Grande Ligne	104.22
	<hr/>
	\$428.13

I am going on my holidays, but if I return in time, shall send September offerings before the Convention year closes.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) VIOLET STOAKLEY.

No action was taken by the church until after the Convention. The September offerings were not forwarded only because the Secretary was absent on a much-needed holiday.

Deducting the \$718.68 for Grande Ligne from the total, we have a balance of \$3,103.62 for five months, and these were the months from April to August, which, in every church, would be looked upon as the leanest months of the year. But taking that as an average, had Jarvis Street continued to give for the other seven months at the same rate, her total to the three funds would have been \$7,748.64, which, with the \$718.68 to Grand Ligne, would have made a total of \$8,467.32.

It should be borne in mind also that hundreds of the people who make up the membership of Jarvis Street Church were young believers; and it was the Pastor's task to interest them in denominational missions, and to persuade them to continue the support of denominational funds while the denominational leaders were busy answering their Pastor's criticism of McMaster's Modernism by hissing out the epithet "liar". We are confident, under other conditions, that Jarvis Street Church would have doubled or trebled its giving to denominational funds. The proof of this is to be found in the church's total missionary givings.

But let us take it as it stands, and one Pastor, caring for a church of 2,219 members, his salary being \$6,000.00, led his people to contribute to these four denominational funds, up to Convention time, at the rate of \$8,467.32. In the same time the five churches named, College Street, First Avenue, Immanuel,

Indian Road, and Temple, having for their pastors respectively, Dr. A. J. Vining, Dr. W. T. Graham, Dr. Bowley Green, Rev. H. B. Coumans, and Rev. W. E. Hodgson—these five pastors leading a total membership of 2,195, the five pastors receiving an aggregate salary of \$15,620.00, succeeded in leading their churches to contribute to the funds named a total of \$8,767.93, or about \$600.00 more than Jarvis Street.

But again, regarding the work of missions as a whole, the five churches named, with their five pastors, and their aggregate salaries of \$15,620.00, led their churches in a total contribution for missionary objects of \$10,785.37. For the same period Jarvis Street, with its one pastor, and a salary of \$6,000.00, gave a total to missions of \$15,205.38.

But let us look at these same churches in comparison with Jarvis Street over a period of three years (1924-1926). It must be borne in mind that throughout this period denominational officials have waged a relentless warfare against Jarvis Street Church; they have done everything in their power to destroy it. But during the three years Jarvis Street contributed to the four denominational funds named, \$20,891.68, out of a total missionary contribution of \$41,084.20.

But perhaps no one has been more bitter in his opposition to Jarvis Street than Dr. A. J. Vining; and it is worthy of note that the contributions of College Street Church to the four denominational funds named, four years ago, amounted to \$3,600.99, and this amount has declined to \$1,207.85 this last year. The contribution of the College Street Church to Foreign Missions in four years has declined from \$2,027.37 to \$534.17; to Home Missions, from \$1,127.86 to \$500.52; to Western Missions, from \$252.51 to \$86.19; and to Grande Ligne, from \$193.25 to \$86.97; while College Street's total mission givings have declined in four years from \$5,510.55 to \$1,562.97. But College Street is a co-operating church!

The total missionary givings for four years of the five churches named was \$53,610.66, and the total missionary givings for the four years of Jarvis Street were \$56,289.58. So much for the financial aspect of this discussion.

Will it not be admitted by all Baptists that while a church ought to send missionary money abroad for the support of missionaries whose business is to preach the gospel so that souls may be saved, it is equally that church's business to preach the gospel at home with the same object in view? Ought not a church to make some contribution in membership also if it is to be a "co-operating" church? Is not the church which increases its membership, and enlarges its testimony, doing something for the Lord?

Let us look at the record of these five churches as compared with Jarvis Street over a period of one year, and then over a period of four years. We set it out in tabular form:

One Year Period.

	Pastors	Salaries	Baptisms	Net Gain or Loss	Miss'y Givings
Five churches named	5	15,620.00	115	94	10,785.37
Jarvis Street	1	\$ 6,000.00	173	208	\$15,205.38

Four Year Period.

	Pastors	Salaries	Baptisms	Net Gain	Miss'y Givings
Five churches named	5	\$58,405.00	410	9	\$53,610.96
Jarvis Street	1	24,000.00	1,012	1,227	56,289.58

Thus it will be seen that for one year, one church, with one pastor, receiving a salary of \$6,000.00, had 173 baptisms, with a net gain in membership of 208; while five churches with five pastors, receiving an aggregate salary of \$15,620.00, had 115 baptisms, with a net loss of 94. Over a period of four years Jarvis Street Church paid its pastor \$24,000.00; it had 1,012 baptisms, and a net gain in membership of 1,227. Over a period of four years, five churches paid their five pastors a total of \$58,405.00; they had 410 baptisms; and a net gain in the four years of 9 members. Or, the five churches paid their pastors \$58,405.00, and made a net gain of $1 \frac{4}{5}$ members each over a period of four years, or nine-twentieths of a member per church, per year. That is to say, in

dollars and cents it cost those five churches \$6,489.44 per member for the nine members which represent their net gain for four years. Let our readers judge whether the Executive of the Convention proposes the exclusion of Jarvis Street on the ground of its being a non-cooperating church!—or for some other reason.

We would call attention to another fact in this connection. Jarvis Street had in its membership five foreign missionaries serving under the Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board. They were: Rev. and Mrs. John Craig, Dr. and Mrs. E. G. Smith, and Miss Farnell. Jarvis Street Church has added to the Denomination, according to the figures, a net gain in membership of 1,227. It was the desire of the Pastor of Jarvis Street Church to enlist all the new members in denominational activities, and therefore to instruct them respecting our Foreign Mission work. But before they left India we received word from Rev. and Mrs. John Craig requesting their transfer to Walmer Road Church. When Dr. and Mrs. Smith came home on furlough the Pastor was away, but the Jarvis Street Mission Circle held a large meeting in the Sunday School Hall for the purpose of bidding them welcome, and providing the membership of Jarvis Street with an opportunity to hear them. Within about two weeks of that date our Office received a very urgent call on a Saturday night to grant letters to Dr. and Mrs. Smith to unite with Walmer Road Church. It was the Walmer Road Pastor's twentieth Anniversary, and apparently a great effort was being made to secure as large an addition to the membership at the Communion Service as possible. These letters were, of course, immediately granted. It will be understood that they represented only names on our book, but they had been before us in our prayer meetings in prayer, and we were endeavouring to lead our people to take an interest in our own Foreign Mission work. We refer to these matters only to show the measure in which certain denominational leaders "co-operated" with Jarvis Street.

Let us now take a look at three other churches in comparison with Jarvis Street, namely, Bloor Street, Park Road, and Walmer Road. The membership of these three churches aggregates 4,145; the total amount of money paid for pastors' salaries in the three churches was \$24,300.00; the total number of baptisms (Bloor Street, 51; Park Road, none; Walmer Road, 59) for the year was 110; the net gain in the membership of these churches for the year was 72. The net gain in membership in Jarvis Street alone was only 8 short of being three times as great as that of Bloor Street, Park Road, and Walmer Road combined. Over a period of four years the churches named paid for Pastors' salaries, \$94,213.33; the baptisms for four years were: Bloor Street, 183; Park Road, 40; Walmer Road, 268, or a total of 496; as against the Jarvis Street total of 1,012. The net gain in membership in these three churches for the four years was: Bloor Street, 169; Park Road, 34; Walmer Road, 373, or a total of 576, against a net gain in Jarvis Street of 1,227.

Of course, in the actual giving of money, these three churches particularly leave Jarvis Street and all the rest of the Denomination behind. The greater part of the wealth of Jarvis Street went to the Park Road Church five years ago this summer; while other Jarvis Street members who were financially strong went, some to Bloor Street, and others to Walmer Road. Last year the total missionary givings of these three churches amounted to \$65,257.73, as compared with Jarvis Street's \$15,205.38; but it must be remembered their aggregate membership was 186 per cent. that of Jarvis Street, or nearly double.

With these indisputable facts before us, it must be admitted that the Executive Committee, controlled by McMaster, has sought power to expel Jarvis Street Church for some other reason than that it does not co-operate.

DES MOINES UNIVERSITY AND JARVIS STREET.

The Editor of this paper would rather please people than offend them but it is sometimes impossible to please certain people and the Lord at the same time. We have recently been informed that certain of our modernistically-disposed friends have found some satisfaction in the announcement of our new responsibility respecting Des Moines University—for the reason that they believe this will remove the Editor of this paper from Toronto. We are sorry

to disturb anyone's peace, or to spoil anyone's happy dream; notwithstanding, we are compelled to announce that the Pastor of Jarvis Street considers himself to be pretty well rooted in Toronto. He does not profess to be an educator; if he has any mission at all, it is to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God; he considers his pulpit work his highest ministry, and he desires everyone to understand that nothing in the world would induce him to leave the pulpit. Our chief business in life is to further the work of the Lord as represented by Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto. That, in itself, is enough to keep one man fairly busy, with its membership of over twenty-two hundred, and its Bible School the largest in the Dominion of Canada.

But next to the pulpit, we are occupied in editing this paper. There are editors of denominational papers who give their whole time to their task. Some of them do not do as much original work in a month or two as the Editor of this paper is compelled to do every week. But we crowd our editorial work into about half a day—or sometimes half a night, managing to get it done somehow, and then go on with other duties.

The Baptist Bible Union gives us some little work; as does also our new Seminary; and, for the present, to keep our mental machinery from becoming rusty, we have some little part in the reorganization of the Des Moines University, being President of the Board of Trustees. But we repeat, preaching is our *vocation*: these other matters are our *avocations*, the lesser matters to which we give our attention "on the side". This being understood, we desire to inform our Canadian friends that we fully expect that our headquarters on earth will be the corner of Jarvis and Gerrard Streets, until we go home to Heaven.

The fact is, we have been experimenting with *The Gospel Witness*. So far it has been like Commander Byrd's aeroplane: we have just been tuning it up! Some day we are really going to "hop off" and fly somewhere.

As for the Seminary: we do not expect to be so occupied with that as to be unable to continue the fight for the faith. On the contrary, the Seminary will be an officers' training school where we propose to train men to be real soldiers in the battle for the Book.

We rejoice in the new door that is opened for service in Des Moines, for that too will be an officers' training school on a larger scale. We are not going to invite men to leave McMaster University to go to Des Moines; but if the authorities of McMaster should become intolerant of the testimony of those who still stand for the faith in that institution, of course such students will be informed that an open door presents itself in Des Moines where, under Baptist auspices, and under teachers which we may modestly describe as men whose scholarship at least equals that of McMaster, they can finish their course and obtain their degree.

And in another five or six years an army of men will be coming out of these and other schools. By that time our new Missionary Society will be greatly strengthened. We shall have entered into many of the towns and cities of Canada, and established new causes. And we shall still be in the Convention—unless we are actually put out. And if we should be put out, we shall not be put out about it!—but in the truly British way, we shall go on fighting after our heads are supposed to have been cut off. We have not the shadow of a doubt that *The Gospel Witness* circulation in the next five years will be four or five times that of *The Canadian Baptist*—indeed, if people continue to cancel their subscriptions to the latter paper as they have been doing, that might come about without much increase on our part.

Be that as it may, things are going gloriously. We shall continue to expose the Modernism of McMaster. We intend to be bolder than ever in calling the names of those who are betraying the cause of truth. So far the valiant men and women all over the Convention who are standing out against McMaster's apostasy may be regarded as a "contemptible little army", but that will grow into a great multitude; and some time, by God's grace, the glorious day of victory will come. We have said it before, we repeat it: it is the British way to suffer many reverses, and to appear at least to lose many battles, but to win the war. It is written, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth".

We promise the enemies of Baptist orthodoxy that there will be "a certain liveness at the front" if not before, say, at least, five years from now.

THE ANGEL OF HOPE.

"We are saved by Hope." And Grace will not begrudge the honour thus accorded Hope; nor will sturdy Faith dispute her title to such recognition,—they are both fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God. But how is the fair angel of Hope to be identified? How may she be distinguished from the radiant principles which consort with those good spirits who are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

From what bright world does this angel of the morning come? To what unfailing fountain of cheerfulness may her lineage be traced? To what other heavenly graces is she related? And how does she differ from them? What are her own peculiar and distinctive characteristics?

Hope is an angel of paradise. She comes from a land where nothing fails: where the leaves never fade; the trees yield their fruit every month; the springs never run dry; the sun never sets; the inhabitants never say, "I am sick"; and even the oldest never die. She is undazzled by triumphant certainties, manifestly invincible; where goodness leaves no room for evil; where light has prevented the darkness; and life abounds to the exclusion of death. Hope has had a glimpse of the inexhaustible sources of Infinite Love, and has looked into "the unsearchable riches of Christ": there are therefore no tears in her eyes. Hope comes from God. This bright-winged angel is native to the infinite spaces, where there are no limitations, and no impossibilities; where the purposes of God have ample verge; and where it is never said of anything, "This is the end." Hope, I say, is an angel of God; a tearless spirit who is stranger to a sigh, save in another's breast. She is never found in spiritually Arctic regions where an attitude of unbelief has turned the soul away from the sun.

This angel has no kinship with Presumption. Though Presumption simulates the voice and attitude of Hope, they are worlds apart. Presumption, while neither wholly deaf nor blind, hears and sees only that which is favourable to her desire. She is unrelated to Truth, and ignores Fact. Her cheerfulness flows from a cistern and not from a fountain. She has a nodding acquaintance with Mirth, but is a stranger to Joy. Hope is dishonoured when mistaken for Presumption; and it is a fatal error to mistake Presumption for Hope.

The angel of Hope is closely related to the angel of Faith. They strongly resemble each other in many particulars. They are indeed twin angels, mutually dependent and complementary. Hope finds her inspiration and example in Faith; and Faith finds her complement in Hope. Like two disciples of old, these two often run both together; but, like Peter in relation to John, Hope outruns Faith, and comes first to the empty sepulchre. Hope verifies what Faith affirms. Faith is sure-footed: Hope is swift-winged. Faith finds renewal of strength in waiting upon God, and saith, "Above the clouds, the sun is shining"; Hope mounts on eagles' wings beyond the clouds and revels in the sunshine. Faith plods along the weary road, and walks without fainting; Hope, with feeter foot, runs and is not weary.

The faces of these two proclaim their kinship, though each has its own peculiar beauty. The face of Faith is sometimes drawn with pain, as when she went with Abraham to offer up his only son; yet shining through the anguish there is always the beauty of a calm repose. But the countenance of Hope is never shadowed by a secret pang—her face is like a summer sky, and her eyes are homes of cheerfulness. While the face of Faith is unmarked with lines of anxious care, and her complexion evidences the possession of the secret of perpetual youth, Hope adds to her equal beauty the eloquence of smiling lips, and the fascination of eyes which sparkle with the promise of the morning. Faith makes Paul and Silas to endure the prison and the stocks without murmuring. Hope supplements Faith's ministry by teaching them to sing at midnight. Faith is the dove going forth from the ark, and returning again to safety; Hope is the dove coming home the second time in the evening, and in her mouth "an olive leaf plucked off".

But if Hope is thus differentiated from Faith, by what characteristics is she distinguished from all others? Her vision is periscope: she can see all sides at once. Hence she can see the dawn at midnight; she can revel in the delights of spring amid the snows of winter; she can find attraction in a cemetery as being the most interesting of all places on the resurrection morn-

ing. Again, her hearing is very acute: she never misses "the sound of a going" over against the mulberry trees; and she is quick to discern the tramp, the measured music of the lightning progress of Heaven's reinforcing angels, when the horses and chariots of fire set out on the cloudy road to Dothan. Therefore Hope never spoils her morning voice with moans; nor mars her joyous face with frowns; nor dims her gloom-dispelling eyes with tears; but, living always in the sunshine, she is ever smiling, and always singing to despondent souls: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

Vol. II.

T. T. SHIELDS, Editor

No. 4

Lesson 3

Third Quarter

July 17, 1927

PAUL BEFORE FESTUS.

LESSON TEXT: Acts, Chapter 25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him" (Acts 25:5).

Felix detained Paul in Herod's palace as long as he remained the governor of the province,—two whole years, and then Porcius Festus comes into power as the successor of Felix. We have very little information about Festus; but all that is said about him implies that he was a very different man from Felix—a much better man.

I. FESTUS GOES UP TO JERUSALEM.

The new governor wishes at once to get into touch with things, so he goes up to Jerusalem without delay to make himself acquainted with the central city of his government. There is no doubt a great reception granted the new governor. While Festus is there the high priest and the principal men of the Jews wait upon him about Paul who has been kept in bonds for two long years at Cæsarea. They try to take advantage of the inexperience of Festus, and his natural desire to make a good impression at the beginning of his "reign" in Judea, and requests that Paul be sent up to Jerusalem to be tried. And why? Because they still have murder in their hearts.

They say that "time is the great healer", but it seems that time cannot heal the disease of hatred. Paul has been quietly waiting, and praying, and growing more noble during the two years, but his enemies are as bitter and as full of hate as ever. And let us remember that this is religious hatred. These Jews could not eat with "unwashed hands", but they could plan and intrigue to place a number of vile assassins who, at their request, and who would be paid by their money, would thrust the knife into the very heart of this noble confessor, this pure minded and fearless servant of Christ, this cultured and finished Christian gentleman. What double creatures men can be! These leaders and "principal men" are living still. They can bend the knee as if in reverent prayer, with their hand on their murderous knife all the time. What hypocrites men can be!

Festus the heathen that he is, is a better man than these religious Jews. Festus says, "No. If Paul is to be tried as a Roman citizen he shall be tried in the proper place, before me at Cæsarea." Some of these Romans have a fine sense of justice and right.

II. PAUL IS BROUGHT BEFORE FESTUS.

Again a threefold charge is brought against him which they could not prove, and Paul in answering for himself says that neither against Jewish law, nor against the Temple, nor against Cæsar had he once offended. How powerful and convincing are the words of a whole mind!

But Festus, not yet understanding the deep seated bigotry and malice of

these Jews in the present case, and willing to keep peace all round if that were possible, asked Paul if he was willing to go up to Jerusalem to be tried there if he himself as governor went up too in order to secure fair play? "No," says Paul, "I am not willing, so I appeal unto Cæsar." So the Christian may to-day appeal from the sentence of the unjust to the judgment of the just; from the opinionous of the world to the testimony of conscience; from the human tribunal to the Eternal Throne.

"To Cæsar thou shalt go." In our lesson only two weeks ago we heard the Divine Lord say to Paul "Thou must bear witness also at Rome." Now the way is being opened for him to go to Rome. How the Hand of God directs the steps of the servant of God. It looked as if the trouble at Jerusalem arose through a compromise suggested by the Christian leaders there. But the Lord overruled it for good. Paul was introduced into an entirely new circle of people who sorely needed to hear the great Christian Gospel. He now becomes a preacher to governors, and rulers, and kings, and mighty men. We may wonder because of some of life's crises; but if we are utterly given up to do the will of God at any cost, He will see to it that our life shall be fraught with the finest issues.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." Not one thing alone but all things together. The winter, the spring, and the summer, work together to bring in the glorious harvest of grain and fruit. The various notes blended with skill produce the entrancing music. And the varied experiences of life working together accomplish the highest good. We need not stop and say "What good will this experience work?" The Divine Hand knows how to arrange every experience for the largest blessing of the life, and for God's church too.

Let us trust the Divine Overruler to shape the ends of all things in our life and some day we shall sing with rapture, "My Jesus hath done all things well."

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF

Vol. II

T. T. SHIELDS, Editor

No. 5

Lesson 4

Third Quarter

July 24, 1927

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA.

LESSON TEXT: Acts, Chapter 26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8).

We must go back to chapter 25 and verse 13 and read from there if we would get this whole story. Paul's trial at Cæsarea is over. But a few days after King Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, with Bernice his sister, came to Cæsarea to offer their greetings to the new Governor Festus. While Agrippa is there Festus speaks to him about Paul. Paul has been tried and ought to have been acquitted, but Paul having appealed to Cæsar, Festus finds himself in an awkward position, for he must send Paul to Cæsar, and yet he has no solid charge to lay against him. Agrippa says, "I should like to hear Paul myself".

I. PICTURE THE SCENE.

Here is the audience-hall. Festus and Agrippa and Bernice, with extraordinary display are there, also the Chief Captains of Festus, and the principal men of the city. We know who Festus was. Agrippa is called a king, and the last of the kings of Israel until Jesus comes again. Then Agrippa's was but a "shattered throne." Bernice is his sister, a woman of deep-dyed infamy. Into the presence of this august assembly the prisoner Paul is brought with the chains upon his wrists. What a scene! To this company the prisoner is to make sport for them all. Is he? We shall see. But it is an extraordinary occasion. The unusual pomp, the company present, Paul, the massive-souled, lofty minded, profoundly Christian preacher, standing in chains in the midst. What

a sublime opportunity for a preacher! Paul had done much street preaching, but here is an occasion quite unique. How will he meet it? Will this man whom we have followed through many scenes fail here? Let us see.

II. PAUL'S GREAT DEFENCE.

Agrippa says to Paul, "Thou art permitted to speak for thyself." That is just what truth asks. One of the efforts of the enemy is to close the lips of truth. Let it speak. Paul gladly accepts the opportunity, and like the skilled orator that he is, stretches forth his hand and begins. The substance of this enthralling utterance of Paul is the story of his conversion. Paul loved to tell the story, and we can believe that it grew more wonderful to himself each time he told it. He tells of his own bitterness against the saints of God, and how he continued to persecute them till on the Damascus road the Lord Jesus appeared to him and transformed his life, and called him to be His witness to Jews and Gentiles too. He could not be disobedient to the heavenly vision, for the message given him to deliver was the very Word of God, as all the prophets declared. Many, alas, are disobedient: they see the truth but it costs too much to follow it. It must have been thrilling indeed to listen to this matchless defence. It was this definite, personal experience which gave to Paul his wonderful power. His Word was not something gathered from books or teachers, but directly from the Lord Himself, and it was burned into his very soul. This is what we need to-day, personal experience of conversion. And we need not be ashamed of the old word, personal conversion. And then personal testimony: if we have a real experience, let there be a clear and unashamed testimony.

III. THE INTERRUPTION AND APPEAL.

As Paul pours forth his very soul in his own cultured and all-mastering way, Festus is thrilled and shouts, "Paul, thou art beside thyself. Much learning hath made thee mad". Paul's reply is marked with wonderful dignity and courtesy, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." But that is the word for a lofty souled Christian,—mad! Our Lord was spoken of in the same way. The soul that lives the heavenly life in the midst of earth-bound souls is always mad, from their point of view. They don't understand such a life. It is too unearthly, too lofty for them. It is a great privilege to share our Master's shame here, and be called mad by a godless world for our devotion to Christ. Few win that glory.

Paul replies courteously to Festus, but his heart is specially set upon Agrippa. He ventures to make a definite appeal to him, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." And so the prisoner appeals to the king. But who was really king? He who wore the chains much more than he who wore the royal robes. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And then comes the sublime reply given in verse 29. Holding up his hands with the chains upon them, he cries with great depth of feeling, and beauty of expression, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all who hear me this day were both almost, and altogether such as I am,—except these bonds." Wonderful appeal! A picture grander than any Greek or Latin art. And so it appears as if Agrippa was almost persuaded. Agrippa seems to have felt the gripping power of Paul's great appeal, but he does not take his stand with Christ and with Paul, and get baptized. Why did he not? Alas, how many there are who are "almost saved", and yet really lost! A chip almost reaches the harbour and then sinks; a young man almost yields to Christ but turns away, "for he has great possessions"; the five foolish are almost in time for the marriage feast, but they are shut out. Almost saved and yet lost! This is the epitaph that should be engraved on many a tombstone. Oh, let not this be true of any of us. "Almost!" See that we are "altogether" saved, "altogether" converted, "altogether" Christ's; "altogether" Christian, "altogether" NOW!

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