

# The Gospel Witness

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### THE A. B. C. OF SALVATION.

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields.

Preached from the Open Air Pulpit, Jarvis St., Sunday Evening, Sept. 4, 1927

(Stenographically Reported)

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"—Romans 10:1-4.



T is possible for a very efficient teacher to be very ineffective in his teaching: he may assume too much; he may overestimate his pupil's capacity and progress, and leave him in ignorance of the most elementary principles of the subject in hand. I have cherished a grudge against one of my early teachers for—well, I will not tell you how many years, but simply that he taught me when I was thirteen or fourteen years of age. It is not a malignant grudge, of course, only a kind of petrified grumble; but I hold it even now.

I shall not tell you his special subject, because it was one for which, not to be too complimentary to myself, I had no particular aptitude; and I am not going to advertise in which direction I am especially, perhaps I ought to say more especially, stupid! And, reviewing those days, I have concluded that I should have been saved much labour in later years, if, instead of a brilliant gold-medallist of one of the leading English universities, I had had for my

teacher an ordinary mortal who had obtained his knowledge at the price of patient plodding. But my teacher was such an intellectual marathonian that no one could keep pace with him; and his precious gold medal prevented my earning so much as a leather one. I heard only a few years ago that he ended his career as a missionary bishop among the cannibals of Africa—where he was loved about as much as his despairing scholars loved him long ago.

The principle of this little personal reminiscense runs all through life. Fast runners do not care to stop to teach children how to walk. Mentally, and socially, and religiously, we are disposed to forget "the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged".

I think it is possible sometimes for preachers to take too much for granted, and to assume that that with which they are perfectly familiar is thoroughly known to all their hearers. Sometimes we speak of a particular subject as being "as easy as A.B.C." Well, of course, the alphabet is very easy to us now, but it is so long ago since we mastered it that we have forgotten those early difficulties. Anything is easy to those who know how. It is easy to drive a motor-car when you know how; it is easy to drive a nail with a hammer when you know how—if you do not know how, you may drive the wrong nail! It looks perfectly easy when you see a carpenter cut off a board quite squarely, judging solely by his eye. You say, "I can do that"; but when you try, you find you are about an inch off. Anything is easy when it has become a part of you and automatic; then you do from internal impulse that which formerly you did by the regulation of some external and objective standard.

#### I.

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOUL'S RELATION TO GOD IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE PREACHER SHOULD BE SIMPLE. I remember years ago sending a number of sermons to my father for his opinion. I thought they were pretty good! I had laboured hard in their preparation. But when I got them back I found them marked all over. I was fond at that time of using words of three or four syllables—and if I could get one of six syllables I was especially proud of myself! I sometimes searched the dictionary, and used words that few understood. It was supposed to give a flavour, of learning to a man's preaching when he talked about something which the ordinary hearer could not understand! When I got those manuscripts back, my father had every one of those long words crossed out—six syllables, four syllables, three syllables; and in the margin a simple word of one syllable, and the question, "Why not so-and-so? Why not so-and-so?" And I learned thus early to try to be simple, to speak in such a fashion that everybody could understand what the preacher said.

I was in a railway station in the United States not long ago and heard a man calling the trains. He was bellowing like a bull of Bashan. He had a magnificent voice—but nobody understood what he said! I occasionally got the name of a familiar city—perhaps it was New York—and I found out he was telling the people there was a train for New York; but if I had never heard of New York, I should never have known.

I heard of an old lady going to hear Spurgeon once, and on being asked what she thought of the preacher she said she did not like him, and added, "I thought he was a great preacher?" "So he is," said her friend, "why did you not enjoy him?" "Why", she said, "I could understand every word he said"! She thought that placed the preacher at a discount!

I want to tell you this evening, in the A.B.C. of the gospel, the most elementary truths of salvation. Kindly join me, if you will, in the primary class; or, if you have not graduated into that, then come into the kindergarten, and we shall try to make the way of life so plain that everyone can understand. When I am motoring I feel very grateful to the people who put up the signs, and I am always glad when they put them up and display the name of the place so conspicuously that I can see it without putting my glasses on. When I come to the cross-roads, I do not want to find quotations from Shakespeare or Milton—that is not what I am motoring for: I am going somewhere, and I want those signposts to tell me how to get there. That is the preacher's business, to be always pointing the way to salvation. That is exactly what the Apostle Paul does; he assumes that everybody needs to be saved: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." and a great many preachers need to learn that lesson, that people need saving, that by nature they "are children of wrath even as others", and that they need something done for them, in them and for them, in order to be saved.

That is my desire this evening respecting everyone who hears me. I am not particular what you say about the sermon. It may be no sermon at all! I heard of a man once who did not go to church, and a preacher made up his mind that he would get him. He was told that all the other preachers who had been in the town had failed, and it was predicted that he could not get that man to come to church. He said, "I will get him", and he invited the man again and again and again. At last the preacher said, "But why will you not go to church?" "I cannot stand sermons; I hate to listen to a sermon." "Well, you come along and hear me, and I think you will enjoy it." He tried that for a long time, and at last succeeded; the man did actually come to church. The preacher was elated, and on Monday he went around to see him. He said, "I was very glad to see you at church last night. Did you enjoy the service?" "Very much indeed", was the reply. "But I thought you said you could not bear listening to sermons?" "I cannot, but that came so mighty near not being a sermon that I got along very well"! I do not care if you say that about my sermon, if only you get the truth.

## II.

PAUL PRAYED THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE MIGHT BE SAVED. I wonder why he prayed for salvation? "My heart's desire"—that is one thing; but "prayer to God" is another—"for Israel is, that they might be saved." Why did he pray to God? Was it because salvation comes down from above and not from beneath? Was it because men cannot be saved until God saves them? Was it because men cannot possibly save themselves—is that why he prayed? How many of you want to be saved? Have you ever prayed for salvation? You say, "I have read a great many books about it, and I thought I would find salvation that way"—but did you ever pray for salvation?

I heard a Jewess give her testimony in one of our prayer meetings a number of years ago. She said she was living in Constantinople before the war, and her husband, a Jew, was converted to Christ. He came home and told his Hebrew wife that he was now a Christian, and had accepted Jesus Christ as his Messiah. She was very angry, and determined to break his faith and turn him back to the religion of her fathers. She persecuted him in every possible way—and I should imagine if a man has to live with that kind of

thing, if his wife really sets out to make his life miserable, she is likely to have some measure of success! She kept at it month after month, but he bore it patiently and only said, "I wish you knew my Saviour." At last she was convicted, she knew something had happened to her husband, and one day she went into her room, and shut the door, and locked it, and fell on her knees and said, "O God, if Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, let Him come and introduce Himself to me." And she said, "As I prayed, I cannot explain it, but He came. He came, and spoke to my heart, and I knew that Jesus Christ was not dead but was alive again and in the glory, and I have been following Him ever since."

If you want to be saved, then pray for it: "God be merciful to me a sinner." Let your prayer express the desire of your heart, let your prayer go up to God for your own soul that you might be saved. Will you do it tonight? You men who have never prayed for ten or twenty years, you men who were taught to pray when you were children, and in whose behalf a thousand prayers have ascended to Heaven's throne, yet to-night you are prayerless men, will you go home, and before you close your eyes, bow before God and pray? Salvation is from above, it comes down from the Father of lights, it is among the "good and perfect gifts"; and can be obtained nowhere else. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."

Now the A.B.C. of things: *Paul desired the salvation of people who were essentially religious.* He is not praying for irreligious people: he is praying for the salvation of the most religious people on earth. The Jews had been cradled in religion, they had been taught religion from their infancy, they had been trained in the law; but notwithstanding their religiousness, they were not saved. And there are tens of thousands of religious people in Toronto who are not saved: they have religion, but they have not Christ; they need to be saved. And we need to pray for them that they may be saved.

*These religious people were observers of religious ordinances:* they kept the law, they observed all the requirements of the law, they were faithful in their attendance at temple and synagogue, they were religious in their practices as well as in their beliefs—and yet they were not saved. How long—how long must we go over the very alphabet of things in order to show people that salvation does not consist in religious ordinances? I received a letter only last week from a woman telling me about her daughter. The mother was terribly exercised about her—perhaps she had reason to be, I do not know about that. Her daughter was a married woman, and one of the great sorrows of that mother was that this daughter of hers had not had her children christened—and she was terribly afraid that that was a mark of irreligion!

Even in this enlightened day, with the Bible in our own language, there are people who attribute some saving efficacy to the ordinance of baptism. You who are Anglicans, I do not suppose you believe it, but your Prayer Book teaches it. "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto Him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning"; this is what the priest says after he has sprinkled a few drops of water on the child's head. There may be some man here this evening who says, "I was baptized as a child, and of course I am saved"! The priest says, "What is your name?" "John Thomas", or whatever it is. "Who gave you that name?" "My godfathers and my godmothers in my baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The only trouble with that is that there is not a grain of truth in it, that is all. Nobody was ever made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven by baptism. "But", somebody else says, "I was not sprinkled, I was immersed." That may all be, but you were not saved by being

immersed. So far as salvation is concerned, sprinkling is just as good as immersion—and neither of them is any good at all. These people obeyed all the ordinances of the law, they were circumspect in their behaviour; but they were not saved.

*Moreover, they were people who were bold in their religious profession, they were not ashamed of their profession; some of them had it embroidered on their garments; and some stood at the street corners offering long prayers. Some of them were so good that the publican and the harlot must not be named by them—but with all their religious profession they were not saved. There are some people like that here to-night. They are bold enough in their religious avowels, they go to church, they go to mass early in the morning. I rather admire the zeal of some Roman Catholics and wish some of our Protestant people would emulate them in that. If you cannot get up without an alarm clock, then go and buy a dozen. But going to mass will not save you. There are some of you who have your Prayer Books, and you say your prayers—so did these people. They said prayers—long prayers. They thought they were heard, the Pharisees among them, for their much speaking—but they were not saved. And with all our religious profession, we may be still out of Christ, and without a vital experience of God's redeeming grace.*

*These people were very zealous. They had a "zeal of God". They were active propagandists—like many Russellites, and like some Roman Catholics too. These people to whom the Apostle spoke had a marvellous zeal—and we commend them for their zeal—but it was a zeal that profited them nothing, they were not saved. And, my friends, you may read many books, and write many books, and go to church, and give alms, and be ever so zealous in your religious life, and yet remain in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity—these Jews were not saved.*

### III.

What is the explanation? I suppose I shall have to deal with that somewhat delicately. *Why were they not saved?* Paul says it was BECAUSE THEY WERE IGNORANT. There is nothing that will offend people more quickly than to be told they are ignorant, especially in our day. Ignorance is nothing to be proud of unless it answers to the name of Doctor of Philosophy—and then you can be proud of it! When you have got out of the kindergarten into the primary, and into the university, and when you learn that nothing can be certainly known, and publish your ignorance to the world, then you can be proud of it! That is the modern professor. But these people were ignorant, and that is the trouble to-day. There are multitudes of people who are religious, but they are ignorant; they have a "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge".

Do not misunderstand, *this is not an intellectual ignorance.* A man may know the Bible by heart. I heard of a man, I cannot verify it, but it was told me as being authentic, who had committed the entire Bible to memory, and he would stand before a great audience on the street or anywhere and challenge people to call chapter and verse in any part of the Bible, and he would undertake to repeat that verse without error. And my informant said he was tested again and again, but without fail. When asked about it he said that God had taken from him everything but memory. He could repeat the Bible, but it meant nothing to him. One of the worst infidels I ever met, I met in this city. He declared his belief that there was no God; he mocked at God and all religious matters; and when I quoted Scripture to him I found he could quote it as freely as I could. I discovered he had been a church member and a church officer. He had the Scripture in his mind—but he was not saved. You could go to a theological seminary and get a degree as Doctor of Divinity—and yet not know the way of salvation. Some of the greatest dumbheads in spiritual matters whom I have ever known were Doctors of Divinity. It is not an intellectual ignorance at all. It is not due to any lack of schooling in any of those branches of knowledge which men may learn from the world about them. Many of these for whom Paul prayed had been highly trained intellectually, and passed as learned men. Paul had himself, in his unconverted days, exemplified this ignorance: a man of unusual natural intellectual vigour, trained at the feet of one of the greatest doctors

of the law, he had been utterly ignorant of the vital thing which brings salvation.

*This ignorance is, in fact, a moral blindness, an unacquaintance with divine moral requirements, an insensibility to the transcendent beauties of holiness. Men do not believe with the mind merely. I know what the clever folks say: "Unless you can prove it, I will not believe it." I cannot prove that your wife is the best woman in the world—but you believe it! Nobody else can prove it. And what is more to the point, nobody else would believe you are as perfect as you think you are, but you believe it! It is with something deeper than the mind that people believe. I remember in this church some years ago there was a very excellent young woman and a miserable creature of a man. I knew the man's record, I knew whence he came; and I knew he would be no use to anybody, for he had been no use to himself. And yet a strange fascination grew up between the two. My assistant went to the woman and said, "Miss So-and-So, I am sorry to have to tell you what sort of man this is who is paying attention to you. We have his record, we know that he is not a fit companion for you, he will break the heart of any woman who will trust him." His record was produced, but she did not look at it. The poor, silly woman married him, and in due time she discovered that what my assistant told her was true—and a thousand times more; and if she is living today she is ruining her own folly that she could not believe what was told her. Men go on in their evil course in spite of all warning.*

No, it is not a matter merely of intellectual apprehension. It is with the eyes of the heart men see God, it is with the heart men believe unto righteousness, and until God the Holy Ghost opens their hearts as He opened the heart of Lydia, until the light that is above the light of the sun shines into men's darkened understandings, they never will be saved. And that was Paul's prayer. He said in effect, "They are intellectually trained, they know the Scriptures, they know the law, they observe the ceremonies of the law, they are outwardly religious; but with their hearts they have never believed." And so I bring you this message, that at the basis of it all there is a spiritual ignorance that must be dispelled if men are to be saved.

#### IV.

THEN THIS WORD WHICH SUMS IT ALL UP, the explanation of it all is this: "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." There are men here who would come to me at the close of this meeting and say, "Sir, I am no thief, I am no blasphemer, I am no libertine, I am a good husband, a good father, a good citizen—what do you mean by telling me that I am not a righteous man?" I tell you this, that you do not know what righteousness means. The righteousness of man is one thing, but the righteousness of God is a vastly different thing; and it was because they were ignorant of God's requirement that they strutted around, priding themselves on their full development, establishing their own righteousness. I heard a man get up in one of our prayer meetings a few years ago and say, "I guess I am as good a Christian as there is in Toronto!" Well, when a man talks like that, you know pretty well that he does not know very much about what it means to be a Christian.

Isaiah came into the presence of the Lord, and he said, "In the year that king Uzziah died"—when the earthly king perished—"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly"—two-thirds reverence and one-third activity. Even the sinless seraphim in the presence of that awful holiness covered their faces and their feet, and cried, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." And Isaiah, himself a seraphic prophet, fell before God and said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips"—why?—"for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." When Isaiah saw the King in contrast with his own unholiness, he bowed in abject submission to God, at

His feet, declaring himself to be unclean. And, my brother, if you could see God, if you only knew who and what God is, if you knew the requirements of His dreadful holiness, and measured yourself by that standard, you would know that you are short-measure; and that you cannot, by your own righteousness, find your way to God.

*What is the way then?* "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." What does that mean? It means that the righteousness of the law is incarnated and exemplified in the Person of Jesus Christ. It means that you and I must be as righteous as Jesus Christ is righteous before we can be saved—not that you must be as good as a church member, not that you should be as pious and good as your mother or father; but that you must be as perfect as Christ is perfect, or you never can come where God is. "Well," you say, "that is a bad job for most of us"—it is a bad job for all of us. There is not a shadow of a shade of a ghost of a chance for any of us; we are excluded by the Divine Standard. But "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." He has wrought out a righteousness which may be yours for the asking; and although you have no righteousness of your own, you may have His righteousness; though you have no obedience of your own, "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous". It is the obedience of Christ that is written down to the account of everyone that believeth; and if you will but trust Him, "Christ is the end of the law," for you.

What does it mean? It means that the law of God is a transcript of His own nature, and is what it is because God is what He is; and is as unchangeable as God Himself. It is the holiness, the absolute—I use the strongest word I know—even the absolute holiness of God. And man must hide himself in Christ, and be covered with the righteousness of Christ. He is "the end of the law". The law has said its last word in Christ: your sins were atoned for at the Cross, your debt was cancelled, the requirements of the law were fulfilled, and He is the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

I have often said it, but I think I will put it this way again to make it plain. When they took the garments from Jesus at the place called Calvary, they "took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be." So they cast lots, and one of the soldiers who crucified Jesus received His seamless robe. I have often wondered who it was. Was it the man who put the crown of thorns upon His brow? Was it the soldier who drove the nails through His hands and His feet? Perhaps it was the man who drove his spear to the heart of Incarnate Deity. It was one of them at any rate, one of them got the robe; and I expect he did what anyone would do, he put it on over his own robe to see how it would fit. I fancy I see his blood-stained garments covered by the seamless robe of Jesus Christ; I fancy I see him coming down from the hill. Somebody says, "I thought Jesus of Nazareth was crucified?" "So He was." "No, He was not, there He is." "No, that cannot be He." "Yes, there He is, I would know that robe anywhere." Someone else says, "He looks like Jesus, he has His robe on." One of the murderers of the Son of God came down from the place called Calvary wearing the seamless robe of Jesus. And when we cease from depending on our own righteousness, and cast ourselves entirely on the mercy of Christ, and trust Him for salvation, all that Jesus Christ is before God is reckoned to our account; His robe of righteousness wraps us about, His garment of salvation covers us:

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
'Mid flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head."

That is the way of salvation, in Christ and in Christ alone. Will you have Him? Will you say, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for myself is that I may be saved"? Will you lift your hand indicating your desire to trust Christ? How many are there in this crowd to-night who will do so?

*Several responded to the invitation.*

## Editorial

### "Gird Up the Loins of Your Mind."

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." These words were written by Peter (I Peter 1:13). He was not like Paul, whose mental discipline and furnishing had been accomplished under the direction of recognized masters. Peter was but a fisherman in whose calling such learning as the schoolmen valued found no necessary place. And yet it was not a vocation for dullards and weaklings: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep"; and they are usually men of alert and ready minds. Only men of stout hearts and vigorous minds choose such occupations. Thus the Master chose for positions of leadership men who, though unrecognized by their fellows, were, notwithstanding, men to whom His predestinating grace had given large natural capacities for great accomplishments. And the human author of the words we have quoted was one of twain whom learned men perceived to be "unlearned and ignorant", but of whom it was observed "that they had been with Jesus".

But listen now to this supposedly unlettered fisherman. Even in his salutation he takes us back to the Eternal's council-chamber, and talks of "the foreknowledge of God". Grounding his announcement on the indisputable fact of the resurrection of Christ, he proclaims a salvation which secures to the elect an eternal inheritance, for which they are divinely kept. With that as a certainty before him and us, he pours the light of that abiding hope upon all our present heaviness, and manifold temptations, and trials of faith, declaring its function to be the ultimate attribution to faith, and ascription to Christ of "praise, and honour, and glory" at His appearing.

Peter then proceeds to declare that even the prophets who foretold these wonders but vaguely understood them: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven: which things the angels desire to look into." Thus our one-time unlettered fisherman claims to be the bearer of a message dictated in eternity, written by wondering and enquiring prophets of ancient times, and the one subject of interest and study of the angels in heaven. There is no suggestion of apology for the gospel's failure to provide intellectual employment. On the contrary, the argument is this: with such a prize as an incorruptible inheritance awaiting you, with the mutual preservation of it and you for certain possession in prospect, with such a will and testament descriptive of its riches, and its price of purchase as you have before you, and with such examples of holy interest and study as searching prophets and passionately curious angels afford you,—"gird up the loins of your mind", address yourselves to an understanding of the possibilities of life, and be sober, as becometh an apprehension of its awful and potentially glorious concerns; "and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

#### I.

WE COME THEN TO THIS, THE REALIZATION OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF LIFE IN CHRIST DEPENDS UPON VIGOROUS MENTAL APPLICATION. That is the meaning of this admonition, "Gird up the loins of your mind." This exhortation was never more needed than now. The modern tendency is for the few to think for the many. Mechanical devices which approximate a mechanical brain, thinking machines of steel, are being continuously produced. The thoughts of the few are transmuted into steel for the use of the many; and many an office is now furnished with a collection of human machines. The newspaper



and magazine habit is mentally demoralizing. No one girds up the loins of his mind to read a newspaper! unless it be to read an occasional editorial article, and when it requires any mental effort, it is usually passed by! And there is an insistent demand for a religion which demands no thinking, which can be understood, and enjoyed, without mental effort. We do well to heed this fisherman-apostle, "If you would be a Christian worthy of the name, gird up the loins of your mind."

This does not shut the door upon the feeble-minded. In spiritual matters we are all feeble-minded to begin with: we have the minds of babes. And there is room for little children in the Father's house; there is abundant provision for spiritual babes at the Father's table. The gospel in all its sweetness and saving power may be believed by one who has never been to school. Like the signposts at the cross-roads, its directions are designed for the wayfaring man. It is simply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And the preacher who does not make that plain is grievously failing in his office.

These words mean that we must not be content with a mere elementary education in spiritual things. The Christian religion is designed to minister to the whole man, and therefore must give employment to all the faculties of the mind. This is a word to those who are reluctant to go to school religiously. Paul complained to the Corinthians that they were only babes; in his ministry to them he felt he had been cramped and circumscribed; they continued in the elementary state, and compelled him to continue as a kindergarten teacher; they had developed a capacity for nothing stronger than milk,—they had never yet enjoyed a good square meal of meat at their Father's table.

Are there any such among our readers? If so, the admonition is for you: "Gird up the loins of your minds"; try to get out of the primary class; try to get beyond the first principles, the mere alphabet and multiplication table of the Christian life. No one of all the children is more loved, nor receives more attention than the baby. His necessary food must be considered, and his pretty sayings must be quoted and admired. But the high chair standard must not be allowed to monopolize the entire household; and when baby has had his plate of soup and insists upon getting down from his chair, he must not be allowed to break up the gathering at the table, among whom are older children who have work to do, and who need and desire strong meat. That is the meaning of these words, "Gird up the loins of your mind." Let the babes be appropriately fed; but be it remembered that in their Father's house there are instruments which they must learn to play, tools which they must learn to use, pictures they must learn to love, books which they must learn to read and understand. They must learn more than the language of the nursery, they must acquire the speech of manhood, and learn the language of literature, of commerce, and of war. They must learn to take counsel with wise men, to share the conversation of the sage, to stand with their Father upon the heights, to look upon the world and understand: "Therefore gird up the loins of your minds." Stripped of all technicalities, it means, set your mind to work. As the soldier girds on his sword for the battle, as the Master Himself laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself in readiness to wash His disciples' feet; or, to modernize the metaphor, as the labourer throws off his coat, and rolls up his sleeves, and frees himself of all unnecessary encumbrances, that he may apply himself to his task, so do you set your mind to work, summon and discipline and apply all your mental powers to the task of being a Christian worthy of the name. As Israel's inheritance of Canaan became theirs as they fought their way into the possession of it; as the wealth of this western hemisphere was appropriated by those who dared the seas, and felled the forests, and wrested treasures from the field and mine, so the inheritance incorruptible is ours to possess and enjoy as we apply ourselves to the discovery and appropriation of its hidden treasures.

If you study the context you will see that there is this further reason for this attitude of mental readiness: it is the only safeguard against evil. Mental lassitude is ever the companion of moral laxity. The enemy finds easy access to the citadel where sentinels are drowsy. It was not safe for our own

or our allies' sentinels too readily to assume that a British cap above yonder ridge necessarily covered a British head: it might be the thatch of a German brain. Eternal vigilance is the price of safety. The ungirded mind is careless of moral distinctions, and an easy prey to the enemy's deceptions.

To "gird up the loins of the mind" is to summon all hands to quarters, and clear the decks for action; it is to set every faculty of the mind on guard with the will in command, subject only to the mightier Will. It is to maintain the attitude the Master Himself enjoined when He said, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

## II.

And now out of this mental alertness there grows, and as a natural fruit of it, The Virtue of Sobriety. "Be sober." The rendering, we suppose, cannot be improved upon; the revised version retains the word "sober" throughout. To be sober means, literally, to be not inebriated, not intoxicated, not with wine only, but to be not intoxicated with anything, not easily excited, not unduly swayed with emotions. The girding of the mind brings the emotional nature under control, and results in poise, steadiness of thought and purpose. We all need the admonition, "Be sober".

Insobriety is a characteristic of mental immaturity. They who never think deeply, too often live superficially. And we have all acquired a taste for mental stimulants—not food, but stimulants, we have craved: the pleasure of the passing hour—and we have found it, not, we hope, in gross indulgence, but in some form of excitement which has quickened the pulse, and multiplied the heartbeats, and packed weeks into days, and years into months. That has been characteristic of every phase of modern life. Young people, bent on pleasure, have no time to gird up the loins of their minds, because they are not sober. And business life has not escaped the infection; it has become a grind, a whirl, a rapid round of dissipation. Nor has the religious life escaped; the craving for stimulants is nowhere more apparent. The church is not a garden where flowers grow, or a table where food is spread, but a house of amusement and excitement, a bar where stimulants are served.

We ought, from Europe's blood-drenched fields, to have heard and heeded the message, "Be sober." Take life seriously, weigh its responsibilities, estimate its possibilities, consider its dangers, measure its truly awful potentialities for good or evil, and "be sober".

That does not mean, Be miserable, be gloomy, do not laugh, be much in tears. No; it does not mean that; but it means, Be a man or a woman, full-grown and thoughtful, as God designed you to be. Don't be a butterfly in the fields, or a moth about the candle; don't be content to be a child among his toys—"Be sober"; shun the superficial and artificial, aim at reality. Be reasonable; learn to weigh the values of life by standards of revealed truth. Avoid the by-paths; keep to the beaten track of the main road, and walk before God—"Be Sober".

And that follows from a girding of the loins of the mind: we do it to be sober. These things are mutually dependent and complementary. To dwell deep, and exercise our minds with thoughts of God, inevitably make one sober-minded; but though it may still our tongues, and silence our merriment, it enables us to rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory".

## III.

A mind thus girded and sobered will be characterized by a Quenchless Hope: "Hope to the end"—"set your hope perfectly" the revised version has it. The girded mind is sobered by reflection, but thereby learns how and where to set its hope perfectly.

It learns the vanity of earthly hopes. It discovers that so much is death-stricken; much that is hailed by the thoughtless as pleasure, it finds to be the laughter of fools, it is as the crackling of thorns under a pot; the light is not a star but a bonfire which will be turned to ashes before morning; and while others make merry, the mind that is girded is sober and serious.

But it discovers the realm of certainty and reality—the grace that is coming. That is the meaning, the grace that is being brought, the grace that

is always on the way. Like light from the farthest star, it is already speeding toward us; and much has come.

"Oh to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be".

Yes, whoever will gird up the loins of his mind, and look where angels look, shall find that it is all of grace:

"Grace first contrived a way  
To save rebellious man;  
And all the steps that grace display  
Which drew the wondrous plan.

"Grace taught my wandering feet  
To tread the heavenly road:  
And new supplies each hour I meet,  
While pressing on to God.

"Grace all the work shall crown  
Through everlasting days;  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise."

Well then, we may always hope for grace, and more grace: "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." We shall never be disappointed in this; we may "hope to the end for the grace"; we may set our hope perfectly for the grace; and whatever fails, grace can never fail.

But this quenchless hope beholds the coming of the Lord. Much grace we have had, much we are now receiving; but then we shall be like Him, "for we shall see him as he is". Then we shall "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Then He will reward His servants, He will vindicate His truth; therefore we may hope for the grace which shall be ours at His appearing. I do not know when or how He will come, but I would gird up the loins of my mind, I would be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We are living in hope, we hope for better days; but there is no certainty in any earthly hope. There are truly fearful possibilities involved in the world's present confusion, which one does not dare to contemplate; but whatever it may hold of disappointment and sorrow, however dark the day or black the night before the final morning, here we are on a certain footing: we may "hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." No one can delay His coming nor rob us of the grace that shall be ours on that day.

Therefore be thoughtful, be sober, be always hopeful, and look for the ultimate triumph of righteousness in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

## The Christian Worker's Greatest Need.

By Rev. T. I. Stockley.

The late Dr. A. J. Gordon of Boston, Massachusetts, once wrote, "I know of nothing more nearly resembling Pentecost than the scenes which followed the preaching of David Brainerd at Crossweeksing, N.J. Even Brainerd himself looked on with astonishment and awe at the power of the gospel on the hearts of those savages." Now, we presume, that what we long for above all else today is to see the same gospel working similar wonders in the hearts of men and women around us. What, then, was the key to the great work which Brainerd witnessed? How is it to be explained? Brainerd himself shall give us a suggestion in his dying counsel to his brother. Said he, "Strive to obtain much of the grace of God's Spirit in the heart; for when ministers feel the special gracious influences of the Holy Spirit in their hearts,

it wonderfully assists them to come at the consciences of men and, as it were, to *handle* them; whereas without these influences, whatever reason or oratory we may employ, we do but make use of stumps instead of hands". And if we want to see how it was that Brainerd received these "special influences", how it was that he could grasp the hearts of those stolid Indians, not with the "stumps" of reason and logic, but with the invisible and irresistible fingers of the Holy Spirit, then take another look at that man of God. See him in his secret place, praying whole days and nights with such intensity that even when the nights were very cold his garments would be wet with the sweat of his agonizing cries.

The worker's greatest need to-day is the same almighty presence and power of the Holy Spirit. And we should know and feel that need. Many Christians have *some* feeling of their need of the power of the Holy Spirit. They feel that they ought to confess Christ in the home, the workshop, and the office, but their lips refuse to utter the message of their heart. They feel that they ought to do something to advance the work of God, but they feel too helpless to touch it. Yes, and worse than all, they are constantly being overcome by besetting sins which carry them whither they would not.

We cannot but feel our deep need of power if *we think of the nature of the work* which is to be done. We are not sent forth by our great Master merely to reform the manners of men, nor to bring about better social conditions, nor to instruct the intellect, nor to teach morals, nor to expound politics. All these are important in their place, and most of them are included in the *results* of our work. But our task is vastly harder than all these: it goes down to the root of things. Our work has to do with the regeneration, the conversion, the sanctification of men. It is a task profoundly spiritual; it touches the secret springs of men's thoughts, and emotions, and motives. It goes to the very root of man's being, there to cleanse him from sin, and to implant within him the very life of Christ. "The standard under which we fight is a more sacred sign than that of Caesar, the territory that we invade is more difficult of conquest than any which kept the conquerors of the world at bay. We see rising before us the lofty fortresses of hostile error and sin; they must be reduced or razed. Every fortress to which the enemy of Light and Love can retreat must be scaled and destroyed, and every thought of the human soul which is hostile to the authority of Divine truth and holiness incarnate in Jesus Christ must be led away as a prisoner of war into the camp of Christ." Who is sufficient for these things? We may just as well talk to men about engineering, or electricity, and expect them to be born again thereby, as to talk to them of Christ and His gospel unless we are clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit. If we only realize in a very small degree the nature and magnitude of our work, we must feel how utterly incapable we are for such a gigantic task.

Our great need of the Holy Spirit's power will also *be felt when we come into contact with men*—when we see their spiritual dullness, their indifference, their deadness, their real dislike for the things of God,—when we stand face to face with devil-tormented people, and see how utterly incapable we are to cast the demon out. How helpless we are in the presence of sin, and ignorance, and prejudice, and hatred of God! How can we speak to dead souls without the presence of Him Who says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life"? What can we do to work the greatest of miracles, the miracle of a transfigured life?

Again, our need will be felt when we think a little further *of what this service means*. It requires for *motive* nothing less than the glory of God in the salvation of men, and that motive to be constantly present in our work. It requires that we put our best into every word we speak for Christ, and into every atom of work entrusted to our hands. It requires that, like Richard Baxter, we always labour to speak things *necessary*, and not to waste the Lord's time, and our energy and opportunity on things which do not touch the conscience, and heart, and will, and life of men. It requires that we explore the mighty continent of Truth, laid open to us in the Word of God; and that we return on every occasion to the people from freshly-discovered lands, from new visions of the glory of Christ, new victories over self and sin, from fresh tears and blood shed in the agony of prayer, and therefore

with ever new intensity of conviction, emotion, and life. It requires that we endeavour to know something of the needs of men—their sorrows and their sins, their pleasures and their difficulties, their heart questions, their falls and their sighs: the burdens of the men of business, the cares and tears of mothers in their homes, the doubts and atheisms of youth, the aching heart of some, and the giddy, empty lives of others. It requires that the priceless loan of time be always and only used for high and holy purposes.

Once more: our deep need of the Holy Spirit's wondrous power will be felt *when we see the lofty privileges and almost boundless possibilities which await us both in character and in service.* It is possible to live a life of constant triumph; possible to cast every care daily on the Lord and to be kept in perfect peace; possible to see the will of God in everything and to find that will to be "no longer a sigh but a song"; possible to put away all bitterness, and wrath, and evil-speaking daily; possible to become strong at our weakest point; possible "daily to enjoy the blessedness of belonging never more to ourselves but only to Him, our Lord"; possible to be always on the alert to catch the least whisper of His Voice; possible each day to find out what good works have been prepared by Him for us in which to walk; possible to abide in our Lord continually; possible to go through the hunger and temptation of the lonely wilderness and to come out victorious.

And in the special work of "doing good," we may have a strong, independent insight in the holy Word of God. We may have the tongue of fire with which to speak the living Word. We may have a heart of burning love for sinful, suffering men. We may have "the face of an angel" as we visit the homes of the sorrowing and the sick. We may have the boldness of Peter and John, the self-sacrifice of Paul, and the realized Presence of our Lord. We may be charged with the Holy Spirit's power so that there shall go forth from us a virtue that shall make the commonest words powerful and healing, like the hem of the garment of our Lord. We may have the joy of being used of God for the quickening of the dead, for bringing home the wanderers, for lifting up the fallen, for saving lost but priceless souls, and thus awakening in the world above new songs of heavenly joy.

If the need of the Holy Spirit is so vast, and if His presence means so much, let us then open every part of our nature to Him, and this sacred power will soon pour through every chink and aperture, and we shall be filled with God, and so "be strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man," and ever "meet for the Master's use."

#### TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY.

There is every prospect of a gratifying attendance of students at the Seminary, which will open October 3rd. Rev. T. I. Stockley returned from England this week, and at a meeting of the Faculty, every member being present, it was evident that a fine spirit of expectation possessed everybody. Mr. Stockley handed us thirty-three pounds in one-pound notes, which had been given him by different friends while he was in England, although he had never said a word to anyone about money, but spontaneously these different friends offered their contributions that they might have a part in the work. Other contributions are coming in, most of them very small, but all of them welcome. Recently we received a letter containing \$2.00 for the Seminary from a distant part of the United States. We remind our many friends that we have no endowment, and are dependent entirely upon the gifts of God's people; and the only medium through which we can appeal for help is this paper. Many of our readers have been very generous in their gifts toward Des Moines University, for which we are most grateful, and we hope they will continue. We should like also, however, if some of our friends could send us some help for the Seminary. In connection with the opening of the Seminary, a public meeting will be held on Thursday, October 6th, when the Trustees of the Seminary, and each member of the Faculty, will publicly sign the Seminary's Declaration of Faith. We hope all our Toronto friends, and many from outside Toronto, will plan to be present on that date.

### BIBLE CONFERENCE AT DES MOINES UNIVERSITY.

We remind our readers once again of the Bible Conference to be held at Des Moines, September 27th to 29th. We hope to have an attendance of at least one thousand people from outside Des Moines. We hope our readers who are within motor or train distance of Des Moines are already laying their plans to be present. It promises to be the greatest conference we have ever held.

### DES MOINES UNIVERSITY ITEMS.

A friend of the University, who desired to be unnamed, sent us a cheque a few days ago of one thousand dollars. In addition to that, *The Gospel Witness* office has sent to Des Moines, \$2,925.65. Nearly all this latter amount has come from Canadian contributors, and includes \$300.00 from Stanley Avenue Baptist Church, Hamilton, Ont. Des Moines University is in urgent need of funds, and we remind our readers that our task this year, from June, 1927, to June, 1928, requires us to raise \$170,000.00. We believe this can be done by everyone interested in really Christian education doing his or her best. Will not our readers make an effort to send us some contribution for this great work. Give what you can yourself, and get others of your friends to give also.

### WILLOWDALE BAPTIST CHURCH.

Rev. W. E. Atkinson reports that he has already received contributions of between two and three hundred dollars for the Willowdale Church. A cheque for \$50.00 was received from the group of Regular Baptists at Wheatley; another \$50.00 came from Ottawa; and various amounts from other places. The Willowdale Church needs \$2,000.00 which the Home Mission Board of Ontario and Quebec demands as the price of their portable building. We repeat, the Home Mission Board has no more right to demand the repayment of \$2,000.00 on that building than Jarvis Street Church has to demand the repayment to the Jarvis Street treasury of the monies committed in trust for Home Mission purposes to the Home Mission Board by Jarvis Street Church, amounting for the last four and a half years to \$8,821.10. But God is the Judge, and the Home Mission Board that has allowed itself to become the tool of the Modernist McMaster University, if it continues its present course, will soon be bankrupt. We again appeal to loyal Baptists everywhere to help this noble band at Willowdale to retain their church building. We confess that compliance with the unjust demand of the Home Mission Board of the Ontario and Quebec Convention is about as unpalatable to us as the payment of a ransom to a gang of kidnapers; but where the life of the church is at stake, we have no option. Contributions for Willowdale Church should be sent to Rev. W. E. Atkinson, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto.

### TO THE MEMBERS OF JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

Next Sunday we are aiming for a record attendance in the Bible School, and at morning service. There is a place for every member of the church in the School. The Pastor urgently requests every member of the church to make a special effort to attend the School, Sunday morning at 9.45, and to endeavour to bring the whole family along, especially the children to the various classes in the School. The Pastor will deliver a special address to the School on the subject, "David, the Giant-Killer". While it will be interesting to the children, the great principles of the lesson will apply to everybody.

### "WRECKING THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION".

Dr. C. J. Holman's new pamphlet on the above subject is a masterly summary of the present controversy among Canadian Baptists. Copies may be obtained without charge by writing the author, 75 Lowther Avenue, Toronto.

**BAPTIST BIBLE UNION SENIOR LESSON LEAF**

Vol. II.

T. T. SHIELDS, Editor.

No. 3.

Lesson 13.

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**DELIVERANCE THROUGH RESURRECTION.**

LESSON TEXT: Romans, Chapter 6.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

The abundance of grace becoming more manifest at the presence of sin, brings the question, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" to which we have the Apostle's fervent denial: "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein"? and his exhortation to and explanation of the life which is in keeping with the great justification and righteousness which comes freely through faith in the crucified Christ. It is now not the position of the believer before God that he deals with, but the life lived on earth which corresponds to the exalted position of the person who has accepted Christ. He describes such a person as being "dead unto sin" and who therefore cannot live any longer therein. He draws attention to the ordinance which everyone had obeyed, and asks if the meaning of that ordinance had not become clear and distinct in their thought, leading to the corresponding practice in the life. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life". In baptism they had publicly declared their union with Christ in His death, and in His burial, and in His resurrection, and as a dead man leaves everything behind him, so should they leave everything connected with the old life, and in resurrection union with Jesus Christ, enter upon an entirely new and distinct life, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin". The position to be taken is that faith in Christ has admitted them unto a new life, has destroyed the old man, that is, the corrupt nature full of evil desires, and has created in them a new man entirely distinct and separate from the old man, and the old man is to be treated as dead, and the new life is to be lived as those that are alive from the dead. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." The old life was lived unto the flesh and sin, but in dying with Christ he has died unto sin, and in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. This is the lesson of baptism: the old man is to be treated as dead, and the life to be lived is to be a new life in holiness and in obedience to God.

How to live this life is the great question of the sixth chapter. Two directions are given. The first is "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin"; and the second one is "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God". The first is a matter of reckoning, not a matter of fact. The old nature is still existing as every believer fully understands and experiences, and does exist until death, and we are to reckon it dead. If it were dead there would be no need for reckoning. What does it mean to reckon this nature dead? We are to take this position on the Word of God, and to claim freedom from this old life as if it were dead. We are to direct all the actions and purposes of our life in our relation to the old nature as if no such nature existed. We are to provide it with no encouragement. We are to listen to none of its demands. We are to abhor it as we do the corruption of death. It cannot be changed; it cannot be improved; and so long as life lasts here, we are to look on it as that which is dead, and to treat it accordingly. This is the one duty devolving upon followers of Jesus Christ in relation to the old man.

The other thing that we are asked to do is to yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead; denying the one, we are to make a complete

submission to the other, and in the service of God we are delivered from the old bondage through the indwelling Spirit, and enabled to yield ourselves to the service of God as those that are "alive from the dead".

To help us in this reckoning and obedience, the Apostle goes on to point out that sin shall not have dominion over us, because we are not under the law but under grace; that our relationship to God now is entirely different. There is no compulsion by the force of law, but there is the compulsion of a new life begotten in our hearts, that enables us to answer to the very greatest demands that are made upon us, because of the principle that directs now our service and obedience, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments". The power to whom we yield ourselves becomes for the time being the master, and we become the servants of the power, and it is preferable to become the servants of obedience unto righteousness, than to become the servants of sin unto death. We have already by the power of God denied the right of the old master, Sin. We have left his service and with our whole hearts we have obeyed the truth. By the Holy Spirit we have been freed from the service of sin, and we have willingly and gladly become the servants of righteousness. We are urged by the Apostle, who explains that he is speaking after the manner of men, to yield ourselves to righteousness unto holiness with the same readiness and with the same intensity and whole heartedness that we had previously yielded ourselves servants of uncleanness.

This contrast between the masters, the service, and the results of such service, he puts down more clearly and more emphatically. He speaks of sin as the master, of the time when righteousness had no attraction, and asks what fruit was then produced, what was the result of such service. The service was profitless, it was without good of any kind, its character was shameful,— "things whereof ye are now ashamed"? and the end of it was death. Now the master is God Himself. Being made free from sin, the fruit is no longer shame but holiness, and the end is everlasting life. Thus the Apostle urges to reckoning ourselves to be dead unto sin, and to yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.

The closing statement in his great exhortation and argument is, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord".

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#### PARLIAMENT ST. BRANCH.

The work at the Parliament Street Branch of Jarvis Street, under the leadership of Mr. W. N. Charlton and his band of workers, is being well maintained. Souls are being saved in the adult service every Sunday; while the School at 3 o'clock each Sunday and Junior Service at 7, are ministering to the spiritual welfare of the juvenile life of the neighborhood. Many of the children have professed faith in Christ. We covet the prayers of our readers for this branch of our work.

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#### ADVERTISEMENT.

To all new subscribers for THE GOSPEL WITNESS (\$2.00 per year) the publishers will send free a copy of Dr. Shields' new book, "Christ in the Old Testament," 160 pages, containing ten lectures on "How To Study the Bible." The book is a suggestive study of the Bible from Genesis to II Samuel. Ministers will find this book will so "prime the pump," as Mr. Spurgeon used to say, as to suggest hundreds of sermons. Send a subscription for THE GOSPEL WITNESS to a preacher friend. To present subscribers the book will be sent postpaid for fifty-five cents. Address THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.