

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES AND
IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL, DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any Address. 5c. Per Single Copy.

T. T. SHIELDS, *Editor.*

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

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

Vol. 6. No. 34.

TORONTO, JANUARY 5th, 1928.

Whole No. 296.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

HOW JESUS CHRIST IS EXCLUDED FROM HIS OWN CHURCH AND BEGS ADMISSION AT HER DOOR

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 2nd, 1927.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Rev. 3:20.

The seven epistles of the second and third chapters of this book were addressed to the seven churches of Asia. There is a sense, of course, in which they were, and are, addressed to all the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ; but these particular messages were sent to churches, as such, in their collective capacity. In this seventh letter our Lord represents Himself as having been excluded from His own church; He is shut out of the assembly of the saints; they have made it impossible for Him to abide with them.

I.

IT IS THEREFORE POSSIBLE FOR THE LORD JESUS TO BE EXCLUDED FROM HIS CHURCH; it is possible to have a church without Christ, to have the organization, a company of professed believers gathering in His name, professing His gospel, declaring allegiance to Him, professing to be engaged in the doing of His work, and yet, with it all, to have excluded Christ from their fellowship. I greatly fear that even in our day there are many churches in which the Lord Jesus would not be at home, churches whose condition of life make it impossible for Him to abide with them.

Some of our coloured friends have a simple way of telling a great deal of truth, and I have heard of one who tried to join a church. The minister was somewhat disturbed by his application, he did not want to admit

the coloured brother. He examined him, and found that he was sound enough in his profession, but he bade him think it over, and come to see him again. But the coloured brother did not come, and after a while the minister met him, and said, "Well, did you talk to the Lord about that matter we were discussing?" "Oh yes, sir; I talked to the Lord about it." "Well, what did He say?" "Oh, He said, 'Never mind, Sam, don't you ask them any more. I have been trying to get into that church for a long time Myself, and they would not let Me in; so it is no wonder they shut you out.'"

The Lord does try to get into His church, but from many churches to-day He is utterly excluded. There is an article from "The Life of Faith" which I have reprinted in the current issue of *The Gospel Witness*, an article written by an Irish minister who had spent two or three months holidaying in England, roaming all over the country, and attending no less than three churches a day. And he gives it as his testimony that, religiously, England seems to be about as barren as it was when John Wesley began his work, urgently in need of revival, without the Spirit, without power, without the manifestation of the Divine Presence in the midst of His people.

I fear there are many churches in this city into which a poor sinner might go without ever being made to feel his need of Christ. I have sometimes been in homes, not very often, but occasionally, where I did not know

whether there was a husband or not. I found out indirectly that there was such an article of furniture!—but he had no place whatever in the government of the house; he was utterly ignored by the mother and the children; poor father hardly counted for anything, although he was supposed to be the head of the house. And that is a picture of many churches to-day, everybody is considered but the Lord Himself; never is it asked what His will is, what His plan is, what His purpose in the life of the church is. I saw an advertisement of a church in Des Moines—and it was a Baptist Church. They were to meet in the Shriners' Temple, the mayor was to speak, and afterwards they were to have a service, a kind of after-service that was to be full of "pep", whatever that is! Popular songs would be sung, everybody would be made to feel at home—everybody, I suppose, but the Lord Himself. There was never a suggestion that His presence was expected, and from the programme I feel morally certain that His presence would not be experienced.

It is possible to exclude Christ from the church. It would be possible to exclude Him from this church. In time past we have lost some people, we have had to be willing that they should go, and we have survived. We can get along without people, but oh, we cannot get along without the Lord. If He should leave us, then we should be of all churches most miserable. I ask you to think of the possibility of our gracious Lord being outside of our fellowship, not one of us, never in the midst of His people, withholding His power, withholding His blessing.

But even though He be excluded from the church, He is not shut out from the full knowledge of all that happens there. Read these letters and you will find this characteristic of all of them: He says, "I know thy works." He can know as much from the outside as from the inside, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do".

II.

But now I should like to call your attention to SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH FROM WHICH THE LORD JESUS IS EXCLUDED. What was the outstanding characteristic of the church at Laodicea? It was this: "Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." There were no extremists in the church of Laodicea! None of its members would ever be charged with fanaticism! They were middle-of-the-roaders; they believed in tolerance; they assumed an attitude of neutrality; they were not hot about anything, and they were never cold toward anything—they were just in the middle, always between the two; they were neither hot nor cold; they were lukewarm. That is a very popular temperature with some people, spiritually, they like to live in the Temperate Zone; they do not want the hot weather that ripens the fruit, they do not want to be exposed to the cold blasts that make them move quickly about the Lord's work, they do not want to be where they will have to plow in the cold: "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold." They prefer a climate where there is neither winter nor summer, where it is always a very agreeable temperature—guaranteed not

to disturb anyone! That is the attitude of the modern church.

They had a meeting in the City Temple in London some time ago presided over by Dr. Norwood, the pastor—the City Temple in which the great Joseph Parker ministered the glorious gospel of the blessed God for so many years—and at that meeting they had someone representing the Hindus, someone representing the Mohammedans, someone representing the Theosophists—nearly every anti-Christian cult had its representative. They sang, if I mistake not, a Mohammedan hymn. *The British Weekly* will never be charged with fanaticism under its present management, it will never be accused of being ultra-orthodox, but even *The British Weekly* had something to say about that! In the record of the meeting the writer said that if the apostles and Christians of an earlier day had only learned such tolerance as was exemplified at this City Temple meeting, there would have been no martyr fires, there would have been no controversy, and *there would have been no Christianity!* But that lukewarm attitude is the popular attitude to-day.

I think much may be learned from an examination of the commendations and the condemnations meted out to the other churches to which the great Head of the church writes. The church at Ephesus was commended for this, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil"—there is no lukewarmness there, no attitude of tolerance there, and—"Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." That is an ugly word, is it not? But the church at Ephesus was actually commended by the Lord of the church for recognizing liars as such. They were not perfect by any means, but the Lord still abode with them; He was not shut out from that church whose attitude was so positive toward good and evil, toward truth and untruth.

Then look at what is said of the church at Smyrna, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not"—say one thing, but are something else—"But are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." They, too, were firmly grounded, and the Lord of the church knew that in the time of testing they would actually go into prison and suffer tribulation, but He promised them victory.

Then look at the church at Pergamos: "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." They were commended because they had held fast His name, and had not denied His faith even in time of trial, and He was still with them. But He warns them of their great defect, "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." Two false doctrines

were represented, and the Head of the church complained, not that as a church they believed these doctrines, not that they were intolerant, but that they were tolerant toward them. He said, "Ye suffer things which I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

My dear friends, *a church cannot suffer false doctrine, and at the same time enjoy the presence and power of God.* A denomination cannot invite to its pulpits men who will say: "And now after the lapse of all the intervening centuries, it is still an open question whether after all it was not misleading to call Jesus the Christ" and enjoy God's presence. Three weeks ago a man stood in the Bloor Street Baptist Church who is the author of the saying I have quoted. They knew who he was, they knew that he was worse than a Unitarian, that his books are crammed full of infidelity. Here is another quotation:

"It is doubted whether any absolute external authority in matters of faith has been provided or is needed. Similarly, it is doubted whether the series of events recorded as occurring at the beginning of the Christian faith, or at any state of its progress, are to be considered as supernatural in the sense commonly intended hitherto by that term. Similarly, also the question whether there was an original supernatural deposit, and, if so, what it was, is now open to perfectly free discussion, without prejudice to the Christian character of him who raises the question."

Or again:

"It is even possible . . . that if all the teachings of Jesus were brought together in the exact form in which he gave them there might be found among them some that would not commend themselves as fixed, and final to the faith of the most intelligent and devout Christians of the present day. Men cannot be called upon to believe things simply because of the name that is attached to them."

And one-third of the members of the Senate of McMaster University are members and officials in the church which invited the semi-infidel Professor George Cross to a Baptist church! Why, my brethren, you cannot have that in the pulpit, and at the same time enjoy the presence and power of Jesus Christ—"Thou hast also them that hold the doctrine—of Balaam—that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes."

Then once more the church at Thyatira is addressed after this fashion, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants." They were not blamed for her teaching, they were not blamed for believing what she taught; but they were blamed for permitting her to teach, for suffering her. The Laodicean church were so tolerant of everything, they were so lukewarm, that nothing offended them at all; and from them the Lord had withdrawn His presence. I know it is popular to belittle the importance of the doctrines of the gospel, but I am sure that no church can suffer the denial of these things, without suffering, at the same time, the withdrawal of the presence and power of the Spirit of God. And what is true of the church is just as true of a collection of churches, call it a denomination, or what you will.

But it is not doctrine only: *these various churches are commended or condemned for their works.* Let us remember therefore that we must be sound in practice as

well as in doctrine. We must do the first works as well as hold the first principles.

I have not time to go into details, but I call your attention to this, that in every instance *the Lord commends them for their positive attitude*, hot or cold, one or the other, but lukewarmness is impossible to Him. They were even commended for hating certain things: "But this thou hast that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." I read some time ago that the most dangerous temperature at which anyone could keep their house was somewhere about sixty-three to sixty-five. If it were colder one would stir up the fire, or if it were warmer you would be likely to open the windows and let in some air. But at that temperature, because it is tolerable, one is likely to endure it, and in the attempt to take a very severe cold. In this church when the temperature declines let us not fail to stir up the furnace again, for then it is time to put on a few extra coals. We are never safe while we are lukewarm. Do not let us be afraid to be called extremists and fanatics in the service of the Lord, for we cannot have His abiding presence so long as we are lukewarm.

Growing out of that lukewarmness there is, however, *another characteristic which I think I ought to name. It is self-righteousness:* "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." That is characteristic of the modern church. I remember preaching a sermon in this church some years ago when one of the deacons said to me, "Now, Pastor, I think your sermon was all right. I think it would have done"—I give you his exact words—"I think it would have done for Walmer Road or Bloor Street; but our dear people in Jarvis Street do not need that kind of thing"! They did need it, and they needed it badly; but wherever you find that attitude of smug complacency, you will find it very difficult to preach the gospel, and you will preach without the presence and power of the Spirit of God. The people who are "rich" and "increased with goods" will not tolerate the gospel of the blood. There is no doctrine that is more cordially hated to-day than that which declares that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture. Someone may say, "Why should I need to be washed in the blood? I am perfectly respectable, thank you. It is all very well for a down-town mission somewhere, for the down-and-outs." A former member said to me of this church, "You want to make Jarvis Street into a mission. This is a church, this is not a mission." "Well," I said, "if it is not a mission it is not a church, for every church has a mission." Oh yes; the gospel of the blood of Christ, salvation through the blood, is all right for the drunken man, and people who are ragged, and have got down into the ditch, but surely a respectable body of people like ourselves don't need that! Whenever people assume that attitude toward the gospel, you may be sure the Lord will be absent from that people. We are this evening to gather at the Supper of the Lord, and we are to remember Him—how are we to remember Him? Did He tell us to remember His teaching? His example? No! He took the bread and brake it and said, "This is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." And He took the wine and said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show"—What?—"the Lord's death till he come." He

wrapped up the great central truth of the gospel, and said to us, "Whatever you forget, never forget that I died for you. Whatever you preach, or fail to preach, never cease to proclaim the death of Christ."

But you cannot proclaim it in self-satisfied churches. I know of a certain superintendent, not a Baptist, who less than two years ago when addressing students who were going out to preach the gospel, advised them not to preach the doctrine of the blood! Think of it, officially advised these young men to ignore the blood! Why? "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." That is the attitude. And, my friends, we have come to that in our own Denomination. You mark my words, we have in one of our own professors in McMaster the forerunner of a procession; the man who openly declares that he does not believe that Christ endured the punishment of our sins, who belittles the blood of Christ as a means of salvation, the presence of that man does not prophesy blessing; it prophesies dearth and barrenness in the Denomination from which our Lord Jesus is thus excluded. There is no room for a gospel of grace where people are "rich and increased in goods." That is for the bankrupt, that is for the people who have nothing! And in our day that is the prevailing attitude: men are saved by their own righteousness rather than the righteousness of Christ.

III.

BUT HE STANDS AT THE DOOR AND KNOCKS, He *knocks with His bleeding hand*. I wonder if any of us have excluded Him from our hearts? I wonder are any members of this church conscious of being out of fellowship with Jesus Christ? I wonder if there are any here this evening who are not in communion with Him Who comes knocking, bidding us open the door to Him?

Sometimes He knocks with a rod, just as you knock at the door with a stick, sometimes He comes that way: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." I think it ought to be our daily prayer that He would rebuke and chasten us as a church, that He would not suffer us to depart from Him, but that He will lay His rod upon us rather than allow us to forsake our first love. I would rather have another revolution in this church, I would rather have anything, I do not care what it is, anything, than lose the presence and the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. ("Amen") Oh let us be on our guard, let us be watchful daily. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

And you who are the Lord's people, be careful as individuals. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." If you are without chastening, "then are ye bastards, and not sons." "Oh," you say, "things are going beautifully with me. I have no kind of trouble at all. I am just as happy as the day is long!" Well, that is how it ought to be, and if you are in fellowship with the Lord, you may praise God that that is so; but it is a sad day when a professing Christian can be comfortable while out of fellowship with the Lord. Be careful lest He lay His rod upon you, lest He chasten that He may bring you to Himself.

Thus He knocks *and calls by His Word*, that we should come back to Him, and, blessed be His name, He will come in to us. "If any man hear my voice"—my friends, He cannot come into the church as a church. The church is made up of individuals, and although He is speaking

to the church, He says, "If any man hear my voice"; we must receive Him individually. I should like to say this to you members of Jarvis Street Church, resolve before God that if blessing should be lost in this place it shall not be lost through you; let each one say, "If the Lord should depart from this place, I will see to it He will not depart from my heart; I shall abide in Him, and let His word abide in me."

I hear people praying sometimes in the prayer meeting, "Lord, if there be anything in our hearts displeasing to Thee, take it away."—He will do nothing of the kind, He will never take it away. I will tell you what He will do: He will reveal it to you, and tell you to put it away, that is His method. He does not come violently upon us, but by the light of His Word He will show us the evil, and say, "There it is—there it is—there it is—put off the old man with his deeds, put him off." He calls us into co-operation with Himself always, He energizes the human will.

He comes back when we open the door. He could break it in if He would, but He says rather, "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." That is His way—"I will come in."

That is a very simple thing, but I wonder if you could see the Lord Jesus walk down this aisle to-night and take His place on this platform, and be assured unmistakably that the Lord is in the midst, what then would the presence of anyone else matter? Would you think of the person beside you? If He were in the midst, what would you think of—last week's business? Your likes and your dislikes? I venture to say that if our faith could see Him, if we could be absolutely sure that the same Jesus Who died for us is actually in the midst of His people, He would monopolize our thoughts, we should think of nothing, of no one, but the Lord Himself. Listen, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." I don't care who else comes, I want the Lord to come to church; it makes but little difference whether we have few or many, if only we have Him. And, my friends, if every one of us will open the door and let Him in, it will be impossible for us ever to meet in this place without all the assembly knowing that the Lord God Himself is in the midst of us. Oh, will you plead that promise? Will you tell Him, "Lord Jesus, Thou hast said 'I will come in' and I have opened the door?" As you do it, He will enter and take possession, no matter what the house is like. Do not stop to sweep it up and put things in order: open the door.

I have sometimes surprised people, as every pastor has. Somebody has knocked at the door, and they thought it was the butcher, or the baker, or the candlestick maker. Once I was mistaken for a rag man! I went early one afternoon and knocked at a door. The door was immediately opened, and a woman stood there with a dish in one hand and a towel in the other, washing the dishes. "Oh," she said, "Pastor, I thought it was the ragman!" She had heard a man going down the street calling, "Rags, bones, bottles", and she supposed it was he who was at the door. "Well," I said, "I am glad you did not know it was I, or I suppose I should have had to wait until you got your best bib and tucker on, or you might not have let me in at all." Sometimes I have gone to the door, and have heard someone hurrying around putting the chairs in order, and straightening up the room, because a stranger had come. Will you let the Lord wait outside until

you have straightened up? Let Him in, and you will find that things will be put in order as soon as He comes in; only let the church open the door to Him and when you have Him you have everything.

No, it is not burning eloquence in the pulpit we need, it is the presence of the Lord; it is not music—I love music, and we have it, everyone is in the choir in Jarvis Street. Dr. Gillon, Dr. Pettingill, and I do not know how many others, say, "I have never heard people sing as they do in Jarvis Street." I never hear it anywhere else myself. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee"—let the choir sing, and let all the people sing as well. That is how we ought to sing, to praise the Lord for making melody in our hearts. But it is not music we need, any kind of music. It is not money we need primarily, although we need that. If you know of anyone who has a million dollars, just send him to me! I want at least a million right now, or any amount of money for the Lord's work. I wish you would begin to pray for money, money for Des Moines University, money for our Seminary, money for *The Gospel Witness*, money for our church. We need money—but we need something far more than money, we need the presence of the Lord. And if this promise is fulfilled to us, "I will come in", then we shall have plenty, there will be no lack.

IV.

And what will happen? WHEREVER HE COMES, THERE IS A BANQUET. "I will come in to him, and will sup with him." Did you ever notice that? You have always thought of doing the supping yourself, have you not? "Oh, I am so hungry, so thirsty," you say, "I wish He would come in and satisfy this soul of mine." But that is not what He says. He says, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him." I wonder what He means? What do you suppose He means? You know how you look after your guests, do you not? You know that you are particularly careful, if you have made a feast in someone's honour and he accepts your invitation, and comes in, you are very particular to see that that person at least is well served, for he has come to sup with you. How does the Lord Jesus sup with us? We cannot give Him bread and wine, we cannot minister to His body. Does it mean that the Lord Jesus finds special enjoyment in the assembly of the saints? When I accept an invitation to dinner, I tell you frankly it is not for the sake of the dinner,—I have never yet found it impossible to get a good dinner at home—I do not go out for the sake of the dinner: I go for the sake of the company. Does it mean that the Lord Jesus comes for the sake of our company? Does He beg an invitation of our hands, "Open the door, and let me come in, and I will sup with you"?

I will tell you what I think it means. You remember what Jesus said outside Samaria when they came with their material ministry and said, "Master, eat"? He said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." He had supped with someone. With whom? With the woman who sat at His feet, and heard His words. And you know when you teach Sunday School for the sake of the Lord Jesus, and when you give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, and that little child takes that cup of cold water, He says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"—that is when He sups with us. And when the Lord Jesus is in the midst, the choir do not sing for the sake of being

heard, or of showing how they can sing: they sing for the glory of God, they sing that He may sup with them. The teacher does not teach merely for the sake of having a large class, but teaches in order that his or her scholars may be saved. And whatsoever he or she does, it is done for the glory of God; and He comes in and sups with us; He has fellowship with us in all this work, and we sup with him.

You housewives know that on some occasions it is a little embarrassing if the senseless man of the house brings two or three people home with him to dinner when you did not expect them. Is that not so? These men, you know, imagine the pantry is always full, and it does not make a bit of difference if you take a half dozen people home to sit down! But the woman in the kitchen knows better, and if you are going to invite people home for dinner, you had better see there is something on the table. I went to a home one day in the days when people used green tea, and there were some other callers there. These callers did not get along with green tea very well, and they used to take some black tea with them for themselves. They took it everywhere they went. I have been half tempted to do that same thing myself sometimes—especially down South. But these people used to go about and visit, and when tea time came, the lady would ask, quite diplomatically, if her hostess would mind making her some tea out of her own bag. And do you know what happened? She offended everyone, nobody liked it at all. But our Lord Jesus comes, and He brings His supplies with Him. It is just like Elijah coming to the widow. You remember he said, "I have come to stay with you a while. Go and bring me something to eat." "Oh," she said, "I did not expect anyone to dinner to-day. Beside, times are hard, and I have just got a little meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, and I was just going out to gather a few sticks to bake it for myself and my son, that we might eat and die. There is a famine in the land." But Elijah said, "Never mind, you go and make me a cake first; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." And so that poor widow, with only a little oil, made a cake for the man of God; and she found that she had more left than when she started. The next day she went on making cakes for the man of God and herself and her son, and there was no end of the meal or of the oil—because the man of God came and supped with her.

So, my friends, if we open our hearts to the Lord Jesus and let Him come in, He will bring all the fulness of Heaven's treasures with Him; it will be like having a multi-millionaire come to live with you. How would you like that, for some man to go home with you to-night, if you knew he was worth millions and millions, and he were to say to you, "Now, do not trouble about the gas bill, or the electric light bill, or the butcher, or the baker. Give all the bills to me. I will pay them for you"? That would be fine, would it not, to have someone living with you to whose resources there was no end? That is just what our Lord Jesus wants to do. He will come in with us and sup with us, and we with Him.

I have often wondered how it must have felt to be with the disciples there in that upper room when Jesus took the bread and gave it to His disciples, and they received it at His hand; and when, after supper, He took the cup and gave it to them, and they received it at His hand,

and He said, "Take eat, this is my body. . . . This is my blood of the new testament". Do you receive the elements of the Communion at the hand of the Lord Jesus? Do you receive them only from the deacons who serve you, or do you say, "I sit at the King's banqueting table; and as He supps with me, I sup with Him"? Let us examine ourselves that we may eat worthily. I wonder what worthiness we need to come to the Table of the Lord? Can anyone tell me? The only worthiness I know is this: to feel that we are so utterly unworthy that we depend upon the righteousness of Christ alone. That is the thing that makes us worthy.

Have you trusted Him? Have you believed in Him as your Saviour? Have you received Him into your heart?

Have you been "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"? Have you come out of Egypt under the sprinkled blood? Have you gone through the Red Sea? Are you living a new life? If you are, you may expect the manna, and the water from the rock; men will eat angels' food. May the Lord help us this night.

Let us pray: Bring us to Thy Table, O Lord, by Thy grace, trusting only in the merit of Jesus Christ. However unworthy we are, make the worthiness of Jesus Christ very real to us. Let us trust Him, and obey Him, as we do this in remembrance of Him. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

News from the Front

BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO.

When some weeks ago we held a meeting in Belleville, we had probably two hundred and fifty or three hundred people in the City Hall. One of the papers said the City Hall was packed to the doors. This was not strictly accurate. It is true that it was full to the doors, but there were some seats elsewhere that were not filled. Still it was a fine gathering, especially in view of the fact that we had no organization, but went there simply to give our testimony.

A week or so later, Dr. Farmer and his helpers visited Belleville, and this time the meeting was held in the Belleville Baptist Church. On the occasion of our going there an advertisement was put in the paper, signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Deacons' Board, informing the people of Belleville that the Victoria Avenue Baptist Church had nothing to do with our meeting. We suppose, however, that the whole organization was behind Dr. Farmer's meeting. One of the Belleville papers which was sent to us reported a very small attendance, and we have received information from the inside that the attendance numbered thirty-six.

We were informed that Dr. Farmer announced to the whole thirty-six that he was willing to meet Dr. Shields anywhere, on any platform. We are aware that people sometimes receive wrong impressions, and it may be that the person who heard what Dr. Farmer said, did not altogether understand him. But in order to make sure, we publish the following open letter to Dr. Farmer. A marked copy of this issue of *The Witness*, with a covering note, will be sent by registered mail to Dr. Farmer, so as to ensure his receiving it. This is our letter:

Toronto, Canada,
January 2, 1928.

"Dr. J. H. Farmer,
McMaster University,
Toronto, Canada.

Dear Dr. Farmer:

I am informed, whether correctly or not I cannot say, that on the occasion of your recent visit to Belleville you announced to the congregation there assembled that you would be willing to meet Dr. Shields on any platform, to discuss the issues before the Denomination to-day.

I hope you were correctly reported, and if you were, I assume that you stand ready to fulfil your promise?

This is to say that I am prepared to meet you on any platform you may designate, at any time, provided only I am given sufficient notice so that the time proposed will not conflict with any other previous engagement.

May I add to this that I should be glad to meet at the same time, not only yourself, but Chancellor Whidden, Dr. John MacNeill, Professor Marshall, Dr. Geo. T. Webb, and any and all others whom you may like to have associated with you.

Statements you have made on different occasions in my absence have been reported to me, and I should be most happy to have you repeat those statements in my hearing where I would have an opportunity to reply to you in the presence of the same people to whom these statements were made.

At the meetings we have held in different places, we have, on every occasion, invited anyone in the audience to ask any question, or to make any remark at any time. To this practice I understand, in some meetings at least, you have objected. This is to inform you that wherever you hear of a meeting being held in opposition to McMaster's Modernism, please consider yourself, or some of your associates, to be invited to attend, to share in the meeting and ask as many questions as may be desired.

Hoping to hear from you at an early date, I am,

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) Thomas T. Shields."

KITCHENER, ONTARIO.

On Sunday, January 1st, in company with Rev. E. A. Brownlee, and Mr. Wm. Fraser, we went to Kitchener, having an afternoon meeting which we held at two o'clock in the Lyric Theatre. Rev. H. A. Ackland, of Hespeler, occupied the Chair. The Theatre is a large building, having fifteen hundred and seventy-five chairs. It was not full, but there was a large gathering of five or six hundred people. Rev. Andrew Imrie, who was present, informed us that he had communicated by telephone with Dr. Farmer the Friday evening preceding, informing him of the meeting, and inviting him to be present and to bring anyone with him to share in the discussion of the afternoon. But

neither Dr. Farmer, nor anyone representing him or his cause, put in an appearance. The people—yes, the people, the common, ordinary, everyday, people, who believe the Bible to be the Word of God, who have had an experience of His redeeming grace, will draw their own conclusions at last.

COLLIER ST. REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCH, BARRIE.

The friends and members of the Collier St. Regular Baptist Church, Barrie, Ontario, organized early this summer, spent an enjoyable time together last Thursday evening, December 29th. After supper, at which about seventy were present, they adjourned to the church auditorium for a song service, where they were joined by a number who were unable to be present earlier in the evening. During the evening an illustrated lecture on the life of Christ was given, which was both interesting and profitable. Through the generosity and energy of the Women's Society, alterations on the newly-acquired church property are almost completed. The Collier St. Church reports increasing congregations, two well attended prayer meetings weekly, a growing Sunday School; while a Young People's Society is being organized.

Rev. T. I. Stockley, Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary, visited the church a few Sundays ago, and was a means of blessing to the congregation. During January, Rev. C. J. Loney and Mr. Wm. Fraser will visit Collier Street.

JARVIS STREET NEWS.

The week-end in Jarvis Street Church was full of blessing. A watchnight service was combined with the regular prayer meeting, the service beginning at nine o'clock and continuing until past the midnight hour. The Lecture Hall was filled in every part, and the presence of the Lord was very real. Sunday morning, on account of the Pastor's going to Kitchener, Dean Stockley preached, and the service was a rich treat to all. Dean Stockley's sermon appears elsewhere in this issue.

Sunday evening the service was conducted by Dean Stockley, the Pastor returning from Kitchener in time to baptize four candidates and deliver a brief message; after which there was a large Communion Service filling the downstairs of the auditorium, when twenty-eight new members were received into church fellowship.

The usual New Year's Morning Meeting was held Monday morning at ten o'clock in the church auditorium. There was a large attendance, and the meeting was one of happy fellowship. Some were present whose connection with the church went back to the days of Bond Street. The Pastor gave as the motto for the year, "To every man his work".

A CIRCULAR LETTER FROM THE CONVENTION EXECUTIVE.

We have before us a copy of a letter signed by W. H. Langton and C. E. McLeod, President and Secretary, respectively, of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. This letter is, apparently, sent in bulk to various churches to be mailed by the churches to every individual member of the church. The letter is a characteristic one. There is no appeal to the authority of God's Word; there is absolutely

no attempt to answer the charges we make against the Convention and its Boards, particularly McMaster University, which, we believe, have been proved up to the hilt. They are concerned because some reflection is cast upon the "men whose position and experience, as you well know, enable them to know intimately and at first hand the work being carried on by the several Boards—men, many of whom by long years of splendid service have won for themselves the absolute confidence of our people, a confidence that has been repeatedly expressed". They deplore our campaign "so persistently carried on for the disruption of the churches". They know very well that our campaign is in defense of the faith, and if a defense of the faith disrupts the church, we cannot help it; for we must stand for the faith.

All they have to say about our charges is that they are "false". It is the old cry of "liar". That is the resort of the criminal when he knows all the evidence is against him.

The Executive denies the charge that any one Board dominates the Convention in its policy. We do not suppose that the Board of Governors of McMaster University ever did pass a formal resolution demanding submission of all the other Boards. They had a better way than that! They saw to it that one of their members became Chairman of the Home Mission Board; another, Chairman of the Board of Religious Education; another, Chairman of the Foreign Mission Board; and then they had one of their professors elected Chairman of the Superannuated Ministers' Board (this chairmanship may since have been changed); another McMaster devotee, Rev. W. E. Hodgson, was Secretary of the Church Edifice Board—all the Boards together being an interlocking directorate dominated by McMaster University.

The Executive assures the churches of their confidence in respect to the outcome of the present "disrupting campaign". That being so, everybody ought to be happy. We are absolutely sure that the rudest awakening McMaster University ever received is awaiting her some little distance in the future. For example: we supposed that the Dufferin Street Church would stand about one hundred per cent. for McMaster University. We knew that a few Fundamentalists had withdrawn from that church to unite with other churches in Toronto. We knew that the Pastor, Rev. Edgar Allen, though at one time one of the most outspoken opponents—and that at a time when McMaster was exceedingly orthodox in comparison with what it is to-day—had thrown the full weight of his influence on the side of McMaster University. We supposed therefore that any vote taken in Dufferin Street would support McMaster University with practical unanimity. And yet a few weeks ago, when the denominational issue was discussed and voted upon, the vote stood fifty-six to thirty-seven in support of McMaster. Even in Dufferin Street, after others had left, a majority of only nineteen in support of the Convention! Are the denominational leaders still blind to the handwriting on the wall? Is this the kind of preparation needed for raising \$1,500,000?

In this connection, let us re-announce that preparations are being made for the holding of meetings all through the two provinces; and we expect in a short time to be able to publish many interesting reports. Meanwhile we give it as our opinion, that never since the controversy started was the outlook for Fundamentalists and Fundamentalism as bright as it is to-day. Our Baptist people are waking up to the discovery that they have been deceived by their leaders, and a time of reckoning is surely coming.

MORE ABOUT CHURCH WOOD.

Our long experience as a member of the Home Mission Board, giving us contact with most of our Home Mission churches, showed clearly that the law of deterioration operates in churches as well as in individuals. We recall many churches in which there were one or more families—sometimes only a single individual—which made progress in the church impossible. They, or he, or she, constituted a rock upon which successive pastors broke their hearts. What was really needed was some one man who would go into the church and stand, and perform a surgical operation, making it possible for the church to go on about its business.

In these days of conflict in our Baptist churches, that element, in many of the smaller churches, which has obstructed a succession of ministries, is developing a passion for the Denomination. It is really amusing how wonderfully loyal to the Denomination some people have suddenly become! Yet many of them for years and years have scarcely contributed a dollar to denominational funds. We know of a certain church of importance in the United States in which four or five men opposed the calling of a Fundamentalist pastor on the ground that he was not sufficiently loyal to the Denomination. In spite of their opposition, however, the pastor was called; whereupon the four or five opponents withdrew—but not one of them united with another Baptist church, but joined paedobaptist churches instead. What loyal denominationalists they were! The fact is, it is just such elements as are being used by the friends of McMaster to oppose those who offer uncompromising opposition to McMaster's Modernism.

WHEATLEY, ONTARIO.

The principle of the foregoing observations applies to the work at Wheatley, Ontario. At the Annual Business Meeting of the Wheatley Baptist Church, January 5th, 1927, the church stood by the pastor, and by a majority vote defeated that element that had hindered the church in its work for many years. But the church, instead of using disciplinary measures toward the opposing element, gave them one month's grace. What happened? With instructions from Toronto headquarters they came back at the end of the month with all the dead timber they could gather up off the Wheatley Baptist Church farm and made a fire. Our correspondent, in giving us this information, said, "Alas! the fire is still burning, and we are afraid it will burn until nothing but ashes is left."

The Pastor, Rev. John Dodds, like many others, received a threatening letter from Mr. Gideon Grant.

An analysis of those who constituted the majority at the meeting held one month later in the Wheatley Church, that is, on February 2nd, 1927, will reveal something of the conditions which we fear are all too general throughout the churches supporting the Convention. Altogether the opposition numbered thirty-six. Three of the thirty-six had never been at church during the pastorate of Mr. Dodds (February, 1925, to February, 1927); six of them had been absent for eighteen months; three others had not been to church for one year; four had not been to church for four months. Thus seventeen out of the thirty-six had for a number of months been non-attendants. Only two of the thirty-six were in the habit of attending prayer meeting, although there had been two prayer meetings weekly for almost the entire two years under review.

After the meeting of February 2nd, 1927, those who stood by the pastor withdrew, and on February 9th, 1927, formed

themselves into the Immanuel Baptist Mission. In order to safeguard their right as Baptists they joined the Essex Baptist Church on experience. Since that time they have continued to witness against Modernism, and to preach the gospel to the unsaved. On Friday, December 9th, this group organized into a Regular Baptist Church, called the Immanuel Regular Baptist Church of Wheatley. Rev. W. E. Atkinson and Rev. J. H. Peer, of Toronto, Rev. T. J. Mitchell, London, and Rev. F. Dyson, of Essex, were present on this occasion.

Mr. Peer spent Sunday, December 11th, with the Wheatley brethren, and was greatly used of God in bringing blessing to the people. The members of the new church rededicated themselves to the Lord, and fifteen responded and came forward to follow the Lord wholly. The following Sunday, December 18th, though very cold, a company of thirty-six went over to Essex, twenty-five miles distant, to a baptismal service, where eight put on Christ in baptism. There are at least eight others waiting to be baptized. This has caused much rejoicing among the people, and in many of these instances prayer was singularly answered.

At the organization of the church, nineteen were dismissed from the Essex Baptist Church to form the new church at Wheatley; four were received by experience, and two others will be received by experience; also the eight who were baptized, thus bringing the membership up to thirty-three—and still more to follow.

We ask our readers especially to pray for the husbands of five of the members of this church, that they may be brought to the Lord.

The new organization at Wheatley affords another illustration of the truth that when the Spirit of God is given right-of-way, blessing always follows. The fact is, there are some churches like furnaces toward springtime: they show a big bed of coals, and one would think the house ought to be warm. Yet all the radiators are cold. The reason is, the furnace is two-thirds full of clinkers, and the only way to get a real fire is to dump the thing, poke the clinkers out, and start all over again. We are inclined to believe that many of our Baptist churches are like that furnace, they need dumping. And the new fire, though perhaps much smaller in bulk, will give two or three times the heat and light. We congratulate the Wheatley brethren on the progress that is being made through the blessing of God among them.

TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY

Appeals For

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This School depends for its support on the gifts of God's people.

Write the Dean,

Rev. T. I. Stockley,
337 Jarvis St., Toronto.

New Strength for the New Year

A Sermon by Rev. T. I. Stockley.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, January 1st, 1928.

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

This great scripture is found in an extraordinary page from the life story of an extraordinary man. Paul records here a real experience. He tells us he is caught up to the third heaven, to paradise, where he beheld visions and heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter". We have to bear in mind also that he was an extraordinary genius, a man of towering intellect, of supreme gifts. He was therefore in danger of pride; he realized that danger himself for he says, "lest I should be exalted above measure . . . there was given to me a thorn in the flesh", something extremely painful and humbling. What was this thorn in the flesh? Frankly, I cannot tell. Thousands of pages have been written to describe this thorn, but no one knows; it is therefore useless to speculate. Better for us to wait until we see him, and the Apostle himself will tell us the story of that thorn. We should do well to discover our own thorn, and then to make the highest use of this scripture in our dealing with it.

I.

Now in our text WE HAVE FIRST OF ALL AN ANSWER TO A CRY OF PAIN: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me."

It was a prayer of pain. The Apostle's distress was great, and it drove him to prayer. It is a great blessing when our thorns drive us to prayer. It may be this is the reason why trial is often sent to us because we are prone to neglect prayer. But prayer is the place for the sufferer, and it is sweet for him to be there. Some of us need many thorns to keep us in the place of prayer. Let all our thorns lead us into the audience chamber of the King.

It was a prayer to the Lord Jesus. The Apostle knew that Jesus was the Son of God; he had no doubts about His deity, and therefore he could pray to Him. He knew also that He was the Son of man. Our Lord as the Son of man had His own conflicts with Satan. He "was in all points tempted like as we are"—sin apart; so He could feel with the Apostle Paul. We rejoice that He is our true Brother in this. We can talk over our agony with Him as an affectionate child may do with a loving mother. Our Lord's sympathy with us is deep. Whatever touches us He feels:

"What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!"

It was definite prayer. "For this thing I besought the Lord". One of the great needs in prayer is definiteness; we are all prone to be too general. When the blind man came to our Lord crying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," our Lord said to him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" What is the mercy that you need? Our Lord loves for us to state definitely to Him our needs. Our prayers often fail for want of definiteness.

It is said that at the battle of Majuba in South Africa many years ago the world was astonished because the trained soldiers were repulsed by the Boer farmers; but these Boer farmers had been accustomed to shoot game on the veldt, and to aim definitely at a single thing, and when they were brought in battle array they aimed definitely, each man singled out his man, and with deadly precision they fired, until lines of British soldiers fell, the aim was so accurate. The Lord would have us to be very definite in prayer. His promises are definite. He says to us, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" Our thorns often make us definite. Our trials lead us to ask for what we feel we distinctly need. The Apostle says, "this thing"! On this New Year morning, what definite prayer shall we offer? What is the thing that we feel we need this year? What special advance do we desire to make in the Christian life? What would we like to see accomplished in ourselves and in the church?

It was an importunate prayer. The Apostle tells us that he prayed thrice. And as we hear Paul in his thrice-repeated prayer, do you not think of Another?—

"Go to dark Gethsemane
Ye who feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflicts see,
Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away;
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray."

There beneath the shadows of the olives our Lord utters His thrice-repeated prayer. And now that same Jesus is listening tenderly to Paul as he thus importunately prays. And Paul's prayer is not granted. The thorn is not removed. The Lord has something better for the Apostle than the removal of the thorn. It is a great joy to know that God is sure to answer prayer. His answer sometimes may be "Yes", sometimes it may be "No"; but He answers. And the answer to Paul's prayer now was greater than the Apostle had anticipated. Instead of removing the thorn the Lord says to the Apostle, "I will give you grace".

II.

WE HAVE A REVELATION OF WONDERFUL GRACE.

Here is grace. What is this? Now we stand upon the edge of a boundless sea, fathomless depths lie before us. What is grace? Grace is energy, is divine energy. Grace is the energy of divine love. Grace is the energy of redeeming love. Grace is the energy of redeeming love like a mighty ocean flowing in upon the shores of human necessity, flooding all its caves and caverns with its mighty fulness. This, however, is a poor conception of grace. Grace is something vastly larger than we can describe. Our best definition is only like a leaf from a boundless forest. The leaf may be a part of the forest, but it gives us no conception of the vastness of the forest. I once descended a coal mine in North Wales, and there picked out of a vast vein a lump of coal which I brought with me

and kept for many years. But that lump of coal gave no conception of the vastness of the vein from which it was taken. That vein ran out far under the depths of the sea. So our best definitions-or descriptions of grace are utterly too poor to set it forth. Its nature is free, unmerited love; its objects are persons without merit—the utterly unworthy; those who have no goodness whatever to plead. Its ministry is a ministry of pardon, and of righteousness, and peace, and holiness, and eternal song.

Here is divine grace. "My grace is sufficient for thee". This is exhaustless grace. We read of the riches of His grace, the unsearchable riches of His grace. Here is infinite depths of grace granted to the Apostle instead of healing. This is something more than the removal of the thorn. Here is a treasure of vastly greater wealth than the removal of pain. The Lord gives the Apostle the divine arm to lean upon and His wealth to draw upon. A little child travelling with a wealthy father need have no anxiety about its food, or paying for the cost of the journey. The father's wealth forbids such fears. The child may be restful and happy; all the cares of the journey are the father's cares. So here we have divine grace, exhaustless grace; grace that frees the soul from every fear.

Here is empowering grace. "For my strength is made perfect in weakness". Here the word strength is dynamis—power. And this power stands as a synonym for grace. So grace is force. Grace is power to bear up under unspeakable pressure. Grace is power to do all the Lord would have us do. Grace is a supply of succour for weakness and suffering. Grace is power to stand in the presence of the severest temptation. Grace enables the weak to do great things. In our Scripture reading this morning did you notice the wonderful metaphor which the Lord uses, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob". Jacob is described under the weakest possible figure—a worm. The worm is described as threshing mountains and beating them small, and making the hills as chaff. Try to take in the conception, a worm, one of the frailest of things, beating mountains into chaff. And this is what the grace of God can enable His own weakest child to do; He can accomplish miracles; and the honour to our Lord Himself is the greater because of our weakness; that He should bring the weak ones through fierce temptations and trials heaps honour upon His name. How much the power and skill of a pilot shine forth in bringing a broken shattered vessel through storms and tempests to its desired haven! And so our Lord says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness".

Here is grace finding its proper scope,—"in weakness". God loves to work with broken reeds, to choose feeble instrumentalities for the accomplishment of his greatest purposes. He does not use iron pillars, but broken reeds. He has to take the conceit out of us before He can use us. It is empty vessels He loves to fill. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." He loves to pour the floods of His power into utter weakness. Paul tells us of the five-ranked army which God chooses for the accomplishment of His purposes: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." The Lord has chosen those whom the world counts foolish, and the

weak, and base, and the despised, and the nobodies. These are His deliberate choice for the accomplishment of His work. If you and I can get in either of these ranks, God may use us. For conscious weakness, leaning upon His divine power, is what the Lord can use.

Here is timely grace. He hath said, "My grace is sufficient". It is present grace. Here we have it now. My grace "Is", not "will be". It is not a promise for the future merely, but something to experience now. You have the thorn now, so the grace is here now. God's time is now. Now He outspreads His wings over us. Now He stretches forth His arm for us to lean upon. Now He manifests Himself as a present all-sustaining Lord. "My grace is sufficient."

Here is sufficient Grace. "Sufficient!" Is that all? Is it not more than sufficient? Is there no margin, no overflow? Listen to what C. H. Spurgeon once said:

"The other evening I was riding home after a heavy day's work, and I felt very wearied and sore depressed, when swiftly and suddenly as a lightning flash that text came to me, "My grace is sufficient for thee". I reached home, looked it up in the original, and at last it came to me in this way, 'My grace is sufficient for thee', and I said, 'I should think it is, Lord,' and burst out laughing. I never fully understood what the holy laughter of Abraham was until then. It seemed to make unbelief so utterly absurd. It was as though some little fish being very thirsty was troubled about drinking the river dry, and Old Father Thames said, 'Drink away, little fish, my waters are sufficient for thee'. Or it seemed like a little mouse in the granaries of Egypt after the seven years of plenty, fearing it might die of famine, and Joseph might say, 'Cheer up, little mouse, my granaries are sufficient for thee'. Again I imagined a man away up yonder in a lofty mountain saying to himself, 'I breathe so many cubic feet of air every year. I feel I shall exhaust the oxygen in the atmosphere.' But the earth might say, 'Breathe away, O man, and fill thy lungs ever. My atmosphere is sufficient for thee.' O brethren, be great believers, and great receivers. Little faith will bring your souls to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your souls." So God's grace is sufficient. There is a sufficiency of love to comfort our hearts; sufficiency of light to guide our way; sufficiency of consolation to soothe us in our anxieties; sufficiency of strength to bear us through. Can the ocean bear up that little bark of thine? Are those mighty waters strong enough to sustain thy boat? Ransack thy heart, O child of God, bring out all thy empty vessels, and let the flow of divine grace flood them all. So grace is sufficient to carry us through every phase of life, whatever its conflicts, whatever its trials. As we look out upon this New Year we need have no fears. The unknown path has been thought out graciously by our Lord; He has made provision for every step. His grace will carry us gloriously through. It is sufficient for life and for death. Mrs. Katherine Booth, the mother of the Salvation Army, had lived on that great word, and when she was dying and too weak to speak she made a movement toward something on the wall. A text was taken down from the wall and brought near to her bearing these words, "My grace is sufficient for thee". And in the memorial service held after her death it was said that this was her text through life, and was the secret of her wonderful usefulness.

Here is present grace. "My grace is sufficient for thee". It is said of John Bunyan that once when he was in prayer

four words of this text came to his mind, "My grace is sufficient". These words were a comfort, but he could go no further; he could not add the last two words, "for thee". Later one day he was at a meeting full of sadness and terror, when suddenly the text came to him, and was three times repeated, "My grace is sufficient for thee"—"My grace is sufficient for thee"—"My grace is sufficient for THEE". And then Bunyan tells us that every word shone out as in letters of gold, and he could look at every word, "My—grace—is sufficient—for thee." The Apostle Paul prayed thrice that his thorn might be removed. John Bunyan received thrice this great assuring word. And it is my privilege this morning to say the same word to you, whoever you are, as a child of God, the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee"; for thee, thou man of business with all thy trials; for thee, devoted mother in the home for thy burdens of responsibility; thee, Christian worker, with all the anxieties of Christian service; for thee, whoever thou art, O child of God; the message comes, "My grace is sufficient for thee".

Here is unceasing grace. "My grace is sufficient". "Is" it! It is our Lord's continuous and final answer to Paul's great need: If the thorn is to remain so the grace and strength will remain, and the thorn will not remain a single hour or moment beyond the grace; not for one hour or moment will that grace fail. By His servant Isaiah, He says, concerning His vineyard, "I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day". So it is unceasing grace.

Here is perfectly manifested grace. "My strength is made perfect in weakness", that is, in its manifestation and operation. There in weakness its full energy is seen; there it shines most conspicuously; there it is unfolded in its fullest splendour. This is why the battle is allowed to go, that there may be a continuous increasing manifestation of grace. Happy for us to be so weak and low that His grace can shine undimmed through us. Our weakness can become the very place where the glory of His grace is most conspicuous.

III.

WE HAVE A RECORD OF A GREAT VICTORY. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Here is a new victory. A wonderful change has taken place in the Apostle's heart. New eyes are given him also. Paul now sees grace to be the real answer to his prayer. The thorn remains, but he sees that thorn is the means of magnifying the grace of God; and so he gets a new vision of the pain. His eye is no longer on the thorn, it is now fixed upon His Lord, and His abounding grace. It is like Stephen who when the Jews gnashed upon him with their teeth did not look at them or the circumstances, he looked upward, "being full of the Holy Ghost" and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. That is a real victory when grace enables us to lift our eyes from our sorrows to be occupied with our Lord, instead of with them.

It is a faith victory. Here faith triumphs over feeling. The word literally is "most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may spread its tabernacle over me". Here is weakness being overspread by the tabernacle of divine power. And as Paul sees this his will is harmonized with Christ's will. He is occupied

with Christ. If our trust is deepened by our thorn, if we hang more truly upon the Lord as the result of our sufferings, then faith has won a real victory, then we may glory in our weaknesses that the power of Christ may spread its tent over us.

It is a joyous victory. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities" or exult—"in my infirmities". R. L. Stevenson was once looking into his garden, the garden of his heart, when he saw a plant growing there which attracted his attention. He said, "What is that plant?" A voice answered, "It is resignation". "Resignation!" said he, "out with it! Out with it! and plant joy, joy of the flowering sort." There is such a thing as joy in sorrow. The Apostle John was in the Isle called Patmos, he tells us, and in the very next breath he says "I was in the Spirit". In one line he says, "I was in Patmos" amidst loneliness and trouble; and in the next line he said, "I was in the Spirit". In one line he was in isolation, in the next line he was in consolation. I was once travelling up the Red Sea; and having risen very early in the morning, I was looking toward the Strait of Babel-Mandeb, which is at the south end of the Red Sea. That Arabic name means, "The gate of tears"; and as I looked the sun rose as it were out of the very ocean and flooded the strait with his glory. Immediately the thought flashed into my mind, "Oh, there is the sunrise in the Gate of tears. In the place where tears are pressed to our eyes by the weight of sorrow, there may be the sunrise of real joy, and blessedness." Paul's pain was turned into joy; Bunyan's terror and sadness were turned into gladness; Katherine Booth's struggles passed into ceaseless song. And what about ourselves? Can we this morning say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather exult in my weakness that the power of Christ may spread its tabernacle over me"?

It is a delightful victory, a beautiful content has stolen into the heart of the Apostle. He says, "Most gladly", that word literally means, "most sweetly", for it is a word that is used to describe the relish of some delightful thing that you have tasted. You say, "That is delicious". And the Apostle with a high degree of relish says, "I glory in my infirmities". He is utterly satisfied. No longer does he indulge in agonizing prayer. His heart is at rest. He glories in weakness now because he loves to see the grace of God manifested in its full splendour.

"O Cross, that liftest up my head,

I dare not ask to fly from Thee;

I lay in dust life's glory dead,

And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

I wonder this morning if there is an anxious soul here who would like to begin the New Year with God but is afraid that he will not be able to stand? He is so conscious of his weakness and the power of temptation around him that he trembles to take the step. Let me assure thee, O trembling heart, that God's grace is sufficient for thee; the blood of Christ is sufficient to cleanse all thy sins away. The righteousness of Christ is sufficient to cover all thy imperfections, and the strength of Christ is sufficient to enable thee to stand, and to keep thee true to Him. Fear not, therefore, to trust Him in thy sin, and thy abject poverty, cast thyself upon Him now, and He will receive thee, and make all grace to abound toward thee, that having sufficiency in all things you may abound unto every good work.

Coals for the Altar Fire

By Rev. T. I. Stockley, Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

Sunday, January 8th, 1928.

Read the Word.—

Psalm 119:1-24

We discover the Bible by reading it. Here is the simple secret. If we are really awake and illumined we shall find the Book by reading it. Other books about the Bible may be very helpful, but it is the personal frequent reading of the Book which is so sadly neglected and to which we must more and more give ourselves. Dr. Gray tells of Dean Burgon who, in his student days, had an interview with the learned president of Magdalen College, Oxford, Dr. Martin J. Routh, then aged ninety-one years. Burgon had called to ask the great theologian's advice as to the best way of pursuing his theological studies. Dr. Routh replied, "I think, sir, if I were you that I would first of all read a little book written by a man named—Matthew." He paused, and then went on, "When you have read that, I would, were I you, sir, go on to read another little book by one named—Mark." The student was astonished. But the Doctor of Divinity went on, "When you have read them read another little book by a man called—Luke. And then you ought to read another written by a man named John." Thus the great divine advised the student, "Read your Bible."

T. I. Stockley.

Monday, January 9th.

Battle for the Word.—

Psalm 119:161-176.

In Psalm 119, v. 162, the writer says, "I rejoice in Thy Word as one who findeth great spoil." Now spoil is the result of a victory. A battle has been fought, and a victory won, and then the spoil is taken. It is so here; we do not find the Word until we have gained a two-fold victory.

The first is mental. One of the great hindrances in the way of discovering the Bible is mental indolence. We are often mentally too idle to find anything. Yet the themes of which the Bible treats are worthy of our supreme effort. Even the writer of Psalm 119 often cried to God, "Quicken me." He felt the tendency to indolence. This tendency has to be overcome. The "spoil" is not ours until we have won a mental victory.

The second is moral. There is no chance of finding the Book if sin is allowed in the heart or life. There can be no delight in the Bible so long as there is delight in any evil thing. Sin must be swept out of the heart and life if we would find the Bible. "It is the pure in heart who see God." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "If we will do the will, we shall know." When this two-fold victory has been won we may "find great spoil".

T. I. Stockley.

Tuesday, January 10th.

Search the Word.—

Acts 17:1-14.

The "Bereans searched the Scriptures daily, therefore many believed". What is needed is that we dig into the Scriptures. Mr. Coranby speaks of Chinese squatters who are supposed to be living on some piece of No-man's Land, and someone comes by and says to them, "Dig and you will be rich." Many of them smile an unbelieving and lazy

smile. Some dig the surface and grow cabbages, but a few dig deep and discover gold. It is those who are willing to dig deep who discover the treasures of the Bible. Martin Luther used to say he studied the Bible as he gathered apples. He shook the tree first—that is, he took in the great Theme of the whole Book. Then he shook the limbs of the tree—that is, the separate books of the Bible. Then the branches—that is, the chapters, and then he reached out under the leaves for the remaining fruit—that is, he searched the verses. Henry Martyn rejoiced that he had been permitted to do some translation of the Scriptures, because that had brought him into close touch with the very words of the Bible and in them he had found great spoil.

T. I. Stockley.

Wednesday, January 11th.

Appropriate the Word.—

Psalm 27:1-14.

Job uses the language of appropriation. He says, "My Redeemer". And all that we know, or hear, or speak of Him, will avail us but little, unless we are really and personally interested in Him as our Redeemer. A cold, speculative knowledge of the Gospel, such as a lawyer has of a will or a deed, which he reads with no further design than to understand the tenor and import of the writing, will neither save nor comfort the soul. The believer reads it, as the will is read by the heir, who finds his own name in it, and is warranted by it to call the estate and all the particulars specified his own. He appropriates the privileges to himself, and says, The Promises are mine: the pardon, the peace, the heaven, of which I read, are all mine. This is the will and testament of the Redeemer, of my Redeemer. The great Testator remembered me in His will, which is confirmed, and rendered valid by His death (Heb. 9:16), and therefore I humbly claim, and assuredly expect, the benefit of all that He has bequeathed.

John Newton.

Thursday, January 12th.

Love the Word.—

Psalm 119:97-112.

This most precious jewel is to be preferred above all treasure. If thou be hungry, it is meat to satisfy thee; if thou be thirsty, it is drink to refresh thee; if thou be sick, it is a present remedy; if thou be weak, it is a staff to lean unto; if thine enemy assault thee, it is a sword to fight withal; if thou be in darkness, it is a lantern to guide thy feet; if thou be doubtful of the way, it is a bright shining star to direct thee; if thou be in displeasure with God, it is the message of reconciliation: if thou study to save thy soul, receive the word engrafted, for that is able to do it: it is the word of life. Whoso loveth salvation will love this word, love to read it, love to hear it; and such as will neither read nor hear it, Christ saith plainly, they are not of God. For the spouse gladly heareth the voice of the bridegroom; and "my sheep hear my voice," saith the Prince of pastors (John 10:27).

Edwin Sandys.

Friday, January 13th.

Feed on the Word.—*Jeremiah 15:11-21.*

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste!" There is given to the regenerated a new, supernatural sense, a certain divine, spiritual taste. This is in its whole nature diverse from any of the other five senses, and something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling of it. Now the beauty of holiness is that which is perceived by this spiritual sense, so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them; or, this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual sense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual state. The Scripture often represents the beauty and sweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and a spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy soul of Jesus Christ, (John 4:32, 34.) "I have meat to eat that ye know not of . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

Jonathan Edwards.

Saturday, January 14th.

Keep the Word.—*Matthew 7:21-29.*

"I will keep thy statutes." A calm resolve. When praise calms down into solid resolution it is well with the soul. Zeal which spends itself in singing, and leaves no practical residuum of holy living, is little worth: "I will praise" should be coupled with "I will keep". This firm resolve is by no means boastful, like Peter's, "though I should die with thee, yet will I not forsake thee," for it is followed by a humble prayer for divine help, "O forsake me not utterly". Feeling his own incapacity, he trembles lest he should be left to himself, and this fear is increased by the horror which he has of falling into sin. The "I will keep" sounds rightly enough now that the humble cry is heard with it. This is a happy amalgam: resolution and dependence. We meet with those who to all appearance humbly pray, but there is no force of character, no decision in them, and consequently the pleading of the closet is not embodied in the life: on the other hand, we meet with abundance of resolve attended with an entire absence of dependence upon God, and this makes as poor a character as the former. The Lord grant us to have such a blending of excellencies that we may be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing".

C. H. Spurgeon.

STEWARDS, ATTENTION!

Churches, Sunday Schools and Individuals

are requested to forward all contributions for the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec to: Rev. W. E. Atkinson, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Ont.

Funds are urgently needed to place Pastors on New Fields. Opportunities await us in many important Centres and the Open Door must be entered.

HELP US DO IT AT ONCE!

URGENT CALL FOR RUSSIAN BIBLES.

By Pastor William Fetler,

General Director of the Russian Missionary Society.

A parallel to the French Revolution has taken place, only in a much larger way, in Russia, as a result of which thousands upon thousands of Russian Refugees, belonging to the Russian aristocracy and the educated classes, have been scattered all over Europe and other parts of the world. Germany, Scandinavia, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo Slavia, and especially France, are full of them. We were told that in one factory in Paris alone, there were 6,000 of these Russian Refugees, formerly officers of the Czar's army, lawyers, doctors, etc., working as ordinary factory hands.

The time will come, we are sure, when most of these people will be able to go back to their beloved native land. But while in their great need, during their scattering, this is the time to reach them with the Message of Hope and Salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Russian Missionary Society has felt the Call of God to give the Bread of Life to these scattered scores of thousands of people.

Some four years ago we published 81,000 copies of the Russian Bible—the largest edition of the Russian Bible ever published by any Society,—and we could do that through our Shilling Bible Fund, as the entire book cost at that time only 25 cents complete, owing to the fact that we were able to have it printed by one of the largest firms in Germany, when the rate of the Mark was exceedingly low; otherwise the book would have cost us thousands of dollars more.

Regretfully we found, however, that no sooner had the Bible been printed, and we were about to start the binding, than the Mark was stabilized, and instead of getting for \$5.00 one million Marks, or a billion, we could get only the normal 20 Marks to the \$5.00. It thus enabled us to bind only about 16,000 copies of the Bible, there being no further funds available at the time.

At the time of writing, nearly all these Bibles are gone, and now there is a very great demand to spread the remaining part of this edition among the needy Russian Refugees all over the world. We feel this opportunity will never return, and that this is the psychological moment for evangelizing the former upper classes of Russia.

It is a great sorrow to us that we were compelled to store the 65,000 Bibles away in sheets in large boxes in the cellars of our Mission House, and we feel that no time should now be lost when this precious Word of God should find its way back to the daylight. These books should be speedily bound in order that the hunger of the poor Russian people for the Word of God may be speedily satisfied.

Twenty-five cents is needed to bind one copy of the Bible, and we feel prompted in our hearts to make this urgent call all over the Christian world. We therefore have launched our Sixty-five Thousand Shilling Bible Fund, and ask God's people everywhere to pray and co-operate that this work may be speedily accomplished. The blessing reached hereby may be incalculable, not only for the Russian Refugees, but later for the entire Russian Empire.

We suggest that each class in all Sunday Schools over the whole country contribute ONE BIBLE—that will go a good way toward our aim.

The same applies to each Christian Endeavor and Young People's Society and other similar organizations. Naturally

the churches as such and individual Christian friends can contribute a great deal more.

25 cents will supply	1 Bible
\$5.00 " "	20 Bibles
\$50.00 " "	200 "
\$125.00 " "	500 "
\$250.00 " "	1000 "
\$500.00 " "	2000 "

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days."—Eccles. 2:1.

PLEASE CUT OUT HERE

To Rev. E. E. Shields,

Home Director & Treasurer, The Russian Missionary Society,
1844 Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Dear Mr. Shields: I am deeply sympathetic with the work of giving the Bible to the thousands of Russian Refugees, and have pleasure in enclosing my contribution for this cause.

Name
(State whether Rev., Mr., Mrs., or Miss)

Address

**Whole Bible Sunday School Lesson Course
for 1928 in**

**I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians,
and Colossians**

issued by

The Baptist Bible Union of North America

FIFTY-TWO LESSONS

The Lesson Text for the year will be found in I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

THE INDIVIDUAL LESSON TITLES

Following are the titles assigned to the chapters. In many cases it is impossible to sum up the contents of a whole chapter in a brief title, but these titles will serve to identify the principal truth or event in the chapter.

1. Jan. 1— **The Wisdom of the World and of God Contrasted.** (I Cor. 1.)
Golden Text—"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (I Cor. 1:30, 31).
2. Jan. 8— **The Apostle's Communication is from the Spirit of God.** (I Cor. 2.)
Golden Text—"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (I Cor. 2:13).
3. Jan. 15— **The Christian's Building and Rewards.** (I Cor. 3.)
Golden Text—"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 3:11).
4. Jan. 22— **Judgment—Example and Authority.** (I Cor. 4.)
Golden Text—"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2).
5. Jan. 29— **Immorality Rebuked.** (I Cor. 5.)
Golden Text—"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (I Cor. 5:7).

6. Feb. 5— **The Unrighteous Shall Not Inherit the Kingdom of God.** (I Cor. 6.)
Golden Text—"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19).
7. Feb. 12— **The Marriage Relation Is of God.** (I Cor. 7.)
Golden Text—"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." (I Cor. 7:39).
8. Feb. 19— **Limitations of Christian Liberty.** (I Cor. 8.)
Golden Text—"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (I Cor. 8:13).
9. Feb. 26— **Paul's Apostleship Vindicated.** (I Cor. 9.)
Golden Text—"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." (I Cor. 9:16).
10. Mar. 4— **Some Types; Fellowship and the Other Man.** (I Cor. 10.)
Golden Text—"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (I Cor. 10:11).
11. Mar. 11— **Christian Order and the Lord's Supper.** (I Cor. 11.)
Golden Text—"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (I Cor. 11:26).
12. Mar. 18— **Spiritual Gifts in the Body of Christ.** (I Cor. 12.)
Golden Text—"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (I Cor. 12:7).
13. Mar. 25— **The Greatest Thing in the World.** (I Cor. 13.)
Golden Text—"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." (I Cor. 13:8).
14. Apr. 1— **Spiritual Gifts.** (I Cor. 14.)
Golden Text—"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church." (I Cor. 14:12).
15. Apr. 8— **Resurrection Facts—Importance and Order.** (I Cor. 15: 1-28.)
Golden Text—"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (I Cor. 15:3, 4).
16. Apr. 15— **Resurrection Method, Transformation and Victory.** (I Cor. 15: 29-58.)
Golden Text—"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (I Cor. 15:54).
17. Apr. 22— **Concerning the Collection and the Greetings.** (I Cor. 16.)
Golden Text—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Cor. 16:2).
18. Apr. 29— **Christian Principles of Action.** (II Cor. 1.)
Golden Text—"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (II Cor. 1:20).
19. May 6— **Paul's Joy and Triumph.** (II Cor. 2.)
Golden Text—"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." (II Cor. 2:14).
20. May 13— **The Ministry Accredited, Spiritual and Glorious.** (II Cor. 3.)
Golden Text—"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (II Cor. 3:18).
21. May 20— **Preaching Christ and Suffering Affliction.** (II Cor. 4: 1-14.)
Golden Text—"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." (II Cor. 4:5).
22. May 27— **The Near Look and the Far Look.** (II Cor. 4: 15-5: 11.)
Golden Text—"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. 5:1).
23. June 3— **The New Creation.** (II Cor. 5: 12-21.)
Golden Text—"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (II Cor. 5:21).

24. June 10— **Self Investment and Separation.** (II Cor. 6.)
Golden Text—"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14).
25. June 17— **Christian Faithfulness and Comfort.** (II Cor. 7.)
Golden Text—"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (II Cor. 7:10).
26. June 24— **Love's Token.** (II Cor. 8.)
Golden Text—"Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith and utterance, and knowledge and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." (II Cor. 8:7).
27. July 1— **Ministering to the Saints.** (II Cor. 9.)
Golden Text—"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." (II Cor. 9:8).
28. July 8— **Paul's Strenuous Appeal.** (II Cor. 10.)
Golden Text—"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (II Cor. 10:4, 5).
29. July 15— **Paul's Strenuous Appeal, Continued.** (II Cor. 11.)
Golden Text—"For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." (II Cor. 11:5).
30. July 22— **Paul's Experience in Prayer.** (II Cor. 12.)
Golden Text—"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (II Cor. 12:9).
31. July 29— **Strong in Christ.** (II Cor. 13.)
Golden Text—"For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you." (II Cor. 13:4).
32. Aug. 5— **Paul's Gospel from Christ.** (Galatians 1.)
Golden Text—"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:12).
33. Aug. 12— **God Mighty in the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.** (Galatians 2.)
Golden Text—"For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles." (Gal. 2:8).
34. Aug. 19— **The Gifts of God in Response to Faith.** (Galatians 3.)
Golden Text—"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin; that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. 3:22).
35. Aug. 26— **Sons of God Through Grace.** (Galatians 4.)
Golden Text—"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal. 4:7).
36. Sept. 2— **Walking in the Spirit.** (Galatians 5.)
Golden Text—"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16).
37. Sept. 9— **The Brotherhood of the New Life.** (Galatians 6.)
Golden Text—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2).
38. Sept. 16— **God's Plan to Exalt Christ.** (Ephesians 1.)
Golden Text—"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." (Eph. 1:10).
39. Sept. 23— **Made One in Christ.** (Ephesians 2.)
Golden Text—"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:19-20).
40. Sept. 30— **The Church and Its Fulness.** (Ephesians 3.)
Golden Text—"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Eph. 3:20).
41. Oct. 7— **Aspects of the Unity of the Spirit.** (Ephesians 4.)
Golden Text—"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3).
42. Oct. 14— **The Believer's Walk.** (Ephesians 5:1-18.)
Golden Text—"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:15, 16).
43. Oct. 21— **God's Will for the Home.** (Ephesians 5:19-6:9.)
Golden Text—"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Eph. 5:21).
44. Oct. 28— **Christian Warfare.** (Ephesians 6:10-24.)
Golden Text—"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph. 6:11).
45. Nov. 4— **Living; Serving; Suffering.** (Philippians 1.)
Golden Text—"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Phil. 1:29).
46. Nov. 11— **The Believer's Pattern.** (Philippians 2.)
Golden Text—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5).
47. Nov. 18— **The Believer's Expectation.** (Philippians 3.)
Golden Text—"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3:20).
48. Nov. 25— **The Believer's Peace.** (Philippians 4.)
Golden Text—"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6, 7).
49. Dec. 2— **Christ's Great Power.** (Colossians 1:1-20.)
Golden Text—"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." (Col. 1:19).
50. Dec. 9— **Christ, Reconciling and Indwelling.** (Colossians 1:21-29.)
Golden Text—"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." (Col. 1:21).
51. Dec. 16— **Complete in Christ.** (Colossians 2.)
Golden Text—"Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (Col. 2:7).
52. Dec. 23— **How to Grow in Grace.** (Colossians 3:1-17.)
Golden Text—"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Col. 3:17).
53. Dec. 30— **Adorning the Doctrine.** (Colossians 3:18-4:18.)
Golden Text—"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time." (Col. 4:5).

LESSON HELPS

Dr. T. T. Shields, President of The Baptist Bible Union, will continue to publish an exposition of each lesson in his own paper, *The Gospel Witness*; but for this year will be unable to furnish copy of leaflets, which have been published by the Union Gospel Press, of Cleveland, Ohio. Therefore, Dr. Shields' notes will be available in *The Gospel Witness* only.

The subscription price of *The Gospel Witness*, published weekly, is \$2.00 per year. This includes a volume of lectures by Dr. Shields, entitled "Christ in the Old Testament—How to Study the Bible so as to Find Him." In addition to the S. S. Lesson exposition, each paper contains a stenographically-reported sermon by Dr. Shields and valuable editorial matter. (*The Gospel Witness*, 130 Gerrard St., East, Toronto, Canada.)

BAPTIST BIBLE UNION LESSON LEAF

Vol. III. T. T. SHIELDS, Editor. No. 1.

Lesson 3. First Quarter. Jan. 15, 1928.

THE CHRISTIAN'S BUILDING AND REWARDS.

Lesson Text: I Corinthians, Chapter 3.

Golden Text: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." I Cor. 3:11).

I. CARNAL CHRISTIANS.

By the use of the term "carnal" we are not to understand the apostle as charging that the believers of Corinth were in any sense vicious people. The word is used in contradistinction to the word "spiritual"; and it means that they were living on the carnal plane; they were dominated by the natural mind; their lives were regulated by natural or worldly standards. In other words, the old man was in the ascendancy, and the new man was being suppressed. How many people there are who belong to this class! They are Christians, they have had a real experience of God's grace; but they are still babes, they are not growing up into Christ in all things.

1. Some of the characteristics of the spiritual dwarf: (a) First, they have an appetite only for elementary things, for the alphabet of Christian experience. They are as babes, and are able only to receive milk. They do not leave the first principles, and go on to perfection. Where this is so, however, the facts must be faced, and people must be fed with milk rather than strong meat. (b) A further evidence of their carnality, that is, of their want of spiritual development, is set forth by Paul in the words, "There is among you envying, and strife, and divisions." They walked as men on the natural plane, and not as children of God. (c) The special distinction was that they differed among themselves respecting the various preachers who minister to them in the Lord. Some preferred Paul, others Apollos, others Cephas. By this rule, we are forced to acknowledge there are multitudes of church members who still walk as men, and are as babes in Christ rather than full-grown saints. And these personal preferences still give rise to difficulties. It applies, not to ministers only, but to other offices and officers in the church.

II. CERTAIN LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM PAUL'S TEACHING.

1. That preachers and teachers are only the divine instruments: the best they can do is to plant and water, whereas the increase comes from God. It is just as impossible for a teacher or preacher to succeed without the divine blessing, as it is for the farmer to obtain a bountiful harvest by plowing and sowing if there be neither rain nor sun from heaven. 2. God knows our share in the work, and shall see to it that every man receives his own reward. 3. We are not to labour apart from God, but with God. We are really God's husbandry, or His tillage; we are His farm from which He produces Himself fruit to His glory.

III. THE BUILDING AND THE LABOURERS.

Paul here describes himself as a master builder, having

laid the foundation which others will build upon, and he exhorts his readers to take care how they build.

1. The only foundation upon which a permanent structure can be built is Jesus Christ, and that foundation is already laid. He is the foundation of our hopes. Salvation is of grace, and of grace alone,—

"I stand upon His merit,
I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

No other foundation is possible. Jesus, and Jesus only, is the hope of salvation. 2. We must learn to distinguish between the gift of salvation, which is wholly of grace, and the reward of labour which depends upon our own faithfulness. Salvation is God's free gift, toward which we make no contribution at all; we receive Christ, and with Him, forgiveness of sins and adoption into the divine family: we become children of God. And we are no more to be credited with that relationship than we are with the fact that we have been born into the families to which we belong. It is an act of God's sovereign grace with which we have nothing at all to do. 3. But over and above the gift of eternal life, God has promised to reward His faithful servants, just as a father promises to reward his obedient children. The child's place in the family has nothing whatever to do with his works; no matter what sort of a child he may be, he belongs to the family by virtue of the fact that he was born into the family, and nothing can ever change that relationship. But, being a son, he is now promised by his father that if he will faithfully serve him, he will reward him according to his labour. So believers are saved by grace, but the rewards which they are to receive will be dependent upon their works. 4. Paul teaches that there is a day of testing coming when every man's work will be tried, and it is described as a day of fire. The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. Our teaching and our preaching and our alms-giving and every other kind of labour which we have rendered in the name of the Lord will be tried by fire. That will be a great day of revelation. Very probably some men and women who occupied most obscure positions here will there be rewarded with great honour; while others who have lived conspicuously before the eyes of the world, and have been greatly praised of men, may have no reward at all. 5. The two kinds of material entering into our labour are here defined. Some works are compared to wood, hay, and stubble, which are naturally combustible, and will not stand the test of the flames. Other kinds of service are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones, which no fire can destroy; and we are admonished to build upon this foundation that which will endure the test of the fire. 6. If our work is of the wrong character it will be destroyed; if it is not destroyed, we shall receive a reward. But in any case, the destruction of the superstructure will not affect the foundation. We shall still be saved, yet so as by fire.

IV. THE BELIEVER AS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Verses 16 to 23 describe the believer as a temple in which God dwells. Therefore we should be holy as He is holy; and in that temple, not man but God, is to be glorified. We are assured that all things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.