

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.

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

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Vol. 8. No. 32.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 26th, 1929.

Whole No. 397.

THE TEACHING OF EVOLUTION

By W. Bell Dawson, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.C.

The above article appeared a couple of weeks ago in "The Globe", Toronto, and we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to that paper—the most wholesome daily paper published on this continent. Dr. Dawson is the distinguished son of a distinguished father, the late Sir Wm. J. Dawson, Principal of McGill University. Another son of Sir W. J. Dawson was the famous Dr. George Mercer Dawson. Dr. W. Bell Dawson's degrees are from McGill University. To give our non-Canadian readers some idea of Dr. Dawson's rank as a man of science, it may be added, that he is a gold medalist in Geology and Natural Science at McGill University; Fellow, Royal Society of Canada; Member, Institution of Civil Engineers, London, with gold medal; Member, Canadian Institute of Civil Engineers; Laureate, Academy of Science, Paris, with two prizes from it; organizer and director for thirty years of the "Survey of Tides and Currents" throughout waters of Eastern Canada, Pacific Coast, and Hudson Bay, under Marine Department.

Thousands of our readers will welcome this authoritative pronouncement from a man recognized as of first rank as a scientist.
Editor, "Gospel Witness."

It is often said that we cannot deny evolution, because it is all around us on every side. Do we not see the budding leaf, the egg that hatches into a chicken, and so on, everywhere? So "evolution" is made to include almost everything that happens in nature, as well as all the developments and progress in human inventions; and we are asked to swallow the whole thing at one gulp. At this rate, it is truly well said that "evolution is the most overworked word in the English language." Now, when we look into all this, we find that the word Evolution is made to include a number of entirely different things. This is very misleading and quite illogical, if we wish to know what we are talking about. We must, therefore, ask the evolutionist to say definitely what he really means by evolution.

If we confine our attention to living things, that is, plant life and living creatures, we find that two very different things are mixed up under the term evolution. One of these is properly called the "life history" of a creature; and the other is the change of a plant or animal into something else of an entirely different kind, which is the proper meaning of evolution. To take a simple example: a hen lays an egg which hatches into a chick, and the chicken becomes a hen, and this hen lays an egg. This is its circle of life or its life history. At some stages there is development, but there is no evolution as there would be if the hen turned into an eagle. This, indeed, would only be a very small step; for in evolution, we have to suppose that a sea snail turned into a fish, the fish became a crocodile with legs, and the crocodile or some other reptile developed into a bird; because this is the order in geology. We must be careful, therefore, to distinguish clearly between the life history of any one

kind of creature, and the supposed change of a creature into another of an entirely different kind, which evolution properly means. Otherwise, we cannot expect to understand the question at all.

In regard to Darwin's writings, it is only fair to explain that he put forward evolution as a theory. He also recognized that if any theory is to hold good, there must be some adequate causes which make it operate. He gave three causes which he maintained to be sufficient to change one species into another. These were: Natural Selection, the Struggle for Existence, and the Survival of the Fittest. This theory and these causes for its operation, which were first published in 1859, at once gave rise to discussion and investigation among scientists; as well as the search for a "missing link" to connect the animals with man; a search which has now been carried on over the face of the whole earth.

Failure of Darwin's Theory.

It would, of course, be impossible even to outline here the discussion and the research during the seventy years since Darwin's time; but the outcome is that the causes which he put forward have proved inadequate to produce the result. It has been ascertained, for example, that "Natural Selection" follows a definite law in the results which it produces (in accord with Mendel's Law) and that it does not give rise to new species. Again, a large amount of experimentation has shown that the "Struggle for Existence" does not conduce to improvement. Plants or animals need favorable surroundings for their development; and when subjected to the most severe disadvantages, such as want of moisture and scanty food, they do not improve by struggling against these; they deteriorate.

The theory of evolution, as Darwin propounded it, has, therefore, failed; as the change of a plant or an animal into another of a different kind cannot be effected by the causes which he relied upon. Leading evolutionists admit, accordingly, that Darwinism is a thing of the past. Dr. H. F. Osborn, a most staunch advocate of evolution, puts the matter thus: "Between the appearance of the Origin of Species in 1859 and the present time, there have been great waves of faith in one explanation and then in another; each of these waves of confidence has ended in disappointment until finally, we have reached a stage of very general skepticism."

We find then, as things are at present, that evolution is confronted with two difficulties: (1) The difficulty to prove that evolution actually took place, either in the records of past ages or by any means that can be used in the present world, and (2) the difficulty to find any cause which can be considered at all adequate to produce the change of one creature into another. To say, for example, that everything has an inherent tendency within itself to improve is pretty near to the edge of nonsense, for it is not only an unsupported statement, but it is not even plausible because it runs counter to all the physical laws. In regard to this question of a cause, we find that evolutionists differ most fundamentally among themselves, and they have reached no conclusion about it which is generally accepted. In these circumstances, evolution can only be regarded as a theory which is still under discussion. The question of evidence is in an equally unsatisfactory position, for throughout geology nearly all the great classes of animals which still exist in the world have deteriorated from their magnificence in the past, and many species continue to the present day exactly as they were long ages ago without any development whatever. There are thus great outstanding groups of facts which are quite out of line with any evolutionary hypothesis and which it does not serve to explain.

Evolutionists Admit Failure.

The most candid evolutionists who take a wide outlook admit that so far they have failed to find any conclusive evidence, for their theory or to discover any causes adequate to bring it about. Dr. William Bateson, the eminent biologist, made this very clear at the meeting of the British Association at Toronto a few years ago. He stated that "the origin and nature of species remains utterly mysterious." Yet he does not abandon the idea of evolution because of this, although he may be constrained to say frankly that "he holds it only as an act of faith." If evolution has thus become a creed or dogma, the Christian believer is surely quite as much entitled to his faith in what the Scriptures declared—that the Almighty Creator "made the beast of the earth after his kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind," and that He "created man in His own image"; for it is "through faith that we understand" these things. Many well-meaning attempts have been made to reconcile this belief with evolution, but the wide discussion upon this has made it clear that a choice must be made between the one belief and the other. Professor Huxley himself, whose mind was trained in logical

reasoning, saw that this choice is essential, for he said: "The doctrine of evolution is directly antagonistic to that of creation. Evolution, if consistently accepted, makes it impossible to believe the Bible."

When evolutionists have come to abandon the Darwinian views and are now at variance among themselves in regard to the very foundations on which evolution is based, it is surely quite unfair to teach evolution to our young people as firmly established. Many of our school text-books on plants and animal life take evolution for granted as though there could be no dispute about it. Yet Dr. Osborn of the Museum of Natural History in New York, who is a most ardent advocate of evolution, makes this remark in a recent book of his: "It is best frankly to acknowledge that the chief causes (of evolution) are still entirely unknown, and that our search must take an entirely new start. . . . The old paths of research have led nowhere, and the question arises: What lines shall new researches and experiments follow?" In regard to man, evolutionists have been obliged to change their ground entirely, and instead of the former opinion of descent from some ape or monkey their present view is that man and the monkey are related as cousins with a common ancestor. But this supposed ancestor can no more be found than the missing link which was required under the former supposition, for which a world-wide search has been made without success. In these circumstances, the remark of Lord Kelvin, the eminent physicist, is as forceful and applicable as when it was first made many years ago: "I marvel at the undue haste with which teachers in our universities and preachers in our pulpits are restating truth in terms of evolution, while evolution itself remains an unproved hypothesis in the laboratories of science."

We cannot here enter upon a discussion of the evidence which is proffered in support of evolution, and the reasons against it; as these reasons carry us forward to oral and religious questions of the highest importance. But keeping to a purely scientific and common-sense standpoint, we protest against the teaching of evolution in any of our school grades, as well as in the earlier years of a university course. For evolution professes to explain how things came to be as they are, throughout the whole domain of what is broadly known as Natural Science. Indeed, if the explanations which it gives are to hold good, it should include the more foundational realms of nature as well; for an eminent scientist, though himself a biologist, has said with reason: "Every theory of evolution must be such as to accord with the facts of physics and chemistry, a primary necessity to which our predecessors paid small heed."

Not an "Elementary" Subject.

We find, then, that evolution as an explanation borders closely upon philosophy; and many thinkers consider that it should rank as philosophy rather than as science, for it is very similar to the ancient Greek philosophies, and even older ones. Is it not rational, therefore, to hold that young people should first have a thorough grounding in the facts, before they enter upon theoretical explanations to account for them? To be able to grasp any intelligent discussion of evolution, they must first have a good knowledge of

chemistry, botany and zoology (or else a combination of these in biology) and some acquaintance with geology. It is plain, therefore, that from the standpoint of progressive instruction, evolution is entirely out of place in elementary text-books. An "elementary" book is, properly speaking, one which begins at the beginning of a subject, however rapidly it may advance; for it does not take for granted that the learner has any previous knowledge of the subject. If, then, a pupil who is beginning zoology, for example, finds it stated that some creature is a development from another type which is lower, this evolutionary teaching comes to him merely as a dogma, backed by authority; which he is forced to learn and repeat to pass his examinations. Let the pupil first be taught what this creature is, what it does, and what purpose it serves in the realms of nature, before theoretical explanations are thrust upon him. His mind should at least be left free at this primary stage to decide later whether he will regard this creature as the design of the Creator or as a product of evolution.

The next objection to the introduction of evolution into elementary text-books is the one-sided and unfair way in which it is taught. Of all the sciences, astronomy is probably better taught than any other; for astronomers make so clear a distinction between, firstly, what we definitely know; next, what we can infer from this knowledge regarding the size and distance of the stars, and can be reasonably sure of; and thirdly, what as yet we do not know. With such teaching the student grasps the situation; and his ambition is stimulated to decrease by further research the wide region of our ignorance. But when teaching has the evolutionary bias, the darkest corners where we know least are continually pointed out as the places where evolution most probably occurred. In geology, which is the best testing ground for evolution, all the features are emphasized which the evolutionist considers to be a support for his theory, and other features which are directly against it and cannot be explained on any evolutionary hypothesis, are passed over or ignored. It is surely quite unfair to present any subject in such a way to a beginner before he has some comprehensive grasp of the facts as they stand. For the subject is treated as though the whole object in teaching it was to find support for an advanced philosophical theory. The learner has as yet no adequate knowledge to enable him to judge of such matters; and he has no choice but to accept the theoretical explanations which are passed on to him.

Deterioration of Creatures.

We may give very briefly a few illustrations to make our meaning clear. In the case of nearly all the great groups of creatures there was a time in the geological ages when they were more highly developed than they are in the present world. Take the wide group of the sea shells (the mollusca), which includes as its highest types the nautilus and the cuttlefish. These upper-class types were far more numerous in proportion away back in the Silurian than they are to-day; as the humbler mollusca, the seasnails, mussels and clams, are now very largely in the majority. Why, then, did the higher types die down, and the lower-

class mollusca gain upon them, till the present? This does not look like the survival of the fittest. Probably the best answer is that the place in nature occupied by these more active mollusca was taken later on by the fishes, which had not then come into existence. This same deterioration, in the sense of the dying out of the highest types in a large group, is also true of the class of trees which formed the forests of the coal formation, now represented in their class by the lowly mosses and rushes. It is also true of the early insects, and very conspicuously so of the great group of reptiles that were once the lords of creation.

We have also the wondrous persistence of many forms, without change. Two little snail shells will exemplify this. There is a land snail (a pupa) and a common water snail (a limnea); that are found about the middle of the geological ages, which are quite indistinguishable from species now living. Why then have they not developed into something better during these ages? There can hardly be "an inherent tendency in everything" to develop. Other examples of this could readily be given, among plants as well as animals. When we turn again to the organs of the body, we find examples of the same want of development. The multiple eye, such as the house-fly has, is well preserved in fossils; and the very ancient crabs and lobsters, in one of the earliest geological ages, had this type of eye. It is precisely the same in its structure, among modern crabs and insects, as it was at the first. Why then has there been no improvement in all these long ages? The only answer is, it was perfect from the beginning; perfectly adapted to the creatures that use it.

Unfair to Students.

These considerations strengthen the conclusion that evolution is entirely out of place in elementary text-books, whether in schools or in the earlier years of the university course. From the point of view of a proper sequence in education, and the stage reached by the mind of the pupil in relation to any branch of Natural Science that he is beginning to learn, it is not right that evolutionary teaching should be mixed in with the facts of the subject. It is also specially unfair to give the impression to the uninformed student, that evolution is an established principle in science, and to teach it accordingly in the very one-sided way that is usually followed; in view of the continual change of attitude toward it, and the inconclusive discussions regarding it, which are still going on among evolutionists themselves.

If evolution must be taught, it should be put in the place where it properly belongs, in the most advanced classes in the university. The student will then be in a position for its discussion, with an unbiased mind, when he is already well grounded in the various branches of Natural Science as a basis. This is the only rational procedure from a purely educational standpoint. Evolution can then be discussed in its relation to Greek philosophy, which it closely resembles; and the student will then make his choice between accepting the views of a pagan philosophy, or believing the revelation from God which the Scriptures give us, where the relation of man to his Creator and to nature around him is so impressively explained.

A Christmas Gift

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

I suppose most of the readers of *The Gospel Witness* received some kind of Christmas gift this year. The writer was not forgotten either, and among his Christmas gifts was a little volume on prayer, from a kind friend in England. I have two other volumes by the same author on the same subject, but this one is helpful too, and quite different from the others. When I opened the book at the first chapter I was struck with the following story with which the chapter begins: "A dear friend of mine," says the late Dr. Dixon, "who was quite a lover of the chase, told me the following story: 'Rising early one morning, I heard the baying of a score of deer hounds in pursuit of their quarry. Looking away to a broad open field in front of me, I saw a young fawn making its way across, and giving signs, moreover, that its race was well nigh run. Reaching the rails of the enclosure it leaped over and crouched within ten feet from where I stood. A moment later two of the hounds came over, when the fawn ran in my direction and pushed its head between my legs. I lifted the little thing to my breast, and swinging round and round, fought off the dogs. I felt just then that all the dogs in the West could not and should not capture that fawn after its weakness had appealed to my strength.' So is it when human helplessness appeals to Almighty God. Well do I remember when the hounds of sin were after my soul until at last I ran to the arms of Almighty God." It would be good for us all to close the old year, and begin the new one, by nestling in those "Everlasting Arms" which will never throw us back into the teeth of the dogs that may hound us!

After telling this story the writer goes on to speak of prayer and faith, and he says that in studying the principles of prayer, the first place must be given to faith. This reminds us of the extremely impressive address which Dr. Howard Taylor of the China Inland Mission gave us at the closing gathering of the students of our Seminary before they went away for their Christmas holidays. This address was a real message from God. In it Dr. Taylor called our attention to the words in Hebrews, chapter eleven, verse six: "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Dr. Taylor laid great emphasis on the words, "must believe". And the writer of my little book says the same thing. Concerning the man who prays he, too, says, "he must believe". From the opening chapters of the book I select a few sentences: "In the ultimate issue prayer is simply faith taking possession of its illimitable inheritance." "Faith projects on God, and God on the world. Only God can move mountains, but faith and prayer move God." "The faith which creates powerful praying is faith which centres on a powerful Person." "All wonderful works depend on wonderful praying." These brief sentences should be pondered deeply, for they lead us into profound realities. Dr. Howard Taylor offered the striking suggestion that true prayer is not horizontal, that is, it is not a question of length, a long measured plane; true

prayer is perpendicular, that is, it goes straight up to God. What a transformation in public and social praying would be wrought if we would take these things to heart! There would be no more sermonizing in our prayers, no more instructing God about Himself, and His abode; no more replies to preceding prayers in our praying, and no desire to make a good impression upon the congregation around us. But there would be definite work done in prayer. Prayer that prevails is the result of searching the Word of God to know His will, of faith which lays hold of that Word and trusts the Author of the Word implicitly, and then places that Word before the Lord and looks to Him and says, "Lord, do as Thou hast said". Faith rests its whole weight upon the Word of God, and the God of the Word. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews, to which we have referred, gives us a "triumphal arch of faith", and tells us of those who have "obtained a good report through faith". As someone has said, "Many men obtain a good report because of the money they give, others because of their gifts, or for other reasons"; but we sadly need more of those who obtain good report through faith, and who show their faith by the wonders of their praying. My little book further says, "It was claimed for Augustus Caesar that he found Rome a City of wood, and left it a City of marble." The Pastor who succeeds in changing his congregation from a prayerless people into a prayerful one, has done a vastly greater thing than Augustus, or a dozen of such emperors. What a calamity it is to any Pastor, and to any church, where prayer is wanting. A pastor may preach his heart out, and then fail, if his people will not meet to pray. The great promises in the Word of God for the church and the world, express the mind and purpose of God. But the Lord says, "For this I will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." The infinite reservoir of God's blessing is full to overflowing, but there must needs be channels through which that blessing can flow to desert souls and desert places; and the prayers of God's people are the channels.

This is the plan of God, and it is useless for us to adopt any other. Some churches may give up prayer meetings and try concerts and entertainments. That method is simply damming out the blessing of God; it is making it impossible for God to do what He longs to do. It is utter folly for churches to suppose that God will change His purpose, and alter His plan of blessing just because they prefer concerts to prayer meetings. When will God's people learn the place of believing prayer in the purpose of God? It is perfectly pitiable to see the fruitless efforts of churches to make spiritual progress when they forsake God's appointed way of blessing. If blessing is to come to some churches in proportion to their believing prayer, then some churches will require a great many deacons' meetings in order to discover any signs of God's saving and sanctifying Presence in their midst. The Lord says, "My house shall be called the house of prayer". Observe, not even the house of praise; or

(Continued on page 14.)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

AN ADVOCATE BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Sunday Morning, December 8th, 1929.

(Stenographically Reported.)

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:
"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—1 John 2: 1, 2.

The title by which John addresses believers in the opening verse of the chapter is evidently a favourite one with him. "My little children"! I think it would be difficult to conceive of anything more beautiful than that, for that is what believers are. We are, in God's sight, only little children. We hear in some quarters to-day a great deal about "the modern mind", and of how the gospel must be accommodated to meet the superior intellectualism of the day! But such a view is utterly at variance both with the spirit and the letter of the Word of God. Our Lord Jesus said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven". When Nicodemus, a learned doctor of the law, a master in Israel, came to Christ with his compliments, saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for, no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him", Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God", it is as though He had said, "Nicodemus, you are altogether too big a man; you must become as a little child."

Of course I know our Lord chiefly referred to that spiritual miracle, that work of regeneration by the Holy Ghost which makes us new creatures in Christ, when He insisted on the necessity of the new birth; but I am sure it has also this aspect, that one thus born again does become as a little child. We are admonished, as new born babes, to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." If we are ever to understand the things of God we must humble ourselves as little children.

I wonder if there is a young man here this morning who imagines that he is "growing up"? that he is becoming rather wise? I remember when I was about eighteen or nineteen I thought I knew a great deal! I thought my father did not know as much as I did! I have since changed my mind completely. But I suggest to you that there is nothing in the New Testament to offer any encouragement to men or women who imagine they are intellectually superior, that they have larger knowledge than other people; and that if the gospel is to commend itself to their mentality—some things will have to be changed. But they never will be changed, my friends, and you will never know very much until you become as a little child.

Indeed, in every realm of human knowledge the more a man knows the more humble he becomes. It is the little knowledge that is a dangerous thing. Truly great men are always humble, and always simple as little children. And we have made great progress

in the Christian life when we are willing to take up that attitude toward spiritual concerns, and remember that before God we are never learned philosophers, we are never anything but the Father's little children.

There are people here this morning who would like to become little children again. In a week or so Christmas will be here. Do you not wish you were a little child so that you could hang up your stocking again? Would it not be fine if Father Christmas could come to you? I wish I could hang up my stocking! I wish I could forget I am grown up, and become as a little child again. In relation to matters of the spiritual world we must become, and remain, as little children if we are to progress in our knowledge of divine things.

Let us come in that attitude to a study of this very simple and yet very profound scripture. Let us pray that as we come to God's word this morning we may come as little children. I once went to hear a great preacher preach—at least people said he was a great preacher; they said he was a man of great renown. He was brought to this particular place for a special occasion, and I went to hear him preach. He talked so simply that I am sure every child in the congregation could understand everything he said. I listened with interest; I found that he gripped me; that he commanded my attention throughout. But there was nothing extraordinary about the sermon. I had a feeling—I was just a young preacher—I had a feeling that I could have done just as well myself, and I am not sure that I did not secretly believe that I might occasionally do a little better! Certainly there was nothing extraordinary about him. But I know now why people called him a great preacher: because, though thirty years have passed, I could preach that sermon now. I remember every word he said. It was so simply and plainly put that it fastened itself in my memory, and the great truth of that sermon has remained with me for thirty years.

You must not expect great things here. A young man came from Scotland some few years ago, perhaps five or six years ago, and he came to Jarvis Street Church for a little while. He actually joined the church! Then he left us—and do you know why he left? Because the ministry was not sufficiently intellectual to please him! He imagined, you know, that he was a very important man. I never became sufficiently intimate with him to ask him what sized hat he wore, but I expect it was rather a large one! Let us come now like little children to this great text, for that is all we are, whether we know it or not. There

is so much yet to be known, that the little we know is scarcely worth mentioning; we all belong to the Primary class. I do not think any of us have really graduated from it yet!

I.

"My little children"—here is THE PURPOSE OF ALL DIVINE COMMUNICATIONS TO US,—“these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.” That is God’s purpose in your life and in mine. “Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Jesus Christ did not come merely to save us from the consequences of sin. He did come for that, and He does save us from sin’s consequence; but He came specifically to save us from sin itself. Salvation is God’s method of taking away our sins, of undoing the work of the devil, and re-making us into the image and likeness of God. And God’s plan for us is that we should be delivered from the power, from the dominion, of sin.

Let me speak to you young Christians, boys and girls, and young men and women, those of you who have known the Lord Jesus for but a short time. What does your religion mean to you? What does your salvation mean to you? Has it effected any change in your method of living? Has it done anything for you within? Has it changed even your thinking? Does it flood your mind with spiritual light? Has it led you to “set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth”? Are you finding an increase of power in your life, so that you are now delivered from the things to which you were formerly in bondage? Are you growing up into Christ, becoming stronger and stronger in your spiritual life, putting off the old man and putting on the new? I know this is very simple, but I want you to understand that Christ came into your life to save you from sin: “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

That is the purpose of the death of Christ, and that is the purpose of the life of Christ, “for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son”,—His blood cleansing us from sin—“much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” The very life of God is at the disposal, at the command of faith; the Holy Ghost is given that He may live in us, and may sanctify us and separate us entirely unto the service of God. Remember it is written, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” We are to become conformed increasingly to the likeness of God. I am anxious to see people saved. I rejoice every time a boy or a girl, or a man or woman, comes to Christ. But being saved, I am just as anxious that these babes in Christ should understand something of their privileges, and lay hold of the grace that is in Christ, so that they may live victoriously, so that they may live triumphantly, and thus be different from people who have never known Jesus Christ.

Is it true of every one of us who has named the name of Christ? Has the coming of Christ into our hearts made a difference, so that wherever we go people say, “That man must be a Christian”; “That woman must surely have been converted”; “Why that boy,—did you not notice that when a rough word was

said in the playground it offended him? Did you not notice that he acted as if he had been hurt, that he did not laugh as the other boys laughed?” “Did you not notice there is something different about that girl, that some change has come over her? She seems to have new tastes, new desires, and a new way of living.”

Is that what people say? That is what they ought to say. And that is the purpose of the coming of Christ, the purpose of the gift of the Holy Ghost, the purpose of this Bible. That is why God gave us His Book. That is the reason for the existence of the Christian churches in the world, that we may come together in Christian fellowship and be mutually serviceable to each other, speaking only those things which are good for the edifying of the soul. The end of God’s contact with us, and of every divine communication, no matter how it comes, is that we sin not, that we be saved from our sins. It is possible for us to obtain the mastery over some things. There is a great difference between our inherent *sinfulness*, the *sinfulness* of our natures, and the direct and deliberate commission of sin. And surely if the religion of Jesus Christ is for anything at all, it is to energize our wills, and make it possible for us to refuse to do the thing that we ought not to do. Surely that is what Christ came for. If the Word is written that we sin not, it certainly implies that there is a reservoir of power, that there are resources of grace at our command that will enable us to be victorious. I covet for myself, and I covet for you, an ever-increasing experience of the mighty power of God that we may sin not. It is possible, dear friends, that we should be made victorious.

That does not mean that we have no sin, no matter how victorious we are, for “if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” We have sinned, we are *sinful*, our natures are sinful, the old man is there. But, blessed be God, the new man is there, and the new man is to be made stronger and stronger by God’s grace; and we are to live victoriously in the power of the Holy Ghost. “These things I write unto you, that ye sin not.”

Very well; then, we ought to pray every one of us for an ever deepening desire after holiness, after an increased likeness to Jesus Christ. I have seen a little boy who was proud of being his father’s son, and nothing pleased him more than to be told that he was like his father. Ask that little chap what he is going to do when he is grown up, and generally he will tell you that he is going to be like his dad, or his father, whatever he may call him. That is his highest ambition, if the father is a good man. (God pity the child who has not an ideal in his father! How poor he is! And if there are any fathers here who do not inspire your children with a desire to be manly and godlike, then you had better get right with God quickly, so that you may be able to set them an example.) But I say where the father is what he ought to be, it is natural for his child to desire to be like him. And it is natural for a Christian—natural? yes; natural to the new nature. It is not natural to the old man, but it is natural to the new man to desire above everything to be like Jesus Christ. It seems to me the highest compliment that could be paid to any man is for someone to say, “Whenever that man comes near me he makes me think about God. I cannot be in that per-

son's presence without having a desire to be a little better."

Is that what we are doing? Is that the influence we are exerting? Wherever we go, are we causing people to say, "In spite of all that people say in some quarters, I still believe it is possible to live the Christian life." You do? How did you find that out? "Because I have met a few Christians who are doing it. I have met a few people into whose life Christ has manifestly come; there is such a savour of Christ about them, and they are so different from other folks, that I never go where they are without feeling a desire rising in my heart that I myself may be more godlike. Oh, that God may work in us an increasing repugnance toward sin! That He may teach us to hate it, to abhor it, to be uncomfortable wherever it is!

When the leper came to Christ he did not say, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst save me from death." He did not say, "Lord, I am afraid that my children will be left fatherless, and my wife left a widow; I have made no provision for them, and if you please, will you extend my life a little so that I may minister to my family?" He did not say, "Lord, I am afraid of death, and I wish you would drive the dark shadow from my life." He did not say that, but with a great passion, with an agony of soul, he said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Save me from this loathsome, horrible, disease, so that I shall cease to loathe myself; that I may be clean among my fellows."

Oh, that God would teach us what sin is, that it is a fretting leprosy, something to be hated, to be loathed as coming from the pit itself! Let us pray that God may deepen the sense of sin in us, so that we may abhor it, and get as far away from it as we possibly can, ever longing after a greater measure of Christlikeness. What a wonderful ambition! Oh, that it may be true that every member of this church, every man and woman, every boy and girl, is crying out to God every day, "Lord, make me clean; make me more like Christ; make me a better Christian; make me a better servant, a more faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." If we begin every day with an earnest longing in our hearts for a greater conformity to the will of God, what a blessing we shall be able to bring to all the people roundabout! I am sure that is what everyone needs. That is what the world about us needs; it needs to be saved from its sin. God save us from this blighting, blasting, deadening, paralyzing, thing that cuts a man off from God, and takes him down into the pit of corruption, instead of giving him wings to mount up like an eagle, and get away into the heavenly places, dwelling there with Christ Jesus the Lord.

II.

"These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." HOW MAY WE BE DELIVERED FROM SIN? Certainly *not by the strength of our own resolutions*. I know there are superficial errors that we may have strength to overcome. Occasionally a drunkard may, by the exercise of his will, turn away from his cups. A man who has an evil tongue may have sufficient force of character, for a while at least, to control his speech. Indeed, a man may, by self-effort and by the assistance of human agencies, apparently cleanse the house, as when the

unclean spirit went out of a man, and the house was swept and garnished—but the house was left empty. It was not possessed by anyone to dispute the return of the evil spirit; thus all self-effort is, in the last analysis, only negative: it produces an empty house. It is a resolve *not* to do something; and is external. A man cannot cleanse his mind, a man cannot, by his own power, purify his heart. He cannot eradicate his innate selfishness; he cannot go down to the root of the evil! The only thing he can do is to cut the thistle off at the top; but the root is there, and in a little while it grows again.

We must have a power outside ourselves. Our Lord knew that when He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." The Comforter is not someone who comes to speak soft words to us. That is not the purpose of His coming. The word "comforter" is an old word, and it has in it, in our English translation, the idea of strength. It means to be brave. The Comforter comes to make us strong, and brave and true. He is the Paraclete; He comes to stand by us, to dwell in us; and the only way by which we can have power over evil is to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts in His fulness. It is not enough that the unclean spirit should go out of a man; the Holy Spirit must come into the man; for it is forever true that our choice is between the indwelling of one, the Holy Spirit, or seven spirits unclean. Unless the Holy Spirit shall take up his residence within, by and by the evil spirit will return, and bring with him seven others, and the last state of the man will be worse than the first. What I call your attention to this morning is that there is a divine Energy, there is a Power sent from heaven to take up His residence in our hearts, to clarify our minds, to energize every power of mind and of body, so that the whole man may be brought into conformity to the will of God.

Let me beseech you to seek more and more a consciousness and a real experience of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. As the Holy Ghost takes up His residence we shall have divine power with us. Then in our homes, on the street, in the place where we work, wherever we are, God will be with us. "These things are written" in order that we may know our privileges in the Holy Spirit and the Word itself. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?"—how shall I know what is sin, and what is not sin?—"By taking heed thereto according to thy word." By opening our minds and our hearts to the Word of God, by shaping our conduct and character in agreement with its principles, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, we may be delivered from sin. That is our high privilege.

III.

But "IF ANY MAN SIN". Just now somebody said, in his heart, "Pastor, you discourage me, for I have fallen into temptation; and I cannot say that at all points I have been delivered from sin. From what you have said, am I to conclude that I am not a Christian because I have fallen into error?" No, my friend. John is careful to say, "I offer you no encouragement in the way of wrong doing. These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin"—if it be so

that the little babe stumbles, and gets its clothing in the mire, if the boy in school is dull, and slow to learn, and fails to triumph as it is his privilege to do, I want to tell you how to overcome it—"If any man sin" *there is a remedy*. If we have been overtaken in temptation, if we have ceased to depend upon God, if we come this morning with soiled garments in the sense of uncleanness and unfitness, I want to tell you in a word or two how we may get rid of it.

I did not intend to spend as much time on that part of the verse, so I can but mention that which I had intended should be the burden of my exposition this morning.

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I should like you to get a *very clear idea of the character in which our Lord is here represented*. You think of Him on the cross, as One Who died for you—and you cannot dwell too much upon that. He did die for you. We think of His precious blood as washing away our sins and we cannot too strongly emphasize that point. We look back to the time when Jesus died, and we say we have in the historic Christ a correct portrait of the Son of God. But remember, He Who was laid in the grave did not remain there. After the third day He rose from the grave, and "shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days." Then He took His disciples to Olivet and pronounced His blessings upon them, and as they looked upon Him He was parted from them, and went up into heaven.

Do you know where Jesus Christ is now? He is not upon earth; He is in heaven. Are you sure He has arrived? I have sometimes imagined, when the hundred and twenty were gathered in the upper room praying for those ten days that they talked about that last scene when they saw Jesus go away. I can imagine Peter's saying, "John, I wonder just where He has gone? A cloud received him out of our sight, and He has become the invisible Christ, but did He arrive? Where is He now?"

I have noticed that when people go to the train to see their friends off, although they have been talking night and day for a month, they still have a great deal more to say. At the last minute, after they get into the train, someone hurriedly puts up a window, and from the window they have to have their farewell word to the friends standing by. And as though it were an entirely new idea, and never had been said before, they say, "Now be sure to write and tell me of your safe arrival. Be sure to let me know how you get on." Sometimes they say, "Send me a wire when you get there."

I can imagine Peter and John saying, "Oh, I wish He would send us word that He has arrived. I wish He would send us word that He is there." And one day while they were praying suddenly—listen—"suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire. . . . and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." When the multitude came together and said, "What does it all mean" Peter said, in effect, "We have just had a letter from heaven to say the Lord Jesus has

arrived. We have just heard that He has got home, and that He is sitting on the right hand of God. He has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and He hath shed forth this that ye see and hear. That is His assurance that He has got home. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Ever since then we have known that Jesus was at home at the right hand of God. That is where the Saviour is.

What is He doing there? He is my Advocate, if you please; He is my Representative. He is there in the Father's presence to plead my cause. That is what He is doing. Have you ever had to go to court? I hope you never have, and that you will not. But if you should, you go to see a certain lawyer and say, "I want you to take my case." He may ask you for a retaining fee. He may say, My retainer is—so much." And you will put down the money. What does that mean? That means that he now accepts the responsibility for your case; he is going to look after all your interests; and whenever your name is mentioned in court you will not have to say anything; he will be there. He will rise and say, "I appear for Mr. So-and-So. I am his advocate, I am his representative." When I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ my faith retained Him as my Counsel, my Advocate; I handed over to Him all my interests for time and for eternity. He said, "I will look after you; I will appear for you. Whenever any matter concerning you comes before the Throne of God I will be there to say that I know all about you. I will plead for you." He is there as my Advocate this morning.

Is that not wonderful? Is it not wonderful that we have a Friend at court to appear before God every day, looking after us. You may speak for yourself. I am only telling you what I have. I hope He is your representative too. But I have an Advocate Who ever appears before God in my behalf.

That applies to every one who would be a Christian, who has not received forgiveness of sins. If you are charged with sin, will you send someone to appear before the throne for you. Will you retain Jesus Christ? He is the only One Who has access there, and if you trust Him He will say, "I will take your case, I will secure your acquittal."

As for *those of us who are Christians we can only approach God through Jesus Christ*. No man has ever come to God the Father; no man has ever seen God the Father. There is no way to get to God the Father, except through Jesus Christ: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He is our Advocate, and He is acceptable to the Father. He stands in favour with the Court, and any plea He makes in our behalf will be listened to by the Court.

I wanted to say more about that, and perhaps I shall return to it again, because it is such a great text. But *I must say a word about how He does it*. He always pleads guilty in our behalf. That is how He secures our acquittal. Jesus Christ never covers up sin in the sense of permitting us to deny it. The only way to get rid of sin is to confess it, to acknowledge it, and then He will forgive us. We are guilty, and the only way by which we can secure acquittal is to plead guilty

and throw ourselves upon the mercy of the court. Then our Advocate will say, "I am the propitiation for this man's sin. I will pay His debt."

I wonder if I could tell you a secret? I wonder would you promise not to tell anybody? I will run the risk. One day some years ago there was a certain man who was sick, and the doctor said he needed a little airing, that he needed to go out for a drive. I knew that he had no car, and I did not suppose he could afford to hire a taxi. I said to myself, "I must take that man for a drive so that he can get some air." I started out after tea, the only time I could command, for I had a meeting that night. I called for my friend, and took him out into the country. And I did like some other people do, I forgot I had to come back! Momentarily I forgot it was more than a one-way trip, but suddenly I took out my watch, and found that I had consumed nearly all my available time going one way and I had to get back to my meeting. When I turned my car about,—well, it was a minister's car, and it knew it had to be at church at the proper time! It went a little faster than some cars do sometimes! A day or so later somebody came to my door, and do you know what he had? (laughter). So you have had one too! He had a paper that was not white: it was blue—and after I got the paper I was blue too. But do you know what I did? I did not go to court. I got someone else to go for me. I did not know how fast I drove. Of course, I was on an errand of mercy; but I did not plead that. I said, "You go and you pay whatever there is to pay." After a while my advocate told me he had paid ten dollars, and I paid him. I paid for a taxi-ride anyhow for my sick friend, although he never knew it, of course. But you see I did not appear, someone else appeared for me, and he paid what was owing, what the law demanded.

And that is the only way by which we can get relief in heaven's court. We must put the whole matter into the hands of the Lord Jesus. He then pleads the merit of His precious blood, and says, "I have paid for that boy; I have paid the debt of that girl. The receipt of it is in my hands, and in my side. I demand their acquittal."

This Advocate never lost a single case. I know the

lawyers feel badly when they lose a case. It is very humiliating for a man when he loses a case at court. But this Advocate has never lost a single case. Every soul in all the world's history for whom He has appeared has been absolutely acquitted. Nor did He lose mine either. I have the Court's certificate that I am acquitted, for the Spirit bears witness with my spirit.

Furthermore I find *the proof is written*. It is a good thing to have documentary proof of matters in dispute. It is written in the Book that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Spurgeon used to say, "H A T H spells got it." Is that not a queer way to spell *got it*—H-A-T-H? It means we have it this moment. And if you have the judgment of the court acquitting you, you need not trouble about what anyone else says. You need not be cast down by what your own heart says. If the Lord says, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven," just say, "Thank you." Lift up your head and say, "I am saved for ever."

Let me put it to you thus: a man is in the police court. He is brought in by a policeman who leads him by the arm. He brings him in and puts him in the prisoner's dock. When all the evidence has been submitted the magistrate says, "I find you not guilty. You are discharged." The man begins to walk out, but the policeman says, "Stop! Stop!" "But why?" says the erstwhile prisoner. The policeman answers, "Did I not bring you in here?" "Yes, but I am going out by myself." "But you are charged with an offence?" "I know I was." "Very well, you stay here." "I will not; I am going out; I am going home." "Who says you may go?" "He does," says the man, pointing to the Magistrate, "and what do I care for you when the Judge says I am discharged? What more do you want?" Do you not see, my friend? When you are acquitted by the Supreme Court of the universe, when God Himself for Christ's sake says, "You are forgiven," there is no appeal against that word of acquittal; all the devils in hell cannot bring you into condemnation, for "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Do you not want to say, "Hallelujah?" "Yes." Well, say it then. ("Hallelujah," "Amen!").

THE DEAD IN CHRIST—WHERE ARE THEY?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 15th, 1929.

(Stenographically Reported.)

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord."—I Thess. 4:15.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord"—it would be useless to discuss the subject before us this evening under any other authority than the Word of God. The paragraph from which my text is taken was especially written for the instruction of people who were interested in those who were asleep. It was written that they might not be ignorant of the future of such as had departed from this life. It is a recognition of the desire of all men, a desire which is legitimate and natural, to know something about the

state and condition of the spirits of our loved whom we have lost awhile.

I am aware that my subject this evening deals with a matter that many try to exclude from their thinking. I fear it is a subject which even the pulpit neglects; for the emphasis nowadays, even among many orthodox people—by which I mean those who believe the Bible to be the word of God—the tendency now is to lay special emphasis upon the profitableness of godliness to the life, and *in* the life, that now is, rather than the life

that is to come. It is profitable to be a Christian even in this life, judged by the truest standards of value; but after all, the larger life, the longer life, is beyond; and that must engage men's thought.

I.

There are periods in a man's life when he may be careless of the future, when he may boast that he is a rational creature, that he is not moved by sentimental and emotional considerations, and that his whole course is determined by a knowledge of the hard facts of life. He is a business man, perhaps. Sometimes we hear of "hard-headed business men." I do not know why business men should be looked upon as particularly hard-headed. It does not appear to me that that is a very complimentary term to apply to anybody. But there are people who are so engrossed with material interests that for a time they seem utterly indifferent toward any consideration of the future life. They are like those people of whom the Scripture speaks when it says, "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names." They live as though there were no future life. I have known not a few who boasted of their indifference toward any consideration of the conditions of life beyond the grave.

But how rudely and suddenly such men are sometimes awakened to a recognition of life's realities. The man is indifferent toward his body. He is all brain—as he thinks. If it were true, there would not be much of him, in many instances! But he boasts of his superiority! By and by he feels a few twinges of pain. He cannot attend to the day's duties. He sees a physician, and the physician looks grave. The man himself becomes rather troubled, and though he may not tell anyone he begins to ask himself the question, "What if I should have to leave it all? What then?"

Here is a man apparently abundantly prosperous, having everything in life to live for, so far as material wealth and worldly possessions and position were concerned; but when he gets a telephone message at the office, he drops everything. Suddenly this man who has no sentiment and no emotion, rushes home, only to find that already two or three doctors have been summoned. It is only a little boy or a little girl, just a little bit of flesh and blood that is sick—nothing more. But even though he be a man of millions, that little cot suddenly holds all the interests of life for him; and when, in spite of all that human skill can do, the little breast ceases to heave, and the heart is still, and the doctors say "We are sorry, but she is gone beyond our help," then what matters all his worldly prosperity? What does he care for his bank account then? Suddenly his interest is transferred across the river. He demands to know what has happened to the spirit of that little child. Say to him then, "Sir, I thought you did not believe in the future life? I thought you had no concern about anything but these material and temporal interests?" The awakened man will cry, "Do not tell me that that child is in the grave. Do not tell me that that is the end,—a decaying body. It was something more than the body that I loved!"

A man comes home from a funeral when he has laid not half his life, but all of it, in the cold, dark, grave. He goes through the great house, if so be he has been

prosperous,—the furniture is all there; the carpets are there; the expensive pictures and statuary are all there. But he does not see any of it. The place is desolate. It is as cold and cruel as the grave itself. He drags himself to business in the morning, and comes to the great building which is all his; he walks in where hundreds are waiting to do his bidding, and he says to himself, "Can it be possible that I was ever such a fool as to think that this was life? I do not care for any of it." Not only his home, his house, but the whole world suddenly becomes empty and dark. He says, "There must be, *there must be*, something better than this." A hunger within cries out for something these material things cannot satisfy. Of her whom he loved, he says, "The light of my life is hidden from me, but cannot have been extinguished. I wonder where she is to-night? I wonder where she is?"

Did you ever ask that question? Sometimes you have passed the cemetery where you have laid a loved one away. It was cold, the wind was blowing, perhaps it was night and the frost was in the air, and you heard even the branches of the trees crackling and creaking as the frosty wind swept over that desolate scene. You almost shuddered as you said, "Did I leave her there? Is that where she is? It cannot be! It is impossible! There must be something beyond that."

Then suddenly the man awakes to discover that he is not devoid of sentiment. He discovers that he has a bit of emotion, after all; and that life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

During the war I crossed the ocean on one occasion when, so far as I recall, there were only four civilians on board. There was a certain very distinguished Canadian whom I will not name; there was Clarence Darrow, the New York lawyer—famous, or notorious, which ever you like to call it; there was the famous "Tay Pay" O'Connor, the father of the House of Commons, recently deceased, and myself. The four of us got together one sunny day—in fact, on more than one occasion, but I think of one sunny day in particular on which we met on the top deck: "Tay Pay" O'Connor, Clarence Darrow, a certain distinguished educator of Canada, knighted by His Majesty, and this poor preacher. We talked about religion. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Darrow suggested that that be the subject of our discussion. In fact, he came over to the table where I was sitting and said, "Let us go up on deck and have a talk about religion." We went up, and talked about the future life in particular.

Mr. O'Connor was a Roman Catholic—and he had no difficulty whatever in believing in the future life. As to how to get there in peace, of course, was another matter. But I recall distinctly the gloomy view of Mr. Clarence Darrow. When we had talked for perhaps a couple of hours he said to me, "Well, I will tell you what I call your religion. It is just dope. My wife takes it, and I do not begrudge it to her at all. It is mighty good dope. I wish I could take it myself, but I cannot. I do not believe it. So far as I know, when a man dies, he dies like a dog, and that is the end of it."

I do not think even Mr. Darrow believed that. If he has any heart in his breast at all, he will be awakened from that fallacy sooner or later. It is well nigh impossible for a man to believe that there is no

continuity of life beyond the grave, even though he be not a Christian. There has always been that instinct of immortality within the soul. That is why they buried bows and arrows with the Indian chieftains, that they might be equipped for the enjoyment of the happy hunting ground to which they were going. In the recent excavations of the ancient tombs of the kings in Egypt, they found every indication of a belief in the immortality of the soul; that death is not the end. They did not know what was beyond; but they did not dress up their monarchs in gold, and furnish their sepulchres like palaces, merely for the entertainment of the worm that was to reduce those bodies to dust and ashes. Somehow they thought there was another life, and they equipped their monarchs for passage into the splendours of another, though imaginary, realm.

II.

I say, it is natural for anyone to desire to know about the future life, and it is as legitimate as it is natural. The inspired writer here says, "I am going to write you this because I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep. You have a right to know. You ought to know. It is your high privilege to know, that you may not sorrow as some other people. I write something that will dry your tears and fill your hearts to overflowing with thankfulness to God. I will tell you where your loved ones are gone, and what shall become of them in the ages that are yet to be."

I do not want any speculation about this matter, do you? Where shall we turn to find an authoritative pronouncement on this subject? Here we have it: "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord." Nothing else has any value in respect to this matter. Human reason, great as it is—and surely we must not discount those qualities which God has given us, and which were designed to be laid at His feet and used in His service. All honour to men in all departments of human investigation who have uncovered the truth and brought to light things that were once beyond human knowledge. How many worthy workers there have been! I am sorry for men like Edison, but on the natural plane, so far as the material realm is concerned, he has been a great servant of humanity. He has given us light. He has given us a thousand things. The mind, the power, that has enabled him in so many directions to discover and disclose the unknown laws of nature, ought to suggest to us the infinite Intelligence whence they came. But in respect to this matter of the future life, all science, all philosophies, all human observations in all fields of human survey—the testimony of all history, utterly fail, for nobody can tell us anything. I have not patience to listen to a man who spins his theories about the future life, because I might just as well spin mine. My opinions are just as likely to be right as his—and both are certain to be wrong. Therefore, "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord."

May I remind you of a principle of ancient times? You remember how Saul rejected the word of the Lord. Saul's history shows that his outstanding and distinctive transgression was that he refused to accept the authority of divine revelation. He would not listen when God spoke. Then there came a time when he wanted to know what only God could tell, and God

would not speak to him. He enquired of the oracle, but could get no voice nor any that answered. He said, "I am bound to know something. I must get into touch with the world of spirits. I must get a knowledge of those things that are beyond me somehow." *When the voice of divine revelation was silent he resorted to a witch!* That was rather a great comedown, was it not, from the prophet of Jehovah to a witch? But, mark you, whenever the word of divine revelation is disregarded, whenever the prophet is rejected, the witch flourishes. Spiritism is the natural child of Modernism. When people reject the Bible, the word of the Lord, in respect to future matters, they must know something; and they resort to the witch.

I am not surprised that such a man as Sir Oliver Lodge, great man as he is in his particular sphere, should want to know something about the future. Why? Why did Sir Oliver Lodge become so anxious to know something about the future? Because he had dug a grave. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, the detective who had ever so many extra senses, and from whom apparently no secrets of human life were hid, also desired to know what lay beyond for the same reason. If these men had turned to the Book, they would have found what they wanted; but in their pride of intellect they rejected it. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle dug a grave, and he too wanted to know whither his loved one had gone.

In these recent years when death has held high carnival, and there was scarcely a family in all the earth that had escaped bereavement, it is no wonder spiritualism has flourished. I remember when I used to go to England nearly every year, at the close of the services in Spurgeon's Tabernacle I used to hold a reception. Scores and scores of people would come to greet me. They did not know me, but men and women would come up and say, "We want to shake hands with you sir, because we have a son in Canada, and we thought perhaps you might not be very far away from him; we thought you might know him." Not once, but I should think dozens of times, I have had people come to me in that glorious little, great isle, called England—not big but great—and say, "We thought we would like to speak to you because we have a son (or someone else) in Canada. You come from Toronto, do you not? Well, he lives in Vancouver. Perhaps you know him!" (Laughter). It is rather difficult for those who live in a beautiful garden like England to realize Canada's magnificent distances. On more than one occasion I have been the messenger, especially during the war days, to some loved one across the seas. I have met a man in France or somewhere else whose wife was on this side of the sea—or someone else who was not his wife. How glad he was to have a link of communication!

I have many friends across the river, and if any properly credentialled spirit who had had conversation with them could really come back and say to me, "I saw your father yesterday; I had a talk with him", I fear I should be inclined to receive him. I should say, "Tell me all about him." Do not forget that I prefaced that remark with an "if"; "if" such a spirit could come. But we should be in a sad way if we were shut up to the mutterings of the witch of Endor, if we had no more sure word of prophecy than that which some spiritualistic medium could convey.

As I pass it, I pause to say that I would not assert there is nothing superhuman in spiritualism, or spiritism as I prefer to call it. I have little doubt that ninety-nine per cent. of all of it is fraud, and the other one per cent. is devil; for whatever superhuman element there is in it is not from God; it is from below. The voice you hear, if ever you hear from that quarter, is a voice that rejects the blood of Christ and everything essentially Christian. It is the voice of that spirit which is opposed to the Holy Spirit Whose testimony is in the Book. No, my friends, we must turn away from all that, and hear the word of the Lord respecting the future life.

That is why some of us are so concerned that men should not be deceived into a rejection of the Book. The Bible is not a thing to play with. It is not something you may cast into the waste-basket, and live happily without; it is more necessary to you than meat or drink. You could afford, if your wealth were measured by millions, to lose every cent of it and be stripped and left a pauper, if only you know what the Word of God has to say to you. But to take that away is not only to blot out the sun, but to extinguish every star, and leave us in utter and outer darkness. Thank God, it cannot be done. "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

III.

I must be faithful, for my purpose is only to give you a suggestion for your own study of what the Bible says about those who have departed in Christ—in Christ. I am amazed that the pulpit of to-day should so generally assume that the future of all is secure. I read an article in *The British Weekly* only last week, a very able article, beautifully written; and yet the principle at the bottom of it all was that if there be any happy future for any of us, as the writer believes there is, then we shall earn it by our own good works. There was never a suggestion that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, has anything to do with the future destiny of the soul; never a suggestion that divine grace must provide a way of redemption, or that the Holy Ghost must change us at the very core and make us new creatures. Let me tell you, if you are out of Christ, I have no word of hope for you for the future.

There is hope in Christ. To trust Him means the forgiveness of all our trespasses; it means a salvation that begins now, and never ends. It ensures our future for time and for eternity; and it is all of the sovereign grace of God, without an infinitesimal element of human merit in it, for salvation is God's free gift. If you have not that, I cannot paint a rosy picture of the future for you; *I cannot promise that any man or woman can be divorced from his or her past and the consequences thereof, save through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. But by that means we can be cut off from our past; we can bury it in the grave of Christ, and be done with it for ever. We can rise again in the likeness of His resurrection, and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God".*

But I can find nothing in the Word of God anywhere whereby it is promised that a man can be released from his sin save through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me be faithful at that point. Do not let anyone say that this preacher ever held out any hope for anybody, for time or for eternity, except through Christ. But there is hope in Him for the worst of men. If we will trust Him, and if those whom we have lost have fallen asleep in Jesus, what then? What do you know about them? I fear there are some people do not like this preacher. My wife thinks they are lacking in intelligence! But I believe that if even I could go to heaven and come back again, some of my worst enemies would come to hear what I had to say. I think they would be so anxious to hear something of the other life that they would say, "We must put our prejudice aside and go to hear him." But we have a surer word than we should have even in such a case:—"This we say unto you by the word of the Lord"; "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." We have a word summarized, gathered up, certified, made final, by Jesus Christ Himself. The Bible is the word on which we must rest.

IV.

I cannot find from the Word that those who have departed have gone to sleep. I know that the body sleeps; it sleeps in the dust. But not the spirit. Our Lord Jesus talked with Moses and with Elias when they appeared to Him in the holy mount, and they talked with him of the decease, or exodus, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Moses understood the exodus in that hour as he had never understood it before, I venture to believe. But are we to suppose that the spirits of Moses and Elias had been awakened out of a long sleep for that particular interview? They were there in possession of their full consciousness, able to talk with Incarnate Deity about the great matters concerning which the one had written and the other had prophesied in the days of their flesh. If I had no other passage than that recording the appearance of those two Old Testament saints, I should conclude that those who have fallen asleep as to their bodies, are wide awake as to their spirits.

Then you will remember in the word of our Lord respecting the rich man and Lazarus, we have a picture of both sides of the gulf. The rich man in hell, being in torment, had possession of all his faculties. He was even bidden "remember". He was not unconscious by any means. Nor was Lazarus; he was yonder in Abraham's bosom in heaven, the Jewish figure for the heavenly state. The rich man did not pray that Lazarus might be wakened up and commissioned. Apparently Lazarus was as wide-awake as the rich man, for Abraham said to Dives, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." There was no sleeping of the soul there. When the dying thief prayed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom", Jesus answered, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." To-day!

I love to contemplate that scene when Stephen was being put to sleep as to his body under the stones of the persecutors. His last message before he went away was, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of

man standing on the right hand of God." He was not going into a state of unconsciousness. The King of glory had actually risen from His throne, just as you rise when an honoured guest is to be welcomed, and say, "Come in; so glad to see you." The extraordinary thing is that it is said of this great Saviour that when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"; but Stephen said, "I can see Him standing." It was as though the very King of glory had said, "Stephen, you are the first of a long procession; come in; there are no stones here; you will be happy in your Father's house." I do not believe Stephen was put to bed when he got there. I think he is still wide awake. The whole trend of Scripture teaching respecting the souls that have departed is that they are awake.

You have wondered sometimes that we have not a fuller revelation of the conditions that attend the life of the redeemed in the glory. I am rather glad that we have not an elaborate description of the place, the state. The Scripture says that those who have departed are "with Christ". With Christ! We may know something about what that means from our human relationships. A man goes away from home and takes his wife with him. He left the house behind, but he has his home with him. As I said a moment ago, we do not live in the furniture: we live in the lives of those who love us, and whom we love. May I reverently say that I cannot see how Infinite Wisdom could say more than is said in these two words of one syllable each—"With Christ". That is heaven, to be wide-awake with Christ.

When I said just now that I had had a few hours' talk with the famous "Tay Pay" O'Connor, perhaps somebody said, "I should like to have had that honour." Well, yes; we do well to value such privileges. And many of us have had the privilege of talking with some great men, talking with them on subjects of common interest. But I should be glad to forego the company of all the great men of earth in all ages for one minute with Christ! It is utterly unthinkable that there should be any joy to surpass that of dwelling in the immediate presence of Jesus Himself, consciously to talk with Him, and to have Him talk with us. The Bible says that is the experience of those who die in Christ,—“To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”

About all that we are told of the present state of the just is that it is very "far better" than the best we have down here. I have an idea that if we knew what goes on beyond, we should not begrudge our loved ones their residence in the immediate presence of God. I think if the veil were drawn, and we could see a little more clearly, we should have but little difficulty in understanding why some very useful man is suddenly cut off, apparently in his prime; while some other man, a weed, is allowed to remain; why a prophet of the Lord, like Spurgeon, is taken away in his prime, and some infidel is allowed to go on with his deadly work for years and years. What has happened? I think very often that they are promoted to higher service. There was not a lazy bone in the Apostle Paul's body. I think he hated indolence of any kind. He was "more abundant in labour" than any of the apostles. It was his great delight always to be in the work of the Lord, not only up to the elbows, but immersed

in it. Occasionally he boasted of all he had been permitted to do. Yet the man who lived that life of happy fellowship with the Lord, seeing hundreds and thousands brought to Christ, who was used of the Lord to write the greater part of the New Testament, to whom such an abundance of revelation was given, looking back on that life, so happily lived, for he rejoiced in the Lord always—and looking into the future, he said, "If I had my choice I would depart to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. I have work to do still, and I suppose I shall have to stay and do it. But if, my own interests were considered only I would be gone at once to get into that larger and richer life."

We ought not to shed tears over the redeemed of the Lord when they are called away. No, I should not say that. Tears are natural when death breaks the tenderest human ties, but we must not weep hopelessly for such as have gone to be with Christ. Moody said on one occasion, "Some day you will read in the papers—perhaps in the headlines, 'D. L. Moody is dead.' Do not believe it. It will not be true." And it was not true. He went "to be with Christ, which is far better."

I am not just now speaking about the second coming of the Lord. I have been telling you what is the immediate possession of believers as they leave this life and go into the next. Do they reach the height of bliss, the best that God has for them? No; they do not. I believe when we have been ten million years in heaven we shall still have new discoveries to make. I cannot think of life in heaven as being stagnant. I think there will be eternal progress, that we shall always be reaching something higher, that we shall never get to the end of those infinite truths we cannot understand to-day. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord"—by which Paul did not mean that he would be alive and remain, or that he expected so to be. He used the term generally; that word written so long ago is just as applicable to us as to him. The Word is for all ages—"that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

We shall have not only redeemed spirits—we have them—but we shall have perfected bodies by and by. I do not want this body back again. The body we shall have will be the same in identity in some mysterious way; but as I often tell you, I am still a youngster! Notwithstanding, I have touches of neuritis, I have had tooth-ache years ago! But I should not like to think of tooth-ache, or any other ache, in glory. I should like to be rid of a tabernacle that makes my spirit groan. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan", but some day we shall have bodies fashioned after His glorious body. The redeemed spirit shall be appropriately tabernacled, and we shall live and reign with Him.

V.

There was a time when, in the eastern hemisphere, men dreamed of a western world. Columbus—and other explorers—but he chiefly brought a new continent to light. Columbus did not create it; but, believing it was there, he sailed away, until he found it. He came back again and said, "I have found it. My dream has come true. There is a new world." There was a time when we did not know anything about the north pole. I said to a friend once, a good many years ago before Nansen went in search of it and before Perry reported that he had actually reached the pole, "I could not understand why anybody wanted to find the north pole! I am near enough to it: I prefer to go south,—but not too far." My friend answered, "I can understand it. I cannot be comfortable with the thought that any part of this earth is shrouded in mystery. I want the clouds to be lifted. I want to know what we have there."

In Old Testament days men fell asleep as to their bodies, they were "gathered to their fathers". Even the saints of Old Testament times knew, in some dim way, that they had gone to be with God; but they knew nothing particularly about that land. Jesus Christ came, and He said to His disciples, "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith."

Of course they could not tell what He said. He went down into the grave, and in so doing, He was like a loved one sailing on a long journey.

When you have come back from the station, from seeing a friend off on a journey, you say, "He has got so far on the way now." Then a few days later, "He must be in the middle of the Atlantic by now"; later, "He must be nearly there now." By and by you get a cable saying, "Arrived". Christ went away, and they all wondered whither He had gone. Representing millions of others, Mary stood at the grave, and when somebody said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. Ever since He left us three days ago I have been thinking of Him. They laid His body here. Now I have come, and the sepulchre is empty. The body is gone. Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." The Gardener said, "Mary!" She fell at His feet and said, "Rabboni; which is to say, Master. You have come back again." I wonder did He do with her as to the disciples, saying, "Look, Mary, it is I", showing His hands and His feet. I have always thought of the Lord Jesus being the most perfect specimen of manhood the world has ever known. I can fancy His putting back the locks from His brow, and saying, "Mary, you can see the marks of the thorns. It is I."

We lay them in the grave, we lose them for a little while; but, if they died in Christ they will come back again by and by with perfect bodies. I think that is what the Bible means when it says, "Our Saviour

Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." I am glad the veil is drawn, and that the continent that lay beyond the grave has been discovered. Jesus Christ tells us through His Word that He is the firstfruits of them that sleep, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. So then, if we believe, and if we have lost someone who believed, and who is gone to be with Christ which is far better, we ought to sing a song of rejoicing. We ought to be very happy. Let us praise God.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT.

(Continued from page 4.)

the house of preaching; certainly not the house of card playing, or the house of dancing, or the house of worldly fooling; but "the house of prayer". And why? Because prayer is the most important of its holy exercises; that indeed which stands out as the prominent business there. What a mighty revival would sweep the churches if they woke up to the fact that the place of worship is "the house of prayer"! Where prayer is a stranger then it ceases to be the house of God. But when the building is a house of prayer it becomes the very sanctuary of God. Prayer should be the chief attraction for all spiritually minded churchgoers. The church that does not put prayer in the foremost of its activities is making the greatest of mistakes, and is sidetracking the very thing which should characterize its life and worship.

Is not this a fitting season to review our life, and to give ourselves afresh to believing prayer? Mr. Spurgeon says, "A people who can pray can never be overcome, because their reserve forces can never be exhausted. Go into battle, my brother, and if you be vanquished with the strength you have, prayer can call in another legion, yea twenty legions of angels, and the foe shall marvel to see undefeated adversaries still holding the field. Who can stand against the people whose prayers enlist Almighty God? "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." We cry unto the Lord and He heareth us; He breaketh through the ranks of the foe, and giveth us triumph in the day of battle. Therefore, "terrible as an army with banners" are those who wield the weapon of prayer." And if we intend to wield this weapon of prayer, we "must believe." What a treasure my little Christmas gift will prove to be if this brief meditation which it has suggested should lead the readers of *The Gospel Witness* to give believing prayer its place in their life and service!

SPLENDID INVESTMENT

Wanted—Two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00). First mortgage on a parsonage valued at Four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00). Interest at the rate of 6½% payable semi-annually, five year period. Church is free of encumbrance.

This is a splendid opportunity for some Christian man or woman to assist a Church in financing its work. For further particulars please communicate with Rev. W. E. Atkinson, 337 Jarvis St., Toronto 2, Ont.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Two sermons are published in this issue because both have been specially asked for; and (to confess to an ever-present inclination to run away from work) because it is easier to print sermons than to write editorials, but, like Mark Tapley, to earn a little "credit", the two sermons are an effort to accommodate the printer with earlier copy. We have yielded to these considerations also, because we have had scores of requests that we print two sermons a week instead of one. As the two Sunday sermons, and the Thursday Bible lecture, are stenographically reported, it would be much easier to print sermons and addresses than to write special articles.

This is the last issue of *The Gospel Witness* for 1929. It has been for us a year of great blessing in many ways, but a year of heavy pulling financially. When we consider how difficult denominational papers find it to keep going, with big organizations behind them, and with much advertising, it seems to us the greater miracle that we have been enabled to reach almost four hundred issues—starting with nothing and having nothing. God has raised up many friends for the paper all over the world, for which we are most thankful. But we still labour under heavy burdens. Gifts of thousands would not be wasted, and the smallest gift appreciated.

This paper very earnestly wishes its readers a Happy New Year. We feel that our readers are not

like ordinary subscribers to a paper. They are members of our *Gospel Witness* family. We pray that every one may enjoy the blessing of the Lord which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow thereto.

In response to several enquiries, we have to report that *The Gospel Witness* has received no communication from Mr. Gideon Grant, K.C., since February 6th, 1926.

The Union Gospel Witness is omitted from this issue because the copy has been delayed in the mail and this paper must go to press a little earlier this week because Christmas Day falls on the day on which copy is usually prepared.

At Jarvis St. Church on Sunday, six were baptized at the evening service. The attendance at School was ten or fifteen below thirteen hundred, which was very good considering the season and the weather.

Members and friends of Jarvis St. living in Toronto are reminded of three very important services next week. Watch-night service, Tuesday, 10 p.m. till midnight; the great New Year's morning service, Wednesday, 10 a.m.—until, well, the benediction; and the service of praise led by Mr. W. J. Hutchinson, and choir of 175 voices, New Year's night, 8 o'clock. Hundreds are usually turned away from these services. Come early.

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Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. V

No. 1.

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, Editor.

Lesson 2

January 12th, 1930.

First Quarter.

DIOTREPHE'S USURPATION.

Lesson Text: III John.

Golden Text. "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" v. 11.

I. GAIUS, (vs. 1-8)**(a) Introduction.**

This epistle like the former two of the same name was written by the apostle John. The recipient of the letter is named Gaius, but of his identity we cannot be certain as there are several of the same name mentioned in Scripture. That he was a person of high spiritual character and greatly beloved by the apostle is made clear in the reference to him, and by the affectionate terms used in addressing him.

(b) Walking in the Truth, (vs. 1-4).

Three individuals are mentioned in the epistle, the first of whom is Gaius. To him the apostle expresses his sincere love, stating that he loves him "in the truth", (v. 1), thus denoting the reality and character of his love. He then states a wish concerning his physical welfare, trusting that he may prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospered, (v. 2). In this we are enlightened concerning the spiritual condition of this saint. His soul was in a prosperous condition. It is important that we keep in good physical condition if we are to be of the utmost usefulness to our Lord; but it is of even greater importance that we keep in spiritual condition if we are to be used at all. Several things are requisite to good health in both spheres, such as nourishing food in sufficient quantity, an abundant supply of clear water, a reasonable amount of exercise, a clear bracing, uncontaminated atmosphere, and a good conscience, etc. Sickness may be brought on in both spheres through the neglect of the simple rules of life, therefore we ought to be sensible and earnest in our manner of life; then we shall enjoy better health and in the spiritual realm at least we shall have the abundant life, (John 10:10). A further testimony to the healthy spiritual state of Gaius is given in the statement that the truth was in him and that he was walking in it, which gave real joy to the apostle, (vs. 3, 4). It should be noted that one cannot walk in the truth unless possessed by it. It is the truth within which governs the life without, and our Lord is the Truth, (John 14:6). Therefore, unless one is a saved person he cannot live the Christian life and follow Jesus Christ. Explanation may be made of the nature of such a walk, with its surrendered will and obedience to God, and of the blessedness, personal and upon others which is

the consequence of it. The necessity for it should also receive due emphasis.

(c) Faithfulness in Service, (vs. 5-8).

Further commendation is given Gaius in this section in reference to his faithful service. He had performed faithfully the service rendered the brethren and strangers, (v. 5), referring to the help given to the Lord's servants who were travelling from place to place on missionary purposes. Such faithfulness had been testified to in the church, and encouragement is given to a continuance of the good work (v. 6); especially in view of the fact that the beneficiaries had gone forth "for his name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles" (v. 7). But for some reason they refrained from doing so. Note the faith and devotion of such persons in leaving all for the Lord's sake, their full surrender unto His will, and their entire separation unto Him for the carrying out of His purpose. Such persons the apostle commends unto Gaius, stating, "We, therefore, ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth" (v. 8). We cannot all go to heathen lands, or even take an active part in the work of the Lord in the homeland; but to the measure of our ability we may all be fellow-helpers in this grand and blessed work. There are many ways of helping, and the Lord will point out our way. Note further the necessity for faithfulness in all kinds of service, the unity of all parts of the Lord's service, and the importance of each particular phase of it, even the most humble. We are all labourers together with God.—(I Cor. 3:9).

II. DIOTREPHE'S, (vs. 9-11).

(a) Pride. We now come to the consideration of a different type of individual. Gaius was a helper, but Diotrephe was one who hindered. Possibly he thought his actions were in the best interests of the work, and that he did God service, like Saul of Tarsus before his conversion (Acts 26:9). But he was sadly deluded, like his successors in these days. Of him John states he "loveth to have the pre-eminence" (v. 9). In this is manifested his proud, ambitious spirit. He was not satisfied to labour on the same level with others he must be looked up to, considered and consulted; and his will must be done. So he received not John,—referring probably to the apostle's letters and representatives. The spirit manifested by this individual is entirely contrary to that seen in the true servant of God, who exhibits real humility of character (I Peter 5:5). Pride and selfish ambition are of the old nature, and should not be manifest in any Christian life, for the old self should be denied (Matt. 16:24); and reckoned dead (Rom. 6:11). The new nature puts Christ first (Col. 1:17, 18); seeks nothing for itself (Jer. 45:5); and is content to take the lowliest place if only the Lord is glorified. Emphasize the necessity for real consecration of life to God.

(b) Evil-speaking. The proud self-seeker is sure sooner or later to be found in fault, and saying evil things about the true servant of God, as here

Diotrephe is found prating against the apostle John with malicious words (v. 10). We are not told what he said, and conjectures have been made as to the reason for his opposition; but we are not surprised at such a manifestation for a spirit of this kind is naturally antagonistic to all who dispute its authority. Evil speaking is used by such a person to depreciate in the estimation of others the one whom he dislikes that thus he might bolster up his self-appointed authority. It is a pity so many people are weak enough to listen to such malicious story telling.

(c) Usurpation. A further aspect of the character of this church boss is seen in his action against the friends of one he dislikes. John says, "Neither does he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would and casteth them out of the church" (v. 10). To gain his end and assert his will he goes the length of excommunicating people; probably as the dominant man in the church, most of the people would be under his influence, and would act in accordance with his desires. No wonder John says, "wherefore if I come I will remember his deeds which he doeth". Such a person required to be disciplined. Many a church is held in bondage because of some Diotrephe within it, who because of his wealth and position has gained the pre-eminence, and by his wilful ways hinders blessing, drives people from the church, and keeps the people quiescent by the threat of the removal of his financial support. Churches should assert their independence of all such and act fearlessly in all matters as the Holy Spirit leads, depending upon God for temporal blessing as for spiritual; thus following good and not evil, (v. 11). Note the evils of church bossism, the way to deal with the disease and the necessity for the church putting God before man.

II. DEMETRIUS, (v. 12-14).

Demetrius, the third person mentioned is after the type of Gaius and not that of Diotrephe. It is a matter of gratitude to God that there are more good persons than bad in the church. The bad are conspicuous because they are among the good. Of Demetrius, John states he had a good report of all of the truth itself, and of John himself, a threefold testimony to the character of his Christian experience. It would appear that all who came in contact with this saint were convinced of the reality of his Christian profession. He possessed what he professed. Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the necessity for a consistent Christian testimony, for even the world knows a real Christian when it meets him. The closing verses are taken up with personal matters, mentioning an intended visit and conveying greeting. Underlying them there is the thought of sweet fellowship, of a particular kind. "Greet the friends by name" John requests, denoting the warm personal character of the greeting. In lessons from the whole epistle note the necessity for carefulness of conduct in the church; also the fact that we are remembered by what we have done.