

# 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.

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

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## GAIUS

The Bible is the most ancient of all portrait albums. It seldom deals with ethics in the abstract, but it supplies illustrations of the principles of right and wrong, of good and evil, in the record of human characters in whose lives these principles were exemplified. The Bible reveals human nature at its worst, when sin is finished and it bringeth forth death. But it portrays human nature also at its best and highest, when it has become the subject of the redeeming grace of God.

Both the Old and the New Testaments are full of biographies. The epistles of Paul abound with brief biographical sketches. James and Peter employ the same principle of historical illustration; while John, within the brief space of his third epistle of fourteen verses, describes no less than three striking characters.

The first of them was "the well-beloved Gaius". While his portrayal of Gaius is very brief, rather a snapshot of a loved friend, the picture presents several striking and unusual features. "Beloved", saith he, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Gaius was remarkable for this, that his spiritual health and prosperity were so exuberant as to be manifest to all. He was a spiritually prosperous man. He had the air of one accustomed to spiritual riches. He walked as one who lived in a palace, and kept company with spiritually affluent souls.

It suggests that real spiritual prosperity manifests itself. There is a way of living by which the children of God display His saving health. And surely such prosperous souls are living examples and advertisements of the grace and power of Him Who said, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." The Christian religion was never designed to make men poor, but rich; not weak and anaemic, but strong and healthy; not to reduce the Christian disciple to the meagre fare of a swine-herd in a famine-stricken country, but to bring him to the fulness of a home of wealth and comfort.

It is usually comparatively easy to identify people who are subject to the limitations of poverty. Their

clothes are often worn and shabby, destitute of freshness or beauty or variety. They are down-at-heel and out-at-elbow; and not infrequently constant deprivations affect their physical health. How pitiful the picture:—the pallid cheek of one who is ill-nourished, lustreless eyes, stooped shoulders, laboured breathing, hands that hang down, and such ground as is covered traversed only by a limping gait,—how sad the spectacle! How vocal of hard times, of social debasement, of personal penury! And how depressing the effect of such a spectacle! What a sense of wrongness! What a sense of eccentricity, of disorder, of out-of-jointness, it induces!

But what exhilaration one feels in observing the opposite! Good health, good spirits, a cheerful outlook, and an air of prosperity, seem to be contagious. When the man with head erect and chest well forward walks with elastic step and swinging gait, radiating health and energy with every movement—how one is challenged to keep company with his pace. If the man is well groomed, and walks with the air of one that is well-to-do, everything associated with him becomes interesting. One wonders what his occupation is, where he lives, to what family he belongs.

Thus, too, every manifestly prosperous Christian challenges the observer to an investigation of his religion. Alas! how many of those who profess royal spiritual lineage appear to be living at a poor dying rate! They seldom wear the best robe, and give the impression that they fear it would soon wear out, and that the family exchequer could not afford another one. They live as though they were practising the strictest economy in respect to their spiritual resources; spending pennies rather than pounds, they appear to be living on the most meagre fare. Their general deportment suggests residence in an enervating climate where food is scarce, and the air is insalubrious. There is no love-light in the eyes, no strength in the shoulders, no manifest inhalations of heavenly atmosphere; no firm and energetic step, as would characterize such as were shod with iron and brass; no praise upon the lips, as of those who keep company with

angels and acquire the habits of princes of the Blood; instead, a shuffling walk, uncertainty at the cross-roads, and painful stumbling even on a plain path.

Who cares for a religion so exemplified? Who would choose to live where its votaries live, or serve whom they serve?

On the other hand, there are those who, when they meet you in the morning, by the very health of their countenances advertise the fact that they live in a house whose windows are open toward Jerusalem whence heavenly breezes blow. They carry about with them a fragrance of paradise. They live in manifest disdain of the mortal and corruptible. Human, practical, though they be, they have a celestial air about them. A superhuman energy throbs in every expression of their life; burdens are easily carried, mountains are easily climbed, obstacles are quickly discerned, difficulties contemptuously overcome, ordinary irritations are ignored, while tribulations are actually gloried in. What a joy to find one's self in such company! How they call us to the heights, invite us to dwell in the heavenly places, and summon us as spiritual athletes to do exploits! How effectively such exuberant health recommends the grace of God!

But ought not this picture to be extended to include the church? How many churches are like hospitals which house only those who are sick, and those who wait upon them! Who would choose to go to a hospital except to receive treatment, or to fulfil an errand of mercy? Thus many churches offer no attraction to the world about. Instead of a well cultivated garden aglow and fragrant with a hundred blooms pleasant to the eye, and inviting to the palate with the luscious fruit hanging from the branches, they present, rather, the picture sketched by a wise observer who said, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man."

What a contrast, whether applied to the church collectively or to the individual believer, to the picture John suggests of a healthy soul, robust and radiant with the very life of God!

But the still more extraordinary feature of this miniature portrait reveals that the spiritual is obviously the predominant quality of the life. The luxurious furnishings of the interior of the house outshine the structure that encloses them. The external shape of the dwelling fades into the gloom of the outward night before the hospitable light which shines from the windows.

Gaius is like one who dwells in a foreign country. His style of dress and his general habits are suggestive of one whose citizenship is elsewhere. The man is an Englishman living in France, or a Frenchman living in China, or a German living in Italy; his entire attitude is that of a foreigner, and his peculiarities of dress and habit and speech are his predominant characteristics. Such was Gaius. He wore different

clothes. He found different pastimes. He spoke a different language from the people about him.

Of how many of our readers is this true? Does our speech betray us? Is our language that of Jerusalem or Gath? As people meet us in the workshop, in the office, on the train, or in the home—what language do we speak? We have known people to come to this country from foreign lands. They learn to speak our language a little, at first brokenly. But they use it only when they must: in the freedom of the home where parents and children meet, they speak their mother tongue. Do we speak the gospel language generally or only occasionally? Is the language of the world the speech we usually employ? or is it only the language of necessity? Are we Christians first, and everything else afterwards? Or everything else first, and Christians last of all?

But the still more unusual fact is set out here, that in the character of Gaius the predominantly spiritual quality of his life became the standard or norm by which all other elements of life were to be judged and measured. How many, even of those who profess to be Christians, seem to be so engrossed with the things of the world as almost to lose sight of spiritual interests! They are carnal, and walk as worldlings rather than saints; but in the case of Gaius his spiritual prosperity was so manifest and was of such a high order that John desired nothing more for him than that the material interests of life should keep pace with the spiritual. He desired that he might prosper and be in health even as his soul prospered.

In the experience of Gaius heaven was anticipated, and he lived in a city where precious stones were so common as to be built into the walls, and gold was so cheap that it was used for paving. Surely here is an unusual standard for the average Christian to measure himself by! What if we could say of this or that man, We can desire nothing better for him than that his physical appetite may equal his appetite for spiritual food! We wish his body were as well clothed as his soul; that he were as well-to-do materially as he is spiritually. Or if one could say, What a healthy man yonder would be if his body could breathe as freely as his soul; how prosperous if his account in the bank were commensurate with his treasure in heaven! What a source of rejoicing such Christians would become! What an advertisement of the health-giving qualities of the heavenly places in Christ!

Or what if one should say of a church, How rich they would be if their material equipment were equal to their spiritual power! How influential, if their standing with men were equal to their standing with God!

These principles found, of course, their supreme exemplification in the character of our Lord Himself. His commerce with God was more important than his contact with men. His appetite for the meat that men knew not of was superior to physical hunger or thirst. Though living on the earth, he was manifestly from above; though in the world, he was obviously not of it; though poor in respect to earthly treasure, he was heir of all things. In the measure in which the individual believer and the church grow up into Christ, we shall become independent of all that is in the world.

# DIVINE FIRE

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

More than fifty years since, the late Dr. Charles Stanford addressed the London Baptist Association, and he began his message with this paragraph:

"I was once shown a brown tattered filament of a letter dated September sixth, sixteen hundred and sixty-six, in which the Baptists were charged with setting London on fire. I only wish the Baptists would do that now. It would be a most desirable consummation. By London, of course I mean not the London of the surfaces, but the deep London of souls. And when I speak of fire I mean real fire, that is, *life*; the life of that Spirit which we are commanded not to quench; the life that is in Christ Jesus before it is in us, and that comes flaming out of Him into us by faith."

In the gospel of Luke, chapter twelve, verse forty-nine, we have these words, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" or "Oh, that it were already kindled!" This is a startling description of our Lord's mission in the world. We have His mission set forth in several ways, for example: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"; "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"; "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost"; "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly". But in this text in Luke's gospel, the mission of our Lord is set forth in striking terms: "I am come to send fire on the earth", and the words which follow tell us of His deep longing for its realization. "Oh, that it were already kindled". And if it be asked, What is this fire which our Lord came to bring? With all the analogies which the Word of God supplies, we cannot surely be wrong when we assert that the fire which our Lord came to launch into the midst of humanity is the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost is fire. And after our Lord's baptism of suffering and death, He shed forth this Holy Flame. There is a punitive side of the divine character in the symbol of fire. But the fire which comes to the earth as the result of our Lord's death is not wrathful energy, but a merciful might, a vitalizing, purifying, transforming, power, the warmth of the conquering love of God.

Here are a few of the qualities of that Holy fire which is sorely needed to-day, as in every other day. It is a *flaming reality*. In a great crisis in the history of Israel there were two altars erected on Mount Carmel. There was the altar to Baal, well built, no doubt. Perhaps it was ornamented too, a beautiful structure. The sacrifice was duly laid upon it, and many and continuous prayers were offered, but the sacrifice remained untouched by any kind of fire. If you leave it there long enough it will corrupt, and become a positively bad influence. Here you have empty form and display. The other altar has no ornamentation. It was only roughly built. The sacrifice is laid upon it, and the man of God prays. Instantly the fire of God descends and consumes the sacrifice. Here you have reality. There are churches to-day where you have correct doctrines, religious forms, ornate service, all very beautiful, but entirely valueless in that they lack the Heavenly Flame. In our Lord's own day there was an abundance of religion, but little reality. His soul

longed to see the kindling of the Holy Fire. In England in the days of Whitfield and Wesley there were forms of religion both in Episcopal and non-conformist churches, but in the gatherings of the colliers at Bristol when Whitfield poured forth the great message of salvation through faith in Christ, and the white channels down the blackened faces of the colliers told of tears of penitence and yearning, there was reality. Oh, that such a flame of reality were kindled in our own religious life, so that whatever forms there may be, they may not be empty show, but throbbing with vitality and power!

*Ardent love* is another form of the Divine Fire which the church needs. Fire means warmth. We speak of warm hearts, the glow of love, the fire of enthusiasm. The Holy Spirit kindles a fire of love in the heart. This is one of the most pronounced characteristics of true Christianity, and where it is lacking you may have the most orthodox creed, or the most beautiful forms of worship, but without this heavenly love all is vain. Our Lord's own heart glowed with such love for us that it led Him to leave the glory He had with the Father to come down to earth to take our nature, and to go all the way to the unutterable shame and agony of the cross, for sinful men. It is that ardent love that we need so much, that the iciness of our natures may melt, and the thick walls of our sinful coldness may be burst through by the fire of love to Jesus Christ, and for the souls of men. Some people are greatly afraid of fervency. "Our great danger", said Dr. Maclaren "is icy torpor. We sit frost-bitten, and almost dead among the snows, and all the while the gracious sunshine is pouring down that is able to melt the white death that covers us, and to free us from the bonds that hold us prisoned in their benumbing clasp." We sadly need the glow of ardent love in our individual life, and in the life of the church; the fire that will burn up jealousies and unkindnesses, and ill temper, and countless other things which mar the beauty of the personal life, and hinder God working in His church.

The fire which Jesus brings means also a *glowing morality*. Please place great emphasis on the word "GLOWING". We all have our moral code, our maxims, our moral ideals ever at hand. But these alone will not suffice. The stains of evil have sunk so deep into the very substance of the soul, and have dyed the warp and woof of it to its very centre, that they cannot be removed by any moral maxims. A divine work is needed; and when we have been renewed and cleansed a cold morality will not commend the gospel of Christ. Our ethics must be set on fire, and be made to glow. There are many persons who have a very respectable morality, but if that is all, it is a poor thing. We do not want "a crystalized respectability, a frozen respectability, respectability faultily faultless, icily regular, and splendidly null". No; we need morals that are aglow with the fire of the Holy Spirit, so that they are seen to be not of man but the fruit of the Spirit, a holiness which is radiant with a heavenly charm.

Another quality of the gift of Christ is *fiery zeal*. How this marked the life of our Lord! When the disciples saw His earnestness they were constantly reminded of the word, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up".

After His ascension the apostles received the gift of Fire, and it resulted in a deep passion for God, and for the souls of men in them too. All down the story of the church men have caught this flame. Richard Baxter was one such. After pouring out his soul in a message as ardent as liquid fire, he would leave the pulpit and say to himself, "Oh, how couldest thou speak such a message with so cold a heart?" David Brainard in his work among the North American Indians, is another example, and so is Henry Martyn, who burned his life out for God in India and in Persia in ten years. And there are many others. This fiery zeal is needed to-day. Men are earnest in business, in the pursuit of knowledge, in sport, in politics, but according to many, zeal is quite forbidden in the realm of religion. We do not want mere surface blaze, a "crackling of thorns", but a profoundly wise and God-guided passion that "many waters cannot quench, nor floods down".

A further quality of the heavenly flame is *burning energy*. Fire is progressive. It is difficult to hold in check. Someone has put it thus: "Take a few live coals and put them down in a hay stack, and tell the fire, 'I have given you a certain limit of hay to burn. Now burn. Burn away to your heart's content. But you must see that you go no further than the mark I set you. Burn with due propriety and within range of bounds'. And while the fire is being thus addressed it has blazed up vehemently, and in a few moments the whole hay stack will be consumed". Paul was possessed of such a burning energy. Driven from one city he fled to another, carrying a flaming torch wherever he went. Some years ago I was returning from the West in this great country, and I saw a forest fire. It was deeply impressive to see the flames leap from tree to tree, and to hear the raging of the fire amongst the branches. What quick triumphant energy was manifest. We have plenty of fleshly energy to-day, but we sorely need the energy of the Spirit. Our risen Lord said to His disciples, "Ye

shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth". The great fields of the world call for that aggressive flame, that tremendous energy, that swift action which is the result of the presence of the Fire Divine.

There is one other quality in the Divine Fire that we would name; *transforming heat*. Matthew Henry says, "Fire makes all it seizeth like itself". Is it not so? Take a great iron bar, black, dirty, cold, hard, and thrust it into a furnace of fire, and wait a little. You see how it warms and glows, and clears, and reddens, and becomes like the fire itself. So the Holy Ghost fire makes all whom it touches like Himself. The cases of Mary Magdalene and Saul of Tarsus are great examples of this transforming power of the Spirit of God. Some years ago the Baptist Caravan Mission in England was able to record this story: A blacksmith in a certain village, who was constantly sodden with drink came under the influence of the great gospel message, and was converted. What was the result? The fire of the Divine Spirit burned with such heat throughout his whole nature, that the transformation was wonderful. It is said that his wife could not restrain her tears, and that she wept for a whole week for very joy because of the marvellous change wrought in her husband. Yes, men and homes, and whole isles and countries, have been transformed by this Divine Fire.

Will the Baptists of this country ever be charged with setting Canada on fire?

"Eternal Spirit, source of light!  
Enlivening consecrated fire,  
Descend, and with celestial Heat  
Our dull, our frozen hearts inspire:  
Our souls refine, our dross consume;  
Come all-transforming Spirit, come!"

## THE BAPTIST BIBLE UNION

The press recently enquired of us how the closing of Des Moines University would affect the present and future of the Baptist Bible Union. Since others may be asking the same question, we venture a reply.

Everyone, of course, will recognize that for two years Des Moines University was the Union's major interest. But the Baptist Bible Union was not organized, primarily, to conduct a university, but to bear witness for the truth, and against error. It was not an organization of churches, but of individuals only. A few churches declared themselves to be Baptist Bible Union churches, but only in the sense that the members of those churches unanimously endorsed our Confession of Faith, and our programme of testimony.

The Baptist Bible Union, as such, undertook no missionary work beyond receiving and transmitting money to approved evangelical missions. In the beginning of its history we repeatedly expressed the hope that the day would come when the Baptist Bible Union's work would be ended, that it would not be a

permanent organization; but that it would give its testimony, and, having done so, cease to be.

The resignation from the Union of the late Dr. A. C. Dixon was grossly misrepresented by the Baptist press of the country at the time. Dr. Dixon was not out of sympathy with the Baptist Bible Union leaders, and never once made any protest against either our "methods" or our "spirit". He was one with us in all that. This writer, at his urgent solicitation, visited his church in Baltimore, and spoke to what Dr. Dixon described as the most representative Baptist audience he had seen in that city since the organization of his church. Dr. Dixon's position was merely that, having made its protest against the errors of the time, the Baptist Bible Union had fulfilled its mission, and might therefore safely be dissolved. In this view his brethren did not concur; but there was never a word of dissatisfaction with the management or leaders of the Union expressed by Dr. Dixon. He and the leaders of the Union were the very best of friends to the end of his life.

Before we speak of the future of the Union, perhaps it may be well to review its accomplishments. What did it do? In thousands of bedrooms in this city a clock is placed on duty at night to ring at a certain hour in the morning. When that hour comes the clock rings, and somebody gets out of bed and goes forth to the labour of the day. The clock remains on the table or the bureau of the bedroom forgotten until it is set for duty the next morning. The Baptist Bible Union has been an alarm-clock. It did not undertake to do the day's work, but to wake people up to a sense of their obligation.

We have sometimes passed a fire-station in the city when the doors have been wide open, and the hall has been empty. One may ask, what is the use of an empty fire-hall? To which there is but one answer, The alarm was sounded a little while ago, and the firemen went forth to their duty, to put out the blaze. The Baptist Bible Union has sent out many a hose-reel during the years of its existence, and it has put out not a few fires; and, where it could not put out the fire, it at least warned certain people to come out of the burning building.

In Ontario and Quebec the Baptist Bible Union has ceased to have much importance, for the reason that our new Union of Regular Baptist Churches is doing all that the Baptist Bible Union could do as a merely inspirational organization—and more.

We presume the same is true, very largely, of Ohio, Michigan, British Columbia, and other places.

At its inception the Baptist Bible Union promised to be a very large organization. It was like all other things of the sort at the beginning: it attracted of itself all the Adullamites of all the Baptist Conventions of America. That is to say, there were many inefficient and unemployable pastors, and hundreds of "evangelists", who joined the Baptist Bible Union with the idea that an organization had come into existence that was to provide them with positions. At that time there was a demand from some quarters that the Executive should publish an official list of ministerial members of the Union. This writer has been President of the Union from its inception, although he had nothing to do with originating it; and when this proposal was made, we pointed out that inasmuch as the Baptist Bible Union was not an organization of churches, and we had no means of examining the credentials of the ministers who applied for membership, if we published an official list, we might discover that, while undoubtedly the overwhelming majority of the membership would be found to be made up of eminently worthy brethren who joined the Union for no other purpose than that they might lend the weight of their influence to its testimony, we might have the names of a number of men of doubtful reputation whose association with us might work irreparable injury to the cause. For this reason, no official list was ever published, and the Union did not undertake to credential anyone.

The Union remains until this day merely an organization of individuals, voluntarily associating themselves together in order to present a united protest against the encroachments of Modernism.

The Editor of this paper, from May, 1923, until last summer, gave quite as much time to the Baptist Bible

Union and its interests as to the work of his own pastorate—and the work of the Baptist Bible Union lay chiefly in the United States. Since we decided to close Des Moines University we have declined all invitations but one to cross the Border, and have concentrated all our energy upon our own work in Canada. But in due course, at a convenient time and place, the Executive of the Baptist Bible Union will meet to arrange for its Annual Meeting, which, we presume, will be held as usual some time in the month of May.

Prior to the Annual Meeting held in Chicago, in 1927, this writer had announced that on account of pressure of duties at home it would be absolutely necessary for him to retire from the Presidency of the Baptist Bible Union. When the Des Moines University proposal was put forward, the brethren made it a condition before considering the question at all that we should withdraw our decision to retire from the Presidency, and continue in the leadership, to establish this new interest. With many misgivings and with great reluctance, under the pressure brought upon us unanimously by the Executive Committee, we consented, and did our utmost during the two years to establish the University.

There are splendid brethren in the United States who have stood like a rock through all the stress and storm of the Modernistic assault for many years. To our dying day we shall cherish the memory of the happy fellowships we have formed with brethren in the United States, than many of whom no truer soldiers of the Cross can be found on earth. This side the gates of pearl we never expect to find a nobler fellowship than we have had with the Baptist Bible Union of North America. As long as the organization continues, we hope to have membership in its ranks.

We hope, however, that our brethren across the line will give earnest consideration to the task of finding someone to lead in the work of the Baptist Bible Union from the next Annual Meeting. Meanwhile, we have this conviction, that if the Bible Union were dissolved as from this date, it has abundantly justified its organization. It has stabbed thousands of Baptists throughout the United States and Canada awake. It has given its testimony from the Gulf to the Arctic Circle, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Thousands of people are now alert and awake to the perils of the day who owe their awakening to the Baptist Bible Union.

Moreover, the Baptist Bible Union has inspired many with courage. It has stood for Baptist liberty as no other organization has stood. Many papers have sprung up all over the land under the inspiration of the Baptist Bible Union. Many churches have waxed bold in the fight, and have challenged the ecclesiasticism of the day. It was once high treason in the Southern Baptist Convention for anyone to suggest that anything but theological perfection could reside within its boundaries. Now it has become quite common for papers to be outspoken in their championship of the truth.

It would be most unfair for the Baptist Bible Union to take full credit for that, but that it has had

its part in it, there can be no doubt. One of the foremost instruments in all this, beyond question, has been *The Fundamentalist*, formerly *The Searchlight*, of Fort Worth, of which Dr. J. Frank Norris is the versatile and fearless Editor. We have little doubt that *The Searchlight* has compelled the First Baptist Church of Dallas to do what it is reported to have done elsewhere in these columns. We think we may without immodesty claim that *The Gospel Witness* also has had some small share in this ministry of awakening.

As to the future: there never was greater need of the Baptist Bible Union's testimony than there is today. Like all other organizations, it will learn from its mistakes, for everything human is faulty. We are of the opinion that if the Baptist Bible Union had been an organization of churches instead of individuals, and if it had boldly called the churches out from association with the Unitarian Northern Baptist Convention, to the formation of another Convention, in the beginning, it might by this time be as large as the Northern Baptist Convention.

In this connection, we remember our faults this

day. We ourselves did not know that Modernism was so deeply rooted. We hoped that both in Canada and in the United States existing Conventions could be purged from their infidelities, but of this we have now abandoned hope. In Canada we have had to form a new Convention, with a new Seminary. We believe evangelicals will have to do the same thing all over America and in England.

The man who saw farther in this matter than any other among us was Dr. Oliver W. Van Osdel, of Grand Rapids, Mich. He had the clearest possible conviction on the subject from the beginning, and his separatist principles are now abundantly justified in the experience of Wisdom's children.

It is not too late for the Baptist Bible Union so to amend its Constitution as to make it an organization of churches. But we should have no right to propose such a matter unless we were prepared to take our full share in giving it effect. We are of the opinion that the Baptist Bible Union will go on in one form or another, and that it will continue to exercise a great and much needed ministry.

## AN HONOUR THOROUGHLY EARNED

Professor L. H. Marshall will leave McMaster University and return to England at the end of the present University term. No man connected with McMaster University from the day of its establishment until now has made such a distinct impression and such a lasting mark upon the Baptist life of Canada as Professor Marshall. We would not judge him too harshly, for in some respects he is to be pitied. He, with some members of the Board of Governors, was the dupe of certain anti-evangelicals in the Denomination who were determined to violate the McMaster trust, and to use the McMaster fund for the propagation of principles the very opposite of those it was designed to disseminate and defend. Professor Marshall allowed himself to become the tool and instrument of this satanic conspiracy, and, it must be admitted, lent himself enthusiastically to the furtherance of its ends.

His presence has had the effect of separating nearly a hundred churches from the Convention, and of disturbing the peace and virtually dividing ninety-five per cent. of the remainder. He has dragged Evangelical Christianity in the mire. He has popularized, within a limited circle, his Modernistic view of the Bible. He has inoculated practically the entire student body of the University with the virus of his scholastic unbelief. He has dragged the entire Faculty of McMaster University down to the level of his Rationalism (we fear the descent was not a very steep one for most of them); he has been instrumental in effecting the purpose of those in the Denomination who were determined that the whole Convention lump should be leavened with the leaven of the Sadducees; and he has been used to induce the majority of the Baptist ministers of Ontario and Quebec so to compromise their testimony that nothing short of a revival absolutely revolutionary in its scope can ever set them free anywhere or at any time even to defend,

much less to contend for, the faith once or all delivered unto the saints.

As the ten unbelieving spies committed Israel to forty years of wandering in the wilderness, so Professor Marshall and his masters have brought upon the life of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec a withering blight from which it will never recover during the lifetime of the present "leaders" of that Convention.

As certain monuments in London commemorate the dreadful visitation of the Black Plague, as a monument in the market place of Devizes, in England, commemorates an unbeliever's defiant challenge to God, as monuments the world over commemorate the world's greatest tragedy, the horrors of the great World War, so some monument ought to be erected for a perpetual warning to all others, commemorating the devastating influence upon the religious life of Canada of the presence in McMaster University, of Professor L. H. Marshall.

We do not propose that any money should be spent for such a purpose. Even a five-cent piece could be more usefully employed. But we do think that McMaster University ought to do something to show its gratitude.

When a divinity degree was conferred upon a certain man, the present Chancellor of McMaster, with his proverbial aptitude for the pertinent and appropriate, remarked that when visiting at this minister's home he had learned that he usually kept a fine horse, and raised wonderful chickens, and kept a well-cultivated garden; and that he had been so impressed with these achievements he thought something ought to be done for him. As a fitting reward, we suppose because no agricultural college volunteered its services, McMaster University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.



Obviously therefore McMaster's degree of Doctor of Divinity may be used as a recognition of accomplishments in other spheres than that of divinity. With all this in view, *The Gospel Witness* begs respectfully to suggest to the Senate of McMaster University that it ought, in all honesty and honour, to confer upon Professor L. H. Marshall before he returns to England, the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Indeed, we think his services to the modernistic element now in control of the University have been of such a distinguished order that they ought to confer upon him all the honorary degrees at their command at once. As a soldier, whose services in the war have been properly recognized, appears on certain occasions, bearing proudly upon his breast the medals he has won, Professor Marshall ought to be permitted to return to England wearing every possible academic distinction McMaster University can confer upon one deserving to be known as the ecclesiastical destroyer *par excellence*.

Notwithstanding all that we have said above, it must be recognized that many others have contributed to the general result; and the credit for the destructive work done in the Baptist denomination of Ontario and Quebec cannot fairly be given to Professor Marshall alone. A certain very orthodox professor once in Canada was known facetiously to remark that no one was qualified to be a professor until he had wrecked at least two churches! And we do say, according to McMaster's standard, one distinguishing characteristic of any candidate for McMaster's "D.D." must be his ability to empty churches, and generally to demonstrate the principles of how not to do it.

We do not suppose *The Canadian Baptist* will have sufficient boldness to nominate those persons whose records specially qualify them to share with Professor Marshall the distinction of becoming a "D.D." of McMaster University. Being fairly familiar with the record of the Baptist ministers of Ontario and Quebec we think we are qualified to nominate certain of them to share in the distinction which most certainly will be conferred upon Professor Marshall before his departure.

Two or three years ago we had the honour of proposing for the consideration of the Senate of McMaster University as one worthy of the degree of "D.D.", Rev. W. E. Hodgson, B.A., Pastor of Temple Church, Toronto. Mr. Hodgson has never been suitably rewarded for his kindness in offering the hospitality of his church to the Convention, in which to pass their amending Bill, and later, to declare Jarvis Street Church, the mother of nearly all the churches, to be ineligible longer to send delegates to the Convention. No hangman ever served his country with greater alacrity than did Mr. Hodgson on that occasion—and even a hangman is entitled to his fee. We therefore think Mr. Hodgson ought to receive the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

At the same time we nominated Rev. Hugh McDiarmid, now of First Avenue Baptist Church, Toronto. McMaster's academic distinctions have an affinity for bitter spirits, and on that account we think Rev. Hugh McDiarmid is eminently qualified to receive the degree of Doctor of Divinity also.

On the occasion of our last nomination of candidates

for this honour, in our first draft we included the name of Rev. C. R. Duncan; but when he was appointed Educational Secretary we thought that was perhaps sufficient recognition to be given one man at once, and therefore refrained from mentioning his name. But now that he has served the University with zeal for two or three years—albeit with a zeal that is not according to knowledge—that fact alone entitles him also to McMaster's Divinity degree.

We endeavoured to bear with some degree of fortitude the terrific blow inflicted upon us when McMaster utterly ignored our nominations a couple of years ago, but we think that this time they cannot well shirk their duty. Though we are not now on the Senate of the University, they cannot treat our suggestions with contempt. The mention of any minister of the Old Convention by *The Gospel Witness* ensures the insertion of a sermon by that minister in an early issue of *The Canadian Baptist*. *The Gospel Witness* therefore respectfully nominates for the degree of "D.D." at the spring Convocation; Professor L. H. Marshall, B.A., B.D., of McMaster University; Rev. W. E. Hodgson, B.A., Pastor of Temple Church, Toronto; Rev. Hugh McDiarmid, B.A., Pastor of First Avenue Church, Toronto; and Rev. C. R. Duncan, B.A., Educational Secretary of McMaster University. This is an imposing list, and rather a large order; but in view of the fact that McMaster is shortly to move to Hamilton, and after next May will have no further opportunity of conferring such distinctions upon anyone in the Queen City, it is due to the dignity of this city that McMaster University should suitably commemorate its own departure. Watch for the announcement of the conferring of degrees upon the gentlemen named above.

**LAST SUNDAY IN JARVIS ST.**

Sunday was a good but quiet day in Jarvis St. It was "good growing weather". The morning sermon appears in this issue. The attendance at School was 1,324. Baptism was administered at the evening service.

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# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## A MOTHER'S PRAYER.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Sunday Morning, February 9th, 1930.

(Stenographically Reported.)

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

"But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

"But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

"Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

"But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

"And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."—Matt. 15:21-28.

After the prayer meeting last night it was especially laid upon my heart that I should speak to you this morning on the subject of prayer. It is not often a subject is given to me before the text, but it was last night. Then I asked the Lord to suggest to me the basis of that address, and this story, a very simple one, came clearly into my mind. So I wish to turn it over for a little with you this morning, that we may endeavour to learn a little more of what it means to pray.

I have read to you the story of a poor woman who was not an Israelite, who came out of the coast of Canaan, who carried a heavy personal sorrow, because one of her children was grievously vexed with a devil. As Jesus came her way she cried out to Him, and begged mercy at His hands. For a time she received no answer whatever. And then the disciples interfered, very much as they did when the little children were being brought to Jesus. On this occasion the disciples desired that they should not be disturbed, and they said, "Send her away; for she crieth after us." The Lord's response must have been even more discouraging than what the disciples said, for He replied, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

In spite of all that she persisted, and cried out, "Lord, help me." But she was only a Canaanitish dog! She was not an Israelite; she was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise. The Lord said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Still she refused to be discouraged, and with a very ready, holy, wit she answered, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. If I cannot sit at the table like one of the children, could you not spare me a few crumbs? My need is very great, and if I might have just a crumb of mercy that would meet my need. I will ask no more than that." To which the Master replied, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

### I.

It is the picture of A VERY DESPERATE PETITIONER, of one who is driven to pray by the extremity of her need.

I would remind you that *our Lord Jesus came within*

*reach of this needy woman.* "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Thus the Lord Jesus brought the power of God within reach of one who urgently needed it. That is what He came to earth for. That is why He left the Father's house. He came to bring God near.

How many people there are to-day who speak of God in the vaguest terms. They have many names for Him. Some of them are quite impersonal. They call Him the First Cause. Sometimes they refer to Him as Law; sometimes they call Him Force, and spell it with a capital "F". Sometimes they do suggest a Personality, but One Who is very far away: they call Him "the Almighty".

There is not much encouragement to pray to a Law, to Force in the abstract, to some unknown mysterious One Who caused to be that which we see in this ordered universe. We need a God Who is nearer to us than that. You will remember that one of the disciples on one occasion said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Please tell us what God is like, who He is, where He dwells, what He does, and how we may come into communication with Him. To us He is unknown. He is far off. We do not know how to reach Him." Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Yes: He brings God near.

Let us hold fast by that great truth, that God is in Christ. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that Jesus Christ is the only God we know. If we cannot pray to God through Him, if we cannot in His name reach the throne of the universe, we cannot touch God at all. But He has come to tell us Who God is, what He is like, and how we may pray to Him. And just as surely as He came into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, as surely as He came within call of this needy woman, so the God Who is over all blessed forever, by Whom all things were made, and without Whom was not any thing made that was made—that God has come to us, does now come to us in the person of Jesus Christ. We have His word for it where we can find Him. If I may reverently say so, He has localized Himself; He has given us His address; He has



told us how we may come and touch Him: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The God Who flung the myriad stars into space, by Whose unfailing decree the sun shone upon our earth this morning, and Who upholdeth all things by the word of His power, even He is here at this moment so that any one of these little boys or girls may speak to Him, and He will hear you.

"Speak to Him now, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet.

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

Oh, if they should take Jesus Christ away! If in our folly we should ever permit any one to persuade us—as so many voices would persuade us in our day—that He is not God, the wires would be down from the telegraph office, and the radio would be for ever out of order. We, in our need, should be cut off from heaven, and we should never be able to pray any more.

Why do we hold fast by that truth? Why does a military commander concentrate his forces very often upon his line of communication with his base? Why, as he advances, does he give orders that at any price of blood that line must be kept intact? Why? Because if the enemy breaks that, the battle is before and behind, and he is lost. Why stand for the virgin birth of Christ, for the great fact of His essential Deity? Why insist that God was in Christ? Because it is vital, dear friends. We are lost men and women if that be not true. But it is true, and He has come within reach of us, and we can speak to Him; He is here! ("Hallelujah!") Let your heart cry out after Him this morning, and receive a blessing from His hands.

This woman *in desperate need resorted to prayer*. I know that is not the highest motive for the exercise of prayer. I know it is well that we should often come to God simply to tell Him how much we love Him, that we should often come into His presence to praise His name. I heard a man say once, a pastor who had some very special duty facing him, that he went to his study, leaving directions that on no account was he to be disturbed; no matter who should come, the visitor was to be told that he could not possibly be seen, because the time was short, and he must be ready for his engagement. When he was in the midst of his work someone came—and did not ask permission to enter, but the door opened and a little bit of a fellow came in. Without apology he walked up to his father's desk, took hold of his arm—and he had to put his pen down. He climbed up on his father's knee, and looked into his face. His father said, "What do you want?" "Nussin'" he said. "Well, why did you come when I am busy?" "Just to tell you I love you." And he was not immediately dismissed, notwithstanding the pressure of the hour!

Ah, that is prayer when we just push open the door that awaits our entrance, and when without any urgent need at all we come to Him, and tell Him that we love Him. That is prayer, that is communion at the highest. But alas! we generally come wanting something. It is when people are in desperate need they pray. What a mercy it is that it is possible for us to come to God when thus we are in need!

"Eyes that the preacher could not school  
By wayside graves are raised.  
And lips cry 'God be pitiful',  
That ne'er said, 'God be praised'."

That is how we all had to begin. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David."

I wonder is there some man here this morning who has not prayed for twenty years? I met someone not long since who told me he had not. You have not prayed; you have gone along as if you were quite independent of God; you did not need Him. And now some great burden has come. You are threatened perhaps with some great calamity, you are full of fear for the morrow, you wonder what will happen next; and at the end of all human resources it has occurred to you that perhaps—perhaps—it may be possible to get into communication with Somebody Who is more than human. You are saying that it may be, if you could only get to God, Whom you have long neglected, He would do something for you which no one else can do. Well, He will! He delights in doing things for us. If you never prayed in your life before, even if you have blotted God out of your remembrance for years past, it is possible to come to Him in your need at this moment.

And what a crying need this was, *a woman praying for one of her children!* Do you wonder that the women are so often in the majority in the exercise of prayer? The men ought to be ashamed of themselves, but the fact is, that in any place of prayer there are more women than men. I suppose the men are too tired! Poor fellows! They have had a hard day of it—sometimes seeing that other people did the work. And of course the man's wife has been home with half a dozen children—with nothing to do! She has not worked all day! She is not tired! She never gets tired! There is no reason why she should be tired! But she gets out to the place of prayer—and comes because she is tired. Who is there needs the help of God so much as a mother? Is it any wonder that the responsibilities of motherhood often drive women to pray?

Some of you women here this morning, in spite of all other interests in life, even as I speak are thinking of your family, of the boy or of the girl; the clouds would be lifted and the sun would be shining if you could only be sure that that boy of yours or that girl of yours was all right. But they are both beyond your help. You do not know what to do next. That is a very practical matter, is it not, but it affects you women here this morning who pray because you cannot do anything else but pray; in sheer desperation, like this Canaanitish woman, you talk to the Lord about your children.

I remember some years ago a man's saying to me, "I wish you could get in to see my wife. She would greatly appreciate a visit from you." I said, "I am crowded, but if it is an urgent case I will try to get in to see her." I telephoned in advance and called in about ten o'clock one morning. I did not wait for the afternoon but called in the morning. This woman had a large family, seven or eight children, most of whom were grown up. I went in and bade her, "good morning". I supposed that she wanted me to give her some help, but I learned a lesson that morning. I listened to her as she told me all about the children. She started with the

eldest, and told me all about the trouble she had had with that one. She spoke of his having the croup, and the measles, and the whooping-cough, and every other ailment. Then she told of the second one, of how the second one got on; and by and by of the third. And after a while she told me about times when they were all sick, and of how she had had to learn to doctor them. Yes; she went into all the details of it and told me about the linseed-meal poultices, the mustard plasters, and all the rest of it. She came down the line, one after another.

At the time I visited her there was just one boy at home; all the others were away. At last when I thought the story was ended I said, "Well, you have John at home anyway. You ought to be thankful for that." "Ah, but", she said, "I very nearly lost him"—and she started in again and told me of what a desperate time she had had in raising that boy! I listened to the whole story until it was well past twelve o'clock. I did not say anything; I listened to her story. Then at last I took advantage of a pause, and I said, "Mrs. So-and-So, supposing we just have a word of thanksgiving. If any woman in the world has reason to be thankful you have, that the Lord has brought you through all this." And so we knelt down and prayed—and I said, "Good-bye", and slipped away before she had a chance to start over again!

The week following I met her husband, and he said, "You have no idea what a blessing you brought to my wife the other day. When I got home she was full of it. She had had such a delightful visit with the pastor, and she wished he could come oftener." I thought it through, and I said, "I wonder what is the psychology of that?" You smile, but I do not. That woman had given her entire life for her children. She was one of the finest mothers I ever knew. A noble Christian woman, a saint if ever there was one. Her children had been her world, and when anything was wrong with any one of them, for her there was not a star in the sky until that boy or that girl was well again. She had lived for them. She had given her life to them, and she carried them all to God in prayer. The central thing in life to that mother, the most urgent thing, the all important thing, next to her touch with God, was her relationship to her family. And so it is in the life of every true mother. We all had mothers who thus carried us as much in their hearts as in their arms. Now that we are well you can laugh at the plasters and all the rest of mother's *materia medica*, but if it had not been for mother's love few of us would have been here to-day.

I bring that simple message to you mothers, that there is Someone Who will listen to your cry, who will not laugh when you tell Him all your troubles. He will never grow tired when you recite the tale of your difficulties, but will lend a sympathetic ear to the woman who has a daughter in dire need of divine help. If you have a family burden this morning, take it to the Lord. If the children are troubling you, go to Him and tell Him all about it. Perhaps you have a bigger burden than even the children. It may be a worthless husband. I wonder sometimes how good women manage to get such worthless men—but they do! And increasingly (though I have not the privilege of visiting the people as once I did) people come to see me, and it seems that the heaviest burdens of life belong to the domestic sphere. A man sometimes on account of his wife; the wife on account

of her husband; or fathers and mothers on account of their children,—whichever it be, I preach to you a Saviour Who comes into the home and Who will listen to the family troubles. Tell Him all about it this morning. What is our religion for if it does not help us at that point? These are not little things: they are the big things of life. If we do not get help in our everyday affairs, our religion is of little worth. Tell your difficulties to Him.

"My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." A moral difficulty is the biggest difficulty of all. Is there a mother here this morning whose children have not been vexed with a devil? Is there a father here, a Christian man, who has not been troubled on account of his son or his daughter? Have you not come to the place sometimes where you have said, "No preacher can help me. No church can lift this burden. I must have help from God or I cannot bear up under the load"? That was the sorrow of this woman, her daughter was vexed with a devil. Her heart's dearest treasure, the one for whom she had suffered, whom she had loved, for whose maturity and companionship she had longed, was vexed with a devil; and now life was blasted because the girl was beside herself.

Other preachers may quote the poets, and speculate with the philosophers, but I desire to be helpful in the practical, everyday affairs of life, and tell men and women here this morning that these are the things which interest the heart of God, that our whole religion is a revelation to us of the heart of God in Christ Jesus. You may tell Him that trouble, that secret burden, that you cannot share with anyone else. Tell it to Him.

Then here is the puzzle: *her prayer was unanswered for a considerable time*: "He answered her not a word." Even as I have spoken to you this morning someone has said, "That is all very well, sir, but I have prayed for many a long day and the difficulty is still there. I have prayed for my husband, but he is just as big a sinner as he ever was. I have prayed with a passionate longing that God would give me a Christian home, but I have to live my life alone. It seems to make no difference when I pray. I have prayed. I have listened—but He answers me 'never a word'. Heaven has made no response to me."

The dear fellow I spoke of last night said something like that to me. He said, "I prayed, and prayed, and prayed, and as yet there is no opening anywhere. I am still trying to hold on to God, although I seem to have had no answer." That is a difficult thing, is it not? When Elijah said, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God", when even as he prayed the heavens were rent and the fire fell, it is no wonder the people fell down then and said, "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God." But when men pray and nothing happens, when mothers cry and the devil still has his own way with their daughters, and their sons, and their husbands, and they keep on crying, and apparently there is no help,—what then?

*It is not because He does not hear*, my dear friends. He hears. Every prayer you have ever offered in the name of the Lord Jesus has reached Heaven. I sometimes get letters saying people have previously written me, yet I did not receive their letters. Sometimes letters have been lost in the mails. But no prayer sent heavenward in the name of Jesus Christ is ever lost. If

you pray, you can be absolutely sure, whether He answers or not, that He has heard you.

## II.

Look at another aspect of it for a moment. **THE DISCIPLES HEARD HER PRAY.** Though He answered her never a word, she apparently kept on praying. Like the importunate woman of whom Dr. Stockley read this morning, she still prayed though she received no answer. And the disciples said, "That is going a little too far; she crieth after us. She is making a noise. Tell her to stop." That is the idea some people have of the Lord Jesus—they suppose he is averse to being disturbed because they are unwillingly to be disturbed themselves. How terribly the disciples, and the church, caricature the Lord Jesus!

I do not know whether you have ever heard of a coloured man who got into the gallery of a certain church and when the preacher said something of which he approved, he occasionally shouted, "Hallelujah", sometimes, "Amen", and occasionally he would say, "Glory to God". He was enjoying himself one Sunday morning, when one of the church-officers thought he was interfering with the quiet of the service. He went up and said, "Look here, what are you doing? You must not make that noise". "Why", said the man, "I am getting religion." "Well, get out of this. This is no place to get religion!" And it is quite true, there are a great many churches where you do not get very much religion. If anyone should—by accident I had almost said—shout, "Amen", the disciples would say, "Now—now—now don't do that."

What is our religion for? Just to hold a service? Some people are a little bit disturbed because we have so many children here, and they like quietness. Yes, so do I—but I do not like the quietness of a graveyard. I love to hear children's voices. And I have learned that little children often are listening more attentively when they are swinging their legs and looking about—and hear more and learn more—than some of their elders who seem to be quite attentive. What a joy! What a privilege to have these hundreds of children here every Sunday morning!

I wonder if any of you have been discouraged by the disciples? I wonder if any of you have gone to pray when you expected that someone would pray with you? You expected some Christian sympathy in your dire need, but instead of that you have met an iceberg. It may be you have gone to your pastor; and he has listened to you and turned you away saying, "You will have to do the best you can." I wonder sometimes how people feel who write asking for help of a minister, when he undertakes to give it to them, and tells them a hundred things to do, yet apparently hardly ever suggests that it would be a good thing to pray, that there is any solution of the difficulty there. "Stop your noise"! "Stop your praying"! Some people have met that. Perhaps you belong to a church where there are few prayer meetings, and the prayer meetings that are held are poorly attended. There is no spirit, and you do not feel that there is any help whatever in the fellowship of those who are called Christians. Instead of that they dampen your ardour; they are like those disciples. You have betaken yourself to the Bible, and sometimes you have found a little difficulty in understanding, for the Master Himself said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I have nothing to do with this woman. She is a Canaan-

ish woman, and I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

I wonder if you have ever been troubled about the doctrine of election? I have known some who were desperately afraid they were left outside, who took the Word of God which ought to be a comfort, and used it as a stumbling-block! I have had people come to me with their Bibles marked, and every gloomy passage that did not relate to them at all they have had underlined—as though the Bible was written to discourage them from coming to Christ. When anyone is vexed with a devil he will use even the Word of God against you, if he possibly can. Our Lord Jesus was putting this woman to the test, trying her faith to see what measure of faith she had.

## III.

**AND HOW DID SHE ANSWER HIM?** I wish I could get you who come to prayer-meeting here or elsewhere, to get the heart of this matter. How did she answer Him? She did not argue; she did not reason, nor ask for an explanation; but out of a bursting heart she cried, "Lord, help me. Oh, help me"—that is all. "Help me." Just two words! "Help me!"

In our prayer-meetings all that is said in a prayer of ten or fifteen minutes very often could be said in one sentence. Supposing your house were on fire, and you sent in an alarm, would you do it after this fashion?—take down the receiver, call the fire-hall and say, "Is that the fire hall?" "Yes." "Well, I live at such a number, on such a street. It runs north off another street. My house is of brick, but there is a good deal of inflammable material in it. The fact is, I have a fire in the basement just now, and I should be glad if you would send someone to put it out. That is the fire-hall, is it? Well, you had better come along a certain street. I think perhaps the best way would be to go up such a street, and when you get there you will find a hydrant—well, there is one across the road and one a little bit down the way. Perhaps you may have to decide that when you get here"! Is that the way you would send in a fire-alarm? Would you give the firemen instructions how to reach you? What would you do but simply say one word—Fire! The firemen would do the rest.

Never mind your geography when you come to the Lord. Do not tell Him what train to take, what street to travel on. You need not tell Him all about the processes by which a soul is saved. I hear brethren tell the Lord how to get people out their boarding-houses, how to get them on to the street, how to get them to church; and when they get here, just what the Pastor is to say that they may be convicted. They gave the Lord a world of instruction—as if He did not know anything about it. This woman did not know how to get the devil out of her daughter, therefore she asked help of God. If we know so much, why have we not done it? What this woman did was to cry, "Lord, help me. I do not care how you do it, but help me. Come to my help."

Do you think you have to wait until you have been twenty years a Christian until you know how to pray? How old was that little baby of yours before he knew how to pray? How old? It could pray before it could call its mother by name. And if she were living down at the corner of Yonge and King Streets at the busiest hour, after a tiring day, she could sleep through all the noise, but the moment that child stirs, just cries, mother is wide awake instantly.

A cry of a soul in need is real prayer. And the way to pray is simply to tell the Lord what you want. If it is help, say, "Lord, help me"—and He will do the rest. We can pray on the street, pray anywhere, everywhere, after this fashion.

#### IV

Then you remember how the Lord said to her, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." There are some religious people who are very easily offended. There are some people who are always being offended. If you look west, they will be quite sure you were looking so as not to see them. If you shake hands with them very heartily and say, "I am so glad to see you", they say, "I wish he would not put on so much." And if you say, "How do you do", they say, "I wish he would not be so icy"! There are people who are bound to be offended no matter what you do. But when you are desperate, you will put all these considerations under your feet and get to the Lord for help, no matter how you get there.

Even though the woman is called a dog, she does not care. She says in effect, "I will still pray." And even though she is told there is no bread for dogs she says, "Well, if I cannot have a slice of bread, give me a crumb. I will be a dog beneath the Master's table; I will be anything; I do not care what you call me, only help me! Oh, help me!"

*When our Lord saw that, He was pleased with her.* He said, "O woman, great is thy faith." Would you like to please the Lord? Did you ever feel as though you would like to have a big offering to give to the Lord? Did you ever say, "I wish I were rich so that I could bring Him a lot of money. I wish I were talented so that I could do great things for Him. I wish I had ten times the physical energy I have so that I might serve Him more devotedly." Well, what for? "I do love to please Him. If I could only feel that I had done some-

#### REV. H. G. HAMILTON.

Jarvis Street Church is to be favoured Sundays, February 16th and 23rd, and at the week-evening meetings between, by a visit from Rev. H. G. Hamilton, of Austin, Minn. We are writing this article in the printing office, and out on the floor, beyond where the linotype machines are clicking, there are huge bales of paper weighing tons. The paper is packed between two boards of several thicknesses, the combined thickness making the top and bottom about as thick as planks. They are then bound together by steel wires—in short, a parcel weighing several tons, tied with wire instead of with string.

The strength of that wire is amazing. It reminds us of Rev. H. G. Hamilton. Physically, he is like a piece of steel wire, thin and taut and unbreakable.

Brother Hamilton is a man of conviction. He suffers a terrible handicap in this, that, unlike many men of our day, he has a very active conscience. He believes things profoundly, and seems to have the old-fashioned idea that a man's convictions of truth ought to have some relation to his character and conduct. How extraordinary that is! Brother Hamilton's views of the Scripture and his Baptist convictions are really part of the man. They are not something external to him that can be shed like an old coat, or exchanged for some other garment, according to the temper of the hour. He is a Baptist all the time, and everywhere, and seems not to have discovered any reason for being ashamed of it.

He is a man of boundless energy. We have sat with him on many occasions on committees and boards, and have observed that he always has his work with him, so that if there should be a pause in the proceedings, or any particular turn

thing that would please the Master I should be the happiest person in the world."

Shall I tell you how to please Him? Just believe Him! Without faith it is impossible to please Him, but with faith anyone may please Him. There is nothing you can do, if you had all the wealth of all the plutocrats of the earth, that would please the Lord Jesus so much as simply to believe Him; to go into His presence and cry, "Help, Lord." We can all, before we go from here this morning, every one of us, if we will, bring gladness to the heart of the Lord Jesus, and please Him, as much as any martyr ever pleased Him who went home to glory in the flames, if we will just believe Him.

He is honoured by our faith, and when we believe we shall have that answer, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Jesus Christ will come into your family. Are you praying for someone? Well, determine from this hour that you will believe God for the answer to your prayer, that nothing shall discourage you. If that is so, your father will be saved, your mother will be saved, your husband, your wife, or children; the Lord will answer you. Shall we come to Him afresh this morning? Oh, do not go away unhelped. Young people, do not go away unhelped. What do you need? No matter what you need, ask for it! You young men, do not go away without your morning blessing. Cry mightily unto God this minute, and say, "Lord, help me", and rest upon His promise, and you shall go out of here a strong man. Mothers, fathers, husbands, children, whatever your need is, do not go away without help. Boys and girls, for to-morrow at school, at home where mother and father are not Christians, facing all kinds of difficulties, whatever they may be, O boys and girls, just pray this prayer, "Lord, help me." If we all thus pray, we shall go away with all our problems solved this morning, with a hallelujah in our hearts, praising the Lord for His help.

in the discussion for which he is not responsible, he knows how to turn every minute to account. He always has a letter to write, or something to do; and has learned, as few men have, how to "give every flying moment something to keep in store".

As a member of the Baptist Bible Union and of its Executive Committee, Mr. Hamilton has been indefatigable in his labours; and as a Trustee of Des Moines University he has been truly apostolic in this, that he has been "in labours more abundant".

Though an American citizen, Brother Hamilton is a north of Ireland man by birth. It would not do for us to say all we think of him, at this point; but we are happy to be able to announce that he will be with us in Jarvis Street for the dates named. We hope he will be present at the Saturday evening prayer-meeting, February 15th. He will teach the Pastor's class each Sunday morning, preach morning and evening on both Sundays; he will teach the preparatory lesson at the great workers' gathering each Monday evening; will give a brief address Tuesday evening, and the Bible lecture Thursday evening.

The Pastor's only regret is that he will be absent while Brother Hamilton is in Jarvis Street.

#### LAST FRIDAY.

There was a large gathering of the Adult Department of the Bible School at its Annual Meeting. The Department consists of two classes: the Young Mothers' Class, taught by Miss M. Whitelock; and the general class taught by the Pastor in the auditorium.

The report showed that the average attendance of this

department for the fifty-two Sundays had been two hundred and seventy-six.

While some were a little late in coming Friday evening, when all had assembled, the Lecture Hall was practically filled. The work of the Pastor's class is done by the class officers, the Pastor having time only to teach the lesson Sunday mornings. Notwithstanding, these generous friends, determined upon some expression of their love, presented the Pastor and Mrs. Shields with a valuable set of cutlery containing a hundred and eight pieces.

The friends had heard that a year or so ago a foolish burglar broke into a Baptist minister's house, and, probably angered by finding little to carry away but a few sermons, stole nearly all the knives and forks. Mr. Spurgeon once said that the best defence against burglars would be a brass plate on the door bearing an inscription to the effect, "Baptist Minister Lives Here", assuming that no burglar in his senses would expect to find anything inside worth carrying away. Notwithstanding, burglars have twice broken into our house, once stripping the sideboard of knives and forks; another night we arrived in time to see his heels going out of the window, and on that occasion all that we missed was a paper-knife! Perhaps some of our critics have told Mr. Burglar that the Pastor of Jarvis Street ought not to be trusted with knives and forks. Be that as it may, the friends of the Pastor's class more than replenished them, so that now we have cutlery enough to furnish a big party.

This present must have been intended chiefly for the Pastor's wife, for so far as the class is concerned, the Pastor himself has not earned it. We repeat what we told our friends on Friday evening. We heard of an Irishman who, coming to this country, found what he considered was a very fine job. Writing back to a friend, he told him that he had obtained the easiest job in the world: he had nothing to do but carry bricks up a ladder all day, and a man up on the scaffold did all the work! The Pastor has been the man on the scaffold, and the class workers have carried the bricks.

However, we sometimes get bricks that are not carried, and perhaps a little bit of that sort of thing will not hurt any minister. Someone told us recently that a very dear friend, whose passing a few months ago we greatly lamented, had earnestly prayed that the Editor of *The Gospel Witness* might be kept humble, but, above all, that he might not become conceited. We were grateful for that kind word, for "the Lord giveth grace unto the humble." But we ventured to say to our friend that any Baptist minister who ever becomes conceited or puffed up must be seven-eighths of an idiot to begin with. The world, the flesh, and the devil, usually exert themselves to the full to keep the minister humble; and there are no ministers of our acquaintance who are without some thorn in the flesh.

Writing in lighter vein than usual, and speaking of knives and forks, we remember that Mr. Spurgeon once said that some ministers reminded him of a man at the head of a table with a magnificent carving knife and fork, with every facility for dividing, but with nothing on the platter to divide—skilled in homeletics but destitute of ideas. We hope we shall have many a feast in the Pastor's class, and that on these occasions the word of truth may be rightly divided.

#### ANOTHER SOUL "WITH CHRIST, WHICH IS FAR BETTER".

On Monday morning last Mrs. W. J. H. Brown, wife of Rev. W. J. H. Brown, Pastor of Annette St. Baptist Church, and mother of Rev. W. Gordon Brown, editor of *The Union Gospel Witness*, fell asleep in Christ. Mrs. Brown had suffered a long and painful illness—about two years—and her home-going was to her a great relief. She was graduated from Toronto University about thirty years ago, having specialized in languages and history. She was a strong and gracious character, full of good works, and true always to the great essentials of Evangelical Christianity. For twenty-one years Mrs. Brown, with her husband, exercised a great ministry in Annette St. Church. She saw clearly the issues involved in the present controversy in the Baptist denomination, and did not hesitate to take her stand with her husband when the crisis came. She had been a member of the Board of the Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptist Churches of Canada from its inception.

The funeral was held from the Annette St. Church this (Wednesday) afternoon, to Park Lawn Cemetery. The great

congregation which packed the church was a testimony to the place Mrs. Brown had held and her husband still holds in the life of Annette St. Church and the Denomination at large. Many ministers both of the old Convention and the new were present, and the service was conducted by Dr. Frank Weston, assisted by Revs. Percy Loney, Boyd, and the Editor of *The Gospel Witness*.

#### DR. SHIELDS GOES TO WEST VIRGINIA.

From February 16th to 25th the Editor will conduct an evangelical mission, preaching daily, in the Clarksburg Baptist Church, Clarksburg, West Virginia, of which Dr. Gabriel Maguire, formerly of Westmount, Montreal, is the Pastor. We shall share with our readers, as is our practice when away from home, some of our impressions of Baptist life in West Virginia. We trust some of our readers will find a place for these services in their prayers, that many may be saved, and that the people of God may be edified.

## To Our Generous Friends

The fiscal year both of *The Gospel Witness* and *The Toronto Baptist Seminary* will end March 31st.

If *The Gospel Witness* has been a means of grace to you, and if you believe its testimony is of value to others, we should appreciate your help. Fives, tens, fifties, hundreds, or thousands would not be wasted.

If you believe in the necessity for a *Theological Seminary* standing without compromise for the Faith, and now training more than eighty students for ministerial or missionary service at home or abroad, send us your help.

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A series of sermons on the parable of the prodigal and his brother.

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# The Union Baptist Witness

These pages (14 and 15) are the Official organ of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches in Ontario and Quebec.

337 Jarvis St., Toronto, Canada.

W. GORDON BROWN, Editor.

*Communications for this department should be addressed direct to W. Gordon Brown, Box 502, Orangeville, Ont.*

## COURTLAND.

Large congregations are attending the ministry of Rev. R. D. Guthrie in Courtland. After a sermon on the new birth, on Sunday evening, February 2nd, one young man responded to the Gospel invitation. At the Communion Service that same Sunday four received the right hand of fellowship. Recently, one of the new converts, a young man who is on fire for souls, asked his pastor to go with him to see his brother, after the Andrew-Peter fashion of John 1. God's plan of Salvation was explained, at least as far as its essentials are concerned, and the brother received Christ as his Saviour, too. This new Christian is also eager to witness for Christ at every opportunity.

## FORT WILLIAM.

On January 26th, Pastor Frank Roblin preached in the Tabernacle Baptist Church at Fort William, where his brother, Leander, is pastor. At the close of the sermon, three came forward seeking salvation, two of them adults and one child. The following Sunday the preaching of the Gospel brought more results: three children professed conversion, two of them being the children of the man who had taken his stand the previous Sunday.

## WEST ORO.

Rev. A. T. Finlayson carries on a difficult work. When weather permits, he has to drive thirty miles each Sunday to take three services, at Mitchell Square and West Oro. We may therefore feel his appreciation of the surprise gift which he received from the West Oro friends, of a very comfortable driving robe. This circle of members of the little church and community also made a gift of money to Mrs. Finlayson. Such encouragements, by the way, do hearten any pastor.

## WESTERN ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE.

At the meeting of the Pastors' and People's Conference held in Essex on December 5th, the Conference of the Western Association was reorganized, including our seven churches from Chatham to Windsor. Rev. William Fraser is the President, Rev. F. W. Dyson is the Vice-President, and Rev. W. N. Charlton is the Secretary. "We are standing together as a unit on these issues (which confront the work of our Union), and have plans made to go into every town, village and hamlet, and shake things to their very foundations." So writes the energetic President.

## II MARKHAM.

During the year 1929, Rev. W. S. Whitcombe had the joy of baptizing thirteen candidates in connection with his ministry in the Baker Hill and II Markham Baptist Churches.

## GRACE, TORONTO.

Our brethren in Grace Baptist Church have ceased to meet for service in the basement of the Sovereign Hall, and are now holding forth in the Doric Theatre on Bloor Street. Their new location has many advantages over the old. Two have recently united with the church by letter, and another has applied for membership. On Sunday, February 2nd, the baptistry of Annette Street was used for the immersion of a Hebrew believer, who has a most interesting history. Grace Church is planning for an extended open-air ministry when the season opens; indeed, they hope to have another Gospel car at work throughout the province, and thus to assist sister churches of the Union, as well as to carry the Gospel to localities that are without it.

## OUR YEAR BOOK.

The executive of our Union are issuing a year book which will be of special interest. It "will be arranged in an attractive form and will contain the reports for 1927-28 and 1928-29 and will comprise something over two hundred pages of material, including a history of the work written by Dr. Shields, and also photographs of the organization and subsequent gatherings held from time to time. It will be of historic value and should be in the hands of every member of our constituency." The nominal charge of 50c will be made for the book, although this does not cover the cost. We hope that many will write in to the office at 337 Jarvis St., Toronto, 2, Ont., and order one or more copies for themselves and friends.

## NORTH BAY.

Increasing congregations are attending the ministry of Pastor James Forrester in the Regular Baptist Mission of North Bay. Our fellow workers in that place were glad to have our Secretary, Rev. W. E. Atkinson, with them last Sunday. At the evening service a young lady who had been a Roman Catholic, professed conversion,—and by "professed" we mean publicly, before men, as well as privately, to God.

## ANNETTE

In the enforced absence of Pastor W. J. H. Brown, last Sunday evening, the beloved Dean of our Seminary, Dr. T. I. Stockley, preached on "Remembering Jesus".

## CHRISTMAS IN LIBERIA.

A letter from Rev. Horace L. Davey, written the day after Christmas, expresses his gratitude, and that of his fellow workers, for the way in which those here at home are supporting them in their difficult but glorious Gospel ministry, by prayers and gifts. He mentions two special gifts from certain brethren, which will enable much more efficient medical work to be carried on.

### By Bicycle.

Says our Missionary: "I have purchased a bicycle out of my own money; this enables me to get in and out from the beach in about two hours each way; thus when a boat is expected, I am able to run in early in the morning and be back by noon. This saves time, and also enables us to get our mail and fresh food quickly and cheaply, for it saves sending in a boy. It would do you good to see a picture of a certain long-legged missionary peddling an old, or rather new push bike up and down the so-called Liberian roads! I was able to buy an English bicycle, new, for \$30.00, so this was really cheap.

### When the Cannon Went Off.

"In connection with our medical program, I might mention the fact that, yesterday being Christmas, some of the natives about five miles away from here decided that they would celebrate by re-burying one of their head ladies. I might say that she had been dead and buried for some long time past, but this is a custom these people have here: if a person is of any account, they bury him a few days after his death; then some long time after they go through a ceremony of cleaning out the old grave, followed by a great and lengthy gin-drinking and dance, all of which they say is out of respect for the dead person. These natives in this town had an ancient muzzle-loading cannon, which they wanted to fire, to impress themselves with their prowess. So they set it ready and fired it; they were not satisfied with one or two shots but decided on three; and two of the men who were loading the cannon decided that the cannon was cool enough to fire the third time, and were ramming home the powder, when it prematurely exploded. These two men were badly burned, and the others sent for me to go and treat them. I set off on my 'bike' with mecca and bandages. I found one of the men had been carried away off to some town for native treatment; the other, being much the worst case, had been left, and he was in great agony, his whole face all burned, eyes, nose and mouth being in a terrible condition, also his hands and chest. I fixed him up as best I could, and gave him a sleeping draught, and came home, and together we prayed that God would spare this man, in order that the Gospel might be preached to him, and that the natives would see that



God is with us in power. I visited him again to-day, and found that he is progressing as well as can be expected, and have made arrangements for him to be carried in to our town, so that I can watch his progress daily. We hope that through our medical ministrations this man and his town may be receptive to the message of redeeming grace.

#### Building a Leper Asylum.

"Our leper work is coming along nicely. We gave our patients a shirt, salt, fish and soap for their Christmas treat, and they were very grateful. We expect to begin work on the leper dispensary early in the New Year; we are only waiting for confirmation of our site and to have the place surveyed before building. We have written to thank Bro. \_\_\_\_\_ for his splendid gift of \$50.00 which will certainly be sufficient for our dispensary at the present. We shall value prayer on behalf of this work, that it may be used only to the bringing of the message of light and life to these poor sufferers, for this is our chief aim in this work.

#### A Chorus in Bossa.

"Our general work is progressing favorably, meetings are being held regularly in our church building, also in the villages. I translated one of our English choruses into this language the other week, and we tried it out in one of the villages last Sunday evening; it certainly pleased the natives, and will bring home the truth of the messages given. It will be fine when we can really preach to these people without an interpreter, for then we shall feel that we are getting into personal contact with them.

#### Christmas Dinner.

"Christmas Day passed off quietly, apart from the accident to the man in the village. Brother Lewis had a special treat for his day-school boys; he gave them a big feed of rice and fish, and, of course, the native is always grateful for food; he never seems to have had sufficient. If their capacity for the Gospel was only as great as their capacity for food, what giants we should have! Prayer can make this possible. We white workers gathered together in the evening for dinner and fellowship, and our thoughts were constantly with you folk in the homeland, and we realized that we were being remembered at His throne, and were glad that we were able to be here in such a capacity as His and your representatives.

"We are all quite fit and happy in this blessed service of ministering the Gospel to those who know not the Saviour; we long to see many of these won for His glory, and know that every member of our Union is one with us in this respect. . . .

"We are delighted at the news we read in *The Gospel Witness* each time it arrives. All other things have to wait when that paper is seen, and my wife and I usually have a merry tussle as to who shall read it first. We are glad our beloved President is being sustained in health and strength and fighting valour, and pray that he may long be spared to direct the forces of our Union against all that is not true and above board."

#### JAMAICA.

Further news from the work in which Rev. J. W. Knight is engaged in Jamaica, says that the blessing of the Lord is continuing to be shown there. Since the special meetings, which we reported last week, seven or eight more have made a profession of faith in Christ. "These last have been largely the result of personal work on the part of one young man. This blessing has brought great joy to the heart of God's people here."

#### MINNESOTA NEWS.

By Rev. H. G. Hamilton.  
Westbrook.

Rev. Alfred Danielson, the Pastor, found it difficult to secure a satisfactory evangelist this year, but launched forth and was rewarded with six precious souls. It is his seventh year in Westbrook, and this is the best of the seven.

#### Storden.

Rev. O. A. Emerson has resigned this sturdy Danish Baptist Church, to accept a call to Council Bluffs, Iowa. We are sorry indeed to lose this faithful companion-in-arms from the Minnesota division, but rejoice that Rev. Mr. Swedborg, a graduate of the Moody Institute of Chicago and Bethel Academy of St. Paul, has accepted the charge. We welcome him and wish him God speed.

#### Fairbault.

Rev. Geo. Fehoe, Pastor. This faithful church and its loyal pastor is now in the midst of a revival of spiritual life. Prayer meetings are better attended, more interest marks the Sunday services, and souls are being saved.

#### Riceville, Iowa.

Rev. Wm. Taylor, Pastor. While just across the Iowa-Minnesota line, Bro. Taylor is a real part of the Minnesota Regional Bible Conference Association. He has just returned from an extended trip through England and Scotland, and reports a profitable time. He greatly fears that a man's education is seriously hampered if he misses a trip through Scotland. There's a reason, "Bill's" a Scot!

#### Pipestone.

Rev. Arno Weniger, Pastor. "We were disappointed that on account of unsettled weather, the Regional Conference could not convene with us, but we are looking forward with great interest to an acceptable time for meeting. Plans ought to be made for the holding of more of these conferences." We agree, and will try to comply. Evangelistic meetings in the Fall developed a blessed atmosphere.

#### Morristown.

Rev. A. E. Berglund, Pastor. "Many calls for evangelistic meetings; revival fires burning; souls being saved; the devil opposing. The church is united in an evangelistic crusade."

#### Austin.

Rev. H. G. Hamilton, Pastor. Entz-minger six point Sunday School system has been installed and is working well. A great baptismal service was held last Sunday night. There was a farewell

service last Thursday for our first missionary to leave this church for Peru, South America. We have withdrawn all support from the Northern Baptist Convention to the extent of our entire budget of \$2,800.00 per year. The devil is making a few friends around here. Miss Christabel Pankhurst was present for a three-day meeting and packed the house at all sessions, when great blessing was received.

#### MICHIGAN NOTES.

##### RETROSPECTION.

As we have had occasion to observe and feel the operations of the ecclesiastical machine in Michigan since that time, it is of more than passing interest to note what *The Michigan Baptist Bulletin* prophetically says about the "machine" in its issue of October, 1915. The article is headed, "Ringling Words of President Shailer Mathews." It reads: "We give below some of the ringling sentences of Dean Shailer Mathews, the newly-elected president of the Northern Baptist Convention. No man who reads these words will ever question his orthodoxy and splendid loyalty to Baptist principles. In a personal word to Northern Baptists, he writes as follows: 'We have organized a splendid machine which has already shown its capacity to accomplish results. The denomination has a unity it never before possessed. But now that we have got together closer, we must work together harder. Acting in its own capacity, the Convention has approved the Five-Year Programme for a cumulative advance during the next five years. It is the most daring programme the Baptists have ever set before themselves. Personally, I take the plan seriously, as a programme for denominational efficiency. I mean to do everything in my power to make the first of the five years one of foundation-laying and real advance. If we are to put this programme into operation, we cannot begin our operations too soon. The denomination cannot be driven, but it can be led, if only its members will lead. To this end I urge two preparatory steps: First, the announcement of the Five-Year Programme in every association; and, Second, the immediate presentation of the Five-Year Programme by every pastor to his people in such a way as to make it plain that our denominational machinery is ready to work and is now getting at work.' There is more following this, which it is needless to quote. In conclusion Dean Mathews is quoted as saying: 'For what shall it profit a denomination if it raises huge deficits and votes great programmes, but loses its passion to preach Jesus Christ to the world He died to save'. This utterance of the Dean's calls to mind one that Caiaphas uttered, to which Divine inspiration replies: 'And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation', etc. As someone has said, 'Orthodoxy is the gospel Dean Shailer Mathews preaches when he is in the South'. Truly, we are living in the times when the signs of the Lord's return are multiplying.

## Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

VOL. 5

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, Editor.

Lesson 9

March 2nd, 1930.

First Quarter.

### THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK.

Lesson Text: Revelation, chapter 5.

**Golden Text:** "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Rev. 5:9.

#### I. THE BOOK, (v. 1).

1. In this chapter there is depicted one of the most interesting and significant scenes of scripture. It is a redemptive scene with the sacrificial lamb prominent. It forms an introduction to that which follows, and gives an explanation of the same. The subject is, the book, or roll, and the worthiness of the Lamb to loose the seals thereof. The location of the book is first stated; it was "in the right hand of him that sat on the throne", or, in the possession of God. The nature of the book is then given; it was a "book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals". This denotes its importance and significance, and directs our attention to a custom of Israel depicted in the Old Testament, where in transactions pertaining to the redemption of an inheritance, such an instrument as this was drawn up, containing the particulars of agreement, the signatures of witnesses, and sealed as described. A duplicate copy was also drawn up (Jer. 32:6-14). Where an Israelite, through poverty lost his possession the same might be redeemed by the next of kin, by the payment of the price, (Lev. 25:25). This is beautifully illustrated in the case of Boaz who redeemed Naomi's inheritance, and married Ruth (Ruth 4). Boaz thus became a redeemer, and the roll used on such an occasion signified the title deed of the property. 2. It would seem therefore that what is depicted here is the antitype of such an earthly transaction, the sealed book denoting the title deed of man's inheritance forfeited by him when he surrendered to Satan, (Gen. 3:1-24). Our Lord has redeemed this inheritance at the price of His precious blood, (1 Pet. 1:18, 19), and therefore it is His purchased possession, (Eph. 1:14). He has not yet taken full possession of it, and the usurper, Satan, is still in control, (1 John 5:19, R.V.), but the time is coming when He will cleanse the inheritance and take possession, and such action is foreshadowed here, and depicted in succeeding chapters.

#### II. THE UNWORTHINESS OF MAN TO OPEN THE BOOK, (vs. 2-4).

It was customary in Israel when a redemptive transaction was about to

take place to advertise the same by word of mouth; so here the strong angel proclaims the matter with a loud voice, asking, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" No one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon, and I John wept much in consequence. Such weeping is not to be interpreted as being on account of his sorrow at not being able to see what was written therein, but rather because of the consequence involved in no one's being able to redeem the inheritance. The next of kin had the privilege of redeeming the earthly inheritance, but if he was unable to do so, another relative in the immediate succession might do so, and if all failed the inheritance would be returned in the year of jubilee, (Lev. 25:28). But there is no such year in connection with the inheritance depicted in this vision, and no one being found worthy it meant permanent estrangement of the inheritance. No wonder John weeps. It is enough to make anyone weep. Men have tried to redeem the inheritance, and they are still making attempts at the same. Some endeavour to do so through political action, others through social service, while some even try religion without Christ. These and all other attempts have failed, and are bound to fail, because man is totally unworthy to accomplish such a work. He cannot redeem himself, it is impossible for him to redeem others, and apart from outside help he is hopelessly lost. Note his helpless sinful condition outside of Christ, (Rom. 3:9-19; Eph. 2:1-12).

#### III. THE WORTHINESS OF THE LAMB TO OPEN THE BOOK, (vs. 5-7).

John, weeping because no one had been found worthy to open the book, is addressed by one of the elders who assures him that one had prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. This one is designated as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David", a title applying to our Lord. He sprang of Judah the royal tribe, (Heb. 7:14; Gen. 49:9, 10), and from Him David came. He had prevailed to open the book and the character in which He had done so is depicted in the following verse. John beheld "and in the midst of the throne . . . stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth". The significance of this is apparent in the light of scriptural teaching. A slain lamb in the religious sense was a sacrifice offered to God on behalf of sin, and this lamb had the marks of its death wounds upon it, and as such it symbolizes our Lord in His redemptive work as the Lamb of God, (John 1:29). He is seen here as the all-conquering, resurrected Lamb which had prevailed over all enemies, for by death and resurrection our Lord gained the victory over death, the grave, sin, and Satan, and returned to the glory in triumph. His strength is also noted in the seven horns, and His relationship to the Holy Spirit is given in the seven eyes. To both Father and Son is ascribed the sending of the Holy Spirit

to this earth, (John 14:26; 15:26). "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne", signifying that the time had arrived for taking possession of the inheritance. Several things may be noted in reference to the lesson of this section. First, in relation to the nature of our Lord's worthiness. This is to be found in His own divine nature, and in His perfect redemptive work as Son of man. Second, concerning the nature of redemption. This is taught in the shed blood of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, first in animals, then in our Lord. There is no redemption apart from shed blood. Note its prominence all through Scripture. And, third, in reference to the application of our Lord's redemptive work. This is experienced through faith in Him.

#### IV. THANKSGIVING AND WORSHIP, (vs. 8-14).

1. The immediate result of the Lamb's action is a great outburst of song on the part of the living creatures and elders who fall down before Him, "having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours which are the prayers of saints". This implies delightful music and sweet perfume. Our Lord delights in the prayers of His people, and graciously hears and answers them. The song sung by this heavenly company is a new one, extolling first the worthiness of the Lamb; then the reason for that worthiness, found in His redemptive work, and third the blessed result of that work in relation to the saints, (vs. 9, 10). It is most significant that this song is taken up with shed blood and on account of much of the present day teaching this requires emphasis. Our Lord's death had a distinct purpose. He did not die as a martyr to His cause. His death was voluntary and vicarious on account of sin. "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree", (1 Peter 2:24). As a result those who by faith accept Him are changed from sinners into saints, and become members of His royal family, a kingdom of priests, who, with Him, reign. 2. In addition to this company John beholds and hears another large company of angels round about the throne, in number "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands", an innumerable host. And these also extol the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain. Note again the reference to our Lord's sacrificial death. And every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, joins in the refrain, and the elders fall down and worship Him "that liveth for ever and ever". This is truly a blessed picture of that which will take place in the future when every knee shall bow unto our Redeemer, and every tongue shall confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father, (Phil. 2:10, 11). And if such praise is to be given to Him later, should we not give Him the same now? Emphasis should be placed upon our Lord's worthiness to receive blessing, and honour and glory and power, the duty and privilege of thus exalting Him, the nature of true worship, and the blessedness arising from such an attitude.