

# The Gospel Witness

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD AMUSEMENTS.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 12th, 1931.

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(Stenographically Reported.)

"And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?"—1 Cor. 8:11.

#### Prayer Before the Sermon.

We draw near to Thee, O Lord, with gratefulness of heart because of the assurance of Thy Word that Thou art ever ready to receive those who come to Thee. Indeed, it is written, All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. We thank Thee that the door into Thy presence is open even to the vilest sinner, and that through Jesus Christ we may have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

We bless Thee that we have not to come through any human intermediary, that we need no church, or priest, or any other mediator, than the one Mediator, Christ Jesus. We thank Thee for Him Who died for our sins, Who offered Himself a perfect and complete Sacrifice, meeting all the requirements of Thy holy law, paying to the uttermost farthing the indebtedness of a sinful world, and making it possible for God justly to open the prison to those who are bound.

We thank Thee that Jesus Christ is ascended, that He sits at Thy right hand, that this Man, having offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God. We come to Thee this evening in His holy name, and we pray that the Holy Spirit may enable every one of us to look to Jesus Christ. Many in Thy presence rejoice in Him as Saviour and Lord. Many before Thee have had years of experience of Thy faithfulness. They have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and they have found it true that the path of the just is as a shining light which shines more and more unto the perfect day. We thank Thee that we have discovered by our own experience that in Thy presence there is fullness of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. We have come to Thy banqueting-house where Jesus provides the feast, and we have discovered that every course is better than that which precedes; that Thou dost ever keep the good wine until by and by. So we bless Thee for the prospect that is before us, for the certainty that some day we who have tasted that the Lord is gracious will know more fully than we know to-day what a glorious thing it is to be reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Accept, O Lord, the praise, the adoration, the worship of our hearts, for all that Thou hast done for us in Christ Jesus the Lord.

But there are some before Thee whose eyes are still blinded, for the god of this world has blinded the eyes of them that believe not lest the light of the glorious knowledge of God should shine unto them. They have not seen the Saviour. They have explored, some of them, the utmost reaches of the far country like the one of whom we have been singing this evening, and they have begun to be in want. We pray that the veil may be removed from their minds, and that in Jesus Christ they may see the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world.

We pray this evening especially for our invisible auditors. We know not how many there are. Some whom Thou lovest are sick. It may be they ask questions in their own minds as to why this sorrow has come upon them. We pray that the presence of the Lord may be theirs, that they may trust Him, and be enabled to say with Job, Though He slay me yet will I trust Him. Where it is in accord with Thy purpose we pray Thou wilt touch them with Thy healing grace, and restore them to health again.

We pray for those in hospitals and in sanitariums. We beseech Thee for the poor fellows in Christie Street Hospital. We think of them often, with others, who fought and bled and suffered, who have been in agony these many years. We pray that such as are Thine may be able to rejoice in Thee. If any are not, make Thyself known to them, and save them by Thine abounding grace through the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

There are people in remote places, in the countryside, some in restaurants, many at home, many here in Toronto, who hear the message this evening. Oh, how well do we know the utter futility of addressing men in human speech unless it be energized by the Holy Ghost. How powerless we are to enlighten the understanding, to open the heart, to enfranchise the wills of men! So, our Lord, our appeal is to Thee, that the gospel of Thy grace, that the great principles of Thy gospel, may this evening prove, in many lives, to be the power of God, the very dynamite of God, delivering men from the shackles by which they are bound, delivering them into the largest liberty that is possible in Christ Jesus.

We pray that Thou wilt bless Thy word this evening. May multitudes of Thy believing people be made subject to its sanctifying power! May the voice of God be heard in the

testimony of Thy word this evening! Lead, we pray Thee, great numbers of people to a fuller appreciation of their inheritance in Christ Jesus,—

"Look how we grovel here below,  
Fond of these earthly toys;  
Our souls can neither rise, nor go  
To reach eternal joys."

O Lord, deliver us into the life, every one of us, which Jesus designed we should enjoy, for which He died and rose again, and ascended into heaven. To make possible that life, the Holy Ghost came. Lord, we beseech Thee to make this an hour of extraordinary blessing to Thine own people. May it be an hour of progress, of definite surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord! Bring home the backslider. Wean us all away from worldliness, even in our thinking. Help us to set our affections on things above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Bless us in our meditation upon this truth of Thine to-night. This Word that is inspired of the Holy Ghost, may the Holy Ghost teach us its meaning, and open our hearts to receive the truth in the love of it! We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The Christian attitude toward amusements is a subject of great importance. While belonging, in some respects, to the category of minor questions, to the "childish things" which we may be expected to "put away" as we attain to some degree of maturity in the Christian life, yet because, as Christians, we can never be unrelated to anything which affects in the slightest degree the spiritual welfare of the least of God's children, we cannot be either indifferent or superior to this matter.

It is a fact, moreover, which even the most liberally and charitably minded find themselves compelled to acknowledge, that vast numbers of professed Christians are now being carried away by an ever-growing love of pleasure, which, like a mighty tide, is sweeping over the world. It cannot be denied that many church members go oftener to the theatre than to church, and pay more for their amusements than for their religion; that there is reason to fear that many such are better versed in rules "according to Hoyle," than in the principles of the Gospel according to Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John; and are bolder and more expert in dealing cards than in disseminating the word of God. Some, too, there are, who are most punctilious in their observance of religious decorum; who would be offended by a colloquialism from the pulpit, or an inartistic performance by the choir; but who see no impropriety in the presence of professing Christians at the dance.

Nor is this condition of things peculiar to any one denomination, nor to any one country. It is a matter of general observation that vast multitudes of the professed disciples of Christ, by their addiction to these and other forms of amusement, openly advertise themselves to be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

Candid minds, I think, will acquit me of the charge of exaggeration, when I say that this has had, and now has, a deadening and almost paralyzing effect upon the life of the churches. The public worship of the sanctuary, the preaching of the gospel, the study of Scripture, the exercise of prayer, the spiritual service of the Christian life, and all the pure spiritual joys flowing therefrom, are esteemed dull and uninteresting.

Indeed, we have come upon days when the churches are entering into competition with the theatre, and with the dance hall, and even with places to which gamblers resort. I cut from last evening's paper an article which I shall not read, except to say that over two columns I saw this headline, "Successful Dance Held by Ladies'

Church Society". It goes on to give the names of the committee that arranged fifty bridge tables, and others who had charge of the work of pairing the various couples for the dance.

There are churches in this city that have their dramatic societies. One sees announcements from time to time of certain plays being put on in the house of God. These things certainly challenge our thought, and it is worth while for those who profess to be bought with blood, to give some attention as to whether in these matters we are doing the will of God.

And I venture the assertion that this inordinate love of sensuous pleasure vitiates not only the public taste, but the taste of that part of the public which professes to be Christian. This has resulted in many deplorable reactions upon the life and activity of the churches. Standards have been lowered to suit the popular taste. People who feed on Charlie Chaplin several days a week have but little appetite for anything but Charlie Chaplin on Sunday. Standards may not always, however, be vulgarized. They may only be reduced to fit the diminishing capacities of the people. The man who becomes addicted to the use of stimulants soon loses his appetite for wholesome food, and what food is forced upon him must be administered in tabloid form. And it seems to be the policy of "the god of this world" to vitiate the appetites of God's children for all healthy spiritual enjoyments, by treating them with stimulants.

Respecting the particular form of amusement provided in the moving picture theatres, it ought frankly to be said that, independently of the character of the pictures, the habitue of the "movies" is certain to find the habit mentally demoralizing. Even now there are many who refrain from reading certain books, preferring to await their production on the screen. Quite apart from the moral quality of the pictures, this aspect of the influence of the craze for the "movies" should give educators, and all concerned in the cultivation of the mind, the most serious concern.

The great question, however, which faces us is this: What is the Christian Church to do? What is the truly Christian attitude toward these things? If people will have nothing but pleasure, is the Christian Church to provide it? If the multitudes insist upon being entertained, must those who serve in the Church, in the pulpit and elsewhere, learn the entertainer's art? If young people refuse to engage in religious exercises designed to develop both the mind and the spirit, unless such exercises are diluted with some sort of entertaining or pleasurable element, is it the duty of the Church to accommodate her ministry to the popular demand? Or is there higher and safer ground which we may take?

I.

LET US EXAMINE THE PRINCIPLE OF THE TEXT, for our answer.

It appears to have been common in pagan Corinth, as in other places, to offer for sale in the market place, meat which was the residue of sacrifices which had been offered to idols in heathen temples. Some of the Corinthian believers seem to have made a practice of using such meat for food. They argued that as an idol was nothing in the world, meat which had been presented to the idol in worship was neither the better nor the worse for having been so used. Therefore they saw no reason why they, as Christians, should not eat it.

But there were others who viewed the matter differently. Lacking the clear intelligence of their more en-

lightened brethren, they appear to have felt that since the meat had been used in idol-worship, the eating of it would involve some recognition of the idol. Therefore, when they saw their fellow-Christians eating such meat, notwithstanding their unlightened consciences felt the practice involved a recognition of the idol, they claimed the liberty their fellow-Christians exercised, and in the doing of it were caused to stumble.

It is probable that this matter had been submitted to the Apostle Paul for judgment, as the first verse of this chapter seems to imply—"Now as touching things offered unto idols"—and this chapter is his answer. Many a pastor in our day is asked similar questions by members of his flock who are sincerely desirous of knowing and doing the will of God in all things.

The Apostle begins by telling them that they are right in the assumption that "an idol is nothing in the world," and that, therefore, meat is unaffected by the fact that it had been used in sacrifice. He tells them that in the eating of such meat in itself there is no wrong. He lays down the principle that *there is a spiritual knowledge which affords liberty*: "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him." That is to say, when a man knows God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ, he knows there is no other God; and that God is a Spirit Who requires of His creatures a spiritual service; and that, therefore, we are not to judge ourselves, nor others, by outward forms, by the mere externals of life, such as eating and drinking. On the contrary, we know that it is spirit, and motive, and intention, with which God is concerned. Or, as the same apostle says elsewhere (Romans fourteen, seventeen): "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The argument, therefore, is that knowing an idol to be nothing in the world, so far as the act itself was concerned and by itself considered, a Christian, knowing this, might eat meat which had been used in idol-worship without offence either to God or to his own conscience.

On the other hand, the Corinthians are reminded, there are some who lack the spiritual discernment to perceive that the nothingness of the idol leaves the sacrifice unpolluted: "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled."

And herein another principle is enunciated to this effect: that while the believer's relationship to God is unaffected by his eating or refraining, and his own conscience, therefore, is also undefiled thereby, *there is still another relationship to be considered, and that is, the believer's relationship to his neighbour.*

And here let me pause to interject a more general observation: In respect to its own desires, the human mind is marvellously resourceful in discriminative judgments. When it suits us, sin and righteousness are defined in terms of our human relationships, and men go so far as to measure a man's fitness for the presence of God by the service he appears to have rendered to his fellows. But how swiftly we can swing to the other

extreme: "As long as I have a clear conscience toward God, whose business is it what I eat or drink, or where I find my pleasures or my recreations?" Thus we choose to magnify the one or the other of the tables of the law as comprehending our whole moral obligation, as the inclination of the moment suits us. One day we are sure that if our consciences be at peace with God, nothing else matters: The next day we are equally certain that so long as we busy ourselves with some particular bit of human service—usually something we rather like to do—it really does not matter whether we pray or otherwise recognize God or not.

The underlying principle of Paul's teaching, however, is this, that the gospel provides a way whereby "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"; and that the principles of the gospel applied to life and conduct will relate the believer in self-denying service to both God and his neighbour too.

But now, to return to the specific matter more immediately before us. I have said the Corinthians are here reminded of their further obligation to their neighbour: "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge." "But," someone will object, "am I to be brought into bondage to another man's ignorance? Because he is so ignorantly superstitious stupidly to suppose that the idol pollutes the meat, or that the idol and the sacrifice are inseparable, am I therefore to be deprived of the liberty which my clearer knowledge gives me?" So secure did they feel themselves to be in their spiritual knowledge, they felt they could actually "sit at meat in the idols' temple" without violating their own consciences, knowing the idol to be nothing, and God to be all in all.

But our apostle lays down a further principle: *that while there is a liberty in knowledge, there is a still larger liberty in love.* "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse. (Which means that, knowing our relationship to God is not affected by such matters, we may do as we like. Thus the truth of God makes us free). But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak."

"But why should I allow the absurd prejudices of my ignorant brother to deprive me of legitimate enjoyment?" Because, my friend, you may cause your weaker brother to stumble if you insist on the exercise of your liberty. "But why should I be held responsible for his stumbling? If I may legitimately do, without injury to myself, that which, to him, becomes an occasion of stumbling only and wholly because of his ignorance, why should not his stumbling be charged to his ignorance, and I be left in the enjoyment of my Christian liberty? Is there any sound reason why my freedom should be restricted, why I should be required continually to deny myself for fear of offending the ignorant, old-fashioned, and superstitious?"

In effect, you really ask, Why should you care if the ignorant, and weak, stumble?

There is a reason why you should care, and why you should deny yourself for the sake of the most benighted human being. Hear the tremendous answer! *He is a soul "for whom Christ died"!* This man Paul has but one answer for every question: it is always the Cross! Everything is referred to the Cross. He sees everything and everybody through the medium of the Cross. He measures and values everybody, by the Cross. Nor is

this a solitary note in his teaching. He wrote the same to the Romans: "Destroy not him with thy meat *for whom Christ died.*" Thus he measures and values all that is in this world and cries: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." And that is no more than our Lord Himself said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Thus our text, and the gospel generally, puts love before knowledge as the guiding principle of life, and as the foundation of the largest liberty. Knowledge afforded liberty conscientiously to eat meat: love gave liberty to refrain from eating for the sake of the interests of a soul for whom Christ died.

## II.

### LET US NOW CONSIDER SOME MODERN ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS PRINCIPLE.

There are certain forms of amusement which are only evil. There are plays which cannot be defended before the bar of an enlightened conscience; there are uses of playing cards which lead inevitably to ruin; there are kinds of dances which are flagrantly immoral, and which no reputable person will attempt to justify. To these propositions no one in this audience will object. But with these things we have nothing to do in our present discussion. Every true Christian will instantly, and instinctively, recognize that the thing which is evil in itself should have no place in the Christian life. Participation in such amusements as I have just named, I feel sure every one will readily acknowledge, would be as unworthy of a professed Christian as lying or stealing.

*The case before us is that of a matter which is not evil in itself, but which some uninstructed people, here called "weak," think to be evil.* It is with the Christian attitude toward these we are now concerned.

For the sake of argument let us assume that the theatre is an institution of great educational possibilities. Lest I be misunderstood, I give it as my personal conviction that the theatre, as an institution, is immoral; that its influence, on the whole, is not good, but evil. But I speak of the theatre in this way as an institution. I shall not argue the point here, for that is beside my purpose this evening. There may be exceptions, and I am willing to assume the exception, to assume that there may be individual theatres whose management keep their stage clean and pure and wholesome. And this involves the further assumption that there may be good plays. Doubtless many are not good; but we will assume that some are, and that their teaching is morally sound, and their influence morally uplifting—or at least not degrading.

We may assume further that the conscientious Christian—and who can be a Christian without being conscientious?—will exercise the utmost discrimination, and will go only to the best theatres, and the best plays, in which there can be nothing that is in any degree harmful.

And we may make the same assumption respecting the playing of cards. Surely no one will insist that there is any evil in the cards themselves; they are neither moral nor immoral: but unmoral. That, to the discerning, is self-evident. But I am aware of the strong prejudice conceived by many against the cards themselves, as though the pieces of pasteboard so marked were essen-

tially evil. Personally, I know nothing of cards; but I suppose there is something peculiarly fascinating about the various games for which they are used. It is not difficult for me to imagine a game of cards to be a very pleasant diversion, nor indeed to believe that such a game may be mentally refreshing. I am not now speaking of the use of cards for gambling purposes. No one questions that cards are frequently put to evil uses;—that even in private drawing-rooms men and women have been inspired by a simple, friendly, game with a passion for gambling which has led to their ruin, and even to suicide. No one whose knowledge is at all extensive, will deny that cards have been the latchkey to the penitentiary for many—to let them in, however; not to let them out. I say it is not to be wondered at that so many should look upon a pack of cards as having been printed in hell, in view of the terrible havoc they have wrought.

But it must surely be assumed that no true disciple of Christ would permit himself to have part in a game in which any of these things could find a place. He would play cards only in such a way as there could be "no harm" in it.

I cut last night from "The Outlook of The Church", in *The Toronto Globe*, this item, which I will read to you:

"At a meeting in Philadelphia, Dr. Chapman read a letter that created a great impression. He declared that he could vouch for every statement in the letter, for the writer was a personal friend. Here is the letter:

"While a well-known evangelist was conducting a meeting one morning, a tramp came in and said: 'My father and my mother used to sit in this pew. It is the first church I ever attended. My father was an officer in this church. Seven boys used to sit in this pew in the Sunday school class. We had a great love and respect for our Sunday school teacher. Saturday afternoon she invited us to her home for an entertainment of music, eatables, and a look over the lesson. After awhile she was anxious to please us and hold us, and she taught us a game of cards. None had ever used cards. We became enthusiastic over it, learning different games. After awhile we would say, 'Do not give us so much time for the lesson, but let us have more time for playing cards, and show us some more tricks.' After awhile we were off in the cotton gins playing cards, and not going to her home. Later we failed to go to Sunday school. Cards, cigarets, and, after awhile, drink and gambling. We all at different times left our homes. Two of these boys have been hung three are in State prisons for life, one a vagabond like myself. No one knows where he is, and, if the authorities knew I was here, I would be arrested and put behind the bars. All I wish is that that teacher had never taught us to play cards.' As he stood there brokenhearted, a lady at the right, and near the pulpit, dressed in mourning, arose and went to where the man was, fell on the floor with a scream, and said: 'My God! I am the Sunday school teacher that did it.' She fainted, and we did not know but that she was dead. She revived, but her heart was broken."

Many an aged Sunday school teacher can look back with regret over the mistakes of the past, and exclaim, "The enemy hath done this," for truly "harmless pastimes" have been used by Satan to wreck many a promising young life. Many a week-

day action thunders so loudly that the Sunday message of the teacher cannot be heard, and many a good seed is choked by a thorn."

The churches, Sunday Schools, and religious leaders, that pollute the house of God with these things are among the chief agents of hell in this generation, I care not by what names they are called.

But what shall we say of the dance? I confess to having had no personal experience. There are those who insist that the modern dance in any and all its forms is always and only evil. I have no doubt it is often so. Indeed I feel sure that certain dances can work only evil to those who engage in them.

Some years ago when my late friend, Dr. John Roach Straton, was preaching for me, I got a telephone call from a lady in the city who said, "I wish you would bring your friend with you up to this institution." We went, and found it was a rescue home for girls. This woman was the matron of a chain of such homes that were dotted across this Continent from Halifax to Vancouver, under the auspices of a certain church, which I shall not name, before the days of Church Union, a sort of work, naturally, of which they did not talk very much. This lady called me and asked if we would go to see her, and we went.

She brought in to us into the parlour twenty-one or twenty-two little girls, the oldest was not more than twenty-one, the youngest, sixteen. Beautiful children they were, somebody's daughters, somebody's sisters, the life of every one of them blighted, blasted, according to human estimation. This motherly soul very kindly said to them, "Tell these gentlemen where you met your ruin." And without one solitary exception every one of them said, "At the dance," and one of them said at a dance that was held in a church! May God have mercy on the preacher who permitted that damnable thing in the house dedicated to the worship of God!

But I have no time tonight to discuss that aspect of the question. I would take ground, for the sake of argument at least, that many censors of the dance who are better informed and more experienced than I, would not take, I would assume that there may be perfectly innocent and harmless dances. For I am compelled to assume that no Christian would deliberately and persistently participate in any sort of dance associated with the probability of evil. I assume, therefore, (I say again, for the sake of argument, for the testimony of the more experienced makes me cautious) that under right auspices some pure-minded people may dance without injury to themselves.

*Thus I have assumed that it is only with the good play, the innocent card game, the harmless dance—if such there may be,—the Christian will have anything to do.*

Can you, however, be sure that others will be equally discriminating? It is admitted that these things are not always good, but sometimes decidedly evil. What if others fail to exercise your carefully discriminating judgment? Perhaps someone will say that their failure to do so is their own responsibility. Beyond question, to great multitudes, the theatre is the theatre, the dance is the dance, and cards are cards. They do not discriminate, and they will not. Some fail for want of capacity to discern between the good and the bad, and some from want of inclination. "But that," I have heard even professed Christians say, "is their concern and not mine."

But remember, *the text lays down a principle for the governance of the relationship of a person of a very high degree of religious intelligence to one who is densely ignorant and superstitious.* You must draw the picture for yourself. At one end of the scale you have a religiously enlightened mind, plus education, culture, refinement, wealth, all these cooperating to discern between the precious and the vile. At the other end you have one steeped in prejudice, restricted in capacity, weak in character, and sheep-like in his imitative propensities. Between these two extremes there may be many varying degrees, of intelligence on the one hand or ignorance on the other. But I take the extremes. What principle can possibly bridge that gulf or span that difference of spiritual enlightenment and moral vigor? *Only the principle of the Cross!* And that is the principle by which all truly Christian conduct is determined, and on which all Christian character is founded: "For whom Christ died"! Let me take the highest possible ground. I anticipate your argument as to your taste for literature and the drama, and your love of music and the aesthetic, and your passion for cultivated society and mental recreation, and your superiority to the degrading influences to which the less favored are subject. I will take your argument at par—"Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge"! Do you hear it? "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge." Let me thunder it in your ears: "*Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge!*" What then? "*Through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died?*" Oh, my brother, do you care? Do you care for the soul for whom Christ died? What? Does this question of amusements affect the business of soul-saving? Yes, it does. Most emphatically it does! The passion for pleasure, for society, for worldly amusement, has made barren churches as it has made childless homes! *And we shall never accomplish our God-given task, nor glorify Him in the salvation of men, until by the power of the Holy Spirit we learn to relate ourselves to men everywhere as to souls for whom Christ died.*

### III.

MAY I VENTURE NOW TO OFFER A WORD OF EXHORTATION AND APPLICATION? For the sake of clearness I repeat, I have nothing now to say about indulgence in that which is known to be sinful. Nor have I any word of denunciation to utter respecting that which is not evil in itself. It would be as wrong to belie your moral intelligence by assuming there is evil where there is none, as it would be to ignore the ignorant conscientiousness of another, who, where there is no evil, thinks there is.

The supreme question is, Can any one of us afford to be indifferent to the fate of one "for whom Christ died"? That is the highest and strongest appeal which even God can make. From eternity He has estimated everything by the Cross! Have we learned to estimate men by the Cross? The man is poor, and ignorant, and obscure, and unattractive, I know; but he is a soul "for whom Christ died". For his own sake he is worth much; and he is one for whom an inestimable price has been paid.

*For Christ's sake we cannot afford to be indifferent toward such an one.* Can you not remember the thrill of satisfaction you experienced when you first realized that Christ died for you? And in that hour you realized His own satisfaction in some measure. Dare any of us consent to permit anything which might defeat the purpose

of the Cross in another's life? Shall we have done once for all with all worldly standards and henceforth measure all men by the Cross?

Do you realize that *some may be perishing through your act of selfish indulgence?* "It is only an innocent pleasure," you say. But the moment your pleasure becomes an occasion of stumbling it ceases to be innocent: "When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."

Do you see *what estimate they put upon the weak brother who selfishly insist upon doing their own pleasure irrespective of its influence upon others?* They put their own passing pleasure before the salvation of the soul. That is the text's teaching. That is the consideration it forces upon us: "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?" Is there a professed Christian here who will refuse to forego an evening at the theatre that another soul may have an eternity in glory? On one particular evening that weaker brother saw you there, and he found sanction for his course in yours. I know he is "weak," and "ignorant," and "prejudiced," and "narrow-minded," and all that is contemptible in the eyes of some: but for him Christ *died!* Can it be that anyone of us will deliberately sacrifice the interests of a soul for whom Christ died for a few hours' pleasure? Even to save a soul from death can we refuse to deny ourselves? I must be faithful. The spiritual requirements of the hour are insistent. The testimony of Scripture is most urgent: "Destroy not him with thy theatre-going, or with thy card-playing, or with thy dancing, or with the pursuit of any other kind of pleasure—destroy not him for whom Christ died!"

Does someone contend that such teaching is extravagant and impracticable? that it involves the erection of impossible standards? that such self-denial requires an unreasonable service? I remind you that the difference between the very greatest and the very humblest of earth, is infinitesimal in comparison with the gracious and infinite stoop of the Lord of glory when He died for your sinful soul? And for one for whom He died will you do

nothing? For one for whom He sacrificed everything, will you sacrifice nothing?

No, my standard is not impossible. It is the simple standard of the New Testament. To be a "living sacrifice," to "be not conformed to this world," is our "reasonable service." It is for this we are here. For this we have been sent. I should be unworthy of my office were I to preach anything less. I must apply the principle to myself; and I say, that if there be any pleasure upon which my heart is so set that it is more to me than the interests of a soul for whom Christ died, I am unworthy of my office, and I ought immediately either to resign that pleasure, or resign my office. And I say the same to the office-bearers in this church; I say it to the deacons. But I know the deacons of this church, and so far as the amusements we have been discussing this evening are concerned, that was settled by them long, long ago. No man could be elected as a deacon in this church who was not known to be entirely separated from such practices. The principle applies to Sunday School teachers, and also to every member of the church. The teaching of Scripture requires that every interest in life should be subordinated to the purpose of the Cross—which is, that they should be saved for whom Christ died. For any of us who call ourselves disciples of Christ, there is but one course compatible with love and loyalty to Christ, and that is to resolve that by His grace, and by the might of His Spirit in the inner man, we will put Him always and everywhere first; that we will live to realize the purpose of the Cross in our own lives, and in the lives of others; that we will lose our lives for Christ's sake, that thus we may find them.

Shall we not all resolve to rededicate ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, and from this forward, put Him always first?

(The principle enunciated in this sermon is kept constantly before the membership of Jarvis Street Church. Only such as recognize and practice it are admitted to the teaching staff of the Sunday School. Sunday last about twenty responded to the invitation.)

## Jarvis Street Week End

Sunday was a good day. The attendance at School in the morning was 1,318. There was a large congregation. Many requests have been received for the printing of the morning sermon, which was an exposition of Luke 14: 26, 27; but the printing of the Thursday evening lecture for some time necessitates the postponement of the printing of a Sunday morning sermon. In the evening there was a great congregation, when the sermon appearing in the Jarvis Street Pulpit this week was preached. About twenty responded to the invitation at the evening service, and one at the morning service.

## BOOKS BY DR. SHIELDS

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## THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER.

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Twelfth in a Series of Week-Evening Lectures of the Doctrines of Grace.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, April 9th, 1931.

(Stenographically Reported.)

Lesson Read: John 3: 14-21.

I am to speak to you this evening on the subject of the security of the believer in Christ, the doctrine of eternal security, the perseverance of the saints, the great truth that when the Lord saves us He saves us for ever. That is a very large subject, which cannot be covered in one address. It may occupy us for two or three weeks. One reason for desiring to deal with it thus thoroughly is in order that we may have the addresses to put in the hands of those who come enquiring from time to time. I hear from people by letter and by personal interview on this important subject very frequently.

Is it true that when the Lord saves us He saves us for ever. I shall this evening begin with the a b c of the subject, and bring to your attention some of the plain, explicit, scriptures, such scriptures as a little child can understand. That is to say, he may not know the reason of them, but he may know what the Lord, in His Word, promises to those who put their trust in Him. Then, at a later time, I want you to go with me as we explore this subject a little more deeply, that we may, if you will let me use a big word, examine the philosophical basis of the doctrine, to show why the salvation which Christ provides must, in the nature of the case, be an eternal salvation.

### I.

Let us look, then, at a FEW OF THE FAMILIAR SCRIPTURES. What does the Bible promise? How is this salvation defined in the Word of God? Observe the verses I have read to you this evening. It is there promised "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". The Lord does not propose that those who come to Him in faith should come in a spirit and attitude of experimentation. That is not faith. We are to come believing that the Lord will do precisely what He says. Into that we shall go more deeply on another occasion, but here in the verses I have read to you He promises "eternal life", "everlasting" life.

Surely that must mean exactly what it says, that the life which God gives at conversion, when the soul dead in trespasses and sins is quickened into newness of life, is, in its very nature and essence, eternal, it is everlasting.

I need not quote many scriptures containing that word, but very many will readily occur to your mind: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life." Then the great words in the tenth of John are full of encouragement: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they fol-

low me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

So throughout the New Testament we are promised everlasting, or eternal, life, on the ground of our faith in Christ. Nowhere is it suggested that those who believe shall be given a second opportunity, that they shall be put on a future probation, that if they behave themselves they may attain to life. There is no suggestion anywhere to that effect, but that we are justified freely by His grace, and that we are given everlasting life.

Then you remember the great words in Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" in the evening-time? After twenty years or more of trial? No!—"ready to be revealed in the last time."

Then you recall how our Lord promised that He would raise up such as believe in Him at the last day. Then again, in His high priestly prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John, He speaks of those whom the Father has given Him: "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled." The Good Shepherd keeps His sheep; and when He is near the close of His earthly career, in His prayer, He declares that He has finished the work which the Father had given Him to do, and He glories in this, that He has not lost one of the sheep which the Father had given Him. One is reminded of David, the author of the twenty-third psalm, when giving an account of himself to Saul he said, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep." He told of meeting the lion and the bear, and how he went out after them and delivered the lambs out of their mouths.

The New Testament abounds with promises to the effect that the life which God gives is eternal, it is everlasting, that He will keep us even to the end.

### II.

Let us now examine THE FIGURES UNDER WHICH SALVATION IS REPRESENTED. Many metaphors are used in Scripture to describe the salvation which is called an "eternal salvation", of which, it is said, our Lord became "the Author".

First of all, *salvation is described as a life*; it is something which is imparted by the power of the Spirit of God, something that is communicated to a man which he did not possess before. It is described

as a gift, something that is bestowed, and that is to be received; and that gift is a life that is communicated by God. It is a part of God; it is, indeed, the very life of God communicated to the human soul. Whatever that life may be that is in God, that is the quality, the nature, of the life which is bestowed upon such as believe.

Therefore we come back to these passages which speak of that life as being "everlasting" or "eternal". That means very much more than mere endlessness of duration. These words are used to define a quality rather than to describe a quantity. It does not mean merely that we are given a life that goes on and on and on for ever; but that we are given a life which is, in its very nature, like God Himself, eternal, and is therefore not subject to death. We shall find out how clearly that is brought out in other figures which further illustrate that life, but I am speaking now of the simple principle that when God saves the soul He imparts to that soul that by nature is dead in trespasses and sins a life that beats from Himself. He gives life. It was for this Jesus Christ came: "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

I can illustrate that in many ways. I know I am covering familiar ground, but we need to give line upon line, and precept upon precept, to say some things over and over again in order that we may understand and remember.

There are different kinds of life about us. There are creatures that are old at a year or so. There are some that would be called very old at twenty years, and there are some that would be quite young on reaching their hundredth birthday.

I read a story—I do not know whether it is apocryphal or whether it is true, but it was in the papers a little while ago, the story of the long memory, as well as the long life, of an elephant. One of the most famous show-men of the world, Barnum, many years ago had in his circus an elephant which he called Jumbo. I do not know where it came from, but it was first of all owned by a man called Bailey, who was also a circus-man. Mr. Barnum tried to buy this elephant, but Bailey would not sell it to him. He offered him fabulous sums of money, and at length he offered a hundred thousand dollars for Jumbo. Then Bailey advertised it thus: "Come and see the elephant that Barnum could not buy for a hundred thousand dollars." Then Barnum said to him, "I thought it was your elephant I wanted, but it is you." They joined up, and formed the Barnum and Bailey Circus.

Back about forty years ago, according to the story, they came to St. Thomas, and as the circus parade was crossing the railway track a Michigan Central engine disputed the right-of-way with Jumbo—or Jumbo with the engine—and the engine came off victor; Jumbo was killed. A year or so ago the paper stated that Jumbo's mate, travelling with the circus through all the intervening years, came back again to St. Thomas. As they passed this place where Jumbo was killed this female elephant fell on her knees and belled piteously, crying for her mate that she had lost more than forty years before.

Whether that is strictly true or not, I do not know, but it was in the newspapers—but there are many things in the newspapers that are not true!

That is a simple illustration to show you how these great creatures are said to live for many hundreds of years, and, of course, they have no family record written in a book, so that it is a little difficult to determine their age. The exact age of only such as are born in captivity may be known. And it is known that the elephant, the ostrich, the tortoise, and other creatures, live to a great age.

A little while ago the newspapers were full of a report of a minister's horse somewhere in the United States that had served the minister for fifty years—at least, it was fifty-one years old. The papers of a continent discussed this very old horse. When a lady celebrates her fiftieth birthday the newspapers had better not write editorials on that phenomenon!—for the simple reason that a lady is not very old at fifty; by that time she is only becoming mature.

There are some other things that live but a day. We speak of certain forms of insect life that have lived their day in twenty-four hours. They are living things. You could not give them life. No human could create that life. There is a vast difference between the living and the non-living, even in the tiniest creature; but its life is of such a quality that even when twenty-four hours have passed it has reached its end, for it is a natural thing for it then to come to an end.

So, ordinarily, if a man owns a horse fifteen years old, he says, "Poor old thing; it ought to be taken out and shot. It is almost cruel to drive it." At that age a young lady is still young! There is a difference in the quality of the life, not merely in the length of duration, but there is something in the life itself that issues in death at the end of a short period, or in a longer period, as the case may be.

The life that God gives is of a nature that time has no effect on at all. It is eternal, it is the same kind of life that is in God.

Let us look at *another figure* akin to this. The believer is said to be "born again". We have it in this third chapter: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." What does that mean? we are born again", we are begotten—I quoted it to you: "Hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." There is another passage in Peter: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

In the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians there is a promise to the effect that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. That has to do with our carnal natures, our fleshly natures; they are born mortal and corruptible, as we all know. When life departs the body begins to decompose and disintegrate; it becomes corrupt in a very short time. But the time is coming when even this mortal flesh is to put on immortality, it is to lose its mortal nature, so that it shall be no longer subject to death. This flesh that has in it the seed of corruption is to put on incorruption, so that we shall have bodies fashioned like unto the glorious body of



our Lord, "according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Meanwhile, *our spiritual natures have already received that incorruptible principle*, and we have been quickened from the death of sin, and, begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible—what is that seed? It is described as "the word of God", and its special characteristic is that it "liveth and abideth for ever." So that when we receive the word of God, and our dead natures are quickened thereby, there is imparted to us a principle of eternity, of incorruption; we are made alive forevermore.

Jesus Christ referred to that in that almost paradoxical utterance when He said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." By which He did not mean that we should not die as to our bodies, but, believing in Him, our spirits would be quickened into newness of life, and we should have the very life of God in us, and should never die. So the figure of the new birth, and, growing out of that, the impartation of life by means of the quickening seed, a principle of incorruption, argues precisely the same thing, that the life that is in us is eternal.

Carrying that figure of a life a little farther, not to speak of relationship, but the life-principle imparted to us at conversion, you have *the further figure of a body*: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." He "gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

You will recall in that great chapter in first Corinthians the Apostle Paul uses that figure of a body and its many members to illustrate the varied character of the ministry of the many members of the body of Christ. Thus this life that is in us is ours because we are severally members of the body of Christ.

What does that mean? Any child can tell you. There is exactly the same kind of life in your little finger as in your head. Life beats from the head. I believe if we understood our bodies better than we do we should find many illustrations, and find that the figure there employed by the Holy Spirit is marvelously suggestive.

I noticed to-day an account of a lecture delivered by a very eminent physician, telling of the result of seventeen years of painstaking research in one particular direction. He had spent seventeen years endeavouring to discover the cause of gastric ulcer, that horrible thing that attacks the human stomach. Who would ever suppose that the seat of that trouble was in the brain? But this physician says it is, that if you want to find out, you will discover the cause of that most terrible trouble is in his head.

I was boarding some years ago in a house where there was a child called Nellie, a little girl of eight or nine years of age. One day, pointing to her stomach, she said, "Mamma, I have such an awful pain in my brains!" Perhaps she was not far wrong, after all!

If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. The Holy Ghost never uses a figure erroneously, and when the Bible tells us that we are members of the body of Christ we have the word of Him Who

made us,—and He knows how we are made. He needs no physician to tell Him. The life that is in every member of that body is first of all in Him Who is our exalted Head.

How secure that makes us! We can be sure of good health by and by. We can be sure that spiritually from that Fountain of life we shall receive such supplies that everything that is alien to His holy nature will be expelled from us, and we shall ultimately be without fault before the throne of God.

There is a beautiful illustration of this principle in the New Testament. I think I will tell you a horrible thing, so that you will not go to sleep! Some years ago I was in Chicago, twenty-five or more years ago, staying in a certain place, and they insisted upon showing me the sights of the city, among other things, upon my going to the stockyards! I did not want to go, for there is not a bit of the butcher in me, but they insisted on my going. Others were going, and so I went. A good many lessons could be learned even in that dreadful place where one saw blood flowing in rivers, literally rivers of it. I saw a picture of the devil I have never forgotten. In a pit a negro as black as ebony, stripped to the waist, stood, and men were driving a stream of hogs into the door, and he was wrapping a chain around their legs, which were hooked on to a revolving disk, and were drawn up—I will not horrify you by a picture of what followed. But over in another part of the building sheep were being similarly treated. I covered my eyes, and one of the men with us almost fainted. I said to an attendant, "What about the lambs?" He said, "They die instantly. These coarse creatures will live, even after their throats are cut; but the lambs die instantly." "How is that?" I enquired. "They are so sensitive they die from shock."

That is horrible, I know, but I could not help thinking of it when I read the scripture which says, "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead." "Already dead"! The two thieves were still living, but so that the bodies might not remain on the crosses over the Sabbath the soldiers came to break their legs and hasten their death. They brake the legs of the two thieves, but "when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs . . . that the scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broken." And when Jesus rose from the dead He rose with a perfect body; no member of His body was missing. His blood had been shed, but with that perfect body He ascended into the Father's presence.

And He gives His angels "charge concerning us". Sometimes we have a hard time of it, have we not? We may know something about the nails and the spear, but the devil cannot break our legs. He cannot dismember the body of Jesus Christ. We are joined in an indissoluble union with Him, and when at last the number of His elect is accomplished He will say before the throne, as He did in that prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost."

Let us look at another figure: "Begotten again." *We are made children of God*—for how long? A woman asked me to call to see her, a woman who had professed conversion in our services when I was in

Hamilton, and she said, "Suppose I am not baptized, what will be the result? What effect will that have upon my salvation?" Just then her little girl ran in, and then ran out again. I said, "That is your little girl?" "Yes." "Suppose you were to call her in, and ask her to run down to the store for you on an errand, and suppose she were to say, 'No, mamma, I will not go. I am going to play'—and she were to run away and shut the door after her, and utterly ignore your command? Whose child would she be?" Whose child would she be?" said the woman, "she would be my child, of course." I said, "Of course. She sustains a relationship to you that she can never by any possibility sustain to anybody else. She is your child." "I see that", she said. "Well, what would you do? Would you shut the door and say, 'You may stay away for ever'." "Oh", said she, "you know I would not do that; she is my child." "She would still be your child, but what sort of child would she be?" "She would be a very naughty child." "And," I said, "you will be a very naughty child if you do not do what God tells you to do."

When we are once brought into that filial relationship to God by reason of the fact that we have been begotten again by the power of the divine life, we become the very children of God, and the life of God is in us as the life of the father is in the child. We are children of God, and, being so, it is inconceivable that we could ever be anybody else's children. You remember how our Lord said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Again He said to others, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers." That does not apply to those who have been begotten again by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. They are made of a different nature; they have a different life in them from those who are in a state of nature.

Carry that figure a little farther, and think of the passages in the Book which refer to *the believer as a plant*: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." There are some people who imagine that Christians are annuals, that they have to be planted again and again and again. I believe they are perennials. I believe they live on and on.

I conducted evangelistic meetings in a certain town many years ago, and at the close of one of the services a man professed conversion. The next night he prayed like an old-fashioned Methodist. I turned to a man of the church and said, "That is a most amazing thing. He professed conversion last night, and to-night he prays like a patriarch." "Oh," said he, "that is about the thirteenth time he has been converted." I was a Pastor in a little village years ago, in which were a man and his wife who "got religion" alternately. It was said in the village that they never both had religion at the same time: when he had it, she could not stand it; and when she "got it", he could not. They took it in turns, and were pious annuals.

We are not to measure doctrines of Scripture by such observations as that. We are to come to the plain teaching of the Word of God. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall

flourish in the courts of our God: They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." When the Lord, the heavenly Father, plants a plant it is pretty much of a perennial; it will last for ever. Such as are not planted by Him will be plucked up.

Then you have the fifteenth chapter of John, the branch in the vine: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." There are branches that seem to be in Him. You have a parallel there to the seed that springs up, and then withers away. The branch was never in Him sufficiently to draw life from Him. It never became part of the True Vine, and because it was not properly grafted in it is taken away, and men cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

There is another figure: *our Lord is the divine Bridegroom*. Believers are the bride. We are being prepared for the wedding, for the marriage. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so the Lord is going to rejoice over us. I read in the Book that "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." Fortunately, I have never had the unhappy experience of coming to perform a marriage ceremony when either party was absent; but I have read of it. And I cannot conceive of the possibility of our glorious Bridegroom being defeated. When all heaven is ready, and when it shall be said, "The marriage of the Lamb is come", the complement of it will be, "And his wife hath made herself ready." The bride will be there, and the Bridegroom will never be charged in the court of heaven with breach of promise. He will keep His word to His bride.

There are other figures, but I will content myself with one: We, as "living stones" are built up *an holy temple* unto the Lord. We all have our place, according to the divine plan, in the divine purpose. You remember how Solomon's temple was built? "And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." You have noticed one of these skyscrapers, the Bank of Commerce or the Royal York Hotel, for instance, in course of construction? One can see them take those enormous steel girders that are brought there; they are lifted by great cranes and swung into place. - When at last the girder swings along and comes where it ought to be there are several holes in this and in that, and as they come together the bolts are put through. It was all made ready before it was "brought thither." There was not a beam too much. It was all fashioned and perfected, and put together, and it was a perfect house.

The great Architect of this world is building a spiritual temple. Christ is the Foundation, and every stone in that building is related to that Foundation. Each one has his or her particular place, and when we are swung into place, and put upon that Foundation, and become a part of that living wall, I do not believe that all the powers of hell can break down that wall, or take one of those living stones from that Foundation. We shall be one in Christ Jesus, and by and by when it is finished we shall be like Zerubbabel, crying, "Grace, grace unto it."

**Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf**

Vol. 6 No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 18 May 3rd, 1931  
SECOND QUARTER.**JACOB'S FUNERAL.**

Lesson Text: Genesis, chapter 50.

Golden Text: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (v. 20).

**I. THE MOURNING FOR JACOB, (vs. 1-3);**

"And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him", (v. 1). Jacob had been privileged to see many days, (47:28). Of him it might be said, with some reason, that he had finished his course, though his days were not as many as those of his father, (35:28); yet at his going there is sorrow. It is but natural that there should be mourning for the loved one gone before, even when there is hope of a blessed re-union on the other shore. We miss the loving presence, the tender touch, the kindly word, and at times a spirit akin to homesickness steals over us. The parting is not easy: it touches the innermost chord of the being. But thank God for the comfort which comes from the blessed hope of again meeting the loved one! Eternity for the children of God will be blessed indeed, when the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed, (I Cor. 15:26). We shall meet with our loved ones, never more to part; but, above all, we shall live forever in the presence of our adorable Lord.

Upon Joseph, as the most important member of his family, devolved the duty of arranging for his father's funeral. He "commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father", (v. 2). The process of embalming in ancient Egypt differed greatly from the art now in use, and so efficient was the process that bodies are now in existence which were embalmed thousands of years ago. The process "consisted in infusing a great quantity of resinous substances into the cavities of the body, after the intestines had been removed, and then a regulated degree of heat was applied to dry up the humours as well as decompose the tarry materials which had been previously introduced. Thirty days were allotted for the completion of the process; forty more were spent in anointing it with spices; the body, tanned from this operation, being then washed, was wrapped in numerous folds of linen cloth, the joinings of which were fastened with gum, and then deposited in a wooden chest made in the form of a human figure.

**II. THE BURIAL OF JACOB, (vs. 4-14).**

According to the expressed desire of Jacob, his body was to be buried in Canaan, the land of promise. And Joseph requests permission from Pharaoh to go up to perform this duty. The request is made after the days of mourning are past, and is presented to Pharaoh through members of his house, (v. 4)—custom possibly denying direct communication on such an occasion. The oath sworn to before his father is stated by

Joseph as the reason for burying the body of his parent in Canaan, and is given as an explanation of his request, (v. 5). Pharaoh graciously grants his permission, and directs Joseph to go up and bury his father according as he has made him swear, (v. 6). Note Jacob's remembrance of the covenant blessing in his dying request. Canaan was his land, not Egypt. He desired to be laid beside his fathers; but he had also the remembrance of God's promise in mind, and he died in faith believing in its fulfilment. God's promises are always fulfilled, and rich blessing comes from trusting Him implicitly.

When Joseph went up to bury his father there went up with him a very great company", (vs. 7-9). By the description we visualize an imposing cortege, following Jacob's body to the grave. His name had been changed to Israel, a prince, (32:28), and as a prince he was buried. We see also manifested in this action of the Egyptians the high regard in which Joseph was held by the rulers of Egypt. God gave him power among an alien people, and by His power and wisdom he was enabled so to live as to show forth an exemplary righteous character. At the threshing floor of Atad which is beyond Jordan, probably at the borderland, the Egyptians evidently left the cortege and returned home, after another period of mourning, (v. 10), the sons continuing the journey alone, and performing the last rites according to promise, (vs. 12, 13). So great was the mourning at Atad that the Canaanites took particular notice of it, and gave to the place a name in remembrance of it, (v. 11). After the fulfilment of the duties attending the burial, Joseph and his company returned to Egypt, (v. 12). This event concluded the earthly career of the patriarch; his body was laid in the grave, but his spirit entered the presence of God.

**III. THE FEAR OF THE BRETHREN, (vs. 15-21).**

After the death of their father, conscience again troubled the brethren, and fear took hold of them in relation to their past sin against Joseph. He had treated them graciously; but this they thought was on account of their father's presence and influence. But now that their father was gone, they feared that he would requite them all the evil which they had done unto him, (v. 15). This attitude manifests, in addition to their expectation, their estimate of their just reward. Truly the way of transgressors is hard, (Prov. 13:15). Sooner or later a realization of one's sin is felt, and the consequences of the wrong action must be borne. All sin is contrary to the will of God, and no real satisfaction can be gained thereby. The wages of sin is death, (Rom. 6:23), and one cannot escape the just recompence of one's action. The warning against sin is found throughout Scripture, in the pages of history, and in daily experience.

So greatly were the brethren concerned about the possible consequences of their sin that "they sent a messenger unto Joseph" to seek his forgiveness, reminding him at the same time of the attitude of their father, (vs. 16, 17). Such an action was probably unexpected

on the part of Joseph, and it affected his feelings, for he "wept when they spake unto him". He no doubt thought that his attitude toward them during the years of their residence in Egypt would dismiss any fear of consequences, which might have possessed them; but the remembrance of sin is hard to dismiss from the mind. This particular aspect of sin might quite readily be emphasized. As a further evidence of their deep concern, we are informed that the "brethren also wept and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold we be thy servants", (v. 18). The dreams of Joseph are having an abundant fulfilment, (37:5-11). The reply of Joseph is most gracious and reassuring, (vs. 19-21).

Various lessons may be derived from the incident described in the foregoing verses. The attitude of the brethren may be noted in its manifestation of real humility, and complete surrender to the will of Joseph. Such an attitude is necessary in approaching our heavenly Joseph, if blessing is to be received from Him. The proud self-sufficient spirit goes away empty, and the unsundered will God cannot bless. The attitude of Joseph may also be noted. Typical teaching may be found here in reference to our Lord in the carrying out of the plan of redemption in conjunction with the wrathful and vindictive attitude of men. His enemies nailed Him to the cross, expecting to end His life and mission. But God ordained otherwise. He permitted Himself to be thus abused, and voluntarily gave His life for the sins of the world. It might naturally have been expected that He would have shown great anger against His foes; but instead He exhibited a wonderful spirit of forgiveness, praying, while enduring the agony on the cross, that His enemies might be forgiven, (Luke 23:34), and throughout the ages manifesting the same gracious attitude, (I John 1:9). He is ready to forgive at all times, and He is the One through Whom we receive spiritual nourishment. Explanation may be made of the condition of all those outside of Christ, and of their need of forgiveness.

**IV. THE DEATH OF JOSEPH, (vs. 22-26).**

Several things are related in these closing verses concerning Joseph. First, the fact that he and his father's house continued to reside in Egypt, (v. 22). The time had not yet arrived for them to leave it. Second, his age at death—he lived a hundred and ten years. He was permitted to live as long as his father, although, compared with the ages to-day, it was a good old age. In the third place, we are informed he was privileged to see "Ephraim's children of the third generation", (v. 23), and this must have gladdened his heart. Fourth, there is the remembrance given the brethren of the promise of God concerning their exodus from Egypt, (v. 24). Joseph was not permitted to see the fulfilment of the promise, but he died believing that it would be carried out, and history testifies that he was not deceived. The fifth thing of note is the oath exacted of his brethren by Joseph concerning the carrying of his bones into Canaan, (v. 25), an evidence of his faith.

# The Union Baptist Witness

This page is the Official Publication of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Send all communications to the Office Secretary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

## PASS IT ON.

A tract written by Richard Gibbs entitled, "The Bruised Reed" was given to a boy named Richard Baxter by a tin peddler. Through the reading of the tract Richard Baxter was converted and later wrote, "A Call to the Unconverted". Among the many saved through the Word given in that tract was Philip Doddridge, author of "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul". It was through this means that William Wilberforce was led to Christ. Wilberforce wrote, "A Practical View of Christianity", which touched the heart of Leigh Richmond who wrote, "The Dairyman's Daughter". The latter book had a circulation of four million copies and testified for Christ in over fifty languages.

Could the ministry of the printed testimony be traced, there would doubtless be many such records. "The sower soweth the Word", the Lord of the Harvest giveth the increase.

## THE MISSIONARY BULLETIN.

The April issue of the Missionary Bulletin is being prepared and will shortly be in the mails. Many are finding this a splendid prayer reminder and a means of introducing the Missionary work of the Union to others. Copies are mailed to any address on request. Pray very definitely that the Lord may speak to souls through the Bulletin and that the hands of our missionaries will be strengthened through a greater prayer interest.

"For when He has found you tell others the story,  
How Jesus extended His mercy to you;  
Then point them a way to the regions of glory,  
And pray that your Saviour may bring them there too!  
And pray'r will be answer'd—'twas answer'd for you."

## A SUGGESTION.

Rev. A. E. Dallimore, Pastor of the Sunderland and Cannington Churches, tells us that during his boyhood days it was the practice of many of the Sunday schools in England to have periodic examinations on the lessons and that he is adopting the idea. An examination on the Book of Genesis is to be given as soon as the study is completed. Marks will be awarded for the written examination and liberal marks for the memorizing of specified portions. Certificates and prizes will be given to those obtaining the highest marks. Other examinations will be held at stated periods throughout the study of the whole Bible.

## ANNETTE ST., TORONTO.

The reorganization of the Women's Missionary Society was held on Tuesday evening, April 14th. A fuller report will be given later, but the large attendance and the interest shown promises the be-

ginnings of a Society which will be most helpful to the church. Rev. Alfred J. Lewis and Rev. John Hall brought rousing missionary messages.

## SUFFOLK ST., GUELPH.

A communication received from Mrs. R. H. Clark, Secretary, advises that the Women's Missionary Auxiliary of the Suffolk St. Regular Baptist Church, Guelph, has been dissolved. The church now has a Prayer Circle to be held once a month and missionary givings will go through the church.

## ALTON.

The church at Alton is still maintaining its two weekly prayer meetings and reports increasing attendance and spiritual power. Pastor Fullard states that while difficulties in the work have been felt, a young woman has promised to make public confession of Christ as soon as it is possible for her to attend the church service. Another has expressed her desire for baptism.

The Pastor earnestly requests the prayers of the Union fellowship that the revival blessing for which they have such desire may soon come.

## CHATHAM.

The Chatham Regular Baptist Church recently had a delightful and soul-inspiring visit from Missionary Fiddler and his wife. The wonderful story of these servants of God encouraged the church to pray more earnestly and constantly for the missionaries in Liberia and elsewhere.

The church has recently suffered the loss of one of its beloved members, Mrs. T. V. Challinor, who went to her Heavenly Home on March 27th. It was at this sister's home that the Chatham cause was organized and carried on for some time. She will indeed be sorely missed.

The radio broadcast on Easter Sunday was one of the best and the hymns sung by the Salem Choir of boys and girls greatly appreciated. Many expressed their enjoyment of the Easter message and the broadcasts are growing in popularity. Prayer is requested that they may be fruitful.

## NORTH BAY.

More than one hundred and fifty were interested listeners at an open air meeting held last Thursday evening in North Bay by the members of the Mission under the leadership of Pastor James Gibson. A new interest is being shown and as the fine weather comes, they are looking forward to an aggressive campaign for souls. A Roman Catholic young man recently was attracted to the meetings and is greatly interested.

## BOBCAYGEON.

Pastor Gillion reports that the work on the Galway Road and in Bobcaygeon

is encouraging. The Sunday School at Bobcaygeon is steadily growing in attendance and the members of the church are taking a deeper interest in the work. A number of new homes have been entered and the Word preached.

## WINNIPEG.

The Central Regular Baptist Church, Winnipeg, of which Rev. James McDermid is Pastor is fellowshipping with the Union in prayer and missionary interests. It is to be regretted that a recent note in the "Union Baptist Witness" would leave the impression that the city was without a Regular Baptist testimony. May the Lord greatly bless the Central Church and the Bethany Prayer Group and make a wider ministry possible for both.

## BENEFICIENT, MONTREAL.

The French work carried on at Beneficient under Missionary Dautheny is steadily progressing. New people come on Sunday nights and the place of worship is full to capacity. The Pastor meets with the Roman Catholics in their homes and they attend the cottage prayer meetings where the way of Life is explained and the difference which exists between the teaching of the Roman Catholic church and the Scripture. Sometimes the conferences last until after midnight.

Prayer is asked that the great change of mind which is noticeable among French-Canadians may be followed by their conversion.

## OAKWOOD, TORONTO.

Rev. C. L. Rumball has seen the spirit of the Lord working at Oakwood. Two responded to the invitation on Easter Sunday and two on April 12th.

The Young Women's Missionary Auxiliary recently celebrated their fourth birthday and the whole church gathered to rejoice with them. Many visitors and friends were also present and it was indeed a bright and happy gathering. Miss Green, Office Secretary of the Union, gave a Home Mission talk, and refreshments were served at the close of the meeting.

## COURTLAND.

The work at Courtland is in a healthy condition and the Pastor and people desire to present the claims of Christ to the whole community. On a recent Wednesday, a Hallelujah Prayer Meeting was held and there were more than thirty present. The Pastor spoke on, "How Every Member of the Courtland Baptist Church can Successfully assist the Pastor in the Salvation of Precious Souls in the Community". On Sunday, March 29th, Rev. R. D. Guthrie, completed his third year as Pastor of the church.