

# The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES AND  
IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS  
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c. Per Single Copy.

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

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Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 10. No. 29

TORONTO, DECEMBER 3, 1931

Whole No. 498

## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

WHAT IS THE FIRST-CLASS FARE TO HEAVEN?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 29th, 1931.

(Stenographically Reported)

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven."—Psalms 107:30.

Prayer by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe.

O Lord, Thy name is great, and greatly to be praised. Before Thou hadst brought forth the earth, before Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. A thousand years in Thy sight are as a day. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. Thou workest all things after the counsel of Thine own will. Thou workest, and no man hindereth.

How dare we who are of sinful lips and sinful hearts praise Thee to-night? We would make the words of the hymn our prayer,—

"O for a heart to praise my God,  
A heart from sin set free;  
A heart that's sprinkled with the blood  
So freely shed for me."

No man can call Jesus Christ, Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. How much less can we praise Thee apart from Him, apart from Thy grace! Enable us to praise Thee as we ought. Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, as Thy feeble creation lisps to Thy praise. We thank Thee that Thou art not a God Who is afar off, for though the heavens and the heaven of heavens are not great enough to contain Thee, yet Thou dwellest in the humble and contrite heart. Such, O Lord, are we. Thou art not far from any one of us. We would search after Thee, and find Thee to-night—yea, rather, Thou hast searched after us, and found us. So we rejoice in the God of all understanding, yet Who abides in us. Our faces are not hidden from Thee. Thou waitest to bless us, to bestow upon us the fulness of Thy mercy and grace.

"Centre and soul of every sphere,  
Yet to each loving heart, how near!"

Bring home to our understanding Thy nearness, O Lord.

To those who have been many years in the Christian life, may Thy presence be very real to-night. To those who have but begun, those who have in Thine own appointed way witnessed before the world their oneness with Christ, be near to

them in a special way. Come near, O Lord, to every one of us and bless us while we wait before Thee.

We would remember our missionaries to-night. Put Thine everlasting arms roundabout them as they sail toward that sin-darkened land to proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

Come near to-night, O Lord, unto those who are distressed, and to those in sorrow, those whose hearts are burdened, the tempted ones here, and the tried. Come near, O Lord, to those who are afar from Thee, to those whose eyes have been darkened, who know Thee not. Draw them, O Lord, to Thyself. We thank Thee that Thou hast come near to us in the Cross where there is found plenteous mercy, and grace to cover all our sin.

We thank Thee for the gracious provisions of the gospel, that Thy offer is still open, that whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely; and that him that cometh unto Thee Thou wilt in no wise cast out. We rejoice that the feast has been spread. We thank Thee that Thou dost extend Thine invitation to-night, Come, for all things are now ready. We pray that the Holy Spirit, the divine Messenger, may bring us to Christ, that He may convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. May He draw men to the foot of the Cross. We remember in our own experience that,—

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin."

We beseech Thee, Who art a God of salvation, a seeking God; that Thou wouldst seek men out to-night, and draw them to Thyself where Thou shalt bestow upon them every blessing through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." It is the veriest commonplace to compare the journey of life to a sea voyage. We have it in our hymns, in all the world of poetry; and one must immediately be struck with the aptness of the comparison. What a

great adventure life in its simplest aspect really is! How much of mystery there is about it! How much of mist and of fog! How numerous are the perils to which we are exposed! And how pathless is the sea we traverse! Though millions have gone before, every life has its own peculiarities; and we must live our lives, in a certain sense, separately.

How full of loneliness life is sometimes, like the wide, wide sea! People who have not crossed the ocean, seeing the ships jostling each other in the harbour, may sometimes imagine that the sea is covered with ships. But I have sailed the Atlantic from New York to Europe without ever seeing a ship until we saw land. There are times when we feel as though we were a ship at sea, as though we were the only ship, all alone in the world. Wind and wave beat and batter us. Storm and calm succeed each other. Even the most favoured life is full of complexity and perplexity, and who can be a sufficient guide in these circumstances?

The text I have read to you is part of an inspired description of a sea voyage. There are those who "go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters", and of them it is said: "These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

I shall use the text this evening accommodatingly, taking this figure of the voyage of life, that we may learn something of how we may safely make that voyage, and drop anchor at last in a desired haven, under the guidance of One Who knoweth how to direct us thither.

### I.

Let me remark, then, that WE ARE ALL SEEKING SOME SORT OF HAVEN, WE ARE VOYAGERS ALL. How quickly the days, and the weeks, and the months, and the years slip by! How soon the grey hairs appear! What evidences there are on every hand of the brevity of life! — when "the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern."

We are all on the way, every one of us. "Here we have no continuing city." There is no stopping place, whether we like it or not. We are moving hence. "The place that

now knows us will shortly know us again no more for ever."

Well do I know that that is an aspect of life that receives but little emphasis nowadays. Men are urged to make the best of this life,—sometimes in utter forgetfulness of the life that is to come. But whatever our circumstances, however vigorous our physical frame, however strong our will, we are going on.

I remember a minister, a dear fellow he was, a lovely man personally. Not always did he emphasize the verities of the gospel, I fear; but he was advertised to speak on a certain Sunday evening on, *The Cultivation of the Will*, how to determine to do things, or, at least, an address entitled to that effect. When the congregation assembled, someone had to announce that the preacher was indisposed, and could not be there,—and before the day broke on the morrow his spirit had departed to God Who gave it.

You may exercise your will over some people, but when the grim Monster calls, when Death shall summon us, whatever our wealth, our learning, our strength of character, or force of will, we shall all have to obey him. We may just as well face it, and recognize the fact that life is but a voyage. We cannot go on for ever. We must reach a haven of some sort. There must come an end to this earthly existence. We are sailing on—but sailing whither? To what haven is our ship directed? To what sunny summerland do we believe ourselves to be voyaging? It is not an inadequate description of life as most of us find it. Some of us perhaps have learned to long for some kind of haven, for the stormy wind has blown, and the waves have mounted up to heaven, and again, they have gone down into the depths. Some of us have had a pretty stormy time of it.

There is a kind of sea-sickness that affects people who never go to sea. You have heard the saying that there are two stages to that dread malady? When one is rather ill, he is afraid the ship will go down: a little while later he is rather afraid it will not! Some of you have had experience enough of life to wish you were well out of it. Do not call me a pessimist. Do not say that I look darkly upon life, for I know very well there are seasons of tranquillity. I know there are periods of calm, and pleasure, and real delight. But let us be frank with each other this evening—I am not going to preach a sermon. I shall talk about your experiences,—you have had a stormy time of it, have you not? Sometimes you have said, "I wish the voyage were over. I wish this ship would make port somewhere." You have felt not unlike one who has been tossed upon the deep. It seemed as though the voyage would never end.

Some of you, perhaps, have not been afflicted with homesickness—for alas! your soul is orphaned, and you have as yet no home to go to—if that be your lot, you may be weary of this life and know not where to go.

What a troubled world this is just now! Find me a bit of tranquil water anywhere. Tell me what sea to sail with the expectation of a pleasant voyage. Where can one go to get out of trouble and distress? I wonder if someone is trying to wean us away from things earthly and temporal? I wonder are we being taught in a wholesale fashion to say, as the wise observer said, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" What there may be above

and beyond the sun is another matter, but "under the sun" there are stormy winds, and troubled seas, and weary voyagers who would gladly be out of it all.

That is not an exaggeration, is it? Is that not true to fact to those of you who have had experience of life for a few years? This preacher confesses it to be perfectly true. How often—how often could he have borrowed the Psalmist's saying, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest." Thus in our weaker and wearied moments do we complain. Notwithstanding, all the days of our appointed time must we wait till our change comes.

## II.

TO WHAT HAVEN, THEN, ARE WE SAILING? This text speaks of a "desired" haven, desired because desirable. It intimates that somebody has set sail with definite purpose, and is not sailing over uncharted seas without compass or pilot, but is sailing a definite course, with a definite haven in view, and is sailing thitherward because it is a land greatly to be desired.

Where can you find a desirable haven? To what land will you emigrate? Where would you rather live than in Canada? I suppose there was a time in early youth when most of us dreamed of an earthly paradise. We saw here and there the work of the grim Reaper, and we observed that old people died, and that they were passing on to some other land, but as for ourselves we had youth on our side, and life was full of happiness and of pleasant things, and we felt as though we could enjoy an earthly paradise. We dreamed of conditions of life which would be ideal, in which we should be perfectly happy. The visions we saw satisfied, for the time, our youthful imaginations.

I heard a missionary say, who had been long years in India under the scorching sun, when he came home to Canada in early June, that as he travelled through the country and saw verdure and beauty everywhere, the lambs gambolling in the fields, and all nature springing forth into newness of life, he remarked to someone, "It may be that heaven will be better than this, but for the moment this is good enough for me."

Yes; we can say that in June. Anybody in good health and reasonably comfortable circumstances can say that in June. What is rarer than a day in June? But can you say it in December? Can you sing about it in January? Are you still of the same mind when March winds pierce you through? Is it not true that we are soon disillusioned? I have seen people of great wealth lose all interest in life. I have seen people of great learning who found it very hard to learn the way to heaven, but easy to learn the barrenness and bitterness of earth. If we will be frank, we shall admit that we had not gone very far until we were forced to the conclusion that our dream of paradise could never be realized here. There are too many graves in this old hollow earth. There are too many broken pillars, too many disrupted families, too many blasted lives, too many ruined fortunes, too much wreck and ruin all about us, to find a paradise on earth. Is not that true? Must we not all say, "If I am to find my way to a haven of rest, it will have to be somewhere other than on earth. There is no haven to be desired here that can meet the longings of my immortal spirit."

Very well, then, let us emigrate, shall we? Let us set sail for another country.

If that be so, let us find out to what country we should sail. What sort of haven would you desire? What would fulfil your ideal? How many people would you take with you? How many would you gladly leave behind? How much baggage would you carry? And how much would you label, "Not wanted"—and forget even to put it in the hold? Life would have to be vastly different from this if we would realize our ideal.

I will tell you somebody I should like to leave behind. He is called in the Scripture "the old man". I do not see any possibility of getting to heaven if the "old man" is to be there. I do not see any possibility of having a heaven where he is. Years ago I had a man in my church who, before the days of tree-sitting competitions, used to climb up into the miff-tree—and I used to leave him there, because I soon learned that there was no use bringing him a step-ladder to help him down from one, for he would only use it to climb another. I thought it better to leave him to nurse the ills he had than acquaint himself with others that he knew not of. But he was a nice man, and had a splendid wife. One day I talked the matter over with her, at her suggestion. I said, "Suppose you and your husband take your church letters and go somewhere else and be happy?" She shook her head and said, "I fear Pastor, it would be as Dr. So-and-So used to say (naming my predecessor) we should take our miserable selves with us." Alas! That is the chief trouble with all of us.

You have heard of the Quaker who was met by a man with a pack on his back, looking for a home? The traveller came to the crest of a hill, and looked down into the valley where a village was snugly nestled. He stopped the Quaker and said, "Can you tell me what sort of people live down in the village?" The Quaker replied, "Friend, what sort of people did thee leave behind?" "They were a bad lot. They did not tell the truth; they quarrelled with each other. I left them because I could not get on with them." "Yes," said the Quaker, "and thee will find the same kind of people down yonder in the village to which thou art going."

What is your greatest trouble in life? "My circumstances." No; they are not! "Some people who are hard to live with"—a husband or a wife. "It is the man down in the office. He is an utterly unreasonable man. I have no peace in my life. If I could get away from these people, all would be well." No; it would not. Your chief trouble is in your own breast—and so is mine.

The land to which we are going must be a land where the "old man" will never be known. It must be

"A land upon whose blissful shore  
There rests no shadow, falls no stain."

It must be a sinless land. That is the kind of haven we all need. Circumstances may be difficult for you, people about you may harry you, and you may have just cause for complaint against many; but even if all these adjustments could be made, the root-cause of all your trouble to-day is the sin in your own life; and there is no haven for any of us unless some way be found by which that can be eliminated, and the "old man" left behind.

I read of a city of which it is said, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." That is the city I should like to live in, where there is no defile-

ment, where sin never comes. But we shall not find it upon earth. Of that you are as certain as I.

But that is not all. Even were we freed from these moral distempers, even if we were so purified that we might consort with angels, and find ourselves able to join in their songs of praise without discord—even then we should need something more than that, for while a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, he cannot very well get along without some of them. To read of some great men, one would think they never ate breakfast! One would suppose they were so different from ordinary mortals that they need only the food of the gods. But as a matter of fact, these matters of which Mr. Whitcombe read to you this evening, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-withal shall we be clothed?" while they are not the all-important matters, they are not wholly insignificant. While we are in this flesh, we shall have to give some consideration to these things.

Many people have emigrated from one country to another in order to better their condition. Thus Abraham turned aside and went down into Egypt. So, at a later day, did Jacob send his sons into Egypt because he had heard there was corn there. At a still later period Naomi, with her husband, emigrated to Moab's land because in Bethlehem, the house of bread, a famine prevailed. She went to a far and strange country in the hope of finding easier conditions of life.

How many people have left Europe to come to Canada or the United States, dreaming almost of picking up gold in the streets? One might suppose, to hear some people talk across the sea, that you could buy the best of motor cars in one of these red stores where they sell things for five and ten cents! From their extravagant view of this hemisphere's abundant wealth it might be supposed that everybody here were wealthy, and poverty were unknown. It is true that some people who have crossed the sea, for their want have found wealth. Many have come to this land, and made a new beginning. But inevitably at last they too have had to go, for the shadow waits for every one of us.

Is there a haven of which it is said, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat"? Is there a land where there are no climatic difficulties, where the plain and the valley are as salubrious as the hills, where everlasting health obtains, where there are no cemeteries, and no breaking hearts?

Tell me of a haven where I can get rid of all these earthly limitations, so that I can find at last the satisfaction for which my soul longs. I want a salvation that is good for the mind, so that my mind can find exercise in great matters through all eternity. I want something that satisfies the heart, that satisfies spirit, soul, and body, the whole man. Let us set sail for such a desirable haven where we shall all be comfortable and happy at last.

It is not on the American continent, nor in Australia, nor Europe, nor Asia, nor Africa. We shall have to leave this planet and sail to another world to find a haven like that.

Then, my dear friends, we do not live in things. We live in our affections, if we live at all. Home is not the house you live in. It is not the furniture you use; it is not the clothes you wear. Home consists in association with kindred spirits whom you love. If you

can find a place like that anywhere, that is the nearest thing to heaven that you will find on earth.

But that does not last. The chair is soon vacant. Oh dear, how well do I know it! And how well do you know it! Why are we so foolish as to live as though we were going to stay here for ever? We think of those whom we have loved and lost. We sometimes sing,—

"One army of the living God,  
To His command we bow;  
Part of His host hath crossed the flood,  
And part is crossing now."

And they are crossing. Others may cross to-night. Shall we see them again? Can you tell me of a haven where Death never comes, where disease is unknown, from whose golden shore sorrow is for ever banished, where there is no night, no shadows, no shortening day, no deepening night, where a tender hand will somehow, at some time, wipe away all tears from our eyes?

I should like to find a place like that somewhere, would you not? Would you not like to set sail for it?

There is such a haven. There is such a land beyond. There is a place where everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers. Did you ever hear of such a city, a city in which there are no cemeteries, a city in which there are no hospitals, a city in which there are no orphan asylums, a city in which there are no sighs, no groans, no pain, no tears? I say to you again, let us seek that city. That is the desired haven! God help us to set our faces toward it.

### III.

I wonder could I tell you in a few words A LITTLE ABOUT THE VOYAGERS? Here are some who go down to the sea in ships, and who do business in great waters. What a world of business this is! A few weeks ago there was a political earthquake in Great Britain. Old party alignments were obliterated, perhaps never to be rediscovered; and the whole kingdom was turned upside-down. New standards were set up; new philosophies were adopted; new sets of opinions, once objectionable, are now lauded to the skies. What was it all about? Just a new way of doing business. There was not a word in it all about the vanity of earthly things. It was simply a plan to devise new ships to do business in great waters, new ways of recapturing the world's trade in order to do more business.

This is Sunday. Tomorrow will be a business day, and even in hard times in what a whirl this city will be found! Thousands, and tens of thousands, will be running hither and thither, trying to make money, to do a little business to keep body and soul together, to live in this dreary land a little longer. Men are building banks that challenge the clouds,—towering buildings everywhere. But they are all "under the sun", and there is nothing of abiding value in Time. In but a moment they may pass, and we shall be left empty-handed. It is not worth while going down to the sea in ships, merely to do business in great waters.

Do not misunderstand me. Of course, I know these things are necessary. Of course, I know, as I intimated just now, that we must deal with these mundane affairs. It is perfectly legitimate that we should, so long as we

keep them in right relation, and look for a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It is right enough, if we do not lose our perspective, and spend all our energies on the things of Time, to the utter neglect of Eternity; if we do not set our affections on things of the earth rather than on things above.

But even those who go down to the sea in ships soon find themselves in the storm. What a picture that is of the sea of life in general: in the face of all their difficulties, which threaten to engulf them, men "reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man." Did you ever see a land-lubber trying to walk the deck of a ship in the storm—reeling "to and fro, and staggering like a drunken man"; their soul melted within them, and they are at their wit's end.

I wish I could find a man at his wit's end to-night, some man who says, "I am out on the storm-swept sea, and I do not know which way to turn." Occasionally, I say, there are quiet hours at sea, not many of them—for soon the storm comes again. Is that a description of your case? Have you plumbed the depths? Have you found out how vain a thing this world is?

#### IV.

IF SO, I MUST TELL YOU OF A SHIP AND A PILOT THAT ARE BOUND FOR THIS MUCH DESIRED HAVEN.

Our missionaries will have no difficulty in getting from this country to England. There are regular liners plying back and forth, and they could have gone almost any time. But when they get to England, and want to sail for Liberia, they will have to take a smaller ship that will call at many of the ports down the coast. There is no liner going to that far off country. But I am here to tell you that there is a liner that is guaranteed to transport all who desire to go from this sorrow-stricken world to that desired haven, and that there is a Pilot who never lost a passenger. There is a heavenbound ship. That is what salvation is. Dropping the metaphor, I am here to tell you that God has provided a way whereby immortal spirits may be transported from this life into a world beyond in perfect safety, without any possibility of loss by the way: "He bringeth them unto their desired haven." Are you glad of that (chorus of hallelujahs)?

Once when crossing to England, we reached the Mersey near Liverpool one day before the sun was down. As everybody does, we had packed up all our traps, and everyone was ready for landing. The heavy pieces of baggage were out on the deck ready to go down the gang-plank. We were coming up the river, and stopped for a few moments to let the pilot on. He was soon on the bridge, and within five minutes I heard the engines stop. The ship dropped anchor, and inside of fifteen minutes the stewards were going around saying, "We are not landing to-night, sir; everybody back to their staterooms." I asked my room-steward what the trouble was. He said, "It is Old Cautious." "What do you mean?" I enquired, "could we not have got in?" "Sure. The captain could have taken us in. But Old Cautious will run no risks. He is so careful that he will not face the possibility of trouble. We could have got in before the tide was too low—but he would not have it." "What sort of pilot is he?" I then enquired. (The ship hands were going home, and were rather irritated because they had expected to land that night.) "What is his record?" "His record is all right. He never lost a ship. He could not! He never

got a ship into trouble in his life. He will not get anywhere near trouble. Old Cautious is all right." I said, "I am glad he is on the bridge. I will wait until morning."

You and I have run on to so many sand-bars, and have narrowly escaped destruction so many times, that it is a marvel of mercy we are here to-night. It is a wonder that we are not in some other haven than a desired haven. It is only the mercy of God that has spared us. It would be a good thing to have a safe Pilot to take us in.

I wish you would have my Pilot. I wish I could see Him taking command of your soul-ship. I wish I could know that before you leave this place to-night the helm were in His hand. No reefs or rocks can trouble you then when Jesus has taken command. Do not make any mistake, however. Even if you become a Christian you may have troubled seas. I do not know that a Christian enjoys a funeral any more than anybody else. A Christian mother is anxious about her children when they are ill. She is full of trouble if anything threatens them. We are mortal. We are human. Sometimes the stormy winds will blow, and even as Christians we shall have a stormy time of it. We read in the Book of a time when Jesus Christ was on board and the disciples said, "Carest thou not that we perish?"

I knew an old man once who was rather a melancholy brother, and who found his only pleasure in being melancholy. You have known some people like that. But he was sound in the faith, and I think his gloom was partly to be attributed to his physical condition; he was a dyspeptic of some sort. But he knew the Lord, and although he did not show it in his face, I think he rejoiced in Him. Somebody went to him for advice about his soul's salvation; he had believed in Christ, but did not now know whether he was saved or not: "I have so much trouble, so much difficulty in my business", said he, "and my children cause me trouble. Even this old body of mine troubles me; and I have wondered, if I am a Christian, if I should not be free from all these things." This old brother said, "Did you ever cross the sea?" "Yes." "Did you have a good passage?" "No; a dreadful passage." "What was the matter with you?" "Well, it was terribly stormy." "Did you get off the ship?" "Oh, no; I had to stay on." "You had your ups and downs?" "Yes, I did." "But", he said, "you did not have your ins and outs, did you?"

The old man was a good theologian. Though there were storms, he was in the ship, and was perfectly safe—although not as comfortable as if the sea were calm.

Some people are more troubled by storms than others. I have in mind a stormy passage. I like a storm at sea. I saw myself described once in a certain city, I think it was by the Ottawa press, as "the stormy petrel". I said, "I am not much of a naturalist, but I will find out about that bird." I studied it, and found out its habits. I discovered that the petrel had nothing to do with making the storm, but it is unlike other birds in this, that when a storm comes it stays out in the storm and does not run for cover. Then I said to myself, "I do not care if they call me a stormy petrel. I like a storm at sea. I think it is glorious."

The one to which I refer was when I was crossing on the *Mauritania*. I climbed to the ninth deck, right under the captain's bridge. For three days we pitched, and for three days we rolled. While we were in the pitching process I was under the captain's bridge watching that mighty ship go down into the trough of the seas and then

mount up again. But at last we nosed into a wave, and although I was on the boat deck, the water swept that deck, and I was drenched to the skin. I kept the hat that got that drenching, with the mark of the salt water upon it, for some years. As I shook myself free of water, I looked up at the bridge. There, was a man walking back and forth—not a bit troubled. The ship could pitch as much as it liked. I had sea legs, and as long as the captain was as calm as that I did not need to worry. I went down and changed my clothes—and went out for more of it.

Turn your eyes toward the Captain. "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." If you are a Christian all will be right. By and by we shall reach the heavenly shore.

Would you like to know the fare? How much does it cost? I read of one prophet called Jonah who went down and found a ship of Tarshish—and paid his fare. Somehow or another people always have money enough to pay their fare to run away from God—and if you have not, the devil will provide it for you. Jonah paid his fare. I have known many people come to this country whose passage had been assisted, partly paid by the government; then they had to repay it. There are many people who would like God to partly pay their way to heaven. They say, "I should like to have a little hand in it myself." But you cannot do it that way.

What is the price? Nothing at all. The name of the ship is "Grace". The ticket is marked, "Without money, and without price." You get a ticket for nothing if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The wonderful thing about it is that there is no difference between the price of first-class and third-class.

I remember before the days of Church Union in Canada I met a friend who was a Methodist, a real Christian. He said, "How are you? I am glad to see you. I have a warm spot in my heart for you Baptists. After all, it does not make any difference whether we are Baptist, or Methodist, or Anglican, or Presbyterian. We are all going the same way, are we not?" I said, "I hope we are. All the cars in one train, pulled by one engine, are going the same way, but there are first, second, and third-class carriages. If you travel third-class, that is your choice; but I am going first-class."

You have to pay no more to get all that God has provided for you than for just a little of it. Why do you want to travel to heaven third-class? Why not prove the height, and length, and breadth, and depth of the love of God, and by faith appropriate His boundless grace, and live in the luxury which His love would provide us while we sail on the stormy seas? I have no objection to that kind of luxury. It is hard enough to go to sea, and I should like to have the largest measure of comfort consistent with a stormy passage. You will get the storm—why not get all God has for you, to help you through it?

And when we get off the ship yonder we shall find that the "old man" has jumped overboard, or, at all events, has disappeared. He will never be given a "landing ticket". He will not be there. But our Pilot will be there. We shall awake in His likeness, and we shall be satisfied. Having left behind us every element of life that would mar the perfection of our joy, we shall come at last to the desired haven.

When the ship is at the dock, and most of the passengers have got on board, and the time for departure has come, at last you hear the cry up and down the deck,

"All ashore! All ashore! Visitors, all ashore." And when all the passengers are aboard, and all the visitors are ashore, the gang-plank is withdrawn, the ship is loosed from her mooring, and she sets her prow toward the open sea.

There comes a time in every man's life when the Pilot, for the last time, bids men come aboard. So with Noah: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." They all went in, and the Captain Himself lifted the gang-plank: "And the Lord shut him in." They went safely through the storm, while others perished.

Shall we come aboard this evening? I want to read a prayer for you. Please do not look at it. Please do not open your book until I tell you where it is. I want you, if you will, by God's grace, to pray this prayer for yourselves:

"Jesus, Saviour, pilot me,  
Over life's tempestuous sea;  
Unknown waves before me roll,  
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;  
Chart and compass come from Thee:  
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me!

"As a mother stills her child,  
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;  
Boisterous waves obey Thy will  
When Thou say'st to them, 'Be still'  
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,  
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me!

"When at last I near the shore,  
And the fearful breakers roar  
'Twixt me and the peaceful rest,—  
Then, while leaning on Thy breast,  
May I hear Thee say to me,  
'Fear not! I will pilot thee!'"

### THE BURNING BUSH.

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

*Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
Thursday Evening, November 26th, 1931.*

*Sixth in a Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on Biblical  
Theology which are included in the Curriculum of  
Toronto Baptist Seminary.*

(Stenographically Reported)

This evening we are to make a hurried survey of the scriptures contained within the third to the sixth chapters of Exodus. Moses, as you will remember, received a commission from the Lord to deliver his people, long before this, but when he began the task of delivering them, he sought first to avenge an Israelite, and in doing so, he slew an Egyptian; later he endeavoured to pacify two Israelites who were contending with each other. The New Testament sums the matter up by saying, "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not". On the contrary, they taunted him with having slain the Egyptian, and when Moses knew that the matter was known, he fled into the wilderness.

It is often so, that those who are commissioned of the Lord to do any particular task will find their chief difficulties with those whom they are sent to help.

There is in that a very useful lesson for all of us who would prepare for the service of the Lord. Moses was not, at this time, a young man, as age is rated now at all events. Nor was he a man without training and discipline, for he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds". Notwithstanding, the Lord providentially sent him back into the wilderness for forty years, to take a post graduate course, in order that he might be fitted for the Lord's service.

I hope none of you will think it is easy to do God's work, that it makes but little demand upon anyone's mental and physical, not to say, spiritual resources. It is a very difficult task, and only those who by some means are thoroughly trained will prove to be effective workmen in the hand of the Lord. Moses took rather a long course.

One of our students left the Seminary a little while ago, because we extended the course to four years, although he had the option of three. I wonder what you would do if it were extended to ten times four—and that for one who had already received all the training which the schools of the day could give him? Surely it ought to humble us, and teach us that it is no light matter to be called into the service of the Lord, and that His service is deserving of the very best that is in us, and the very best that may, by training, be brought out of us.

At last Moses comes, in the prosecution of his daily task, to the bush which he had seen a thousand times as he led his flock; but he found it on this occasion ablaze with glory.

You must not suppose that all the lessons which God would teach us are to be learned from books. Books are most valuable, but I have known not a few men thoroughly instructed in that respect, who were utterly useless because they were so far removed from the ordinary affairs of life that they had not learned to make application of their principles to everyday affairs. We may learn from the commonplace. Every bush may burn with fire. While we are about the daily task we may receive some of the greatest communications which God can make known to His people.

In the course of your studies you students will come upon the sayings of a great many irreverent investigators. There are those who boast of their ability to ask questions. They are fond of saying that it is our right to enquire into everything. They would leave no place whatever for the exercise of faith. They call themselves rationalists, and will believe nothing that is not proved; and in order to prove the matters which come under their observation they sometimes treat the most sacred things with the utmost irreverence. Remember that Moses was cautioned to remove his shoes from his feet, to "draw not nigh hither". He was told that the place whereon he stood was holy ground.

Even when we have had a long experience of life, when we have walked long with God, we must ever remember that in the presence of God, and in respect to His communications, we are always as little children. We must behave ourselves with becoming reverence in the divine presence.

Here the Lord reminds Moses of His covenant with His people. Please keep that word in mind. We used to hear something of "covenant theology", of a God Whose

ways were ordered by the plans of His own making, Who sees the end from the beginning. You will come upon a word in your theological studies, a very interesting word, teleology, the doctrine of design and purpose. God is a God of plan and purpose. Here he tells Moses that He is in covenant with His people, and that He is about to execute the terms of that covenant.

You need yield nothing to science. You may well stand upon your rights as theologians, for theology is the greatest of all sciences; and your business is to understand, and then to apply, the great principles which underlie, and which operate in, the divine government. You will find plenty of room for the exercise of all your reason, and for the assumption of what is called "the scientific attitude", in your examination of the things of God. Theology is not a science to be treated lightly by persons who have ceased to think, and by little children who have not yet begun. It is a man's task, and requires the very best of which anyone of us may be capable.

You will observe that in this matter human nature manifests itself in Moses' response to the divine commission. Sometimes we think of great characters like Moses, and David, and Paul, and Elijah, and of others who have lived since their day, as though they were not men of like passions as ourselves. They had the same human nature as you and I have; they raised the same objections to the divine proposals that we naturally raise. When the Lord told Moses of His plan, immediately to begin the execution of His eternal purpose in respect to His people Israel, Moses did exactly what Peter did. When Peter went up to the housetop to pray, and God gave him the vision of the sheet filled with all manner of unclean things, and commanded him to rise, slay, and eat, Peter said, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean."

Every one of God's servants has been ready in the beginning with his, "Not so, Lord." We heard something of that principle in the lives of our missionaries Tuesday evening, as they told of the Lord's speaking to them, and making known to them through the teaching of His Word, and the goings of God on their own spirits, that He wanted them to go and preach the gospel. They did not say so in so many words, but in the beginning they said, "Not so Lord." I suppose we have all been foolish enough to raise some objection to the fulfilment of God's purposes through us.

Moses was no exception. He was a very modest and humble man, and said, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" But the Lord promised His presence.

Then we have here a very important communication. God had been known by several names in the Old Testament. We must remember that Genesis must have been written at a date subsequent to the events there recorded, as was also Exodus. God had been known by the name Jehovah. The name occurs in Genesis as well as in Exodus. But it had not been used as a proper name. Perhaps it might have been mistaken for a descriptive adjective, descriptive of God. Now He assumes that name, and takes it to Himself as His name, the name by which He will be known for ever, Jehovah: "I am that I am"; the self-existent One, the One Who is alone existent, the centre and source of all life, Jehovah—"I am".

Once more let me suggest to you that the theory that anywhere in the Pentateuch God is conceived of by His people, or is ever represented by any distinctively divine revelation, as a God Whose interest, and power, and grace, are restricted to a particular people, finds no support in the Word of God. He is everybody's God. In the Pentateuch, just as truly as in the later portion of the Old Testament, and as He shines in full-orbed effulgence in the New Testament, "the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him".

That is the purpose of this revelation to Moses, and, in effect, to Pharaoh. He said, "Go and tell him that you come in the name of the only God"—his, as well as Moses'. But that is to be communicated to Israel first: "And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

It is just as necessary that we should know the name of God as that the unbelieving world should know it. Our human nature, even as Christians, is a very stubborn thing; and grace has much to do to discipline it, and to mould it and fashion it to the divine purpose. Not Moses only, but the people of God are full of objections to the carrying out of God's plan in their behalf. You, as ministers and missionaries in the home land and in the regions beyond, will often find a great deal of comfort by reading these ancient records of how Jehovah, as Professor and Teacher, had to train both Moses and His people before they were ready to carry out His plan.

Moses then went with full knowledge of the difficulties he was to encounter in respect to Pharaoh, for he was told that Pharaoh would not respond to the appeal.

I do not condemn mechanical means. I use them. I believe they are legitimate and useful in calling people to decision and confession of faith in Christ. But some of you may have to serve in very difficult places where you will have to plough and harrow, and see no fruit for many a year. You may be tempted sometimes to ask yourself whether you are really in the place of God's appointment. No minister's usefulness is to be measured by the apparent fruit of his ministry. One is called to one form of service, and another to another. Paul may plant, and see no fruit. Apollos may water, and see no result from his labour. And yet, in His own time, God will give the increase, that will be reaped perhaps by other hands than those of Paul or Apollos. We must bear our testimony whether we see results or not. We are to walk in our Christian service, as in the ordinary routine of daily life, by faith, and not by sight. We must do what God tells us although there seems to be no immediate result from our faithful service.

Moses is still in difficulty in the fourth chapter: "Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice." Our Lord gave a special promise to men of weak faith, and said that if we had faith but as a grain of mustard seed, "ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove". Faith is always small in its beginning. Like all other Christian virtues, it grows. It feeds upon our experience of the divine faithfulness. As we know much of God we are able to say, "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice". Or again, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my

voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." But most of us, in the life of faith, have to creep before we can walk. It is no easy thing for us to give ourselves wholly to the Lord. If sometimes you have rebuked yourselves for that—and we do well to rebuke ourselves—remember we have good company, for Moses was a slow scholar in the school of Christ; although Jehovah was his teacher, he was still reluctant to go all the way with the Lord.

I now call your attention to an important matter which has particular bearing upon our time. When Moses was reluctant to go, the Lord said unto him, "What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." Moses had a view of the miraculous, a manifestation of the supernatural. He was promised that God would, by that rod in his hand, do signs.

If you read your Bible you will find that such signs belong to the infancy of faith, and that those who desire signs, supernatural manifestations, show, not that they are giants in faith, but rather that they are still in their nonage, in their infancy.

We hear much about "tongues" in this day. I have been told that I shall never have real blessing until I speak in tongues. I have not seen much advantage accrue to those who profess this miraculous gift. The New Testament says that tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to those who believe not.

God promised Moses a sign for the confirmation of his own weak faith, and also to reinforce his word to an unbelieving people. You may ask for a receipt from somebody you do not know; and you may be justified in securing yourself against possible loss when dealing with strangers. But when you have had a long acquaintance with a true man whose word is as good as his bond, you ask for no sign: you are content with his simple word.

It is my opinion that the more we grow up into Christ, and the more we know of Him, the less pronounced will be that morbid desire for signs. I assure you that that attitude is no evidence of superior spiritual development. Our Lord said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas". Again, when the nobleman came to Him, and "besought him that he would come down, and heal his son", Jesus answered, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman said, "Sir, come down ere my child die." Then, the Lord, to test him, said, "Go thy way; thy son liveth"—"And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." With splendid faith he said, "I have seen Jesus Christ, and I ask no sign from Him. His word is all I want." As he went on his way "his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house".

But he believed before he had the outward evidence, before he had the sign. Let us seek to believe. Yet how



merciful God is to condescend to our weakness, and to the weakness of Moses in granting him a sign!

Then Moses pleads his natural incapacity—and I should like you to note this very carefully. After all that God had done, Moses said, "I am not eloquent . . . I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. I have no natural aptitude for this task assigned me". The Lord said, "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Do you not know that even if you were dumb, I could open your mouth and make you speak like an archangel? Do you not know you are speaking to the Creator?" Moses lost a great opportunity, I believe, great as he was.

The Lord said, "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well . . . Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do". Here is the point I want to make. It is a difficult one, and I hope you will see it. Moses and Aaron are commissioned to go to Pharaoh, and Moses carries the rod: "Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." What is the rod? An inanimate thing, non-intelligent, non-volitional; it has no intelligence, no will; it is nothing but a piece of wood. And the Lord said, in effect, "Moses, I made you in my image and likeness. I gave you a mind. I gave you certain mental qualities, so that you could understand who I am, a capacity for the reception of spiritual things. I gave you conscience, and will, and heart; but if you will not let me use you, I will use a piece of wood."

If He could use a stick, surely He could use a man. Let us not heap up obstacles in the way of the execution of the divine purpose.

Moses begins, and there is one interesting verse, in passing. You are going to have a hard time. I congratulate you. If you want to have an easy time, be anything in the world but a preacher. If you have not got the stuff in you, then do not waste your time. If you expect everybody to praise you, you are on the wrong track. You will be beset with difficulties and enemies of every description, and you will be inclined to give way sometimes. Moses had that experience, but remember it is said here, "All the men are dead which sought thy life". That hymn we were singing just now promises divine protection; and the divine accompaniment all through life remains true. You need be afraid of nothing, and of nobody; if only you have God with you, you will survive them all, as Moses did.

Moses went before the people and assembled them, and they were just a kindergarten class (just about like your department, Mrs. Hewlett). Moses told them what the Lord had said, and then did all the signs. When they saw the signs they said, "That is wonderful. We will believe". Their faith was very, very weak, but they believed that the Lord had visited His people.

We have Moses' first interview with Pharaoh. He saw him many times. Moses had to make many calls on Pharaoh. You may have to make many calls on some people before you do them any good. He had an interview with Pharaoh, demanding the separation of his people, and Pharaoh responded, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go". You will always meet with that. Nobody can know the Lord until He introduces Himself. Do not be surprised or discouraged if you meet

with no response the first time you speak to a man about the Lord. It is true that they do not know the Lord.

It is likely to make Pharaoh very angry. There is a theory abroad that you can present the gospel so diplomatically, so sweetly, that everybody will like it, that you can go to Pharaoh and tell him that you are going to take Israel from beneath his dominion—and he will say, "I am glad to hear it"! It is not true! When you really preach the gospel, you are likely to incur men's displeasure. Some important man will go out and say to a deacon at the door, "Is that the way the gospel is preached in this place?" And the good deacon will come to you and say, "Now, Pastor, you are a young man. I am much older than you, and I think you gave needless offence to-day. There was a man here in whom we are all interested, and I met him at the door, and he was furiously angry. Try to soften things down a little. See if you cannot be a little more persuasive. See if you cannot be more loving. What we want is more love!"

I heard somebody say that recently. With the fury of Nebuchadnezzar in his eye he said, "When I said, 'A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another', you got mad. What we want is more love". But not in speech! "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue". True love will manifest itself. You cannot help it. You will find out whether people love you or not.

You will probably make Pharaoh angry. I do not mean that you are to study to make people angry. Nobody could have been more polite than Moses was. Nobody could have been more careful in his speech than Moses. It was not the way Moses said it: it was what he said. It was not his "method" or "spirit". Pharaoh said, "These people have not enough to do. We will give them more".

Then the people turned on Moses next. You must expect that. Do not be upset when the Lord's people do not like you. It will be useless for any one of you to be a preacher unless you are going to ask God to give you grace to stand, under some circumstances, at some time, absolutely alone. Thank God for the fellowship of Christian people, but sometimes and in some stages of the work in which you are engaged, you will find many people who do not understand. You say, "But they ought to understand". Of course, they ought. But do you know why you are chosen as a preacher and a leader? Because you are supposed to understand a little better. See that you do.

The people said to Moses, "Now you have only made things worse". First, they complained to the Egyptians, and when they could get no redress there they turned on Moses and Aaron and said, "Leave us alone in our bondage. Instead of improving matters, you have accentuated our difficulties".

It is wonderfully inspiring to faith to see God in these pages—to see God anywhere. No matter how discouraged Moses may be, God is never discouraged. God is always marching straight forward. He said, "Moses, I will show Pharaoh who I am in my own time. He shall know that I am the Lord". Do you know why the Bible was written? That all men might know that Jehovah is Jehovah. That is the end of all preaching. That is the end of all church organization and activity. That is what we are here for, to be the media through whom God will declare and execute His purposes so that people will know that He is the Lord.

It is a great thing when there is something about our ministry that distinguishes it as a ministry energized by the Holy Ghost, so that when people go out—they may be displeased—but they will go out saying, "In spite of it all, God is with that man". He will let people know that He is God.

Then He mentions His name again. He refers again to His covenant. Then in the fifth verse He says, "I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel". He heard their cry. That is a commonplace; but it is not a commonplace if you put it down beside the literature that issues from the press today—theological literature, and every other sort. It all has this one theme, that we are part of a great machine, and the wheels are grinding and we are being ground with them, and by and by, far off in the distant future, there will emerge a better condition of society, and a better race, and so on. But there is never a suggestion that there is a God Who hears a child when it cries.

What is the Bible for? It is a heavenly telephone. The Bible is written just to tell us that God hears His people when they cry. He announces His purpose to deliver them, to make them His people, and to fulfil His oath.

I hope you will never be ashamed of being a Baptist. If you are, then be something else. You have heard of the Irishman, Scotsman, and Englishman, who got together and compared notes, asking each other what they would be if they had their choice, and were not what they were? The Englishman said what his second choice would be if he could not be English; the Scotsman said what his choice would be if he were not Scotch (and I rather think there was a Welshman there, Brother Davies). At last the Irishman was asked, "What would you be if you were not an Irishman"? "Faith", said he, "and I would be ashamed of myself"!

If you are a Baptist from conviction, if you have a great body of truth which you know is the word of God, then be thankful for God's illumination of your understanding, and go ahead and preach your doctrine, and be unashamed. But if sometimes, in contrast with the bigness of things in this world, you are inclined to feel yourself pretty small, remember that the God of all the earth came to a despised people who were nothing but a nation of slaves, who were utterly without standing anywhere. From heaven He said, not, "Let Israel go", but, "Let my people go, that they may serve me". He was not ashamed to identify Himself with them. And it is written, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren". However humble and despised we may be in this world, He will see us through.

When Moses came to Israel on this occasion they would not listen to him: "They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage".

Let me give you students a story that a minister of experience told me when I was going to my first church. He said, "I went to a little church, and there was one man there who was looked upon as the leading man. He had a store, and conducted a rather good business. He had an interesting family, and a comfortable home. He asked me one day to go to dinner, and I went. I had a lovely time. We prayed together. His family were nice to me. As I came away this man said to me, 'Now, Pastor, we do not want to be unreasonable. You will be

busy seeing other people, and we are willing to take the last place, but whenever you have time to come, you will be heartily welcome in this home; come whenever you can, and look upon this as your second home'."

My friend said, "I went away feeling that I would go there often. I went on another occasion, and had an equally happy time; and the invitation was repeated. Then I went a third time, and that time the head of the house sat at the head of the table. He served his guest and his family. The family talked, but he did not say a word. He looked down at his plate, and seemed preoccupied all the time. I thought I must have said or done something to offend him. I passed one or two remarks, but there was no response—and I became somewhat stiff"—as people will when in a place where they feel they are not welcome. It stiffens us up.

"I felt the head of the house was out of sorts with me, but I could not make out what I had done. When I left, other members of the family were cordial enough, but I said to myself, I am not going back there until I am invited.

"Weeks and months passed, and I did not again visit that home. One day I met this good brother on the street and he said, 'Pastor, I told you at the first that we did not want to make unreasonable demands upon you, but remember you are welcome to come whenever it is possible. My family were saying the other day that you had not been to see us for some time'. I said, 'I may as well be perfectly frank with you and say that it is not because I could not have gone.' 'It wasn't?' 'No. To tell you frankly, I thought you did not want me.' 'My dear Pastor, whatever put that in your head?' 'Well, the last time I was there I thought you were very silent. You said scarcely a word, and I imagined I had offended you in some way; so I made up my mind that I would not go back until you spoke to me about it.' 'Let me see if I can recall the circumstances. I am sure my silence was unintentional—Oh yes, I remember the occasion now. That day in business it seemed as though every single thing from morning until night had gone wrong. I had been bothered with my customers, with travellers, and everything. When I came home that night my nerves were on the outside of my skin. I was not fit to speak to anybody, and I have learned, when I am in that condition, that the best thing is not to say anything. But you had not offended me. I love you as I did before. Now when will you come?' 'Well, I will come right away'." Thus all the difficulty was smoothed out.

Sometimes when you meet people their attitude will be changed from what it was at your previous meeting, and you will wonder what has happened in the church, or outside of the church. If you have a vivid imagination you may draw a dark picture. Go back to the sixth chapter of Exodus and read the ninth verse, "They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage". "Oh dear! Oh dear!" they said, "we cannot listen to a sermon."

Did you ever feel as though the archangel himself could not preach to you? You wanted to say, Amen, to somebody who was singing, "Oh, for the wings of a dove" and then to fly away! Do not judge the people too harshly if they do not immediately respond to your message. It may be there is an anguish of spirit that you do not know anything about. It may be that the woman, when you

*(Continued on page 12)*

# The Union Baptist Witness

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

## COMPLICATED.

Last week there was held in Toronto a Convention which claimed to be representative of all Canada—a Convention of Conventions of which the report is before us. As the Union of Regular Baptist Churches has been recommended time and time again to take its cue from the Women as to how to run a Convention, it is of interest to note some of its features.

The report, however, convinces us that if the Union had anything which needed to be "explained away", needed to be hidden in the depths of complications, it would be well advised to follow the procedure of the President of the Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada and leave bewilderment in its path.

To read, study and try to analyze, the following tangled reasoning of Mrs. C. J. Holman's address will certainly prove to many minds the utter impossibility of working with one who can twist any circumstance and resort to the most complicated and far fetched reasoning in an endeavour to cover up an irregular procedure. To us, this questionable explanation is but another illustration of the workings of a mind which is capable of explaining away, passing judgment upon, and bolstering up, a case out of anything in accordance with its notions. It is just another example of how the Women's Missionary Society of Regular Baptists of Canada is run and of how anything may be done by that Society. It is indeed another corroboration of the system which exists and of the ability and agility of the President and officers of the Society to make black appear white.

We should like to quote the President's remarks in full, but as this is not feasible, a lesson in reasoning is given.

"If the number of our Board of regularly elected women fell below eighteen, we could not operate. . . . Our members were from many churches. There was no danger that members of the Board belonging to churches standing with us would be affected, but those in churches which were not with us might be excluded, or being compelled to drop their membership and when they dropped their membership be disqualified from acting on the Board. Therefore any church that was in opposition to our society of which there was a Board member could disorganize our society if enough of them did it simultaneously. If there was one vacancy created in that way at one time we could fill it from among the churches that were favorable, but if all those in the churches that were not standing with us simultaneously failed our women, we might fall below eighteen."

Following this statement Mrs. Holman gives her version of her exclusion from the membership of the Jarvis Street Church and adds "That, of course, meant that I was excluded on Saturday

night, June 27th, and the following Saturday night Mrs. Clubine, having refused to choose between the agency of the *Regular Baptist Call* and the church, was likewise excluded. Mrs. Clubine was a regularly elected member of the Board and when she was excluded, automatically her place was vacant. It would only be necessary for her to be received into another church to be put back into her own place, but your president was elected President and not a regularly elected member of the Board. Therefore I had the delightful experience of being, not only, no longer president but not on the Board even, hence not even a member of the Society to which the Lord had called me".

Such a predicament in no wise hinders the Women's Society, a way can always be found to justify its works. ". . . on Sunday there was penned to me a letter from Mrs. E. J. Zavitz of Ottawa resigning her position on the Board and creating a vacancy. Therefore when I was received into Hughson St. Baptist Church, there was a vacancy for me as well as for Mrs. Clubine. She was off the Board for forty-eight hours. I was off for eight days, and on July 7th we were both elected, she in her own and I in the place of Mrs. Zavitz, to serve as elected members of the Board until the annual meeting. I was also re-elected editor and she was re-elected superintendent of the Call."

Much of the report is but a labyrinth in which one loses himself and while we must confess that at the beginning of the controversy, although we had long sensed the danger and had again and again voiced our protest of the policy which sought to draw support from established churches which it refused to support, we deeply sympathized with the women of the Society for whom we had respect. While believing that they were in error, we did admire their aggressiveness, their seeming allegiance to their position and their zeal, but we knew their fallacies also. They were intensely jealous of credit for their work; they were dictatorial beyond expression; they were fault-finding continually, no Pastor, no member of the Executive escaped criticism, and even members of their own Board received a share in private, and while that may be pardoned to some extent, because one is liable to be more severe in his criticism of those nearest to him than of those in whom he has no interest, we are of the opinion that the ladies are not always competent to judge and pronounce upon "what is in one's mind". It may be interest, spelled with a capital, but when we view their ability to make a long story out of a very short one, a mountain out of a mole hill, and their adeptness in reviewing and reiterating, the interest can be dispensed with.

The ramifications of such an explanation as is reported, the self-righteous, self-centred, self-congratulatory manner of the officers, surely leads to a state of

mind which is deplorable and bids fair so to obsess those who exercise it so that every difficulty can be hedged around to their own satisfaction. We are indeed not surprised to hear that resignations accidentally get under something and are not dealt with and that one can jump in and out of office, although they may be without a church and must become members of churches miles from their place of residence. We certainly mistrust such actions, as much as we mistrust the leadership of a President who always knows—"instantly I heard it, I knew what to do"—"had you asked me, I would have told you directly what to do". Is it any wonder that the husband of one of the officers of the Women's Society in exasperation unburdened his heart and told his wife that she was "Holmanized". We rather think that we agree with him!

## TORONTO TO MONTREAL.

When the Rev. and Mrs. Hancox, and Miss Florence Stacey left Toronto on Wednesday, November 25th, many of their friends gathered at the Toronto Baptist Seminary to wave a last farewell and partake in the short service which preceded their leaving. While the last minute matters were being attended to, the baggage strapped in place, the robes tucked in, the many instructions given, and the final good-byes were being said, it was pretty hard to keep the tears from overflowing and in spite of bravely smiling countenances, handkerchiefs had to be used often. Eventually the cars are off, Mr. Atkinson having with him Mr. and Mrs. Hancox, and Mr. Stacey having Mrs. Stacey, Miss Stacey and Mrs. Campbell. We are taking the last glimpse we shall have of our missionaries in probably three years, but no, the cars obligingly stop at the corner and once more we have an opportunity of seeing the missionaries for a brief minute or so, before they are on their way.

On Wednesday evening, the missionaries met with the friends at Trenton and the members of the Belleville Regular Baptist Church were well represented. The night was spent in Trenton and the morning saw them on their way bound for Ottawa, stopping for lunch in Brockville, where they visited awhile with Mr. Simpson. Ottawa was reached on schedule and at Calvary Church, Mr. and Mrs. Davey's home church, a great Farewell Meeting was held on Thursday evening.

Friday was a heavy day—from Ottawa the missionary party travelled to Lachute and met with the friends from Dalesville, Lachute and Brownsburg in an afternoon meeting. Rev. F. W. Dyson, who had arrived in Dalesville only the night before, was ready to welcome the missionaries and a splendid meeting was held.

Back to Montreal, the party motored for the meeting in Emmanuel Church,

Verdun, and that farewell meeting on the eve of their leaving Canada was a happy one. Many friends met to express their interest and become acquainted with the missionaries and as they bade farewell and said "God Bless You" to these young people, it seemed that the Lord had raised up an army of consecrated Christian people to bear them up in prayer and stand behind them as they labored. The testimony of the out-going missionaries was that the kindness of the friends, the supplying of their needs in such a wonderful way, were but manifestations of His going before in accordance with the promise, "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them".

Saturday morning, November 28th, at 10 o'clock, the hour when many hearts were lifted to God in prayer on behalf of the missionaries, they set sail, having taken leave of their friends gathered on the wharf. Mail, expressions of love and gifts, welcomed them in their cabins, and yet another surprise awaited, for they found that they were to have, as travelling companions as far as England, members from the Central Church, London, Ontario.

The S.S. Antonia is scheduled to reach Liverpool, England, on December 5th, and the Elder-Dempster steamer will leave Liverpool for Liberia on December 12th. Remember the missionaries as they attend to necessary business in England. Pray for their testimony there and on the steamers. Think of them often and visualize the Sing-Songs on the African liner to the accompaniment of the auto harps and pray for those who will be compelled to listen.

#### FROM "THE GLOBE."

A portion of the letter written by "Konna Rue" and appearing on The Homemaker's page of the Toronto Globe, November 26th issue, is quoted that the readers of the Union Baptist Witness may enjoy it also. Possibly, "Konna Rue" may be identified by many and certainly her work, so vividly described, will ever be remembered in our prayer.

**Bassa Babies:** I often go into a town, spy a nice baby, cuddle it for a wee while, and then must go on. The next time I call I ask for the baby, and the mother, with tears, says "It's dead." This has been my experience quite often. Why? Because these poor mothers think that rice is essential to their darling baby's growth, so from the day it is born it is fed rice. The baby is held, arms, feet and head, and the rice is crammed into its mouth and washed down with water. Baby's stomach at birth should hold about two ounces; the mother does not know this, and forces rice down into the wee stomach until

it is distended and the baby cries with pain. Now, do you wonder why babies in Bassa Land die? I have tried to tell the mothers, but the old women say the babies will have witches if they are not fed rice. In their ignorance, the mothers believe this.

I am carefully guarding two lovely babies in the town near us now—one a large, fat baby, but very good-natured; the other, the sweetest baby I have ever seen; and I hope some of the mothers who had babies born while I was in training will not be insulted if they should ever know who is writing this. Certainly, she is the sweetest baby, very fine features, as dainty as any white baby, and her hair is lovely. In fact, I love my little namesake dearly. I had the privilege of giving her her first bath, and putting on her a little baby shirt sent from some one at home—made out of an old stocking. She is two months old now, and I am proud of her. They both come to church Sunday evening with me, and how I hate to think of there being any chance of losing either of them, but they, too, are fed the horrible rice. Will all homemakers who name the name of Christ remember these two babies, and all my other babies; and pray that the Lord Jesus Christ may help me to show the mothers the way. They must first be shown the Cross of Christ, and then told that all the witch nonsense is of the devil.

We have five precious souls who have said, "I leave the world to follow my Saviour where He leads." Keep praying that more will come.

Thank you for your helpful and uplifting paper, so much enjoyed, so far away from home.

Konna Rue.

#### BAKER HILL CONFERENCE.

The semi-annual meeting of the Lindsay Association of Regular Baptist Churches was held at Baker Hill Church on Wednesday, November 11th. The afternoon session was opened at 2.30 by the Chairman, Rev. J. M. Fleming, of Lindsay. After a song-service, led by Mr. O. L. Raymer, of Toronto, and a short season of prayer, the business was dealt with. Mr. Jackman, of Lindsay, was appointed to the Executive in place of Mr. Roy Hisey, who is now in Montreal. The invitation for the next meeting of the Association was extended by Pastor M. B. Gillion, of Bobcaygeon, and accepted.

The opening address was brought by the Chairman, and this was followed by a message from Rev. John Byers, of Orillia, a message which surely encouraged the hearts of those present as they traced the account of Gideon's call as found in Judges, chapters 6 and 7.

The Association had a surprise visit from Rev. and Mrs. E. Hancox and Miss Florence Stacey, who so shortly leave for Liberia. Their messages were greatly enjoyed, and the prayers of those present will follow them as they go to labour in that needy land.

The interval between the afternoon and evening sessions was taken care of by the ladies of the Baker Hill, Mount Albert and Sixth Line churches. About two hundred and seventy-five friends sat down to the evening meal, and the tables abounded with good things; it was indeed a royal banquet.

The evening session was opened with a song-service conducted by Mr. Raymer, there followed a short testimony meeting, and words of welcome were extended to the visiting brethren by Mr. Seneca Baker, Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, former pastor of the church, and by the present pastor, Rev. Arthur Lee.

The Baker Hill Church choir rendered special music, and their song-messages were greatly enjoyed.

The speaker of the evening was Dr. T. T. Shields, Pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto. His message on "Law and Grace" was the climax of the day; it was indeed the strong meat that the Word of God exhorts all to partake of and enjoy.

Rev. W. W. Fleischer, of Stouffville, closed with prayer, and as the great congregation broke up, it was with hearts full of praise to Him who had done exceeding abundantly above all that we could ask or think. (Reported by Mr. Lee.)

#### NOTES OF PRAISE.

Four baptisms at Emmanuel, Verdun, Que.

Three baptisms at Stouffville Baptist Church.

Four conversions at Long Branch Church.

Conversions at Baker Hill and Mount Albert.

Great meetings at Ravenshoe.

Two saved in the Sunday morning service at Westboro.

Nineteen baptized at Central Church, London.

A liberal offering at the Farewell meeting in Calvary Baptist Church, Ottawa, toward the expense of bringing Mr. and Mrs. Davey home on furlough.

Blessing at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Toronto.

Great increase in attendance at the Sunderland and Cannington churches.

Continued blessing through the Jarvis Street services.

Three baptisms at Shedden.

Most of the above information has come to us through indirect reports, but we print it that thanksgiving may be made for blessing during the past week.

#### THE BURNING BUSH

(Continued from page 10)

called that afternoon, had been washing all morning, and baking in the afternoon—and that even while she was talking to you, or trying to listen to what you said, she was afraid the pie would burn in the oven. Or, it may be some secret sorrow was eating her heart—it will be better in the morning.

Faith, thus, is overwhelmed by such anguish of spirit; and the Bible always recognizes our weakness. I am

always comforted by that gracious word in the Old Testament, "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust". What a compassionate God we have!

Then, while He did not say so in so many words, in effect God said, "Moses, let the children cry, and you come and talk with me". Moses paid no attention to them; he did not rebuke them; but he had further audience with the King, and went on with his work. Try to do the same when people will not hearken to your words, and our sovereign God will lead you on to victory.