

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. 50

TORONTO, APRIL 28, 1932

Whole No. 519

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

WILL THE COMING OF CHRIST BE SECRET OR OPEN?

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

(Fourth in a Series on What the Bible Teaches About the Second Coming of Christ)

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 24th, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers: believe it not.

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."—Matthew 24:26, 27.

Prayer by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe.

We come to Thee, O God, because Thou hast given us strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. As we enter Thy courts we find no hope or stability within ourselves, for we are creatures of the day; like a flower of the field we flourish and pass away, and the place thereof knoweth us no more. But Thou art eternal, Thy years do not fail, Thou art the same from everlasting to everlasting. We are unholy and full of sin: Thou art holy and just and true. Therefore we come into Thy presence, not looking within ourselves to find hope, or to find that which shall make us acceptable in Thy sight: we come looking to Thee our Saviour and our God, knowing that Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And because Thou art the same, therefore we are not consumed; Thy unchanging mercy and grace are toward every one of us. Thou hast sworn, and will not repent, that Thou hast made for us a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Therefore because our salvation is bound by the terms of an eternal covenant, sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ, we come with boldness and confidence into Thy presence to-night.

Recall to our minds, we pray Thee, Thy great promises; strengthen us with Thine assurance in our hearts; teach us by Thy Spirit how to pray, that we may worship Thee in spirit and in truth.

We thank Thee for all Thy goodness. Surely Thou hast surrounded us on every hand by Thy great love. Even in days of infancy, before we realized Thy being, or knew about ourselves, Thou didst love us. Thou hast been the Author of every good thing we have ever known. Thou hast given us health and strength, home and loved ones; and above all, Thou has brought us to Thyself through Christ Jesus. Thou hast provided for us a salvation perfect and complete in Him. Now, much more, being saved from wrath through Him, Thou dost bestow upon us the riches of Thy grace, as Thou dost lead us step by step all the way, in

times of difficulty and trial, as well as of blessing and good things.

We pray that Thou wouldst unfold Thy purpose of love in every one of us. Make us strong in Thee, that in all things we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

We remember to-night those who are in special need; those who toss upon beds of pain, those who are burdened by special cares and anxieties, those who are still without knowledge of Thee as Lord and Saviour. Bless us all: those who know Thee, by a fuller revelation of Thyself; and those who know Thee not, by a manifestation of Thy power and blessing in Christ Jesus. May the hosts of angels sing together this night over one sinner—nay, over many, who repent and come to know Him, Whom to know is life eternal.

All these mercies we ask in the name of Him Who loved us, and gave Himself for us, Amen.

We are this evening to consider whether the Lord, when He comes, will come openly and in view of all, or whether He will come secretly, revealing Himself to the few as He does not unto the many. That, I think you will agree, is a very important consideration; and we do well, in respect to any view which we hold as being scriptural, to re-examine the foundations, to compare spiritual things with spiritual.

We are all very easily betrayed into the acceptance of error, error which may seem to be slight, and from some points of view, unimportant, but which may lead ultimately to a serious departure from the truth.

Many godly people, people who love the Lord, who love His word, assume that baptism is sprinkling, that it is quite scriptural to sprinkle unconscious infants in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They are not wilful, deliberate, transgressors: they have been

trained to a certain view. They are not generally ignorant of Scripture: they have read their Bibles; but whenever they have come upon any reference to baptism they have read into it their preconceptions. They never examine it, and suppose they are on sound scriptural ground.

There are good people who really believe there is scriptural ground for—what shall I call it?—the rite of confirmation.

I might enumerate many things which are taught and practiced in so-called Christian churches by people who are genuinely converted, but who have assumed certain things to be scriptural which are actually devoid of any scriptural foundation.

Many people come to the Word of God with their minds made up, and when that is so, it is exceedingly difficult for the truth to gain entrance.

I am far from being disposed to teach that nothing matters, and that after all we should be liberal in our thought of those who depart from the Word of God. That which is revealed does matter, and it is important that we should understand it, and that we should not abide in error simply because a company of people with whom we associated when we were first converted, entertained certain teaching respecting certain doctrines, and we imbibed the teaching, and coming to the Scripture brought those preconceived ideas with us, without searching the Bible for ourselves.

This evening my task will be to call your attention to a number of passages of Scripture, and with such brevity as is consistent with clarity, to deal with them in relation to the subject in hand.

I.

THE SON OF MAN IS COMING. I shall not labour that, for I think it is not necessary; but in order that we may have a sound foundation upon which to stand, a clearly defined starting place, let me once more affirm that the Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ will personally, visibly, audibly, come again.

We must not dismiss with a wave of the hand those who see a fulfilment of the promise of the Lord's coming in many of His providential visitations. For example, the day of Pentecost. Did the Lord come then? In one sense, He did. In one sense He fulfilled at least one promise wherein He specifically said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." He was speaking of the coming of the Comforter. He identified Himself as one in essence with the Holy Ghost. And there is a sense in which, with the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, Jesus Christ did actually come.

But the promise of His coming has a much larger significance than that. You will remember too that ere He left He said to His disciples, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." We do not worship an absentee Saviour. There is a sense in which He is always with His people.

Did He not also say; "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"? He meant what He said. There is a sense in which Jesus Christ is here tonight. He is here in the presence of the Holy Ghost. He has already fulfilled to us "the word upon which he has caused us to hope", and He is in the midst of His assembled people.

But these passages are entirely aside from that great group of promises which assure us of the Lord's second advent, His personal return to the earth.

I am aware that many excellent people identify some of the promises of the Lord's coming with certain spiritual movements. We speak of revivals as times of divine visitation, and it is true that the Lord does come near to His people sometimes in power and great glory, manifesting His power in greater measure than at other times. I believe there is a sense in which God identifies Himself with every principle of righteousness, and wherever right and truth are found, God is there. We are not to hold in contempt and scorn people who, erroneously, as I think—and I have no doubt most of you think—conceive of Pentecost, or of the regnancy of some special gospel principle when it comes to special recognition and power in individuals and communities, as the coming of Christ. We must not dismiss such believers with a wave of the hand, and say they know nothing of the Bible; for there is a sense in which, in these things, God draws near to His people.

There is a sense in which, in Old Testament times, Jesus Christ, "the Angel of the covenant", came to His people. God came to Eden. Furthermore, "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Christ Himself said of Abraham, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." Again and again down through the unfolding ages God manifested Himself to His people. There were times of divine visitation. But never in Old Testament times did He come as He came when the angels sang, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord." When He came in physical form, when the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us", when He took on Him not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, He, the Incarnate God, came to the earth as He had never come before; and when He went away, clothed with our human flesh, visible to the natural eye, His waiting and wondering disciples were told, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven", the Lord, through angelic lips, uttered a promise that Jesus Christ would personally return to this earth.

It is of that coming, that second appearance of our Lord, of which I speak this evening, enquiring whether He will come first secretly to His own people, and then openly to the world; or whether His coming will be public and open, or in one great word, manifest. That is the question.

II.

Beginning with the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, you will recall the disciples asked Jesus Christ, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end"—not of the world, but—"of the age", of this dispensation? And this great eschatological discourse was our Lord's response to that question.

I am aware that there is a school of interpretation which relegates this chapter to the Jews. I should like to know upon whose authority. I cannot find in the text itself directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly the slightest suggestion that Matthew's Gospel is restricted to the Jews. Our Lord addressed the people to whom He was speaking, and they were surely representative of disciples generally. It is true they were Jews. So, up to this time, were all

the disciples, for as yet the gospel had not been preached to the Gentiles, though here and there, like the Samaritan woman and the centurion of Capernaum, there were pre-intimations of God's larger purpose. But surely this is a discourse that belongs to everybody.

And I pause here to say that there is a passage of Scripture which, in my view, is grossly misinterpreted: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." There are some people who interpret that as meaning, rightly *labelling* the word of truth,—Matthew for the Jews. They carry it to such an extreme that at last we are told the gospels do not belong to us; the Acts of the Apostles do not belong to us, except perhaps a chapter or two at its conclusion—and the only thing that is of present value to believers is the prison epistles of St. Paul. That is "rightly dividing the word of truth"! I call it mutilating the Word of God.

"Rightly dividing the word of truth" means nothing more nor less than correct and accurate exegesis, getting out of the Word of God what God has put into it, and not reading into it our own fancies.

The Word of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will bring God's thoughts to the hearts and consciences of men, and it needs not to be cut up, carved, and mutilated, according to any man's theories. Some people who profess the utmost devotion to the Bible as the very Word of God by their so-called "proper division", it seems to me, subject it to just as grievous a mutilation as it suffers at the hands of Modernists. Modernism cuts and carves the Bible, and on alleged scientific, historical, or ethical grounds robs this section and that section of its authority;—and so also do some branches of this so-called "rightly dividing" school. The Gospel of Matthew is for us and for the Jew, beyond all peradventure. The church for generations has based its missionary programme upon what is usually called "the great commission" in the twenty-eighth chapter, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age."

Please do not take that away from us, and tell us that that belongs only to the Jews: it belongs to believers everywhere. It is God's command to His redeemed people, to the blood-bought church of Christ in all ages, to carry the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. And if the twenty-eighth chapter belongs to everybody, so does the twenty-fourth. In our later studies we shall return to it, but for my purpose this evening I must keep to the one point: How will the Lord come?

Our Lord said, "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect"—the "very elect" does not mean the Jews: it means you if you have been bought with blood, God's elect people—all His elect people, not the Jews only. Give us your authority for any such assumption,—"Behold, I have told you before. Wherefor if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers: believe it not"—what is His argument?—"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west"—you have seen it, have you not? as it flashed across the

sky, and illuminated the whole earth so far as it was visible, from horizon to horizon—"so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Surely what our Lord intended to say was that if anybody should say to you the Lord has come already, as, for example, do the Russellites, if anyone should say that any secret coming of the Lord was possible, that He could come without your knowing it, answer them, When my Lord comes He shall come as the lightning shinning from the east to the west. Every eye shall see Him. If we have not seen Him, He cannot have come. So Matthew's Gospel teaches us.

It seems to me that in the passage I have quoted the Lord especially sets us on our guard against the assumption that His coming could be secret: "Behold, he is in the secret chamber; believe it not." That is what Jesus said: Therefore a secret coming is not possible. He will come "as the lightning," and "every eye shall see him".

In the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew the high priest said unto our Lord, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God"; and Christ (probably in allusion to Daniel 7:13) said, "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." That was spoken, not to a friend of Jesus, but to an enemy of Christ; and it was promised that he should see Him. Thus to both friends and foes He prophesied His manifest coming.

I need not take you through parallel passages in the other Gospels. I would, however, have you examine them for yourselves, particularly in Mark, the thirteenth chapter, and in Luke, the twenty-first chapter—and especially verses twenty-five to thirty-three. Study also such references to the Lord's coming as are contained in John's Gospel; and I think you will see there is perfect consistency among all of them, and that in every instance it argues the public, the manifest, coming of the Lord.

Let us look at the familiar passage in the first of Acts: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." I would put beside that a passage in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles—and by the way, the brother of whom I spoke last Sunday evening, in writing to me, quoted this passage, and said that single quotation ought to be sufficient to convince me that Christ is coming first for His people, and again with His people. I cannot see the remotest relation in that passage to the subject in hand. Here it is: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God."

The question there is, not the ascension of Christ, but the resurrection of Christ: "Him God raised up the third day and showed him openly; not to all the people, but . . . even to us." By whom was He seen? Not by all the people; but "witnesses chosen before of God". Witnesses, mark you. And for what were they chosen? In order that they might bear witness to the fact of the resurrection. Having thus been chosen as witnesses, they are now commissioned to preach the gospel of the resurrection.

When the angel said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as

ye have seen him go into heaven", he was not speaking particularly of the fact that there were comparatively few who saw Him go: he spoke of the fact that as He was received by a cloud into heaven, so should He come in the clouds of heaven, in precisely the same manner as He was seen to go. If the doctrine of the secret coming of the Lord Jesus rests on no surer foundation than that passage it seems to me it has but little support in the Word of God.

Let us look at the first epistle to the Corinthians, the fifteenth chapter, the great resurrection chapter with which you are all familiar. In that particular case—and I am quoting these passages in the order in which they occur in the Scripture, because they are more easily followed—in that particular chapter the writer is not speaking specially of the personal coming of Christ: he is speaking of the resurrection of Christ and of the saints. But other scriptures always connect the resurrection with the coming of Christ. The writer is speaking there of the resurrection of the body, of those who sleep in Christ; they are to be raised at the coming of the Lord.

Under what conditions shall the resurrection of the just take place? Let me read those few verses: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed"—that is, we shall not all die before the Lord comes; some will be still living when He comes in the clouds of heaven, but even those who are still alive will be changed—"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"—in the quiet of the night, when others are sleeping, we shall quietly arise from our graves and steal away, and perhaps on the morrow be missed? No! That is not what it says—"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

There the resurrection is associated with the sound of a trumpet. It is described as the "last trump"—but more about that next Sunday evening. I am now merely pointing out that the resurrection of the dead, as described in that passage is by no means a secret event: it is associated with the sound of the trumpet, "for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed".

We come next to the great rapture passage in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter four, verses thirteen to eighteen. We have read it and recited it so often I am sure we know it by heart, but mark the doctrine: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep"—who of us wants to be ignorant about that? Surely that is one matter concerning which we need to be fully informed—"that we sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"—I think it is significant that the Apostle Paul quotes his authority here—"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord"—he is speaking with authority, as a part of "the abundance of revelations" which had been given him—"that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede, or, go before) them which are asleep."

That is to say, those who are alive will not be caught up before those who sleep in Jesus are raised from the grave. We shall have to await their resurrection: we shall not go before them.

How will it occur? "The Lord himself"—Himself! Jesus Christ in person—"the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Put those together for a moment: the Lord, accompanied by the angels of His power, will descend from heaven with a great shout, as of an army going into battle. It does not necessarily mean that the Lord shall shout, but He will descend *with* a shout, and with the voice of the archangel.

And what else? "And with the trump of God." And what will happen then? "And the dead in Christ shall rise first." That is, before we are caught up; then, afterwards, next in order, "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

I am told that the "shout", the "voice of the archangel", and the "trump of God", will be heard only by believers. But the text does not say so. I submit that if you had never been told that, no man would ever read that passage and conclude that it indicated a quiet, secret, coming of the Lord to earth. If it does, then language has ceased to have any significance whatever. If the "shout", the "voice of the archangel", and the "trump of God", be associated with a secret coming, unknown to the world, then I despair of proving anything from the Word of God, for you can read into it your own fancies, and language has no meaning.

But another thing: what circumstances attend the coming of the Lord? We have already heard from Matthew, that He is to come as the lightning, appearing to everybody. Here His coming is represented in another way, as being audible, breaking upon the ears of men.

And what else? "The dead in Christ shall rise." How many of them? All of them. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Does anybody ask me to believe that the resurrection of the countless millions of the righteous dead—if in any sense it is a real resurrection—that the resurrection of the countless millions of the righteous dead the world around, the instantaneous changing of all living believers, numbering millions, can all take place secretly? can happen without the knowledge of men? and that thus the bodies of the redeemed raised from the dead, with the living, shall ascend in the clouds without anyone's knowing it?

Where is your scripture? I have never been able to find a vestige of scripture for the assumption. I should be glad to learn it if there is such, for I want to know what the Lord in His Word has to say.

Let us look at the second epistle of Thessalonians for a moment. We are confronted with the contention that there are three aspects of the Lord's coming: the *parousia*, the coming of the Lord; the *epiphany*, the appearing of the Lord; and the *apocalypse*, the revelation of the Lord. It is contended that He comes secretly first: He comes first *for* His saints, and then afterwards He appears, and, *with* His saints, is revealed from heaven. I do not know what genius originated that interpretation, but let me read you one passage: "Then shall that Wicked (the antichrist) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming", with the *epiphany* of His *parousia*. The *parousia*, the coming of the Lord, is not secret: it is so bright with the divine glory that as He comes He appears and destroys antichrist by the brightness of His coming. How

can we divide the two when the Scripture links them together?

It surely must be accepted that the saints enter into their rest at the coming of the Lord. I do not know that anybody contends that we shall have to suffer after the Lord comes. Did you ever hear that? So far as I know, all schools, in respect to the teaching of these chapters, would agree on that, that when the Lord comes there will be an end of our persecution, our suffering; because at His coming living believers are changed and the righteous dead are raised, and they are caught up together with the Lord in the air. There will be no more persecution after that. We shall suffer no persecution when we have been joined to Him, and are for ever with the Lord. No; the devil will have done with us then—and we shall have done with him; he will bother us no more.

Put on your thinking cap—even if you are in church, while I read a passage: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure"—that could almost be written of Jarvis Street—"which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." Surely it means that as you suffer now, the Lord will recompense you for your suffering.

Let us see: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you." God will arise some day for our help, and to all who trouble us he will recompense tribulation. "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity." Leave all that to the Lord. We are admonished not to avenge ourselves: "Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

"It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us." As he recompenses tribulation to the troublers, He recompenses rest to those who are troubled. When? When? Not at the *parousia*. Nor is the word, *epiphany*, used, but if possible a still stronger word, *apocalypse*. "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." That is when you will get rest—nor will you get it until then, "at the apocalypse of the Lord Jesus." Not until He is "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"—not until then can His believing people have rest. But they will have it then; and that will be the time, not at any secret coming, but when He is revealed from heaven, that Jesus will reward His servants and give them rest.

There are a few verses I should like to read to you in first Timothy (6:13-14): "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." What does he say to Timothy? "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable." Until when?

Until the secret rapture? Or until the rapture, whether secret or open? No! "Until the appearing (the *epiphany*) of our Lord Jesus Christ", until He appears; be found faithful until then. Why should Timothy be admonished to be faithful until the *epiphany* of the Lord, if the *parousia* and the rapture, admittedly taking place at the same time, precede the *epiphany*? Surely no saint can be unfaithful after he has been caught up to be with the Lord.

Then in first Corinthians, one and six, is Paul's prayer for the Corinthians: "The testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." What is that word? The Corinthians are told to wait for the coming—the word is, the revelation (*apocalypse*) of Jesus Christ. Not His *parousia*; that is not what they are to wait for. Why wait for the revelation of Christ if before that—perhaps seven years before, a longer or shorter period—the church is to be raptured out of the world? Ponder that well. Paul admonished the Corinthians to wait for the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Next there is the familiar word in John's epistle, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." It is when He shall appear—when He is manifested, we shall see Him and be like Him.

You remember how Paul speaks of the reward in prospect, which he knows is held in reserve for him, (II. Tim. 4:8) and he says, "and not to me only, but unto all them also that love." His coming for His saints? No! "Unto all them also that love his appearing", His *epiphany*.

Let us look now at that much quoted passage, and a very precious word it is: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Ah, yes; that is the goal before us: "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope"—what is that blessed hope? What is it? I ask you, What is it? The secret coming of the Bridegroom for the bride? The secret coming of the Lord for His saints? No; that is not the blessed hope,—“looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”, and “the appearing of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is the “blessed hope.”

Observe now this great passage in Hebrews: "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear"—how many times? Really I cannot follow some of my good friends who are such experts at dividing the Word of God. I do not know how many comings they have found. "Once in the end of the age hath he appeared to put away sin." He did not come more than once, did He? And if that numeral means anything there—once—it must be taken at its face value in the rest of the passage: "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time." I affirm in the name of the Lord, and on the authority of His Word, that Jesus Christ will come a second time. He will not come a third time: He will not need to come a third time. He came once, and He will come once more—and only once more—"The second time without sin unto salvation." The Revised Version employs the indefinite article, "a second time," but it does not diminish the force of the passage, for He will then come "apart from sin," without a sin offering—"unto salvation." His coming "unto salvation" will be his "second" coming. Jude quotes Enoch as saying; "Behold, the Lord cometh

with ten thousand of his saints." They rise and meet Him in the air, and they come with Him as He comes to judgment.

We come now to that matchless book of symbols, the book of Revelation. But observe, please, that before resorting to symbolic speech the writer exclaims: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."

I was in a minister's house in the Southland one evening after a meeting. He, his wife, and I, were discussing these matters, and when we came to the book of Revelation his wife treated it as though it were a simple matter. She said; "I know the key to that book." I said, "You are to be congratulated if you do." "It is simple enough", said she, "the bride in heaven after the third chapter." "That is most interesting", I replied, "although I am bound to say you are not particularly original in that, for that has been said before. Will you get your Bible, please, Mrs. So-and-So, and show me where you find that." "But it is. That is the explanation." "I know; but will you not please get your Bible, open it, find the passage, and show me, where it says that is how to interpret the book of Revelation." "But that is the interpretation of Revelation"! "Exactly. I have heard that before, but I want you to give me one scintilla of scriptural proof of it"—but I did not obtain it.

If you bring your preconceptions to a highly symbolical book like the book of Revelation, or Daniel, and say such-and-such a thing is so, who can positively say it is not? I do not wonder we should have so many interpretations of the book of Revelation. Let us aim at exact exegesis, and when we come upon a passage we cannot understand, let us not invent an interpretation, but frankly admit we do not know.

I want you to read Revelation again, divesting your mind of all preconceptions and let the book speak for itself.

I have not time to exhaust my subject. Please do not think that I have deliberately passed over passages that are germane to the discussion of the subject. I am aware that we can go back into the book of Daniel, but I do not see that thereby you will help in establishing your theory, because, for example, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book"—notwithstanding the tribulation—"and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." I do not know when that will be.

Had I time I should like to take you to the parables of our Lord and go over them one by one; but it surely is a sound principle of interpretation that the parables should be interpreted in the light of the plain teachings of Scripture, and not the plain Scriptures by the parables. However, I name one or two: the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:36-43). Our Lord identified the field as the world; He said, "The harvest is the end of the age." When does the age end? "The Son of man

shall send forth his angels"—when? Not until the end of the age. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." (See also Matt. 24:31.)

Look now at the parable of the virgins (Matt. 25). The bridegroom came at last. When did he come? At midnight. How did he come? "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh." Who heard it? The wise and the foolish virgins; "All those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." The bridegroom did not come secretly, but publicly; and it was at His coming that they bethought them of their folly, and tried to get oil—but it was too late, and the door was shut; nor was the door ever opened again.

There is also the parable of the talents, of the man, who, travelling to a far country, divided his property among his servants. When the lord of those servants returned, how many knew of his return? Just the faithful? No. They all knew; he reckoned with all his servants, not with the faithful only.

So of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations"—I know that by some that is relegated to a particular time and place, to a judgment of the nations. Be it so, for the sake of argument. He comes with power and great glory, and all His holy angels with Him, and there is nothing to indicate that He had come secretly to the faithful before, for both the righteous and the wicked are summoned to his judgment bar.

There are passages in which the Lord's coming is described as the coming of a thief. (Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39; I Thess. 5:2-5; Rev. 3:3; 16:15). I examined those passages again this afternoon, and in every instance the simile is used to mark the unexpectedness of his coming. "If the goodman of the house had known *in what watch* the thief would come, he would have watched." Behold, I come as a thief", said our Lord. It does not mean that He comes secretly. Every passage which so describes His coming relates to the suddenness and unexpectedness of His coming. He comes when nobody expects Him. Another passage in the first epistle of Peter speaks of the day of the Lord coming "as a thief in the night," but says the heavens shall pass away "with a great noise." The purpose of each of these is to teach us, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Are you among those who "love his appearing"? I do not want the Lord Jesus to come secretly. I have been a minister for a few years now, and I never was in favour of secret marriages. I rather like to see a young man when his heart is given to some young woman, walk proudly down the aisle of the church, as though he would like all the world to know that he is proud of his choice. When the day of the marriage comes it is the one day when bride and groom like to have all their friends around them; that is a time when they want everybody to rejoice together with them.

Jesus Christ is the divine Bridegroom. Some day He is coming for His bride, and I believe He will come in such a way, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, that all the universe shall know that at last the great hour has struck, when the Prince of glory has come to claim the purchase of His blood. What a happy day

that will be for all who love His appearing when Jesus Christ shall thus come. Let us look for the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Permit me to add this word. I discuss this question in no contentious spirit; and if any of you know of any scripture anywhere which supports the opposite theory, please write me. I have not been able to find it in my Bible. Do not write and say, "It is so". Do not write and say, "Dr. So and So says so." Give me the plain unmistakable Scripture which teaches it. I have met many of the foremost "Bible teachers" of the continent. I have put that question to some of them again and again, and I have never met one of them yet who could say anything but that *it is so*. What I desire to discover is, Where in His Word does God say that Christ will first come for His saints and afterwards with His saints?

Next Sunday evening we shall consider whether the rapture precedes or follows the tribulation. May the Lord bless all His people for His name's sake.

THE RED HEIFER AND THE SMITTEN ROCK.

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

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Tuesday Evening, April 21st, 1932.

Twenty-second in a Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on Biblical Theology, which are included in the Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

(Stenographically Reported)

Lecture Text: Numbers 19 and 20.

A ripple, at least, upon the surface of Baptist life in England has recently been produced by an article in *The Times*, London, by Dr. T. Reavley Glover, of Cambridge, in which he makes a virulent attack upon—I was going to say upon C. H. Spurgeon, but as he died in eighteen hundred and ninety-two, it would be more correct to say that Dr. Glover's attack was upon the great body of truth which evangelicals the world around for now nearly three-quarters of a century have identified with the name of Spurgeon. By that I mean that C. H. Spurgeon's testimony to the cardinal principles of Evangelical Christianity was so clear, consistent, and convincing, that the name of Spurgeon became a synonym for evangelicalism. Toward the close of the article which appeared in *The Times*, Dr. Glover expresses the earnest wish that ministers would leave the Old Testament alone, and not preach from the Old Testament. One might as well suggest that people do without the sun. Personally, however, I find a little comfort in the situation created by Dr. Glover's attack in the reflection—and I think I am right in assuming it—that when Dr. Glover has been forty years in his grave nobody will take the trouble to attack him. Long, long before that the world will have forgotten that he ever lived.

We, in this place, believe the Old Testament. The Old Testament is just as certainly the word of God as the New, and whoever—as I have told you a hundred times, if not a thousand—whoever dispenses with the Old Testament must, of necessity, surrender the New. They stand or fall together. The roots of the New are in the Old.

We have here a very interesting chapter, the nineteenth of Numbers, which once again reminds us of the dreadfulness, the awfulness, of the divine holiness. I use those words advisedly. I hope you students will learn how not

to employ the word "awful". Things are not "awfully" pretty. That is "awful" which fills one with awe, as one of our hymns has it, "This awful God is ours."

I.

Here again this chapter shows how exacting God is respecting the purity of those who approach Him. It has to do with the offering of a red heifer. It differs from other sacrifices in many respects. It had to be red. Matthew Henry quotes a tradition among the Jews to the effect that if so many as two black hairs were found, the heifer was rejected; it must be red.

And it must be without blemish. It was slain as other sacrifices were slain, but not at the altar: it was slain without the camp. Parts of other sacrifices were burned without the camp, but this whole offering was taken without the camp. There it was slain, and there it was burned to ashes. Then the ashes were gathered, and carefully preserved.

Another curious thing about it was that all who had any part in presenting this sacrifice were themselves reckoned to be unclean, those who slew the sacrifice, and the one who gathered the ashes. Another interesting feature was that the heifer was to be one that had never borne the yoke.

Still another special requirement was that it was not to be offered by Aaron himself, but by Eleazar his son. Then the ashes gathered after the heifer was burned were laid up before the tabernacle, and they were mingled, on certain occasions, with running water. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times.

What is the meaning of those provisions? We must not be content with the use of our imaginations, but see what the New Testament has to say. Let me read: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats—mark—"and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Let me turn aside from my subject for a moment, to remind you that that is one of the strongest of New Testament texts in support of the substitutionary work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that the cross is retroactive, that Christ died for "the transgressions that were under the first covenant," and that even those who died without seeing Christ, or, without having opportunity of believing "the record that God has given us of his Son", but who simply accepted the incomplete disclosure of God, and of His purposes through the messages of the prophets—that even they share in the benefits of the death of Christ. That for ever puts an end to the theory of the mere moral influence of the atonement, and, equally, to the example theory; because He died to pay the debts

of those who, in faith in that Sacrifice that was yet to be offered, died "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth".

Remember that text. It is aside from my subject to-night, but, quoting it in another connection, I remind you it is one of the strongest in the New Testament that it is on the ground of the substitutionary character of Christ's death "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance".

But to return to our subject, we may conclude, on the authority of the New Testament, that this sacrifice of the red heifer is really designed to be typical of the sacrifice of our Lord, "who through the eternal Spirit offered himself", an offering by fire; and that the purpose of it all was the purging of our consciences "from dead works to serve the living God".

Let us look at that for a moment, and immediately the significance of the red heifer will appear. It will come to your mind at once. It was because he was of the red earth that Adam was so named. And our Lord Jesus is described as the "second Adam". He was red in His apparel. He was without blemish. He voluntarily yielded Himself, for no yoke had been put upon Him. In the head of the book it was written of Him, "Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God."

He suffered without the camp. He offered Himself; and as the heifer was consumed by fire, so did our Lord Jesus through the eternal Spirit offer Himself to God. There was no reserve. Notwithstanding His absolute perfection, because He stood in our room and stead, He bore our reproach, and suffered without the gate.

You will immediately, I am sure, recall the saying of Peter on the day of Pentecost, speaking of Jesus, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Those who crucified the Lord, who had part—any part—in bringing Him to the cross, bore the guilt of their own sin. They were unclean.

Yet all that the red heifer typified was really represented in the ashes which were gathered and treasured in the tabernacle. The blood was sprinkled. It is said in Hebrews, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." There is treasured up in Christ such resources of merit and power that we may share in the purification which God's abounding grace has provided for unclean sinners.

What is the work of Christ? He died to atone for our sin. Is that all? Did Jesus Christ die only to save us from the punishment of sin? Surely His death accomplished more than that. If a man of criminal record is brought to book in a court of law, and is found guilty, there is no means whereby, under any human system, he can be freed: he must pay the penalty. But suppose the penalty could be paid for him—what then? Is he, without a change of nature, without any change of disposition, to be set at liberty? Is he to be released still further to prey upon his fellows? Something more must be done for him, and for the community to which he belongs than the mere remission of the penalty. Something must be done, not only *for* him, but *in* him; or his reformation will be incomplete.

All the people who had any part in this offering were

esteemed unclean. In the latter part of the chapter there is reference especially to those who came in contact with the dead. Death is the last result of sin: "The wages of sin is death." Even to touch it is to share its pollution. And those who, in a figure, were already partakers of that which has issue in death, and are therefore ceremonially unclean, may be purified and cleansed only as the efficacy, or that which is representative of the sum-total of the efficacy of this sacrifice, is communicated to them. So the ashes of the heifer were sprinkled in the running water, and the running water was communicated to the unclean person, and he was reckoned to be clean.

I take it that the whole work of redemption, which involves the payment of the penalty, the impartation of a new life, the regeneration of the one dead in trespasses and sins, the recreation of one who has thus by sin been slain and is therefore unclean, but is quickened by the Holy Spirit—the whole process of sanctification, "the washing of water by the word",—for "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"—all this is represented in the ashes of an heifer. The word of God is like the running stream, the cleansing tide: "Where withal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word"; "Now ye are clean", said the Lord, "through the word which I have spoken unto you."

The payment of sin's debt; the regeneration, the new birth of the soul; the impartation of the very life of God to us; and then that gradual process, the putting off of the "old man", and the putting on of the new; the illuminating of the understanding, the instruction of the judgment, the impartation of spiritual knowledge, the—what shall I say? it is more than inculcation: the incorporation of the gospel into our very thinking, until it becomes part of our moral fibre—all this is here set out in a figure. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The whole plan of redemption, every element in it, finds its culmination, its climax, in the resurrection of the body and the perfecting of our spirits as we are at last presented without fault before the throne of God. All that, the virtues of it, the justification for it—how shall I put it?—the ethical harmony of it, the harmonizing of all these principles which are blended into the white light of the divine holiness, just as all the colours of the solar spectrum are blended into the whiteness and glory of a sunbeam, all these things have their base, and source, and rise, and justification, in Him Who is our Saviour.

"If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh"—if thus they had some ceremonial value—"how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Surely we do not need to be extravagant or excessive in our imaginings to see in that nineteenth chapter a pre-intimation, a prophetic delineation, of the whole scheme of divine redemption. Let me give you students advice exactly opposite to that of Dr. Glover. I hope you will know the Old Testament so thoroughly that you will find the gospel on every page, and in every verse; and that

you will see that this Bible is one and indivisible—the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.

I have given you but the briefest sketch, the details of it you must work out for yourselves. I remind you only, that this was to be a perpetual statute unto them. The ashes of the heifer were saved up, so to speak, and held in readiness for use. So everything that you need to make you the kind of Christian God has designed you shall be is awaiting your appropriation in Christ Jesus the Lord, Who is our Sacrifice, our Tabernacle, our Mercy-seat, our High Priest—our All-and-in-all. He “hath given unto us all things that pertain”—not unto worldly prominence or prosperity, but—“all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” Therefore are we left without excuse.

II.

A word about the twentieth chapter. “Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh.” That must not be confused with Kadesh-Barnea which they reached perhaps thirty-eight years before, and from which they were turned back again into the wilderness. This is another Kadesh, not far from Kadesh-Barnea. After thirty-eight years of wandering they are now being divinely directed once again toward the land of promise, and to the possession of the inheritance promised their fathers.

How merciful our God is to give us a second Kadesh! How great is His mercy toward us! Did you ever arrive at a place in life a second time? Did you? Did you ever arrive and feel, I have been here before? So also in your spiritual life, having missed a blessing that was almost within your grasp, perhaps after years of living at a poor dying rate, God, in His mercy, brings you again to the place where you get a glimpse of the promised land, and once again He inspires you with a desire to cross the river.

“And Miriam died there.” We do not publish many obituary notices in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, but I remember a certain Baptist paper whose Editor was greatly tried by the length of obituary notices submitted. When somebody died in a certain district—Mary Jones, Robert Smith, or somebody else, an obituary notice that would fill a page was sent in, telling where he or she was born, where he went to school, and all about it, to the last detail.

I think your essay for this quarter is to be limited to five hundred words. What a nuisance it is to have to condense things! How much easier it is to say a thing in a hundred words than in a sentence! But when we send telegrams we have to learn to say much in a few words. If you would learn the art of condensation, study the Bible.

Who was Miriam? She was the older sister of two of the most famous men of all history. Apparently, so far as we are able to gather from the record, it was she who stood afar off to watch the babe in the ark of bulrushes. When the wife of the Levite could no longer hide him, she made an ark of bulrushes and put him among the flags by the river, and his sister stood afar off to see what would become of him. It was Miriam who, when Pharaoh's daughter saw the tear on the child's face, went to her and said, “Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?” Receiving her consent, she called Moses' own mother, and the princess said, “Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.” All

mothers deserve wages, but few receive any. Moses' mother did, but Miriam was responsible for it.

Later Moses, because of his being in the king's house, had been trained “in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds”. When at last God's ordaining hand had been laid upon him, and he had been put at the head of God's people, and had brought them through the Red Sea, it was Miriam who sounded her timbrel, and led in the singing, “Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.” Miriam was a really great woman. She had the defects of her qualities, and later became jealous of the very man she had helped to make, and sided with Aaron against Moses, and was temporarily made a leper. Notwithstanding, Miriam was very active and influential in the life of Israel.

Now Moses is nearing the end of his earthly pilgrimage, and Aaron too, for he died before Moses; therefore Miriam must have had far more than a century of history behind her. She was a tremendously important factor in the life of God's people, but this is all the Divine Biographer said of her, “Miriam died there, and was buried there.” Seven words! In this case I do not object to those who lay such stress on the figure seven; I call that a perfect obituary,—seven words.

That ought to be enough for any of us. If you have lived your life, and have done your work, and have been a factor in the world's affairs, it makes no difference whether you receive extensive notice when you die or not.

“And there was no water for the congregation.” How monotonously it recurs! One feels almost like apologizing for calling attention to it—and I would not do it if I were not speaking to prospective preachers. “There was no water for the congregation.” They had had water miraculously provided these thirty-eight years: “They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ”, the rock at Rephidim. But now, for some reason, perhaps because they had been in a region where water was found naturally, the supernatural supply was stayed; for God is very economical in His use of the miraculous. When the corn of the land appeared, the manna ceased. Perhaps the supernatural supply of water ceased because it could be found naturally. In any case, there is now no water; and they gather themselves together to go and look for it, to dig wells? No, they did not! They gather themselves together against Moses and Aaron: “The people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord!”

What an aggregation of babies they were! What a lot of the baby there is in all of us! How easy it is for us to complain! “Why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.” And it was all the fault of Moses and Aaron!

Let me tell you pastors something. Put it down in your note book, and put your note book somewhere where you cannot lose it; the best place to put it is in your head. I hope you have that full of pegs and hooks so that the things you learn will stay there. Remember this principle when you become pastors of churches: if the finances fail, it will be your fault. If people do not go to church,

it will be your fault. If anybody gets so wrapped up in the world that he has no time for the Lord's work, and therefore stays away from church, he will be sure to say it is because of you. It will make no difference what happens in the church at any time, or who does it, in the end Moses and Aaron will be blamed. Can you stand it? If you cannot, get out of the ministry; because Moses was thus blamed and you must expect to be. After a while you will half enjoy being the target of everybody's darts.

It is almost a coarse illustration, but it comes to me at the moment. I was talking to the students about the faculty of observation, and told them of being in a certain city. I walked uptown to spend an hour between trains, and as I was walking up the street I saw, from the sidewalk, a thing that I thought at first was a shooting-gallery. It was not, however, but a place where men were paying five cents to throw balls. Yonder at the end there was a man with a black face, presumably a negro. He put his head up, and as one after another threw a ball, he dodged them. But he kept smiling all the time. I do not know what he would have done if one of the throwers had succeeded in hitting him.

There will be plenty of people who will throw things at you. Do not let that negro beat you: laugh at it! When they blame you, take it as a compliment.

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and prayed. Once again we have the same story. I have reminded you of it again and again. When people blame you, do not argue with them. And above all things, do not waste your time trying to defend yourself. Moses did not say, "I am not to blame." He did not whine about it. He and Aaron had a prayer-meeting; they talked to the Lord about it, and asked the Lord to forgive these foolish people. That is the way to do. In that particular, take Moses as your example.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

Read the one hundred and sixth Psalm, and observe that Moses was downright angry at last. They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he "spake inadvisedly with his lips".

You will have enough as preachers to provoke you, and you will very often be like Jonah and say, "I do well to be angry." It is easy to pity ourselves. I have done it myself. I do not see why people should blame me for everything. I cannot help the colour of your hair, the clothes you wear, or the sermons you preach. There will be many ills for which you will be in no wise responsible, but for which you will be blamed. You will be inclined to be angry, and it will be very easy to justify your anger, very easy, by any human standard. Moses could have said, "I gave up everything in Egypt for this people. I suffered with them forty years when I might have been a prince in Egypt, with all the wealth of Egypt at my disposal. I have endured everything at their hands, and

all I ever get is this constant complaining. It is about time I was getting angry."

Did you ever feel like that? I have. I fear we are sometimes too prone to excuse ourselves on the ground of the failings of great men. It is possible to justify one's ill humour by the example of even great men. Discerning the particular weakness of one you can say, "He did it."

Many people are very fond of referring to Elijah—under the juniper tree; and others who say, "Moses is a great example to me. He became angry." That does not justify our bad temper, nor a short temper either. We must not attempt to justify our delinquencies by comparing ourselves with some great outstanding personality who was great in spite of his shortcomings, not because of them. Do not take any man as an example: you will copy his vices and not his virtues.

"Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice." I do not know whether it was because he smote the rock that God was displeased. I know the other time when he brought water out of the rock, the Lord told him to smite it; but now the Lord told him to speak to the rock. Instead of being content to speak to the rock he called the people together and smote it twice, and "the water came out abundantly". It seemed as though the Lord said, "You shall be my mouthpiece. Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water." Instead of that, he smote it.

Whatever be the cause, Moses and Aaron on that occasion grievously sinned against the Lord, and grieved the Lord. I said this was a second Kadesh, but it was a second Meribah, the water of striving, too.

Is it not a pity that a man should repeat at the end of his life the faults of his youth? How sad it is that a man at sixty, though a Christian, is too often as great a grumbler as at twenty! Why does he not leave Meribah behind him? Why is not one experience of that sort enough? Remember, you will never be out of the woods until you are out of the world. You will never be free from temptation until you leave this tabernacle. You may have left one Meribah, but there is another one coming.

How sad it is that men of such splendid qualities as Moses and Aaron should thus have fallen! The Bible admits that it was the people who provoked them to it, and that God was angry with them for the people's sakes. Read the one hundred and sixth Psalm. Whatever be the reason, in the late evening of life this greatest of all men showed that he was still subject to human frailties, and that he displeased the Lord. The "old man" in Moses was not eradicated! And if Moses thus late in life stumbled, then "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall". If Moses offended, we may offend too.

From the viewpoint of those who are called to positions of leadership, be it always remembered that the murmurings and complainings, the frailties, and even the wickedness of others, can never excuse us. We may be provoked beyond endurance almost, but God will hold us to account in spite of it all. The Lord said to Moses, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Neither Moses nor Aaron ever set foot upon the soil of the promised land.

I spoke to you a few weeks ago about the temptation to resign. Do you remember? Do not allow yourselves

at any time, no matter how important your position may be, how necessary you may seem to be to a certain situation—never allow yourselves to be puffed up by the devil to think that the Lord cannot get along without you. Here is a most humiliating spectacle. The Lord said, "Moses, I am going to do without you, but I will put Aaron to sleep first. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there." The Lord did not wait for him to resign: He handed him his resignation.

If the Lord could do without Moses and Aaron, I rather think He can get along fairly well without us. Do you not think we had better walk very humbly before Him if He allows us to do anything around the camp? Do not be above being pastor of a small church. Any church is big in God's sight. "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"; "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God." Be careful of them, and never allow yourself to become puffed up.

I believe there is nothing in the world so objectionable to God as human pride. And of all the varieties of pride, ministerial pride, it seems to me, is the most abominable. I do not know how you feel about it, but when I see Mr. Preacher strutting around as though the eyes of all the world were upon him, I want to get out of the back door—or window—as quickly as possible. Take the humble place. Remember how God dispensed with Moses—and Aaron, and Miriam.

We shall see presently the same living Personality, the same commanding, sovereign Voice speaking in the pages of this Book when Moses is dead. We shall hear Him saying, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise." He will bury us all as He has buried countless millions before. He will carry on His work, and will get better workmen who will do His work better than we have ever done it. Therefore let us walk humbly before our God, and count any labour a high and holy privilege which we are permitted to render for Him.

I need not tell you the spiritual significance of the smitten rock. It is still Christ Jesus. It is from Him the water of life flows; albeit it was our sin that smote Him.

LETTER FROM MR. PHILIP MAURO.

A day or so ago we received the following letter from Mr. Philip Mauro, whose name, of course, is known throughout Christendom through his books. Our readers, we are sure, will be glad to read the letter, and our comments thereon. The letter is as follows:

Rev. T. T. Shields,
Toronto, Canada.

Washington, D.C.
April 20th, 1932.

Dear Brother:

I have been, purposing for some time past—"but was let hitherto"—to write you a word of encouragement and of appreciation of the benefit I have been deriving through THE GOSPEL WITNESS. That purpose was strengthened by a visit from our brother, _____ of Hamilton, who, with Mrs. _____, spent a day with us last week and who gave me a heartening account of the firm stand you have been maintaining for the truth of the gospel. So I extend my hearty greetings, with the fervent prayer that He Who is able to make all grace to abound towards you, will be your sufficiency for the fulfilment of this ministry "till He come". Am enclosing my cheque for a year's subscription.

This is as far as it was my purpose to go in writing you

when THE WITNESS for the 14th inst. came into my hands, and the following lines are prompted by what I read therein concerning "a certain gentleman . . . who was converted when rather a mature man". My impression is—perhaps I am wrong—that you were referring to myself and I am confident that many of your hearers and readers will think so too. Upon that assumption, and because I know you do not wish to make misstatements, even in a matter of small consequence, I am impelled to give you some facts which, had you been aware thereof, certain statements in your sermon on "The Lord's Return" would not have been made.

Concerning the unnamed person referred to, you say that after being converted "he immediately began to write books. It is a great mistake for a man to write books too soon after his conversion." You appear to have been very positive of this, and to have attached importance to it; for, after a digression, you repeat the assertion with an added statement which exhibits the unhappy consequences of precipitancy in rushing into print. You say:

"This gentleman of whom I speak wrote books almost immediately after his conversion, and now for some years he has been writing other books correcting the views expressed in his early publications."

It would be embarrassing if some of your hearers were to ask you for the titles and dates of publication of the books which the unnamed person wrote "almost immediately after his conversion", which books—and this is the crux of the matter to me—were such that he spent years of his after life "correcting the views expressed" therein. But as I have no feeling of resentment and no wish to be disagreeable, I merely give you the pertinent facts for such use as you may see fit to make thereof.

I was converted in May, 1903. Shortly thereafter I retired from my professional work and devoted the next twenty (20) years almost exclusively to Bible study. My first two books—if my memory serves me aright and my available records are complete—were, "The World and Its God", and "The Number of Man". The latter was published in 1909. The other preceded it by perhaps a year (I have not the exact date at hand). Shortly thereafter I wrote "Life in the Word", "Evolution at The Bar" and "Ruth, the Satisfied Stranger", which brings us to about 1914. Whether this was "immediately" (or almost) after my conversion, I leave you to say; but the material point is that those early books dealt with subjects I was fairly competent (because of my previous education and training) to discuss, and not with subjects touching which there are differences between those who stand for the fundamentals of the faith. I did not subsequently write books to correct errors therein, or find any reason so to do.

As to the "other books correcting the views expressed in his early publications", I know of none that answer to that description. Probably you had in mind the series of "Kingdom books", in which I have sought to correct what I deem to be an exceedingly serious error, namely, the very modern doctrine that the Kingdom our Lord declared to be "at hand", was the restoration of Jewish nationality, including the hegemony of the world and embracing the temple worship of the old covenant, that He in fact "offered" it to them, that they refused it, that it was thereupon withdrawn and "postponed" till the "millennium", that the gospels are "Jewish", etc., etc. This orthodox modernism I abhor because I believe it to be abhorrent to the Lord; and the kindred doctrine of instant salvation (by sight, not by faith) for the whole Jewish race and world-wide salvation (of some undefined sort) for all men, I regard as "another gospel, which is not another", (against which is pronounced the only "anathema" of the N.T.), and is dangerously akin to Russellism.

My first book on this subject was published in 1918, when I was in my 60th year (not a novice). And the material fact, for the purpose of this letter, is that neither that first volume, nor any of its successors was written to correct errors in earlier books; for I had never published books in advocacy of this modern dispensationalism.

Yours for the truth's sake,
(Signed) Philip Mauro.

We offer Brother Mauro our most abject apology. We are not familiar with his earlier books, but we remember

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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

THE LATEST REPORT FROM STANLEY AVENUE.

Stanley Avenue Church, Hamilton, continues to enjoy a time of special blessing and the Lord is saving souls in that place. Three glorious meetings were held on Sunday, April 24th, and at the evening service more than a thousand people were in attendance at the Church. Ten followed the Lord in baptism and a number responded to the invitation for consecration, baptism and church membership; twelve others confessed their need of a Saviour and surrendered themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The meetings have been so signally blessed of the Lord that arrangements have been made to continue them for another week and Rev. Anton Cedarholm, the old-fashioned evangelist, and his brother, Hilmor, remain with the Stanley Ave. Church until the 1st of May.

As we go to press, the report comes that blessing continues during the week night services. As the result of the meetings, supported by the prayerful co-operation of the Church, some twenty-five will receive the hand of fellowship next Lord's day morning and others will follow Christ in baptism.

Christians throughout our Convention and prayer helpers in other places are requested to continue in prayer that the great work begun in Stanley Ave. will reverberate to the blessing of others through the new converts and those who have made a new beginning purposing in their hearts to forsake those things which hinder and mar testimony.

Pray for the Stanley Avenue Sunshine Hour over Station CKOC, the Voice of Hamilton. As usual the broadcast will be heard on Saturday evening from nine to nine thirty. The musical program is a splendid one.

ANOTHER NOTE RE NIAGARA FALLS.

The interest in the new cause at Niagara Falls is growing with each service. Sunday last was a happy day as the people met together. Mr. Lumsden of Stanley Avenue Church, Hamilton, had a great time at the Mission preaching the glorious gospel.

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR THE PROGRAMME OF THE GREAT YOUNG PEOPLE'S RALLY AND CONFERENCE

to be held in

JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, TORONTO

Tuesday, May 24th, at 10 a.m.

Plan to Come and Spend the Whole Day.

IMMANUEL CHURCH, HAMILTON.

The fellowship of prayer which is the privilege of "Union Baptist Witness" readers is greatly valued and from the Immanuel Baptist Church, Hamilton, comes a request concerning their special services. Rev. W. E. Atkinson will preach at both services on May 1st and Rev. James McGinley of Central Baptist Church, London, will commence a special campaign on Monday evening, May 2nd.

RUNNYMEDE RD., TORONTO.

From time to time the Lord has visited the Runnymede Road Church, Toronto, with much blessing. It has been the privilege of the Pastor to have seen whole families brought to the Lord and throughout the years witness a good confession. Glorious conversions and righteous lives have been recorded throughout the history of the Runnymede Road Church but one of the greatest ingathering which the church has yet experienced is looked for.

On Sunday, April 24th, when the Pastor preached to good congregations and believers received the strong meat, the evangelistic note was not forgotten and in response to the invitation a mother accepted Christ as Saviour.

At the close of the evening service, the church agreed to invite the Rev. Anton Cedarholm and his brother Hilmor, to conduct a two weeks' series of meetings commencing on Monday, May 2nd and continuing until the 15th.

Through this medium, Runnymede Church requests the prayers of the Lord's people that blessing may attend these special meetings, and an invitation is extended to all who may be able to attend. The services will be held nightly at 7.45 o'clock and on Sundays the services will be at the hours of 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 6.45 p.m. Monday, May 2nd, will be a great musical service when the Lord will be praised through the instruments upon which Mr. Hilmor Cedarholm exercises his musical gift.

The ministry of the Cedarholm brothers has been greatly blessed of God at Stanley Ave. Church, Hamilton, during the past few weeks. Hundreds have attended the services from every part of the city and many have accepted Christ. It is confidently expected that a time of refreshing will be experienced at Runnymede. Pray earnestly to this end with the Pastor and his people.

LETTER FROM MR. PHILIP MAURO.

(Continued from page 11)

that years ago we heard him often quoted by the most pronounced dispensationalists as an oracle. We know that he is not now regarded by men of that school with quite the same favour. We remember also to have read in one of Mr. Mauro's comparatively recent booklets relating to the time of the end—we have been unable to lay our hand upon that booklet at the moment for exact quotation—a statement to the effect that some years ago he could not have written as he now writes, because he had accepted a system of interpretation with which he was now no longer in agreement. These are not his exact words, but they are, as we recall, to the same effect.

We are most happy to publish Mr. Mauro's correction of the statement contained in the sermon to which he refers.

We have very much in common with Brother Mauro, and find ourselves in full agreement with the last paragraph but one of his letter. Mr. Mauro is right in assuming we had in mind chiefly his "series of Kingdom books". We are most grateful for the gracious spirit his letter breathes. We are sorry to have misunderstood, and, to that extent, misrepresented him, in the remark to which he refers. We greatly appreciate also the kind words contained in the first part of the above letter.

We repeat our most humble apology for our mistake in this connection, and we are sure that we already have Brother Mauro's complete forgiveness.