

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.

Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editor: ALEXANDER THOMSON

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

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.
Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 10. No. 52

TORONTO, MAY 12, 1932

Whole No. 521

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE RAPTURE AND THE TRIBULATION.

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

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, Sunday Evening, May 8th, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported)

"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."—Revelation 1:7.

Prayer by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe.

We seek Thy face at this time, gracious Father, because Thy Spirit has impelled us to do so. Were it not that He had wooed and won us, and brought us to Thyself, we should not be in Thy courts to-night, nor seek to praise Thee. We can come only by that way which the Lord Jesus opened up for us through His flesh. Therefore upon Thine own invitation, and in the Way of Thy provision, we come to Thee.

We have the full and certain assurance of our acceptance in the Beloved. We rejoice in that assurance. We should not find it possible to believe that Christ receiveth sinful men were it not that Thy Word guarantees the truth of it, were it not that we know He receives us on the ground of the blood of the everlasting covenant. We rejoice in Thy grace, in that incomparable salvation purchased for us by Jesus Christ.

As we come into Thy presence, quiet our hearts, we beseech Thee. Take from them all strife and turmoil, that as we contemplate Thee, we may know Thy peace, Thy holiness, Thy majesty, Thy love; that in Thy light may we see light. Yea, in Thy presence, O Lord, may we learn to abhor ourselves, to repent deeply of our sin, in order that we may put all our sins under the blood, and know the fulness of Thy divine forgiveness. Let us see our own weakness that it may be made perfect in Thy strength. Let us know that we are as nothing before Thee, that we may be able to do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth us.

As we bow in Thy presence we realize more than ever before that we know not how to pray as we ought. Hear us, therefore, we beseech Thee, not according to our asking merely, but according to the riches of Thy grace in Christ Jesus. Let our very poverty, our impotence of spiritual speech, plead for us to-night, that Thou mayest bestow upon us the fulness of Thy grace.

Especially would we remember those who know not the way of prayer at all, those who feel their need in a special way of divine comfort but know not how to touch even the hem of Thy garment. For those who will not pray for themselves, we pray to-night. We thank Thee that Thou receivest sinful men, that Thou dost never turn away those

who come to Thee. To those who are sad, bring home to-night the assurance that there is no sorrow of earth that Heaven cannot heal. To the lonely, may the fellowship of Thy presence be made real. To those who are distracted with many cares, give Thy guidance. To defeated ones, give Thy victory. Oh, to each of us give Thine own appropriate blessing.

We would remember Thy word as it is preached and taught. We thank Thee that Thou art a God of love Whose unchanging purpose is one of grace and salvation. Therefore when we cry to Thee for the salvation of souls we have the assurance that we pray in accordance with Thy will. Thou dost not desire that any should perish, but that men should turn from their evil way and live. So exercise Thy gracious ministry to-night in the salvation of men. According to Thine own promise, let not Thy word return unto Thee void, but let it accomplish that whereunto Thou dost send it. And unto Thee we shall give all the praise and glory through Him Who died for us, Amen.

In the discussion of our subject this evening I recognize that I am on somewhat delicate ground. It is not often from this pulpit I speak in such a way as to imply that the message is delivered to others beside those who comprise this congregation. I trust you will allow me to keep in mind on this occasion a much larger audience without than this building could possibly accommodate. It may not be known to all of you that many ministers of all denominations read THE GOSPEL WITNESS every week, that the ministers alone on our list could not possibly be accommodated within this building. Frequently we receive requests from ministers for volumes of THE GOSPEL WITNESS back even to the beginning of its publication.

This evening I shall speak with this in view, that in addition to the people who are here, many thousands will read this message,—many of them ministers, many of

them teachers, and not a few of them professors and leaders in various forms of Christian service. I ask you to try to follow me as I speak in a style that is somewhat unusual for a Sunday evening service; and if at any point I seem to any of you to be somewhat abstruse, if here and there I should venture beyond the extent of anyone's intellectual explorations, I trust you will try to accompany me, and, at the same time, resolve that you will do me the kindness of thinking through the sermon when it shall be printed that you may have opportunity to examine every word.

I begin this evening by laying a foundation for my argument. I want you to indulge me if, for a moment or two, my speech be somewhat metaphysical.

All truth, like gold, has a certain intrinsic value. It is valuable because it is true. But all truth is not equal in value. The value of truth is always relative. Its value is determined by the character of the subject to which it is related, by the character of the subject of which it is an integral part.

For example: it may be true that a certain physician specially expert in the treatment of certain diseases lives on the next street. If I am afflicted with a disease he is expert in treating, the truth about that physician will have special value to me personally. If I am free from such disease, if I am perfectly well, and need not a physician, though the truth remains the truth in respect to that man, to me it is a very unimportant truth because I do not need his services; and that particular truth is of value to me only to the extent in which I may be interested in someone else who needs that physician's care. That is the philosophic principle contained in Christ's saying, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

If that were my thesis to-night, *The Relative Value of Truth*, I might survey the whole realm of the physical universe, terrestrial and celestial, and in every category of physical facts I could find illustrations of my thesis, that the value of truth is relative.

I want you to transfer that principle to the spiritual realm. The Bible is a Book of incomparable worth. It is a divine, authoritative, revelation of undiscoverable truth. Nothing in the Bible is unimportant. But not all the truth of the Bible is equally important. Each book of the Bible is invaluable because of its relation to the integrity of the Book as a whole, and yet each book in the Bible is not of precisely the same value. It is all the word of God; it is all divinely inspired; and, therefore, it is all true. But the truth which the Bible contains—or, using the plural form—the truths which the Bible contains are not all of equal value. Every truth of the gospel is precious, but some truths of the gospel are more precious, more valuable, than others.

For example: let us suppose I have to go to Vancouver. I am going on a train that is made up of a number of units: it is a train of many cars. There is a colonist car; there is a day coach, an ordinary first-class day coach; there is a tourist car; there is a Pullman sleeping car. Every one of those cars is important. Even the baggage car is important to the unity of the train; if the coupling of the baggage car should break, you would find out what would happen to the rest.

I have a ticket entitling me to transportation from Toronto to Vancouver, and I have a Pullman ticket into the bargain which entitles me to travel first-class. I go down to the station. It is important to me that I find

my car, the car in which I have a berth reserved for me. What is the truth about that train? That such a car is numbered so-and-so, and my berth is in that car; therefore, I want to find my berth. But it is more important that I find the train than that I find my berth. If the supreme matter be that I get to Vancouver, then the fundamental, the indispensable thing, is that I shall somehow get on the train that is going to Vancouver. Thus when I go to the station, that is my first concern, Which is the Vancouver train? It is better that I should get on the right train on the wrong car, than that I should get in the right kind of car on the wrong train.

I never missed a train but once in my life. I seldom reach the station five or ten minutes beforehand—but sometimes the train waits for me!—but I got to the station on one occasion in time to see the train moving out. The porter said, "Get on anywhere." He threw my bags on, and I got on any car I could catch—but *I was on the train*. After I was safely on the train, I had time to explore the train until I found my car.

Do you see the principle? I hold there is a body of truth revealed in the Word of God that is absolutely indispensable to saving faith. In other words, there is a body of truth which will tell you how to get on the heaven-bound train. That is the main thing, is it not, to be sure you are on the right road? Other matters are less important.

There are certain great truths about the person of Christ that are indispensable to our salvation. For instance, that He is the eternal Son of God; that He died for our sins according to the Scripture; that we are saved by His blood; that He was buried, and that He rose again from the dead; that He is in session at the right hand of God; that He is some day coming again a second time "without sin unto salvation". We must believe the great truth of justification by faith, that we must be born again in order to be saved. Then, of course, we must accept the supreme authority of the Bible as the word of God. These are the heritage of the Christian church; these are the things that are indispensable to faith.

There are other things that are important. For instance: there is my Episcopalian brother. He believes in the doctrine of apostolic succession. He believes that he has derived his authority straight from the apostles, at the tip of the Bishop's finger. Because of that, he would not allow me in his pulpit; I am only a layman, I am not in "holy orders", I have no apostolic authority. It is all fudge to me, and does not disturb me a little bit. But I am not going to quarrel with him because he cherishes that figment of the imagination, apostolic succession. If he will not let me into his pulpit, he is welcome to come to mine if he will preach the gospel.

There are our Presbyterian brethren, with their Presbyterian form of government and their practice of infant sprinkling. I do not believe in either of them, but here is a Presbyterian brother who believes in the great verities of the faith, and is a sound Christian man who preaches the gospel with all his heart. All right, brother; you may come and preach for me any time you like. I think these other matters are not unimportant, but they are less important than the fundamental, vital thing.

So of our United Church brethren, and all the rest of them. So long as they believe in those indispensable elements which relate to the person of Christ and His work in behalf of sinners, and are partakers in it all by simple faith, I give them the right hand of fellowship

and say, "God bless you, brother. The Lord will forgive you all the rest if you preach the gospel"—and I suppose they would say the same to me.

The men who hold to the verities of the faith are on the heaven-bound train. They are on the same train, though they do not ride in my car. We are going the same way, and I am willing to have fellowship with them, and, incidentally, to go down and have a chat with them, and show them my Pullman ticket, and do the best I can to persuade them to come with me and ride in a first-class Baptist Pullman car!

If that be true, surely in respect to these other matters which I have been discussing, while they are important, very important, yet I do not think they are indispensable to faith. I can conceive of somebody's being saved through simple faith in Christ, though he never heard there was to be a rapture of the church. I have no hesitation in believing that multitudes can be saved without having heard of the great tribulation, and personally I am confident there are thousands in glory who never heard of many things that are in the Scofield Bible—nor do I think they have heard of them yet.

I want to deal with those matters this evening, so I repeat what I said last Sunday night—and you will see why I deal with these matters presently—that my dear friend, Dr. Pettingill, who has occupied this pulpit often, is welcome to occupy it any time he comes to Toronto. I love him; I believe in him; I know he loves the Lord, and preaches the gospel. He believes many things that I do not believe, but I see no reason why we should not have the sweetest fellowship one with the other in spite of some differences.

In *The Evangelical Christian* there is an article by Dr. Pettingill, entitled, "Will the Church Pass Through the Great Tribulation?" In the opening of the article he refers to several letters; with them I need not concern myself, but come directly to his argument. Let me read the first few paragraphs:

"Let us now look at the Second Psalm, which by its quotation seven separate times in the New Testament, and its application there to Christ, is indubitably proven to be Messianic"—with which statement we are in perfect agreement. We continue the quotation:

"The Psalm opens with a tumultuous scene, in which the nations rage and the peoples imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against His Christ (see Acts 4:12).

"What is this 'vain thing' imagined by these rebels against God and His Son? Hear them saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us'. They vainly imagine that they are able to rid themselves of the power and authority of High Heaven. (It is true that this had a slight fulfilment in connection with the first advent of Christ, as shown in Acts 4; but the complete fulfilment awaits the end-time, as is perfectly evident.)"

You remember when they came out of prison they prayed, saying, "Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of thy servant David has said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Thus in the opposition to the gospel in apostolic days inspired apostles recognized a fulfilment

of that prophecy. We are on solid ground there, about which there can be no difference of opinion. We continue the quotation of Dr. Pettingill's article:

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision' (verse 4). His laugh is not yet heard; His derision is not yet manifest; He remains silent. But one day the silence shall be broken. 'Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure' (5). This points, as we shall see, straight toward The Great Tribulation. For it is immediately followed by this:

"Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion' (6). You see? The time of His vexation and sore displeasure upon the nations is just before His King takes His seat upon the throne of David in Zion."

Thus "speaking to them in his wrath" is identified as the "great tribulation", which immediately precedes the enthronement of Christ. The tense does not say so. Notwithstanding all this which admittedly began in apostolic times as the apostles said—notwithstanding all that, God said, "Yet have I." Not, "Will I"; nor, "Do I now"; but "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

Then Dr. Pettingill continues his quotation:

"I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel' (7, 8).

"The establishment of Christ's reign over the nations, and His destruction of all the Kingdoms of the world, to replace them with His own Kingdom (observe Dr. Pettingill's assertion) it is seen again, follows immediately upon The Great Tribulation, in which Jehovah speaks to the nations in His wrath and vexes them with His sore displeasure."

For many years I have been reading the second Psalm. I have read it hundreds of times. Thirty years ago I could say it backwards and forwards, and every other way—but I never saw anything in it to indicate that the church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation: I do not see it now. I cannot see that it has any direct relation to the particular subject in hand. But our author begins to establish this strange theory by going back to the Psalms. Instead of taking the plain, unmistakable teaching of the New Testament, and going back into the Old Testament with that, he begins with the second Psalm, with certain assumptions which the plain words of the text cannot be made exegetically to justify.

I want you all at your convenience to take the second Psalm, divest your mind of all preconceptions, read it carefully before the Lord, and see if, left to yourselves, without any suggestion from anybody else, you would ever have found the pre-tribulation rapture theory in the second Psalm. Whoever can find it there, it seems to me, can find it anywhere. The point is, Jehovah speaks to the people in His wrath, and our writer is going to identify the "day of wrath", or "the wrath to come", and he finds it in the second Psalm.

Dr. Pettingill continues:

"Now let us look at Jer. 30:4-7, where we have another picture of The Great Tribulation, with the people of Israel as the chief sufferers in that awful time: 'And these are the words that Jehovah spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith Jehovah: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.'"

Will you put that down in your mind, Jeremiah, verses one to seven of chapter thirty, so that you may study it afterward?

"Here again The Great Tribulation is immediately followed by the setting up of the Kingdom: 'They shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them' (v. 9)."

Dr. Pettingill simply makes the assertion, in the first place, that God's speaking to the nations in His wrath predicted in the second Psalm, and now "the time of Jacob's trouble"—that both these references are to a Great Tribulation yet future. But there is nothing to support it. It is simply an assertion that such is the fact, unsupported by any scriptural argument.

Let us go farther.

"The 12th of Daniel is our next Scripture: 'And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy (Daniel's) 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' (verse 1).

"The correspondence between this and the passage from Jeremiah is obvious. There cannot be more than one such time of trouble as is described in both passages. Jeremiah says, 'there is none like it', and Daniel says 'such as never was'. Both are speaking of the same time, and that time is the time of The Great Tribulation, when God will speak to the race in His wrath."

I point out to you that there is not a word in the passage from Jeremiah about God's speaking to the people in His wrath. There is not a word in the passage from Daniel about God's speaking to His people in His wrath. There is no suggestion of it. It speaks of a time of great trouble. We have a time of minor trouble now; it is a time of great distress. Who is responsible for it? Has the earth failed to yield its fruit? Has there been any what is ordinarily called, "act of God"? Has there been earthquake or pestilence? The earth has yielded her fruits. We cannot see that God has done anything particularly to bring this distress upon us: the only thing He has done is to leave men to their own devices, perhaps; but there is no divine interposition anywhere that has brought about the present distress. But it is a time of trouble.

Leave man to himself, and he can make trouble enough. Let a man have the devil's help, and he can make still more trouble. But there is nothing in the passage in Jeremiah to say that it is the time of God's special wrath: it is the time of Jacob's trouble. There is nothing in Daniel which says it is the time of God's special wrath. But Dr. Pettingill says,

"Both are speaking of the same time, and that time is the time of The Great Tribulation, when God will speak to the race in His wrath."

I turn to my friend, Dr. Pettingill, and say, Will you not be good enough to give us one little bit of proof for your statement? So far, it is merely assertion, without any scriptural authority at all.

Let us look further:

"Notice, too, that The Great Tribulation, as seen in Daniel 12, is followed immediately by a resurrection, after which the saved are to be glorified: 'The wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament'. This corresponds with other passages showing the order of events, and in these other passages these events are related to the Second Advent of Christ, and the setting up of the Kingdom (see for example, Rev. 7:9-14; 19:11 to 20:6)."

What Dr. Pettingill is attempting to prove is that the church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation, and will not pass through it; and one of his proof-texts is the twelfth chapter of Daniel, verses one and two: "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. 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."

What I point out to you is this, that neither in Jeremiah nor in Daniel is there the slightest allusion to the church. It is not mentioned: it has not that in view. It has nothing to do with the rapture of the church.

Furthermore, *the only resurrection mentioned in Daniel is after the time of trouble, not before.* How many resurrections are we to have? Shall we base our view of the resurrection upon that passage in Daniel, apart from the New Testament?

Dr. Pettingill says that both Jeremiah and Daniel refer to the Great Tribulation as the time "when God will speak in His wrath". Neither of them says so. I wonder if you have ever had to do with a peculiar type of conversationalist? You are talking to Mr. So-and-So, and you are relating something—but he breaks in, anticipating what you were going to say, and finishes it for you. But you say, "That is not what I was going to say." There are people whose minds travel far faster than yours, and they take things out of your mouth, as they suppose—whereas they put something into your mouth that you never intended to say.

Why do men read into Scripture that which is not there? Read those passages, the thirtieth of Jeremiah and the twelfth of Daniel. How many resurrections are there? According to Dr. Pettingill's theory, the rapture takes place at the resurrection: "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The resurrection, and the coming of Christ, and the rapture of the church, are simultaneous; so that the righteous dead will rise, and those who are alive and remain shall be changed, and together they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. That is one resurrection. But this resurrection in Daniel takes place after the period of trouble. What resurrection? There is one resurrection at the coming of Christ. Then, according to this theory, at the end of the tribulation there will be the resurrection of the tribulation saints, and then at the end of the millennium there will be still another resurrection—how many resurrections are there to be?

Dr. Pettingill says:

"Let us now look at Mt. 24:21, where our Lord says: 'For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be'. He is speaking of the same Tribulation as Daniel 12, and Jeremiah 30, and Psalm 2. It is The Great Tribulation, the time when God will speak to the world in His wrath. It is 'the wrath to come'."

We are told the second Psalm, the thirtieth chapter of Jeremiah, and the twelfth of Daniel, all refer to the same thing as the twenty-fourth of Matthew, the Great Tribulation. "It is 'the wrath to come'." Here are

repeated assertions without a vestige of scriptural proof. I affirm that it is nothing of the kind. The Great Tribulation and "the wrath to come" are two very different matters: *tribulation* is from man and devils; "the wrath to come" is the righteous judgment of God.

"And in Mt. 24, as in the other passages referred to, The Great Tribulation is immediately followed by the Second Coming of Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom. See verse 29: 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory'. And the setting up of the throne is described in the next chapter (25:31).

"This language of our Lord ought to suffice to silence the argumentations of those who insist that The Great Tribulation 'is passed already'. This cannot be, for 'immediately after the tribulation' His coming in glory is scheduled. We have not yet reached The Great Tribulation, nor, please God, shall we."

That is another question: understand I am not now discussing what is involved in the great tribulation, but only Dr. Pettingill's assertion that it must follow the rapture of the church. The question before us now is the relation of the great tribulation to the second advent and the rapture of the church.

Let me read a further interesting passage from Dr. Pettingill's article:

"Let us now go to First Thessalonians. In the first chapter, verses 9 and 10, the Apostle reminds the Christians to whom he writes that they have 'turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come'. This 'wrath to come', as we have seen, is the Great Tribulation."

Dr. Pettingill says, "This 'wrath to come,' as we have seen, is the Great Tribulation." I should like to say to my friend, You may have seen it, but I have not yet seen that "the wrath to come" and the "great tribulation" are one and the same.

Dr. Pettingill continues:

"Again, in the fifth chapter, verses 9-11, we read: 'For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do'."

Do you observe that what Dr. Pettingill has been aiming at in his argument so far is to identify the Great Tribulation with the "wrath to come"? Do you see that? Dr. Pettingill says the Great Tribulation is "the wrath to come". Let us examine the Scriptures on that point.

Let us take the word of John the Baptist. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism he said unto them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the"—Great Tribulation? Did he say that? No! "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Would it ever occur to you, reading that passage, that John had special reference to the Great Tribulation, whatever that is, and to the time of Jacob's trouble?

Here is another passage (John 3:36): "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." What relation has that to the Great Tribulation?

Millions such have died in their sin, and will not experience resurrection until after the Great Tribulation.

Look at Romans one, and sixteen—this is not a sermon: it is an examination of Scripture; that is what sermons ought to be, I suppose—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"—and then, antithetically, in opposition to that—"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

The wrath of God! The wrath to come! Terrible, unspeakably awful, as the Great Tribulation must be, or must have been, "the wrath to come" is something infinitely worse than that. It is the anger of an outraged God Who summons all the earth to judgment. That is "the wrath to come". It is not meted out by the hand of Antichrist, but by the hand of God Himself.

Romans two, verse four and five: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." That is something bigger than the Great Tribulation.

Once again: Ephesians two, verse three, speaks of believers who "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Does that mean, heirs of the Great Tribulation? Then there is the parallel passage in John three, thirty-six: "The wrath of God abideth on him." Ephesians, five and six: "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." And to the same effect in Colossians three, six: "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians; commending them for having "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which"—not shall deliver, but—"which delivered us from the wrath to come." That has no relation to the Great Tribulation: it is the final reckoning, the great assize at the hand of God. If the "wrath to come" be the Great Tribulation, tell me how shall we describe that awful thing set forth in the Scripture which speaks of their being cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone—"This is the second death." What is that? That is the wrath to come! That is the wrath to come!

I have not time to examine this evening that mysterious book of Revelation, for I am answering Dr. Pettingill's argument, but I repeat a principle—you may accept it or not—that these highly symbolical passages must be interpreted in the light of the plain and unmistakable teaching of Scripture, and not the reverse, for you will find hundreds of differing interpretations of Revelation. There are many elements in the horrible suffering which comes upon the earth through the beast and false prophet, when Satan is let loose. I have a conviction that the day will come when we shall know these things unmistakably.

Frankly, if you ask me for a dogmatic, a final, interpretation of a book like Revelation, I say, I cannot give it to you. I have read books on the book of Revelation

until they have made my head swim, written by godly men. It is part of the word of God, and some day we shall understand it. I know some of you will tell me you have the interpretation in the Scofield Bible. Therein lies the danger. It is a vaster question than can be settled by a few footnotes, let me tell you.

Here my good friend says:

"How could a faithful and righteous God subject the Church, which is the body of Christ, to such a visitation of His wrath? He could not, for, in His reckoning, Christ and His body the Church, on the cross of Calvary, have already once endured His wrath to the uttermost."

Jesus Christ did not die to save us merely from the troubles of the Great Tribulation. When He went into the outer darkness for you and me, and "tasted death for every man", it was to save us from something more than the terrors of the Great Tribulation. He became the Author, not of salvation from the Great Tribulation: He became the Author of eternal salvation. His salvation saves us, not from seven years of trouble: it is an eternal salvation and saves us from everlasting punishment.

I must show you to what that argument leads. If it be true that believers cannot pass through the great tribulation because Jesus Christ has suffered the wrath of God for them, and if we are to judge God on that principle, where would it lead us? What about Stephen? Stoned to death! And even as the stones were falling he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Was God cruel to let Stephen die?

I read years ago of a debate between a Christian minister and an atheist. I do not commend the minister for taking part in the debate, but the atheist referred to Stephen as a typical case and said, "What did your God do for Stephen, His faithful servant?" To which the minister replied, "He enabled him to say, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'"

I read to you last Sunday evening that Dr. Pettingill himself says that at the rapture "all who have fallen asleep in Christ, including all the saved of all the ages", will be raised at the time of Christ's coming. Let me read from Hebrews: "And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Before the canon of Scripture was closed, this inspired writer reviewed the history of the saints of God and said, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder", and all the rest of it. Do you tell me that God was unrighteous, that He was unkind, in permitting His people to suffer so?

In another place Dr. Pettingill says that a loving Bridegroom could not allow His bride to suffer. But He *has* allowed her to suffer! Is it not proverbial that the blood of the martyrs—it is not scripture, but it is true—that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church? Millions have died for the faith since the canon of Scripture was

closed. Have you ever been in the Tower of London? Have you seen the instruments of torture there preserved?—the rack and the thumb-screws. They are horrible to contemplate. One wonders how the human mind could ever give such place to the devil as to invent such things. And yet, by such means, and in the name of religion, the true saints of God have been tortured and torn to pieces, from Stephen's day until now.

I will not allow you to say that my God is not righteous. I challenge the statement that the Divine Bridegroom does not love His bride. Why should He be especially solicitous for those who happen to be alive and remain during the tribulation? If the Great Tribulation be future, and is to last but seven years, they would be few in comparison with the countless millions who will, by then, have fallen asleep in Christ; the righteous dead will form the greater part of the bride—and countless thousands of them died for the faith. And Jesus Christ loved Stephen as much as He will love anybody who may be alive at the Great Tribulation. That argument impugns the character of God. It is utterly impossible of entertainment.

Furthermore: what about the problem of war? There are men here who went through the war. That was tribulation enough, was it not? It is terrible to contemplate. I do not wonder that the men who endured the horrors of that great struggle do not want to talk about it. They desire to forget it, to blot it out of their memories. Where was God in the Great War? Millions of His blood-bought people suffered, and many are now suffering from it. Did God permit it? If He did, was He righteous? If the Divine Bridegroom was on the right hand of God, and He loved his bride, what is the explanation?

There are the names of forty-ones persons on that first tablet to my left, who laid down their lives in the war, and among them were some of the noblest Christians I have ever known. They laid down their lives in the cause of righteousness. On the farther tablet are the names of three hundred who went to the front, and among those were great numbers of devout Christian men.

How does Dr. Pettingill's argument apply there? They faced the problem of human suffering. And, more than that, I could find in this city a devout Christian dying of cancer, doubtless many of them. Did you ever see anybody suffer from cancer?

I went to preach for a Presbyterian minister in the United States some years ago, and he said, "I am in great sorrow. My wife is going to leave me. She is stricken with an incurable disease: she has cancer of the bone. The doctor says it will take three or four years to kill her. I wish you would come over to the house and have a talk with her." I went over, and found a woman of perhaps forty years of age, a graduate of a university, a Doctor of Philosophy, brilliant to the last degree, meekly submissive to the will of God. She said, "Sometimes I wish it were not going to be so long drawn-out: the doctor promises me at least three years of this excruciating torment." She lived it through like a hero, and at last fell asleep in Christ.

Do you suppose that that doctrine would be any comfort to her husband as he saw that lovely creature suffering such indescribable and unrelievable torture?

Did you ever see anybody suffer like that? Great Tribulation? Within that human frame there was all that a human spirit could bear. What if I lay my hand on my brother-minister's shoulder and say, "The Divine Bride-

groom loves His bride too much to let her suffer." He would turn on me and say, "Do you say He does not love that beautiful spirit who trusts Him so implicitly?" That is a horrible doctrine, an unspeakably horrible doctrine.

What interpretation does it put upon the suffering of the church through all the ages, if that be true? No! "Wrath to come" is not the Great Tribulation. It is the righteous judgment of God justly meted out to evil-doers according to the things written in the book. From that we are saved by the blood of Christ.

Job is the outstanding representative of a man who suffered great tribulation for all the ages. It is difficult to conceive of anybody's suffering more than he. But you remember what he said:—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." He did not complain that God was unrighteous to permit him to go through such great tribulation.

Once more I quote Dr. Pettingill:

"More might be said in defense of our position, but we shall close with a single additional citation. Any remaining doubt should be dispelled by the direct word of our risen Lord in Rev. 3:10; 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth'."

Dr. Pettingill wrote me a few weeks ago about that passage. He refers to one of my sermons, and then begins his letter:

"If I did not love you so much I would not be so distressed by some things you say."

Later on he says:

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with YOU that God should do what He has promised concerning His people Israel and concerning His beloved Church. . . ."

"Then, too, there is your position on the Church passing through the Great Tribulation. I have asked you before what you do about Revelation 3:10, but you have not answered me"—and then in his delightful, playful way he says, "How come?"

I want to read my reply to that:

"It must be admitted that the seven churches to which the Lord's messages through John were directed were not, in any sense, mythical, but were historic realities. There was, in fact, a church at Philadelphia. Surely it must also be admitted, that being so, that the message by John to Philadelphia had its first application to the believers at Philadelphia themselves, just as Paul's letters to the Ephesians, Galatians, and other churches, applied primarily to their particular case, but were divinely intended to stand for all time as the word of God to the churches. If that be so, the passage you name, being part of the message to the Philadelphia church, must have had an application first of all to them. Surely it hardly needs to be said that every member of that original church died, and their spirits departed 'to be with Christ, which is far better', nearly two millenniums ago. The Futurist view of Revelation puts the Great Tribulation in the future, and you quote Revelation 3:10 as one authority for the pre-tribulation rapture theory. Will anybody tell me how the 'great temptation' there mentioned can possibly, at one and the same time, refer to the Great Tribulation yet future, and yet have had its fulfilment in the experience of those who died nearly two thousand years ago? If Revelation 3:10 is worthy to be cited as a proof-text for the pre-tribulation rapture theory, I am constrained to say that it is a theory that is hard up for scriptural support. However, I should be most happy to be shown that I am wrong. I am waiting for just such evidence."

Dr. Pettingill says of that text: "Any remaining doubt should be dispelled by the direct word of our risen Lord in Rev. 3:10"—a promise delivered to a church nearly two thousand years ago, commending them for

keeping the word of His patience; and promising, as a reward for their faithfulness, that He would keep them from a certain great hour of trial to come upon all the earth. Did He fulfil His promise to the Church at Philadelphia? If He did, that hour of trial must long since have passed into history, for the reason that the people to whom it was spoken and fulfilled have been dead nearly two thousand years. By what principle of logic can that promise apply to an event which it is contended is unique and is yet future?

Brother Pettingill refers to me in the latest copy of *Just a Word*—not by name, but as "another brother beloved in the Lord"; and I reciprocate that kindly sentiment.

But I quote from that editorial:

"Still another Editor, while admitting that his publishing house has sold large numbers of Scofield Bibles and still goes on selling them, claims that weaknesses in the Scofield Bible are 'evidenced by the omission of the most glaring error in subsequent editions'. This surprised us, and we asked the brother to tell us what this 'glaring error' was. His reply is that he 'had reference to Dr. Scofield's statement on page 174 of the earlier editions, in which he refers to our Lord as under the Nazarite vow, and therein states as follows:

'For the sake of His unique work He denied Himself the innocent, natural joy of wife, child and home'.

I am very glad it is omitted! Think of that! Dr. Pettingill says:

"Would such men as the late Drs. Weston, Erdman, Pierson, Moorehead, and Harris, and Drs. Gray and Gaebelein, have gone on through the years endorsing any 'most glaring error' touching the person of our Lord?"

The answer is, Not if they knew it. But I do not think these men were or are infallible, do you? A certain teacher is reprimanded here because he does not accept this doctrine, of whom Dr. Pettingill says, he "received his start in intelligent Bible study at the feet of Dr. Scofield". I turn to Dr. Pettingill and ask him this: How does it come to pass that this theory of yours never appeared in theological literature anywhere until about eighteen hundred and thirty-two? And you quote me Dr. Scofield, and Dr. Pierson, and Dr. Gray. I affirm that there is not a line of this pre-tribulation rapture theory in Luther, or Calvin, or Knox, or Wesley, or Whitfield, or Spurgeon, or Finney, or Moody. These men believed in the second personal return of the Lord, but this pre-tribulation rapture theory and all that goes with it is absent from the writings of the world's greatest theologians. Surely Dr. Pettingill will not contend that the endorsement, of the view he supports by the worthy men he names lifts that view from the realm of legitimate, kindly criticism, and stamps it as being infallible. The greatest men who ever lived have erred at some point, and to follow them wholly involves the adoption of their errors. If Dr. Pettingill quotes these men as joint-editors of the Scofield Bible, I am prepared to call the names of men at least equal to any of them, or all of them, who taught none of this.

I referred to Dr. Tregelles, the eminent Greek scholar, last Sunday night, but as I did not have his book in my hand at the time I deleted it from the printed sermon. Nobody will question at least the scholastic authority of Dr. Tregelles, and he says (in a small work published in 1864 entitled "The Hope of Christ's Second Coming," p. 35):

"I am not aware that there was any definite teaching that there would be a secret rapture of the Church at a secret coming, until this was given forth as an 'utterance' in Mr.

Irving's Church, from what was there received as being the voice of the Spirit. But whether any one ever asserted such a thing or not, it was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it arose. It came not from Holy Scripture, but from that which falsely pretended to be the spirit of God, while not owning the true doctrine of our Lord's incarnation in the same flesh and blood as His brethren, but without taint of sin."

Study the fathers of the church, the great theologians of post-apostolic days, and you will find nothing of this theory. Few men have read more of Spurgeon than I have. He believed in the second coming of the Lord, but I challenge anybody to find anything from his pen that will establish this pre-tribulation rapture theory, or secret coming, or of millions being saved during a future tribulation after the church has been raptured, and the Holy Spirit has ceased from His special work. There is no word of it. I have never been able to find it.

I should like to make a contribution to the cause of religious sanity. When we were called into the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, we were not asked to lay aside our common sense. These extravagances, to me, would force one to conclude that the eschatology of the Bible is rather absurd. It appears to me to be contrary to all human history, to all analogy, to all reason. If this matter be so esoteric as to be beyond the understanding of ordinary mortals, I should be for ever grateful if some of the initiated would enlighten me. Either the abstruseness of the subject, or my special obtuseness, renders it impossible for me to follow the pre-tribulation rapturist reasoning.

Let us content ourselves by putting our trust in Him Who died for us, and let us look for that "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Jesus is coming again. There is no doubt about that. He will come to reward His servants, and when He comes I think you will know a great deal more about His programme than you will ever know before: "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe."

Many other people would have been here to-night if they had been sure I should say just what they have heard a thousand times already. They go to prophetic conferences to hear over and over and over again the same things that have been told times without number. Go back to the Book; examine the Bible itself; prove all things; hold fast that which is good. I beg of you, do not charge me with bitterness. I love these brethren, and it pains me to differ from them, but I must be true to my own conviction of what the Bible teaches on this subject, as on others. I love these men. We are on the same train, bound for glory! I am only doing the best I can to get them to ride in a more scriptural car. I shall discuss Dr. Gray's article editorially in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. I have kept you long enough for to-night. May the Lord bless you every one.

Let us pray: We beseech Thee, O Lord, to direct us by Thy Spirit as we study Thy word. Give us all a passion for the truth, the truth as revealed to us in Thy inspired Book. Bless our meditation, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

A SUGGESTIVE LETTER.

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

We received yesterday a letter from Dr. W. Bell Dawson relating to our discussion of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. In response to a request by

telegraph, Dr. Dawson very kindly gave us permission to publish his letter. To the great majority of our readers Dr. Dawson requires no introduction, but there may be a few who are not informed of Dr. Dawson's standing. A letter on a subject requiring such a thorough knowledge of history as does the subject of the Great Tribulation has special authority when written by one of such recognized scholarship as Dr. Dawson.

We have long wondered how anyone with historical perspective could entertain the view that the Great Tribulation spoken of in Matthew twenty-four can be compressed into seven short years.

For the sake of the few who may not be informed respecting Dr. Dawson's standing, it may be said he is the distinguished son of a distinguished father, the late Sir Wm. J. Dawson, Principal of McGill University. Another son of Sir W. J. Dawson was the famous Dr. George Mercer Dawson. Dr. W. Bell Dawson's degrees are from McGill University. To give our non-Canadian readers some idea of Dr. Dawson's rank as a man of science, it may be added that he is a gold medalist in Geology and Natural Science at McGill University; Fellow, Royal Society of Canada; Member, Institution of Civil Engineers, London, with gold medal; Member, Canadian Institute of Civil Engineers; Laureate, Academy of Science, Paris, with two prizes from it; organizer and director for thirty years of the "Survey of Tides and Currents" throughout waters of Eastern Canada, Pacific Coast, and Hudson Bay; under Marine Department.

7 Grove Park,
Westmount, Que.,
May 8th, 1932.

Dear Dr. Shields:

I am very pleased to see your explanations regarding the features which betoken or accompany the coming of Christ (the rapture and the great tribulation) which are published in the last two numbers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. If careful explanations of the meaning of Scripture were thus given from our pulpits, on these momentous themes, there would be less place for fanciful and unbalanced views, which throw discredit on the whole subject. For prophecy is like a neglected field, where all kinds of weeds have an opportunity to flourish.

There is one point, as to the meaning of words, which you may allow me to refer to, in regard to the great tribulation. If the meaning of "great" were more carefully looked into, it might throw light on the whole question. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, where the expression first occurs, we have an outlook over the whole Christian era to the return of Christ; and yet in such a connection the expression "great tribulation" is very frequently explained to mean "short and intense", at the very end of the age. This is the Futurist interpretation, so widely promulgated. But such a meaning for "great" cannot be upheld from other scriptures.

The tribulation is said in this passage to be so great as to be without parallel in human history; and we find a very similar use of the word in the description of the "great earthquake" in Rev. 16:18. It is said to be "such as was not since men were upon the earth"; so that, like the Tribulation, it is unique. In what sense then was it "great"?—The usual feature of an earthquake is its very local character, however intense it may be. But in this earthquake "the cities of the nations fell"; that is, a number of different cities in different countries were destroyed at once. Quite apart from whether this earthquake is to be interpreted literally or figuratively, the meaning of "great" is "widespread," or even "universal"; which is an altogether unparalleled occurrence.

If we take the "great tribulation" to have a similar meaning, it may well signify "widespread" and "long-continued". It is spoken of immediately after the reference to the destruction of Jerusalem (in Matt. 24:16-20), and it only finally ends when the sign of the Son of man appears in heaven. Yet for part of that time, its terrible character "is shortened". This would well accord with the interpretation

that it refers to the Jewish dispersion and persecutions in all lands; from the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; and the contemporaneous tribulation of Christians under the Papal persecutions for twelve centuries, in which indeed the Jews also had their full share. The "people of God" were all involved, whether the covenant Israel or the true believers in Christ; and the trouble extended over the whole of Christendom.

This may surely be considered a reasonable meaning to give to such an expression as "great tribulation"; and it only came to be "shortened" at the end of the religious wars which followed the Reformation (say, about 1700), when Protestants were left unmolested in countries of their own. The Jews also had no status as citizens in any country, and were without civil rights anywhere, for seventeen centuries; and only in the eighteenth century were they first accorded their rights (in the British colonies in America, the United States, and in France after the Revolution in 1791).

Such a broad interpretation seems a fair one in so concise a description as Matt. 24, where the whole Christian era is summarized in about half a chapter. In Revelation, more detail is given, and the two companies of martyrs are distinguished; one company under Pagan Rome and the other under the Papacy (See first intimation of this in Rev. 6:9-11).

Yet even apart from interpretation, the expression "great tribulation", must have a very wide and comprehensive meaning.

I trust you will pardon this length, running on quite beyond what I had intended.

With my best wishes in all your endeavour to make the prophetic Scriptures clear,

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) W. BELL DAWSON.

ANOTHER GREAT LETTER.

Monday of this week we received a letter from Mrs. Jessie Sage Robertson, Editor and Publisher of *My Watch*, Piedmont, Calif. We have had occasional correspondence with Mrs. Robertson for some years, and have long greatly enjoyed the finely-balanced reasoning of Mrs. Robertson as evidenced in her articles. Immediately after reading Mrs. Robertson's letter on Monday we telegraphed her, asking permission to share with our readers the good things it contained. This permission was very kindly granted. Hence we publish Mrs. Robertson's letter below.

213 Bonita Ave.,
Piedmont, Calif.,
May 2, 1932.

Rev. T. T. Shields,
130 Gerrard Street East,
Toronto, Canada.

Brother beloved in Christ:

Your present series of sermons on the return of the Lord Jesus in fulfilment of the Word of God are most timely, and I hope that you will continue them until He comes, should He return within your lifetime; that is, just this, that, Paul-like, you will hold it constantly and insistently before the Christian of to-day; for it is surely "meat in due season". It has always been that, for it is the purifying "hope" of the Church, but "as we see the day approaching" for His return, it should ever take on increasing interest.

Personally I am convinced that the entire subject should be reconsidered by those who will give time to original study and prayer, for, unwittingly mayhap, many are teaching utterly unscriptural things in this connection. I feel so encouraged over your series, for I can see that you have been doing some original digging for yourself. Will you bear with me as a member of your GOSPEL WITNESS congregation if I sit here and chat with you a bit over these sermons? I know you are busy—and so am I—but may we each spare a little time in personal fellowship over this matter that is so dear to our hearts. Indeed, it was upon this very subject our fellowship began. Perhaps you have forgotten it, but I haven't. I will try to be brief; and I will follow the method that dear Mr. Rohold and myself used for years in our correspondence before his death. I learned it from him, as I learned so many other things. In his going I have lost one

of my most intelligent prayer helpers. Never an issue of *My Watch* but he read it from cover to cover—and more than once, for one reading did not seem to satisfy him—and then he would sit down and write me. Though he could not always get my point of view, he believed deep down in his heart that God was leading me into a deeper study of His Word for a definite purpose, and his words were full of encouragement for me to press on, that others, like himself, should be spurred to a deeper digging for themselves. Oh how I miss his words of counsel and fellowship.

FIRST SERMON: Right to the point is my first pencilling—I always read your sermons blue pencil in hand, for they are so challenging to praise, prayer, and deeper thought.

"Fundamentally" sound was your father's advice to you, and praise God you had sense enough to take it. There are altogether too many who are merely echoes. Commentaries, as they are for the most part used, remind me of an apothecary's shop. There they are all set in orderly rows, and you just dip your spoon in and help yourself to whatever is needed for your proposed sermon. Sometimes you take it all out of one bottle; and sometimes out of several. Then you mix it all up and put it forth as something quite worthy of acceptance. If it cures, well and good; but if it should turn out to be poison—well, who is the wiser? Whereas, God's Word tells us to "prove all things". And that is where your father was fundamentally sound.

Preachers everywhere are following a mistaken leadership just because they find it easier to let someone else do their thinking. And the subject of the Lord's return, with related subjects, is all but one grand unscriptural "mess". Because men setting themselves up as teachers are approaching "the Bible with preconceived ideas about a (this) particular subject". Whereas, "we ought to come with open mind to hear what God the Lord will say".

THE SCOFIELD BIBLE. Timely, most timely. May God raise you, or someone else up lovingly to point out something of the harm that Dr. Scofield has unwittingly accomplished. If Dr. Scofield could only come back he would be the very first to do this once he was convinced of his mistake.

I was deep in certain chronological studies when the first edition of the Scofield Bible came out. I could not make the historic facts fit many of the marginal dates of my Oxford, so I got a Scofield, hoping that he had made reliable corrections. I started in to "prove" some of his marginal dates where they differed from my Oxford, and found some not only out of harmony with known facts, but actually out of harmony arithmetically with themselves. I wrote Dr. Scofield of my find, and pointed out the clear error, hoping to be of some help, and he met me in the same spirit in which I wrote. He saw the mistake; explained it as the result of taking someone else's "say so" without taking the time to "prove" it for himself, and said that he would see that the correction was made in the next edition.

I could not help wondering last night as I read your "Sermon Echoes", if it were possible, that knowing better now, Dr. Scofield might be seeking to correct his many disastrous mistakes in the Bible notes of the so-called *Scofield Bible*. It would be just like him to pray the Lord to raise up someone here to correct mistakes which he had made, and which he could not now correct himself. You would do that, and any other really honest man would do that from the other side of the veil if it were possible. For some of the Scofield Bible notes are utterly misleading about the subject, and kindred subjects of our Lord's second coming. And the great pity of it is that leading Bible teachers on the subject are so blind as not to see it for themselves.

The trouble is that a wrong premise is accepted without being proven as utterly sound, and "the intricate maze of hypotheses" results. I do not care how elaborate the argument, I contend that no conclusion is of any value unless the premise upon which it is based has been proven to have value, i.e., no conclusion is of greater value than its premise.

I was preparing a series of Bible studies on The Palestinian Covenant, and just last week, among the other Bibles spread out before me—for I use several opened at the different scriptures under consideration (reliable historic data is all I use in my studies outside the Bible)—I had my Scofield opened at Deut. 30. Whether or not it was your reference to the subject, I do not know, for I have long since ceased paying any attention to the footnotes, but this day I glanced down, and there lay an utterly unscriptural premise. The argument was missing for lack of space, but there too was the naturally unscriptural conclusion that is being accepted to-

day as a sound basis for doctrinal teaching concerning events connected with the return of the Lord Jesus.

Of what value are the references given when used as they are used here? The footnote is on the words "turn thy captivity" in Deut. 30:3. And the return from this "captivity", which is for the broken Palestinian Covenant, is pushed forward beyond the second coming of the Lord Jesus. If that is true, then it is utterly illogical to preach the near return of the Lord Jesus.

The entire "set up" of the program here outlined is not only out of harmony with an expectancy for the soon coming of the Lord, but is out of harmony with itself, and is utterly illogical and unscriptural from start to finish, as anyone can see if they will but sit down and do some original thinking. And right here does "the intricate maze of hypotheses" concerning "that blessed hope" have its rise. But so few will take the trouble to go back, and back, to this source. "Too 'indisposed to exertion'." Though it really would not need a very great outlay of exertion to one of a willing heart that was hungry for the truth at any cost.

For instance:—

"The Palestinian Covenant gives the conditions under which Israel entered the land of promise." (Scofield)

And that is true. (J.S.R.)

"It is important to see that the nation has never as yet taken the land under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, nor has it ever possessed the whole land (cf. Gen. 15:18, with Num. 34:1-12) (Scofield)

It is true that national Israel has not yet possessed the land "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." (Gen. 15:18). But that is not "important" unless it is proven that "the Palestinian Covenant" territorially included the entire land of this covenant; which it does not.

In Gen. 17:1-27 we shall find the line of prophecy begun that unfolds in the Palestinian Covenant, and not in Gen. 15:18. And it is because these two prophetic utterances are not differentiated, away back here in Genesis, that our present day "maze of hypotheses" exists. Go wrong here, and you are blinded to the illogic of the entire modern program concerning the Lord's return, for it is a program of men's own making; and made to fit an utterly worthless hypothesis.

One would suppose that Dr. Scofield would have been arrested by the harmony of the context of Deut. 30:3 (v. 5) and his reference to Num. 34:1-12. But he was not, and in his blindness stumbled into the ditch, and others blindly stumbled in after him. Oh the pity of it! Deut. 30:5 and Num. 34:1-12 are in utter agreement as to the land of the Palestinian covenant; viz., that land which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "possessed", which was within the borders outlined by Moses in Num. 34:1-12. And that is the land of the Palestinian Covenant.

The "blessings" of that covenant came to their fullest fruition in Joshua's day, in this circumscribed *promised land* (Jos. 21:43-45). And Joshua warned Israel that just so surely as the *blessings* of the Palestinian Covenant had followed upon their obedient faith, just so surely would the *curse*s of this same covenant fall upon them if they went into idolatry. (Jos. 23:14-16).

They went into idolatry in the land which their fathers possessed, and went into the very "captivity" referred to in Deut. 30:3. And that is past history, though Dr. Scofield here says in his footnotes that the return from this "captivity" will not fulfil until after "the return of the Lord". And yet from that national captivity Israel was freed under Cyrus.

There is nothing so very complicated about following the historic unfolding of the Palestinian Covenant, and one would have to be terribly "indisposed to exertion" not to be willing to follow the historic account of these things with an open Bible before him. If he is too lazy for that amount of exertion, his opinion upon so important a matter—I am not referring to Dr. Scofield—ought to be accounted worthless. I am not referring to Dr. Scofield just here because he did a tremendous amount of work. The trouble was he began with the findings of others as having been proven, and made his exegesis fit those findings. Hence the "maze". Andy's "mess" would be just as expressive.

I do not say that the land from "the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" may not yet become the inheritance of Abraham's seed in Isaac and Jacob; but I do maintain that the Palestinian Covenant pertained specifically to "the land of Canaan" as possessed by these three patriarchs, and described in Num. 34:2-12, including the tribal

allotments of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan. But even if this should not fulfil to Israel, it (Gen. 15-18) already has had an actual historical fulfilment in Abraham's seed through Ishmael, Esau, and Abraham's descendants through Keturah.

May the Lord use you to the ends of the earth to stir up Bible students to re-examine the Scofield Commentary. I only wish I were big enough, and strong enough, to tackle the job out of sheer love for Dr. Scofield who is not here to do it himself. Heretic or no heretic, he that has *The Truth* under his feet has nothing to fear, if he but speak it out of a heart full of love. It is usually those who are in error that get bitter. Keep at it, Dr. Shields, quietly, lovingly, persistently, and some will be saved from blundering into the ditch.

BISHOP BALDWIN. What a man of God he was! He had not been caught in the swirl of "the intricate maze of (the) hypotheses" of to-day so intimately associated with the return of the Lord Jesus. He was able to give a straightforward witness to "that blessed hope."

A SECRET COMING. With you, "I do not believe it." I did once when I let others do my thinking upon the subject. It was such a comfortable thing to believe, and sit back and enjoy it. What a stupid I was! *Ignorant* would perhaps be a better word—I was plain ignorant. Ignorance is curable with knowledge; but genuine stupidity is incurable, for there is no way of getting knowledge into a stupid or stupified brain.

The Lord Jesus did not, nor did Paul, differentiate between the parousia and the apocalypse, associating the *epiphaneia* only with the latter. Our Lord's *parousia* assures us of His personal corporeal return. His *apocalypse* assures us of His uncovering; i.e., we shall be very sure to identify Him then. His *epiphaneia* assures us of His return in glory—a glory above the brightness of the sun, a glory above anything we mortals have ever dreamed. These things are inherent in His second coming (just one event). They cannot be separated and shunted around to accommodate men's exegesis of a "week" in Daniel that they do not know what to do with; whereas, if they would leave the seventieth week just where God put it, and where it belongs, just following the sixty-ninth, there would be no trouble.

BLACKSTONE. Dear Brother Blackstone. He was among the first to start me thinking seriously about the return of the Lord. I got so hungry for information that I read everything on the subject I could get my hands on, and, in my ignorance, "fell" for a lot of unscriptural teaching.—Brother Blackstone's misleading statements included. We are real friends by now, having met each other personally when he sought me out while I was a patient in Pottenger's Sanitorium, besides a correspondence of many years' standing. It would be wonderful if he could but shed his "blindness" and correct some of his mistakes while he is still alive. But he is getting pretty old and feeble even to attempt such a task. In his case, as in Dr. Scofield's, we can only hope that the good they have done may outweigh the harm; and I believe it will. Who of the sons of men but stumbled through their mistakes of ignorance on the road to truth as they climbed ever upward? Disaster results from ceasing to climb higher for the better view. Mistakes can be made stepping-stones up the grade if we but put them under our feet, and not let them lumber up our heads.

THE MISTAKE OF WRITING BOOKS TOO SOON. W.E.B.'S, "Jesus is Coming", may have been such a mistake; but it might have been a greater mistake not to have written it at all. I do not know how old he was when he wrote it, but he seems to be of the same mind still, and he has passed his 90th birthday. It is sound advice however, that your book-writing friend gave you of long ago, especially if it made a closer student of you, and did not discourage you altogether from writing. The real danger in beginning to write for publication too soon is the danger of believing that what you have written is the last word on the subject, so that what you have written acts as a sort of tether. And when that happens it warps one's power for sound, sane, thinking.

Dr. Royal S. Copeland—an M.D.—one of our U.S. senators, said a true thing when he said: "A sane person holds no ideas so fixed as to be incapable of discussion and perhaps of readjustment. He is ready to listen to new evidence, to weigh it, and to accept it, if it is logical and convincing. He is mentally free. His mental processes are not congealed and crystallized. A person possessing what experts call 'imperative ideas', is lacking in that freedom of mind which characterizes perfect sanity."

THINKING. "You hit the nail on the head" there: "Not many congregations assemble at any time to think." How true that is! Indeed it is also true of many pulpits as well as pews, as you know as well as I do. Original thinkers are scarce these days, excepting as "headliners". By that I mean thinking up some sort of a headline to draw a crowd, "Mussolini and the Antichrist", for instance. It draws the crowd all right; but oh, the utter trash that is being put forth as scriptural that is as unscriptural as it is possible to be. A lot of texts strung together prove nothing, though so many seem to think so. And they think so because they are not willing to get right down to business and do some real *thinking*. I hope you will succeed in getting your listeners really to think logically from a sound premise, through a sound argument, to a sound conclusion.

The return of the Lord Jesus is indeed a fundamental in our Christian faith, as fundamental as is His first coming; and it began in its unfolding before the creation of the world; and is wrapped up in Gen. 3:15, as is the first coming, for that scripture looked forward to the second coming through the victory of the first.

This is a long letter—and would be much longer if I wrote all that is in my heart to say—but your sermons on our Lord's return have blessed me through and through because you have struck out boldly against what you see clearly to be error. But I hope that no fear of man will in any way hinder you at this time in meeting what is clearly erroneous teaching concerning matters vitally connected with our Lord's second coming.

It seems to me that, at this time we need something more than simple doctrinal teaching, sound though it be. We need to face that which is erroneously being associated with the simple doctrine of our Lord's return to the confusion of tens of thousands, and prove that it is erroneous. Surely we must "contend" as "earnestly for the faith" here as in the other fundamentals. Error here is more devastating than one might suppose, for it not only concerns the Christian world, but it concerns God's covenant people Israel. Indeed, with the evil powers behind the scenes, it would not astonish me that this is the real objective of the devastation. Not that those who foster these errors suspect this for one moment.

If the return of the Jews to Palestine at this time is not the fulfilment of Isa. 61:4—as I believe it is—then there still remains another cycle of "many generations (dor, cf. Heb.)" of "desolations" before we could hope to "welcome back the King". For the "desolations" there referred to are Israel's last prior to that great event. (cf. context forward and through chap. 62). This is a matter of simple logic.

Again. According to Isa. 40:1-5 we cannot "comfort" the returning remnant of our day with "that blessed hope" of v. 5, unless we are assured that Israel's "double" judgments are in the past, and the national slate wiped clean of all her national sins. If Israel's two terrible national calamities, viz., her pre-captivity tribulations, and her national captivity under the Assyrian and Babylonian kings for idolatry, i.e., the broken Palestinian Covenant, as the first outstanding judgment; and her second outstanding judgment of those terrifying years just prior to 70 A.D. eventuating in a nearly 2000 years' desolations and dispersion, do not fulfil every requirement of the "double" of Isa. 40:2, then, logically, the Lord's return is a long way off. For Israel is as much concerned in the Lord's second coming as is the Church.

If the joint captivity of the two houses of Israel under Babylon's kings, together with the pre-captivity tribulation, and concurrent desolations of the land, did not constitute "the time of Jacob's trouble" of Jer. 30:7, then what was it?

And if "the day of vengeance" of Isa. 61:2, did not begin to fulfil with the generation Jesus was addressing in Matt. 23 and 24:1-28, as He said it did (cf. Lk. 21:22), then what did fulfil then in the way of judgment that eventuated in the protracted desolations of the land right down to our own day? Surely some "abominations of desolation" set those age-lasting desolations in motion.

But all this goes for nothing to our modern second-coming teachers, and Israel's "double" is still future according to them. One marvels at their illogic, for a tribulation in the future for Israel that is greater than that which is past cannot be squeezed into "seven" short years. How they have complicated matters.

God's Word does not so complicate the fulfilment of its prophecies. The Palestinian Covenant was broken by Israel's national idolatries; and the remnant of the people went into national captivity, while the land lay desolate. Israel killed God's prophets, rejected the Lord Jesus as their Messiah

though God raised Him from the dead, and killed His witnesses in *finishing their transgression* (cf. Dan. 9:24), the "seventy weeks" were expired, and the "day of vengeance" set in, and eventuated in a national dispersion and desolations lasting to our own day. Here is Israel's "double for all her sins" of Isa. 40:2. And now that that is in the past as is clearly witnessed by the restoration now going forward in the Land of the Palestinian Covenant, we can confidently look forward to our Lord's second coming. How very simple and logical is God's program.

Oh, may God pour out the Holy Spirit upon you to witness in "power" to "that blessed hope" as it pertains to Israel and to the Church. One "olive tree" finally in God's eternal purposes.

Yours most sincerely,

(Signed) JESSIE SAGE ROBERTSON.

MORE ABOUT BALAAM.

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, May 5th, 1932.

*Twenty-fourth 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, chapters 23 and 24.

We observed in our last week's study how evidently Balaam desired to possess himself of the rewards which Balak had offered him. He is described in the New Testament as one who "loved the wages of unrighteousness", and those who walk in Balaam's ways are said to walk in "the error of Balaam." In the letter to the church at Pergamos the doctrine of Balaam is denounced.

We observed last week that Balaam cloaked his covetousness in a religious guise. He was asked to curse the people of God, and again and again sought audience with the Lord that he might secure divine permission; and even after the miracle which God had wrought in making the beast that carried him to reprove him; he still persisted in his effort to obtain divine permission to curse Israel, at the same time saying that of course he could not go beyond the word of the Lord.

Now he instructs Balak to erect seven altars, and to offer upon each a bullock and a ram. He still adheres to the forms and sacrifices of religion, he is still perfectly orthodox in his outward attitude; and he bids Balak abide by the sacrifices while he goes to meet with the Lord: "Stand by the burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the Lord will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee." But for the light which the New Testament throws upon this story it might easily be imagined that Balaam had had a change of mind, and that he was now sincerely seeking the word and the will of God. But the New Testament makes it impossible for us to believe that. To the end he cherished that covetous desire, and endeavoured to possess himself of the profits of a worldly life while, at the same time, exercising the prophetic office.

How many people there are like that to-day. It is of no use for us to study these ancient scriptures as so many pages of history, if we do not learn the principles which they teach, and learn also to make application of those principles to ourselves. Of what value is it for any of us to observe the forms of religion, or, to translate it into evangelical speech, to profess faith in the Great Sacrifice which has been offered, to be perfectly sound in our intellectual views of the principles of the gospel, and out-

wardly, in the life we live before men, to appear to be endeavouring to serve Jehovah, if, at the same time, our hearts are set upon the praises and plaudits of the world? If our religion is but a sham, of what value is it?

Repeatedly Balaam did the same thing. It may suggest to us how dangerous a thing it is to cultivate the power of self-will. I suppose we are all inclined to be rather proud of our strength of resolution, the force of our own will, which is the centre of any human personality. But it is possible to cultivate that power until, paradoxical as it may seem, it runs away with us, until a man subordinates his judgment, his affections, everything there is of him, to that one passion, a determination to have one's own way.

I heard of a little boy once who, when his mother attempted to reprimand him, turned on her fiercely and said, "I will go out and let a little dog bite me." The mother—very wisely, I think—opened the front door and said, "I would if I were you."

There are grown people who are like that little boy, who are just as obstinate, just as stubborn—only they call it resoluteness or resolution: "I am a man of strong will." If you have a strong enough will you can go and knock your brains out against a stone wall—but it will not profit you. Balaam had a certain object before him, and he was determined to obtain it no matter what it might cost. So now, in spite of divine interposition, in spite of the multiplied mercies of God, he leaps over them all to his own destruction.

Be careful what you do with your will. Tennyson is not always orthodox, but he is sometimes, in some places. You remember those familiar lines,—

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest, manhood Thou;
Our wills are ours, we know not how—
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

The man is never so strong as when he adopts an attitude of perfect submission to the will of God. Balaam's ass had more sense than its master: It turned back when an angel stood in the way. But even an angel could not turn Balaam back from his purpose. It is said of some people, "They would not be satisfied if they had an angel to preach to them." That is true of most people! They would not be as well satisfied as to have you or me preach to them, because they can find fault with us, and they could not with the angel!

What was true of Balaam was true of Balak. Balak used religion as a kind of enchantment. He built altars, and offered sacrifices, for the purpose of cursing his enemies. What a perversion of truth is involved in that! True religion was never designed to rob anybody of the highest good. It was designed to bring us back to God, to bring us into harmonious relation with the Source of all blessing. And yet there are a great many people who build their religion upon hatred.

A certain brother told me that he, as an officer of a certain church, interviewed somebody for membership. When he had completed the interview he said, "I should have no hesitation whatever in recommending you for membership in this church"—I think there must have been just a little element of irony in what he said, for he said to that person—"for the cardinal requirement for membership in this church is an intense hatred of Jarvis Street Church and its Pastor; and, on that ground, you are

thoroughly qualified." That is only building Balak's altars, using religion to try to bring a curse of some sort upon somebody. May God save us from that kind of thing!

Balaam uttered fuller prophecies, and it is very interesting to study those prophecies. I shall not deal with the content of them: that is too large an order for the time at our disposal. But they throw a very interesting light upon *the principle of divine inspiration*.

Some years ago we had a very sharp controversy in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec—back in nineteen hundred and nineteen. A series of editorials appeared in *The Canadian Baptist* at the time based upon a certain book which had recently appeared in England. The author of that book professed to have found himself relieved of a great difficulty. He had found the solution of a great problem: he had discovered that, not the writings of Scripture were inspired—that is, not the Scriptures themselves, for that is what it means; they are the writings—that the Scriptures themselves were not inspired, but the writers were inspired; Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the 'writers of the Gospels and of the epistles. They were inspired men, good men in whom God dwelt; but their writings were not specifically inspired by the Holy Ghost. Being good men, they exercised their judgment, and wrote the truth as they saw it. Of course their writings were not infallible, but they were the product of inspired men.

I remember in the debate at Ottawa a scripture came to me with peculiar force in the midst of that discussion, and I felt the Lord specially used it. It was that scripture in Peter where he says, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

Peter there says that many of the prophets did not know the meaning of their own prophecies, that they were just as dark to them as they were to others, and that after they had written them they examined them, "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." All they could make out of it was that they were writing for another day, that it was something that they need not understand at that time: "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister."

Here is a man who is set upon obtaining Balak's reward, and if there is any possibility of his uttering a prophecy agreeable to Balak, for which he can receive a reward, he is determined to do it. He has made several attempts already, and now once again he says, "Build your altars and prepare your sacrifices, and it may be that even yet I may get something from the Lord that will be pleasing to you."

But he did not. Instead of cursing, he blessed. God did actually speak through this ungodly man. The Lord did actually sovereignly overrule his evil intentions, and just as supernaturally he made even the ass to speak in

rebuke of the prophet, so he sovereignly compelled Balak to pronounce a blessing upon Israel whom he had come to curse.

I would suggest to you that you give careful study to Balaam's prophecies as an interesting and instructive example of what divine inspiration really is. It certainly means that God did in those days so possess men that against their own wills, and even without the co-operation apparently of their own faculties, He caused them to speak His words. He did actually, when it pleased Him—not always did He inspire them in the same way—He did actually when it pleased Him, superimpose His own will, and compel men to be the mouthpieces of Jehovah.

You have a further example of the same principle when the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul, and Saul prophesied, so that it became a proverb in Israel, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

So much for that principle. We have here a study of the principle of divine inspiration; think it through for yourselves.

Once more we come indirectly upon a *revelation of what God is*. Involved in what I have said is this principle: there are some people who think they can make use of God. He is a useful Person somewhere Whom we do not invite to our games, but when we are in trouble we can look to Him. I noticed in an interview with the former crown prince of Germany he quoted a German proverb to the effect that "misery teaches men to pray". Balak, being in trouble, thought he might make use of God, irrespective of all principles of righteousness, for his own ends. He pressed Balaam into his service, and the two of them together conspired in the name of religion to lay hold of some superhuman power in order to get the better of their enemies.

But God cannot be so used. Surely we have here a further disclosure of God as the sovereign God, Who does His own will, who has His own programme, Who accomplishes His own ends in His own way.

Then we may well learn a principle laid down in the eighth of Romans: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Balak was filled with fear because of the success that had attended Israel's pilgrimage thus far, particularly their victories over Arad, king of the Canaanites, Sihon of Heshbon, and Og of Bashan. But in spite of it all the people of God were blessed. Balaam said, "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?"

We need not fear the antipathy of men. We need not be afraid of human hatreds. The Psalmist said, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me roundabout." Then he declared, "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly." And God will break the teeth of the ungodly. He may allow them to do a great deal of barking, but He will not let them bite. We need not be afraid of them, providing we are in the will of God. If God wills to bless us, if He is for us, who can be against us?

I believe if I had time to analyze these prophecies I could show you that there is scarcely a doctrine of the gospel, scarcely a doctrine of the New Testament, that is not wrapped up in these marvellous prophecies, sovereignly wrung from the lips of a man who had come at the behest of her enemies to curse Israel. I give you one example only.

In the twenty-third chapter, verse twenty-one, we read, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." Have we not been following Israel through the wilderness journey in the books of Exodus and Leviticus? Have we not seen what a perverse company of people they were, how obstinate, how rebellious, how disobedient, at every turn? Brought to Kadesh-barnea, they were turned back again into the wilderness through unbelief. For thirty-eight years they have been wandering in the wilderness, now they are brought again toward the promised land, and this man says by inspiration, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel."

How can you explain that? How is it possible to say that? Only on the principle of an imputed righteousness, only on the principle of a justification that was Israel's by faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." So God beholds us in the face of His Anointed; He looks upon us, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Christ: we are complete in Him. He has made us accepted in the Beloved; He sees no iniquity in us, no perverseness belonging to us, because we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. The divine Bridegroom says to His spouse, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."

It is instructive to observe how Balak invokes, not only religion, but geography. He says, "Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence." I have known a Convention to change from one place to another to give Balaam a chance to curse. But it makes no difference. God does not need to take a train. Whether you see all God's people, or part of them, it is all one.

When Balaam had twice refused to curse them, but instead had pronounced a blessing, Balak said, "You have made it rather worse than it was, but I wonder if you cannot neutralize what you have done? Come and get another look at them, and neither bless nor curse—Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." Balaam responded, "Told not I thee, saying, all that the Lord speaketh, that I must do." To which Balak again replied, "Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place: peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence." Balak built the seven altars again; but it made no difference: the blessing was still pronounced: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."

Balak's anger was further kindled against Balaam, and he said, "I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." Balaam,

being devoid of honour himself, forfeited all honour both from God and man. The world can never confer real honour upon an unfaithful prophet; while he who is faithless of heart while faithful of tongue will fail of all heavenly honours.

To Balak's passionate outburst Balaam replied, "Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak? And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open"—what a wonderful word this is! And is there not a strain of pathos in it—"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city."

Thus Balaam's prophecy did not end until, by the inspiration of the Almighty, he had been led to behold a Star come out of Jacob and the Sceptre rise out of Judah, until he beheld the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off. You would not understand that apart from the New Testament, but the New Testament confirms the prophecy of Balaam, and records at least a partial fulfilment thereof: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

I have offered only a few suggestions on chapters twenty-three and twenty-four, but to one principle running through them all I direct your attention in a sentence or two in closing. We shall see in our Sunday evening studies in the next few weeks that there is a certain school of interpreters who teach that Jesus Christ came to this world with a tentative programme, that He took certain courses, and made certain offers, and that had those offers been accepted then the course of human history would have been otherwise. I may return to it again, but I say this especially to you students: Dr. Gray approves of the usual answer, as he calls it, given to certain questions, that, until near the close of the Acts, Israel, as a nation, "had still an opportunity to accept Jesus as her Messiah and King, in which event He would immediately have returned to judge the nations and set up the kingdom"; and quotes Sir Robert Anderson as saying: "When in Matthew 24, for example, the Lord addressed His hearers as though they themselves would pass through the Great Tribulation, we recognize that this would have proved literally true if the Jews had accepted Him as their Messiah."

Against that assumption I must with all kindness protest. Jesus Christ did not come to this earth with a

tentative programme. When he spoke in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, He did know that He was going to be crucified. He did know that He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He did know the last detail of His programme. And when He reached the end of His life He did not say, "And now, O Father, I have done the best I could; but they would not let Me do this, nor would they let Me do the other. They would not accept Me here: they would not accept Me there." No! No! He said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Any interpretation that would impugn the divine prescience, any interpretation of Scripture that falls short of a full recognition of the absolute sovereignty of God in all realms, is not of God, I care not whose it is. Away with that idea that there was any hap or chance in the life of our Lord during the days of His flesh. He finished His work.

Why do I say that now? Because God said it to Balaam: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel"; "Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion." There was never any doubt about that. There is a great deal more in these matters that we are now studying than some people imagine. Let us hold fast by that principle.

Balaam said, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent." He does not change His mind. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Let it be ours to try to understand them, and to come into harmony with His plan for ourselves, for the church, for the world at large.

Shall I whisper a secret to you? Everyone of us has made a botch of everything we ever attempted. Did you ever do anything in such a way that you did not desire a chance to do it all over again? I never finish preaching that I do not wish I had a trap-door through which to retire, and forget about it for a week, and try to do better next time. We are a poor lot. But God, in His sovereign mercy, looks upon us, and gives us another chance. He overrules our blunders, and loves us in spite of all our waywardness, and then graciously declares that He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel! Blessed be God for the righteousness of our Lord Jesus imputed to all poor sinners who simply believe.

"When free grace awoke me, by light from on high,
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die;
No refuge, no safety, in self could I see;
'Jehovah Tsidkenu' my Saviour must be.

"My terrors all vanished before the sweet name;
My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came
To drink at the fountain, life-giving and free:
'Jehovah Tsidkenu' was all things to me."

BOOKS BY DR. T. T. SHIELDS

"CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT."
A series of Thursday evening Bible Lectures from
Genesis to II. Samuel.

"THE MOST FAMOUS TRIAL OF HISTORY."
A series of sermons preached in Jarvis Street Church,
on "The Trial of Jesus."

Price Fifty Cents a Volume Postpaid.

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 7

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson 22

May 29th, 1932

THE MURMURING OF MIRIAM.

Lesson Text: Numbers 12, Deut. 18.

Golden Text: "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?—Numbers 12:8.

Daily Bible Readings.

Monday—Deut. 34:1-12.

Tuesday—Heb. 13:7-17.

Wednesday—I Tim. 5:17-25.

Thursday—Jer. 2:1-8.

Friday—Jer. 28:1-9.

Saturday—Luke 2:1-8.

I. THE MURMURING OF MIRIAM AND AARON, (Num. 12:1-3).

One cannot but be sympathetic with Moses in his trying position as leader in Israel. Whenever the people became dissatisfied with their lot, he became the target of their complaint, and in the record of our study his own sister and brother chide him and challenge his leadership. He had much to endure, but he bore it patiently, although feeling the heaviness of the burden, (11:14). Leadership is not without its privileges, but it also has its cares. A leader is human, and is not without limitations, and as he deals with persons of like imperfection there should be mutual consideration between them. One of the greatest trials of a leader is that of misunderstanding on the part of those whom he is endeavouring to lead, even his motives at times being misjudged, and his private affairs interfered with, as in this case. Serious consequences often ensue from such conduct, the work of God being hindered, and the divine name robbed of glory. It should be remembered that it is a good and blessed thing to mind one's own business, and to consent to the fact that leaders and others have a right to a private life which none should touch.

Miriam and Aaron found fault with Moses on account of the woman whom he had taken for his wife, referring probably to Zipporah, and they challenged his leadership by intimating that he was not the only one through whom God had spoken. He had used them in this respect. Such an attitude manifested rebellion, actuated possibly by jealousy of Moses for acting contrary to their wishes in matters of leadership, for it would seem as if there was something more than mere objection to the nationality of the wife. Such conduct was wrong in its injustice toward Moses, and its sin against God. It implied a challenge of the divine order, as Moses occupied his position by virtue of the divine commandment. Note the position of the New Testament leader, and the proper attitude toward him, (Heb. 13:7, 17; I Tim. 5:17-19).

II THE INTERVENTION OF GOD, (vs. 4-9).

The serious nature of the action of Miriam and Aaron is seen in the immedi-

ate appearance of God on behalf of His servant Moses. He spake suddenly unto Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and invited them to come unto the tabernacle of the congregation, (v. 4). "And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth", (v. 5). He then addressed them on behalf of His servant Moses, in vindication of his unique and divinely appointed office, (vs. 6-8). The danger connected with their offence is evident in the question, "Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" and in the statement that the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, (v. 9). Caution is required respecting one's attitude toward God's servants. They are dear unto God. He is jealous on their behalf, (I Chron. 16:20-22), and the work which they do is His work, (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:8-16). Note the fact that God vindicated His servant. Moses did not require to do so. See the character of Moses, (v. 8).

III. THE PUNISHMENT GIVEN MIRIAM, (vs. 10-16).

It is possible that Miriam was the instigator of this rebellion against Moses, and therefore she was made to bear the punishment. After the departure of the Lord she "became leprous, white as snow", (v. 10). This was a dreadful punishment, but it corresponded to the evil nature of the offence. The punishment fitted the crime, manifested God's estimate of the same, and taught Miriam and Aaron a lesson which they would never forget. Several things are worthy of note respecting this punishment, and the release therefrom. First, Miriam was afflicted on account of sin, the same being attributable to the Lord. There are three possible sources of sickness: God, (Deut. 28:27, 28, 35); Satan, (Job. 27; Luke 13:11, 16); human, (Hos. 7:5; Phil. 2:25-27). Second, Miriam was healed through the prayer of Moses, (v. 13). God heals without means, (Gen. 20:17; Luke 7:2; 17:15), and with means, (2 Kings 5:14; 20:7). Note Aaron's repentant attitude, (vs. 11, 12). In the third place observe that the journey of Israel was held up for seven days on Miriam's account, during which time she was not permitted to enter the camp, (vs. 14-16). It should be recognized that sin always hinders progress, as at Ai, (Josh. 7:10-12). Kadesh-Barnea, (14:42, 43), and in the present day, (Heb. 12:1). Chastisement at the time may seem grievous but afterward it yields fruit unto righteousness, (Heb. 12:11).

IV. PRIESTLY DUES, (Deut. 18:1-8).

The priests and Levites had no part nor inheritance with the rest of Israel in the land. They were definitely separated unto the service of God, and He provided for them in another way, through the offerings of the people, (v. 1), certain portions of the same being set aside for their sustenance, (vs. 3-5). The numbers of the Levites being large, part only of them served in the tabernacle at a time, the rest dwelling in their cities. A direction is here given concerning a Levite who in a spirit of devotion left his city to serve in the sanctuary. Such an individual was to share equally with the others who were on regular duty, (vs. 6-8). The principle underlying the provision of God for the Levites is operative in relation to the

servants of God in the New Testament period in that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel", (I Cor. 9:13, 14). Note the loving care of God for His servants, and the wisdom of the divine plan, in removing those servants from the economic temptations, and uncertainties of life.

V. AVOIDING ABOMINATIONS, (vs. 9-14).

The purpose of God concerning His people was that they should be truly separated unto Him, and remain uncontaminated from the heathen customs of the people surrounding them. They were thus to be a peculiar people, unlike all other nations, glorifying God in their individual and corporate life. Christians are also called to be a peculiar people in the sense of separation unto their Lord and Saviour, (Titus 2:14; I Pet. 2:9). Several things are worthy of note in reference to this command. First, the Israelites were not to do after the abominations of the nations of Canaan, (v. 9). Second, there was not to be found among them "any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire", implying a worshipper of Molech, (Lev. 18:21), "or he that useth divination, or an enchanter or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer", (vs. 10, 11). These terms refer to the different modes of exploring the unseen, and all are forbidden. This includes spiritualism, a most subtle and deadly system. God is the only source of information concerning the unseen, and the future, and all should be content with that which He has revealed in His Word, and leave all fortune tellers and others of a like nature severely alone. Note God's attitude toward those who do these things, (v. 12), and His desire concerning Israel, (vs. 13, 14).

VI. THE PROMISED PROPHET, (vs. 15-22).

After forbidding the people to consult with soothsayers, the Lord gives the promise to His people of the coming of the prophet like unto Moses, unto Whom they should hearken, (v. 15). Throughout the course of the years there were several raised up from among the people who gave forth the message of God; but the supreme fulfillment is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, (Acts 3:19-26). He spoke the words of God, (v. 18; John 17:8), and men and women will be held responsible for treatment of His message, (v. 19). The heathen nations consulted their charmers and wizards, but Israel was directed to listen to the message of God through His servants, and particularly through Jesus Christ. He is the One through Whom God has revealed Himself. We can know God only through Him, and all other professed sources of information are false and wicked. In these days of the multiplicity of heretical sects, it is essential that we remember this. In the Bible is the record of this revelation, and to this appeal must be made in relation to all teaching, and all that which is not in accordance therewith is erroneous and must be discarded. Emphasis should be laid on the supremacy of Christ as God's revelation to man, and the necessity for faith in Him. Note also the supreme place of the Bible, the fate of the false prophet, (v. 20), and the test to be applied to all prophets, (vs. 21, 22).

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 YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE.

For the past two weeks, a notice of much importance has been carried in the pages of the *Union Baptist Witness*; a notice concerning a great meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 24th, in the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, and now it is possible to make an announcement regarding the Great Day.

The Young People of all the churches of the Union are invited and those who are not so young are asked to come along too that they may be partakers of the good things in store.

The day is to begin at ten o'clock, and the programme provides for every church having a part, and it is expected that the Rev. and Mrs. H. L. Davey, who will but have reached Canadian shores about the 22nd of the month will bring greetings from Liberia. As it will be necessary for Mr. and Mrs. Davey to have a period of rest before making any itinerary among the churches, the Young People's Conference will be the only opportunity for some time of meeting them.

Then the speakers in the afternoon and evening sessions will have messages of burning interest to all—Rev. Anton Cedarholm will speak, and Mr. Fred Syme and Mr. Hilmor Cedarholm will bring messages in song and direct the singing.

Meals will be served in the B. D. Thomas Hall of the Jarvis Street Church. Plan to attend and make the meeting known to all who are interested.

* * * *

RUNNYMEDE ROAD MEETINGS.

The meetings conducted at the Runnymede Road Regular Baptist Church, corner Colbeck Street and Runnymede Road, Toronto, are attracting considerable interest. They are something different. How beautiful the old hymns ring out from the water goblets which lend themselves to music under the skilful fingers of Mr. Hilmor Cedarholm and how the messages of the grand old hymns take hold of one as the Rev. Anton Cedarholm leads the congregation and their invitation, or their gospel message peals forth!

The rain in a steady drizzle, monotonously beat upon the windows, or sent its damp chill into the bones, on the evening of May 9th, but in spite of this, it was necessary to crowd oneself into a seat in the Runnymede Road Church and wonder where the late-comers would find a place. Before the service began, there was time to look around a little and make a mental note upon the kind of people who were interested enough to pack a church on such an evening. Here is a group of happy young people who have come right across the city. They do not look like old fashioned, or behind-the-times young men and women, but they are sweet and wholesome and

intelligent, alert and happy. How good it is to rest one's eyes upon faces unmarred by rouge and make-up and fellowship with young people capable of enjoying good music and sharing the same. Then, to see them follow the speaker's reasonings; to be conscious of the hush which accompanies attentive listening and to know that great decisions were being made and momentous questions settled, was a great experience. What a privilege it is for Christians of all ages to join hands in fellowship like one large family, ready to hear the Father's voice! Something like this seems to be the atmosphere of the Runnymede Road meetings. Pray much for the messengers and influence in every way possible the unsaved to attend the meetings. They continue over Sunday, May 15th, and then the Evangelists are to be with the Rev. A. C. Whitcombe at Orangeville for a week or so.

* * * *

THE RADIO BROADCAST.

A programme which is arousing much interest is broadcast each Saturday evening at 9 o'clock, Eastern Standard Time, from Station CKOC Hamilton. Be sure to listen in. Rev. Clifford J. Loney will speak, Rev. Anton Cedarholm will bring a message, and Mr. Hilmor Cedarholm will play upon the water glasses. Enjoy with hundreds of others the Stanley Avenue Sunshine Hour, and drop a card directly to the station, or to Mr. Loney, telling of your appreciation of it. Donations to cover the expenses of the broadcast will be appreciated.

* * * *

CABLED NEWS.

A message has been received which advises that Rev. and Mrs. H. L. Davey will be sailing from Southampton, England, on Saturday, May 14th, via the S.S. Alaunia.

* * * *

THE ST. AMEDEE FIELD.

A church building is gradually taking on form at The Gore, where the Lord so graciously sent revival blessing under the ministry of Pastors Lorne and Roy Hisey last year. Throughout the winter months the people have met together in the homes, but with the coming of summer, it is necessary that some other accommodation be provided. Much of the labor is being done by voluntary help and the Pastor writes that the people have a mind to work, so that much progress is being made and it is expected that ere long the building will be opened.

* * * *

MOUNT PLEASANT RD., TORONTO.

To be the only church in a large residential district of a great city which gives out from Sunday to Sunday the unadulterated gospel message, is the lot of many Regular Baptist churches. The Mount Pleasant Road Church has this sacred privilege in an over-churched community. It is always hard to make

headway in such a place, for people, lulled to sleep by a form of godliness, are hard to reach and yet there are many trophies of His grace praising the Lord for such a testimony as the Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church.

Mother's Day was observed in a special manner. Splendid congregations were in attendance and the Sunday School held an open session. At the afternoon session, Mr. F. G. Pim gave an interesting object lesson to the school and other visitors assisted in the evening service, bringing special messages in song.

On May 5th, the women of the church had the privilege of a visit from Mrs. MacBain, of the Hillcrest Church, who brought a heart-searching message, covering the responsibility and the underlying meaning of the name "Regular Baptist Church." The message was one of exceptional interest and supplied much food for thought.

It has been a real accomplishment on the part of the church to have paid \$400.00 off the indebtedness of their building during the past few weeks. The need has not been met without sacrificial giving on the part of the people, but the Lord has sent abundant blessing and the church goes forward in happy fellowship.

* * * *

MEDINA.

The work on the Medina field is encouraging indeed. Congregations, in spite of bad weather, have kept up and the Pastor is looking forward to another baptismal service shortly. The first Sunday in June will be the anniversary of Rev. Melchie Henry's own baptism, which took place exactly eleven years ago.

* * * *

DUPLEX ENVELOPES.

The prices of the duplex and other church envelopes are greatly reduced during the summer months and considerable saving may be made by ordering them at this time for the coming year. Prices will be gladly supplied from the Union Office and orders may be placed through that channel also.

* * * *

THE MISSIONARY BULLETIN.

The May 14th issue of the Missionary Bulletin is now in the mails. The issue has many notes of interest and there may be many Christians who will be happy to have it and share with the Ontario and Quebec constituency the prayer burdens of the work. Do not hesitate to send in the names of such. They will gladly be put on our mailing list, free of charge.

* * * *

PARCELS TO LIBERIA.

The route via Germany, while taking, as a rule, a little longer, has been found to be quite reliable by our missionaries and as it is the cheaper rate, it would be well to note the comment. Mark all parcels "Of no commercial value. Not for re-sale."