

Seminary Graduation Exercises, May 26th, 8.15 p.m.

The Gospel Witness

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

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

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Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 11, No. 1

TORONTO, MAY 19, 1932

Whole No. 522

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

WHERE DWELL THE SPIRITS OF THE BELIEVING DEAD TILL THE LORD COMES?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, May 15th, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported)

"Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."—Phil. 1:23.

Prayer by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe.

We enter O Lord, into Thy gates with thanksgiving and into Thy courts with praise, for truly Thou hast been good unto us. Not only hast Thou brought us together in health and strength, having supplied to us all things that are necessary for life, but Thou hast set Thy love upon us, and hast caused us to approach unto Thee, having cleansed all our sins away in the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Thou hast called us Thy children, sons, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Thou hast given to us the spirit as an earnest of that fulness of joy which shall be ours when we see Thee face to face, when we know Thee as Thou art, and shall be made like Thee.

We praise Thee for all Thy lovingkindness and tender mercy. At every turn in the way we have been met with some new token of Thy goodness and Thy love for us. There are some here to-night who praise Thee for some special blessing that has been given to them in the past week; they would echo the words of the Psalmist of old, I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Unto others Thou has given new light from Thy Word; it has become to them a new Book, burning and yet not consumed, giving light and warmth and blessing. Others have received some token of Thy goodness, some evidence of Thy love and grace that brings them to a deeper understanding of the things of God. Thou has dealt with every one of us according to our need.

There are others of us, who think of no new spring of blessing, but who have the joy of a quiet consciousness of Thy presence with us every moment of the time. Thou hast been with us in our homes, hast made them as veritable Bethels. Thou hast transformed our places of work—the house, the office, the shop—into houses of God. Thou hast thrown about our paths Thy peace and joy. For all these things do we praise Thee: Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Teach us to give unto Thee the praise that is due Thy name. Open our lips, and our mouths shall show forth Thy praise.

We would praise Thee for the ministry of this church. We thank Thee that it has stood through the years for the unsearchable riches of Christ, for the gospel of the grace of God. Many of us first saw the light in this place: all of us

have been blessed through the ministry of this church, and for this we praise Thee.

We would remember to-night those who have gone out from us in past days to preach the gospel, even in foreign fields, and for the many who are proclaiming the truth in the home land. We pray Thy blessing upon them to-night. Command Thy richest blessing upon every activity of this church. We remember the Seminary students as they write their examinations this week, and then go out to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. We remember the ministry of THE GOSPEL WITNESS as it goes into many homes from week to week. Bless the teaching and preaching of Thy Word in the various Sunday School classes. Pour out upon us here such a blessing that we shall not be able to receive it. Open the windows of heaven, and make the floodtide of Thy blessing come in upon us.

Let some blessing come to us to-night in the salvation of souls and the edification of saints; and unto Thee we will give the praise and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

We have been discussing for some weeks the doctrine of the Lord's return and related events, and we have by no means reached the end of that discussion. We must, however, be careful of our diet: it is sometimes possible to have too much of a good thing.

There are certain aspects of this eschatological subject that are seldom discussed, and to one of these I propose to give attention this evening. In a former address I said I would deal with an article published in *The Moody Monthly* by one whom I am happy to be able to call my friend, Dr. James M. Gray, President of the Moody Bible Institute; but the position taken by Dr. Gray so largely parallels the position taken by others of the same school, that much of Dr. Gray's argument was covered in my address of last Sunday evening. The points that were not covered will be dealt with editorially in THE GOSPEL WITNESS, and you will be able to follow my completed argument there. But we shall return again and again to

a further discussion of the problems which the school of interpretation from which I, at least, find myself compelled to differ at some points—we shall return from time to time to a discussion of some of the problems which the view of that school, as I see it, creates.

But the subject of this evening is related directly to the doctrine of the Lord's coming. The Lord's coming synchronizes with the resurrection of the saints, and the question before us this evening is, Where do the spirits of the departed believers abide until the coming of the Lord? At that time, soul and body will be reunited, and we believe that we shall have bodies that will be "like unto his glorious body", so made by that power which is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

But what of the disincarnated spirits? Where dwell to-day, and until that final consummation, the spirits of those who have believed in Christ, and who have departed this life? I submit that that is a very important consideration, for there is not one of us who has not been to the graveside. We have had to dig our graves, and to all of us they have seemed very deep and dark—and in the darkness sometimes many questions have arisen. I suppose we have tried to visualize the conditions of life to which the redeemed spirit has been admitted when the "earthly house of this tabernacle" is dissolved.

The Importance of the Subject.

I say, it is a very important subject. It is a subject that may minister great sorrow or great comfort. I do not wonder at the tremendous hold which the Roman Catholic Church retains upon its people. They always insist upon the absolute control of the education of their own people—not merely on Sundays, but all the time; so that the education of all children of Roman Catholic parents is carried on under the direct supervision and by the agents of the church itself. Into the young minds are instilled certain ideas which bring those who receive them into bondage to the church which imposes those views upon them.

I have seen people who have but very little of this world's goods indulge in the greatest imaginable extravagances when death snatches some loved one from their side. I know it is foolish, and I could join with others in criticism of such extravagances; notwithstanding it is quite within ordinary understanding, that when the heart is torn, and the light of life seems temporarily, at least, to be extinguished, people should feel they would be glad to do everything in their power to give final expression of their devotion to the poor tabernacle to be laid away in the grave. If people can be persuaded that the spirits of those who die pass into a purgatorial state, if they can be persuaded to believe that the spirits dwell in purgatorial fires, and that the process of cleansing is hastened, and deliverance from that awful condition is brought about by prayers to be offered for a price, who would not give all that he had in order to shorten the duration of the soul's purgatorial experience? It is no wonder the Roman Catholic Church is rich, for it piles up its wealth on the soul-agonies of the people.

We in this place do not believe in purgatory, but I think any clear understanding of the Scripture will teach us that there is an intermediate state. That is to say, that the souls of the departed, whether of the redeemed or of those who die in unbelief, have not reached, as yet, their final state; for there is to be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust—which does not mean that they

take place simultaneously. I do not mean that, but I mean that ultimately, in the divinely appointed order, both the bodies of the just and of the unjust will rise again. Men are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and not until that final great assize will even the impenitent know what it means to come under the full measure of the "wrath of God".

Just so, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The whole creation! The created order is to be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus is a much richer and larger thing, I think, than the human imagination could possibly conceive. We are shut up in these matters entirely to the word of divine revelation, and by its authoritative pronouncements we must be content to abide.

The Practical Value of the Subject.

I say, this subject which engages our thought this evening is not only important, but it is of great practical value. With you, I have lost loved ones, and I must know, if it is possible, where they dwell, and under what conditions they live.

If the Bible be closed, and men reject the divine revelation, it is not surprising that spiritism, or spiritualism as it is sometimes called, should gain such general consideration and wide acceptance. Men like Sir Oliver Lodge, and Sir Conan Doyle, and others, with a desire to rend the veil and peer into the future, have resorted to the medium in order to communicate with those beyond.

There is a profound principle laid down in the Old Testament in respect to this matter. You remember it was the distinctive and peculiar sin of Saul, the son of Kish, that he refused to believe the word of the Lord. It is charged against him that he rejected the word of the Lord. And, having dismissed the prophet, it was inevitable that he should call upon the witch.

The Modernism which destroys faith in the Word of God paves the way for the spiritualistic medium, and for every other heresy that has its origin in the corrupt minds of men. But to know—if we may know—where our loved ones are, and under what conditions they live, ought to be a great comfort to us even now.

In that great and glorious rapture passage in the fourth chapter of first Thessalonians, Paul concludes his prophecy of that day by saying, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." It is a comfort; it is "the blessed hope" of which the choir sang this evening. But it is a comfort also to know, if we may know, that our loved ones separated from the body are well, and in conditions which are far better than even the happiest conditions which here obtain.

I have no opinion on the subject. If you ask me for my opinion, I say, I know nothing about it; I have never been there. We are shut up entirely to what the Word of the Lord may tell us.

A Safe Assumption.

Shall I surprise you if, before citing the scriptures which deal specifically with this matter, I say to you that we may safely assume certain things respecting the future? We know enough about the Lord already experimentally to be sure that no disappointments await the

believer in the future. Our Lord almost incidentally remarked, "In my Father's house are many mansions." Then He seemed to say, "Of course, you know that: If it were not so, I would have told you. I would not let you go into the future in expectation of a life of glory and of joy unspeakable if it were not so: I should have warned you against any possible delusion in that respect. So let me assure you that in my Father's house are many mansions." That incidentally and by the way.

In this matter, as in the other aspects of the truth of the Lord's return, we must begin with the plain and unmistakable statements of Scripture.

Someone wrote me last week, saying, "Since you have proved to your own satisfaction that Christ won't come for His church until after the tribulation, then to convince the readers of your paper, will you tell us where He will get His bride, seeing all that dwell on the earth at that time will worship the beast, and have his mark in their hand or on their forehead?" My answer, of course, would be: "You are evidently far more expert in expounding the book of Revelation than I. Why should any one rest his case upon a particular, and perhaps questionable interpretation of a symbolic scripture rather than upon the plain statement of the Word of God?"

One of my correspondents, in a letter published in last week's WITNESS, says, "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." So I say in this matter we must come to the plain statement of Scripture.

Life and Immortality Brought to Light.

Once again: We must bear in mind that the revelation of the New Testament in respect to these matters is specifically declared to be clearer than the revelation of the Old Testament. Let no one mistake: the Old Testament is just as truly the word of God as the New, but "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"; so is the path of divine revelation: it shines more and more until we behold the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". The New Testament tells us that He "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"—not merely that He gives life, nor that the spirits of men were not immortal until the gospel dispensation, but that the gospel draws the veil and throws a flood of light upon life, showing us what life is, and revealing in a clearness unknown in the Old Testament the true significance of the fact of the soul's immortality; He has brought it to light. Hence we must stand upon New Testament ground, and in the fuller light of the New Testament we must view this question of the soul's present position.

"Sleep" of the Body Not the Soul.

I am aware there are some who teach the doctrine of soul-sleeping, that when a believer dies the spirit goes to sleep, passes into a state of unconsciousness and sleeps until the resurrection. My insistence this evening is that there is no scriptural warrant for that doctrine; that it is utterly unscriptural, as I shall endeavour this evening to show you.

Of course I am aware that the figure of sleep is used in Scripture. Our Lord employed it when He said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep,

he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." When He came to the house of Jairus, and the professional mourners were making much noise with their bewailing, He said, "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth"—and they laughed Him to scorn. But, as in the case of Lazarus, He awoke her out of sleep.

The figure properly belongs to the realm of the physical. The body sleeps every night, and the soul, when the body thus sleeps, becomes unconscious; its activities are suspended—unless, of course, you have eaten not wisely but too well, and you have some unpleasant dreams, then the mind becomes active in sleep. But the figure properly belongs to the body.

There are other scriptures. For example: when our Lord was raised from the dead Matthew tells us "many bodies of the saints which slept arose". "Many bodies which slept arose"! We know nothing more about it—what became of them, when and how or whether they returned to the grave, or ascended, we do not know; but the bodies of the saints are said to have slept, and they arose.

You will remember too that Paul in Thessalonians says, "Whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." So that even though we sleep as to the body, we shall still live unto Him. Then in Corinthians, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

To what does the term "sleep" apply? Not to the spirit, for it is the bodies of the saints that will be changed at the Lord's coming. I suppose the work of sanctification will then be perfected: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Thus Paul says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." It is to the sleeping of the body, not to the sleeping of the soul, he there manifestly refers.

Then, of course, there is the familiar passage in Thessalonians: "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." By which He does not mean that He will bring a procession of sleeping saints, but that the bodies of those who sleep will be raised, and that, with us, they will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

I do not know of any passage which may fairly be taken to teach that the spirits of men sleep. However, in discussing matters of this sort we must always be perfectly fair, and I am prepared, for the sake of argument, to grant that the scriptures which I have cited may seem to some to be inconclusive, and one or two of them might be held to refer either to the spirit or to the body. Therefore for our understanding of that matter we must bring the whole question into the light of the plain and specific statements of the Word of God.

The Direct Teaching of Our Lord.

I think we may well begin that discussion by looking at the direct teaching of our Lord Himself. He came direct from heaven; again He left the world and returned to the Father. He said: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Surely it need scarcely be stated that no one can speak with greater authority on this subject than the Lord Himself, and if we believe that we have here a divinely-inspired record of His teaching, then we may rest our case upon the particular teaching of the Lord Himself.

The Rich Man and Lazarus.

I think we may take first of all the sixteenth of Luke, the story of the rich man and Lazarus. That is sometimes called a parable, but I find nothing in the text itself to indicate specially that it is a parable. "There was a certain rich man", our Lord said, "which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores"—then He draws the veil. I have not time now to expound it, but I believe you have in the sixteenth of Luke the climax of the discourse recorded in the first part of the chapter where our Lord speaks of the unjust steward.

It is a fine example of the psychology of effective preaching. When the Lord has laid down the doctrinal position, He draws the veil and gives us a picture in illustration of the terrible truth He has been expounding. However, two or three simple principles will guide us, I think, in the interpretation of that story, or parable, whatever you like to call it. Certainly it was designed by our Lord to be a revelation of conditions obtaining on the other side of the grave, whatever else be said of it. If you insist that it was a parable, that does not lessen its weight: it was designed specifically to teach something respecting the state beyond death.

Our Lord there lays down the principle of the continuity of life, and the relation of this life to the other; that we sow here, and reap yonder, that we live a life here that is to be remembered yonder, and that the life men live by and by will depend upon the life they live here: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things"—on the other side of the grave the tables were turned, and conditions were reversed. That by the way.

We have a picture of both states here: the state of the saved, and the state of the lost. Lazarus was carried at death by the angels "into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he"—not his body, but he, the personality, the ego, the man himself—"lift up his eyes, being in torments." He was not in a state of unconsciousness, by any means: all his faculties were alert. He was bidden "remember". He was sufficiently wide awake to remember all that had occurred on earth.

On the other hand, he saw "Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom",—a Jewish picture of a state of heaven. You say, "That is a state of repose, is it not?" Yes, but Lazarus must have been in a state of activity. He was not fast asleep, for Dives prayed that Lazarus might be sent from that state to his, to minister to him in his condition of torment. Our Lord would never have so described the spirit of one who died in unbelief if it were not true that yonder those who have rejected all their privileges here are still awake and sensible to their loss, and even as having capacity for the appreciation of that heavenly state which they have deliberately refused to enter.

Nor would our Lord have represented, surely, this man as conceiving of the possibility of a ministry exercised toward him by the spirit of Lazarus if Lazarus had not been in a state of alertness and activity when he was able to exercise such a ministry. The gulf between made the answer of the rich man's prayer impossible, and I think it directly relates to the teaching of the first part of the chapter where the Lord, as I think, utters the most terrible words that ever fell from His lips when He de-

scribed the unjust steward as turning his back upon his lord's debtors, that he might at last, when put out of his stewardship, be received into their habitations. The Master said in effect, When the fruit of your unfaithfulness matures, do not again come knocking at my door. When once the door is shut, it will be shut for ever.

Then the Lord draws the veil and shows Lazarus in heaven, and Dives on the other side of the gulf, declaring the absolute impossibility of anyone's passing from one state to the other.

That there are two distinct states—that those who die in their sins enter into a life of suffering, I think there can be no doubt whatever. But that is not my subject this evening: I am speaking specifically of those who have been redeemed by the blood, and have departed this life. This is a distinctly pre-resurrection scene, because Dives said, "I have five brethren", and requested that Lazarus might be sent to "testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment". They were still in the flesh, still susceptible of receiving heavenly messengers. To that you remember he received the final reply, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

How terribly true that is!

Quite incidentally: I have never yet met a man who denied the divine inspiration and authority of the writings of Moses and the prophets, who did not, ultimately, deny the resurrection of Christ. To deny one is to deny all. Surely that establishes the fact of the consciousness at least of those who have departed.

Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration.

Then you remember how when our Lord went to the mount of transfiguration and was transfigured before His disciples, and His face shone with a brightness that was above the brightness of the sun, all He needed to do was to withdraw the veil and let the glory and the majesty of His Deity shine through the veil of His flesh, and the disciples fell at His feet as dead. But when thus He appeared in glory, there appeared also two men, Moses and Elias, talking with Him—and they appeared also in glory.

Moses died and was buried; that is the record. You remember how Mrs. Alexander puts it?—

"On Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab,
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man knows that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there."

Yes, Moses was buried.

Elijah did not die: he was translated, and carried his body with him into the glory. I suppose his body was changed even as ours shall be. But the particular teaching of that chapter in respect to the subject before us is this, that though Moses had departed from this scene of activity many centuries before, he appeared in the mount, talking with Jesus. Moses then saw even more clearly than he did on earth the meaning of the Exodus and the Paschal Lamb. I think that must have been a rapturous time when, with his Lord, he discussed the fulfilment of every promise he had made in His behalf; especially when he said, "The Lord thy God will raise

up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Moses was not asleep: "There appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him."

Elijah was the man who introduced himself by saying, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." He had been carried away to be with his Master, and now he appears and talks with Jesus. You cannot think of Elijah's being swept up the shining pathway in a chariot of fire, through the gates, and into the city, and then going to sleep, can you? Is not that a part of the meaning of that scripture, "Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"? Where is Moses? Where is Elias? The New Testament tells us they are wide awake, able to hold conversation with their Lord about the things which He was, in their behalf as in ours, to accomplish.

The Word of God Through Paul.

Look for a moment at two or three scriptures in the epistles—the one Mr. Whitcombe read to you this evening: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Do you know what that means? I do not. "We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And we earnestly desire to be clothed upon, to find life's complement, with that house which is from heaven.

But my particular reference is to the later passage, where Paul says, "I make it my aim, it is my supreme ambition; that I may be accepted of him." He says he is "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. I want to please him here: I want to please him hereafter; and here or there, present or absent, I want to know that he is well pleased with me."

"Present With the Lord."

"Present with the Lord"! I am rather glad that not very much is said about the future, I mean that particulars are not given. I suppose when a marriage is contemplated, it may be necessary to think of the house, where they are to live; these commonplace, material, mundane, affairs must be attended to. But the main thing with these two young people is to be with each other. There are some of you who were born across the seas, and you lived in a house on the other side of the world. Perhaps you owned it—but you do not own it now. You sold it, and came with your family to this country; and your home is where they are.

That is the teaching of Scripture, that the moment the soul is absent from the body it is present with the Lord. Do you think that means going to sleep?

There are many people who seem to think that a long, long sleep would be specially attractive. Not so the active spirit of the Apostle Paul; not the one who was "more abundant in labours". He desired to be "present with the Lord".

"With Christ Which is Far Better."

But there is another scripture which is still more clear, where to the Philippians Paul wrote, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be

with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." This marvellously active, energetic soul, who never wasted a minute of his life, but was always spending and being spent for his Master, said, "I know that you need me still, and for your sakes I should like to stay that I may serve you a little longer. But for myself, I have a desire to depart, to leave this world."

Where are you going, Paul? What sort of house are you going to live in? "I have not thought about that." Where will you be situated? "I have not troubled about that." How many servants are you going to have? "I have not given it a thought." You do not know where you are going? "No. I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." And yet he was with Christ then. There is a sense in which we are always with Him. But he wanted to be closer to Him, and he realized that to "put off this tabernacle" would be to rid the spirit of an incumbrance, and that he would get closer to Christ. He said, "I should like to leave it behind, and to be with Christ, which is very far better." He uses the superlative—better than anything this earth can possibly give.

Do you think that means for the soul to go to sleep? I do not. Surely it would be a reversal of all that had characterized the active spirit of this man. Had he said, "I desire to depart, and to be at rest, which is far better"—but no! To be with Christ! If the soul is to sleep in unconsciousness it does not make much difference where it is, but the very suggestion of relationship with Christ surely implies a conscious relationship, a spiritual alertness, which enables one to have correspondence with his Lord.

"A Cloud of Witnesses."

There is another passage about which I shall not be dogmatic, but you remember how the writer to the Hebrews calls the roll of the heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter, and concludes by saying, "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 (or, apart from us) should not be made perfect." Then he proceeds, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses"—what does that mean? Their names are written in a book. Where are the spirits of the departed? We may not recognize them, but I can find no scripture that would forbid me to believe that they are nearer to us now than they were when they were in the flesh. Why not?

In the letter to which I have referred there is a suggestion which I had never dared to put into words, but it has passed through my mind. In the letter from California, printed in THE WITNESS this week, the writer assumes the possibility of somebody who has made mistakes in this life, but one of the Lord's own, passing into the glory, and discovering the mistakes, might then pray that somehow those mistakes might be corrected. I do not believe in praying for the dead. But we pray one for the other here, do we not? And do we not pray on the ground of the merit of Jesus Christ? And do you suppose that when we depart, and are "with Christ", if we remember, as the Scripture teaches us we shall, when we are "with Christ", closer to Him than we ever were here, if Moses and Elias talked to Him in the days of His flesh, is there anything in Scripture to forbid our believing the possibility of our talking with Christ after we get to glory? I can pray to Him now, can I not? And

when I shed this body, and see Him face to face, may I not pray to Him still? And may I not beg of Him to raise up from the Seminary and elsewhere somebody who will preach better than I had ever preached? And when I see all my mistakes, may I not say, "Lord, send somebody to correct them"?

I do not see anything necessarily unscriptural in it. And if it be true, I believe there are many people praying for me. I know two people who never, never, never, closed their eyes without praying for their children.

I wonder will you permit this personal word? Just a few weeks before she departed to be with Christ I called the long distance telephone, and my mother answered. She was a very reserved woman. She said over the long distance telephone, "While I have your ear, may I tell you something that I have long desired to tell you. It had long been a grief to me that I could not speak publicly for Christ, and before you were born I dedicated you to the Lord, and asked Him that in His grace He might let you speak for me." One who thus prayed in the flesh has not ceased to pray now.

That "cloud of witnesses" is round about us now, perhaps knowing more about us here than we can possibly know about them.

"The Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect."

But there is another passage in the twelfth of Hebrews: "Ye are come unto mount Zion"—not ye *shall* come, but—"ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." "The general assembly and church of the firstborn"! That does not speak of unconsciousness, does it? Rather, of supernal bliss, perfected in the presence of God.

"The Spirits in Prison."

Then there is that mysterious passage in Peter where it says that our Lord went and preached to the spirits in prison, when He descended into Hades between His death and resurrection: "He went and preached unto the spirits in prison." I cannot explain it: I only accept the Scripture for what it says. Those spirits in prison to whom our Lord went in those three days were the spirits of those "which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

I shall not try to expound it. The point I make is this: if Jesus Christ preached to the spirits in prison, He did not preach to a congregation of sleeping spirits. I have had to do that sometimes, but my Lord never did. And when He went to preach to the spirits in prison He preached to spirits that were wide awake and able to receive His ministry. Why, rests with God: I do not understand, but there it is.

I hold that it is the teaching of the Word of God that when the spirit leaves the body it becomes immediately present with the Lord, and, being with Christ, it is introduced to a condition which is "far better" than the best which earth can provide, and that that condition is a state of consciousness, of mental and spiritual activity; when, like Moses and Elias, the redeemed soul holds converse with the King. It is not the completion of the work of redemption. Some time those spirits will be

clothed with glorified bodies, and in the ages to come God will "shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus", and we may go from planet to planet, and from constellation to constellation, singing the praises of our glorious Redeemer. When the astronomer comes and staggers me with his distances I say, "You cannot make the universe too big for my God, for He is infinite. The larger you make it, the more clearly can I understand how God will unfold His greatness in "the ages to come".

Ought I to tell you about the terrible state of those who depart without Christ? I think I will speak about that next Sunday evening. But for to-night, let those of us who have been washed in the blood rejoice, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted in Him; and that some day we shall depart and be with Christ "which is far better", if indeed He does not first come down the skies and receive us unto Himself.

Some of you may not be here next Sunday. A brother of one of our deacons only last Saturday was suddenly taken ill, and yesterday departed "to be with Christ, which is far better". I am glad he was a Christian. It may be—oh, it may be—that some of us will be gone by this time next Sunday. It may be that someone leaving this place without Him, will die in his sin. I beg of you to put your trust in the sinners' Saviour; then you will be safe for time and for eternity.

Let us pray: We beseech Thee, O Lord, to bless our meditation this evening. May it minister comfort to the hearts of Thine own children. If there be one here who has not yet received Christ, may he or she receive Him; and, receiving Him, receive power to become a child of God. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

CONCLUDING LESSONS FROM NUMBERS.

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, May 12th, 1932.

*Twenty-fifth 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 25 to 36.

We begin with the twenty-fifth chapter, and very hurriedly we shall look through the other chapters to the end of the book. We have seen in our former studies that God's people were called out of Egypt, and separated from Egypt and from all other people, to be a people for His name, a peculiar people. They were promised an inheritance in the land which the Lord had sworn to their father Abraham that He would give to them. They have already been repeatedly warned when coming to the land not to do according to the abominations of the heathen. They have been warned to be as unlike the people with whom they must mingle as possible, to be entirely separated unto the Lord's service.

The twenty-fifth chapter relates the story of an Israelite's taking to himself a Midianitish woman. It is very old-fashioned to insist that the Lord has anything to do with marriage. In these modern times our religious convictions are not supposed to regulate our affections. And yet swift judgment fell upon this man who had so flagrantly violated the commandment of the Lord.

The Roman Catholic Church is deserving of study for many things. We believe that it is, though called Christian, decidedly anti-Christian, but our Lord admonished us to be wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. And there is one thing that must be recognized in the policy of the Roman Catholic Church as a practical matter: It has always opposed the principle of mixed marriages. It recognizes that when a man and woman enter the married state, if but one of them is a Roman Catholic, his or her devotion to the church, as the case may be, is likely to be a divided devotion if the other side of the house is wanting in interest.

Why should we not take the plain principles of the Word of God and have the courage to make application of those principles to ourselves? The Roman Catholic Church is very narrow, it is very bigoted, it is very outspoken; and makes no apologies for laying down certain principles, and insisting that people shall abide by those principles. This chapter at least should teach us that two cannot walk together except they be agreed, and that a Christian man or Christian woman should be separated from those things which would mitigate against a whole-hearted and unreserved devotion to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I know that the subject of marriage, even if broached, sometimes brings a smile to people's countenances. But let me tell you that after some years' experience as a pastor, I must say it is no laughing matter. I have seen young men who were zealous in the service of the Lord, who seemed to have put the interests of the kingdom of Christ first, and to be seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and I have observed them open their hearts to some affection that alienated them from spiritual things until by and by they drifted away and were utterly useless.

On the other hand, I have seen young women who seemed to be passionately devoted to Jesus Christ, and to all that concerned Him, weaned away from His service and rendered spiritually useless by an unwise marriage.

Do not laugh about it, particularly you students. Do not think of it as a light matter. Next to your own soul's salvation, so far as your usefulness in life is concerned, there is nothing so important. You had better postpone marriage as long as possible. In the Province of Ontario a marriage license has to be three days old before it becomes valid. If I had my way I would make it three years, so that young people could have three years to think about it instead of three days. I do not want you to think I am anything of a pessimist, but I should like to send back to the Registrar General, unused, most of the licenses that are brought to me.

In that vitally important matter young men and women do not take time to think. Surely this chapter is an indication of the danger that lies in that direction. I have known many a preacher utterly ruined by his wife. I say to you young ladies, I have known many a preacher's wife who had to hang her head apologetically whenever her husband's name was mentioned. There are many ministers who are not worth marrying. Give them a wide berth. Keep clear of marriage, all of you, until you cannot help it—then, of course, it will be another matter. You may laugh now if you want to! I have said all that with a sincere desire to save you—although not a Roman Catholic—from purgatory to paradise.

In the twenty-sixth chapter the Lord instructed Moses to take the number of the people, to have a roll-call, to

take a census to find out how many people there were. I call your attention to the sixty-third verse: "These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho"—you remember they have now had nearly forty years in the wilderness, and they are approaching again the borders of the promised land—"in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun."

The old generation had died off, and another generation had risen. Caleb and Joshua were the only two that entered the promised land of those who were living when the people rebelled at Kadesh, and turned back again into the wilderness. Before they could enter the promised land the undertaker had to be very busy; the old generation had died off.

I have seen some churches like that. I remember when we used to have some problems in small country churches where the population was stationary, and nearly everybody was related to everybody else. There were Uncle Joe and Aunt Mary, Cousin Tom and Sister Lou—they were all mixed up together, and it was impossible to do anything with them. You could not operate on the patient because it would die on the operating-table,—and if you did not operate you were in for trouble in any event. I said to the Home Mission Board on more than one occasion, "That church will never have blessing until the undertaker has done something for them." There would be one or two men in the church, professing Christians, hard as nails, men of no reputation for faith or piety in the community, and yet not guilty of anything that would bring them under the church's discipline; and thus they would go on until the situation passed beyond remedy. Then when a few of the older ones were removed, and another generation took their places, we have sometimes read of revival: they have actually got across Jordan into the promised land. Do you think that sounds cynical? On the contrary it is very scriptural in principle. The "old man" is always in the way in every one of us until he is crucified with Christ; when he is given up to death we shall get into the promised land.

There is a principle here of which I must remind you. The privilege of prayer is one of the highest and holiest privileges of the believer's life. There are many who quite glibly discuss the philosophy of prayer. To many, it is a very mechanical exercise: they find certain things prescribed in the Bible, they interpret them as being a promise that God has pledged Himself to do certain things—and then they demand the fulfillment of the promise. That is not prayer. We may thank God that He does not answer many of our prayers. If He did, many of us would be in a very bad way. It is said of the children of Israel, "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

Some of you may remember a story one of the brethren told at a session of the Convention a few years ago, of a baby in charge of a nurse, crying most lustily. The mother said to the nurse, "Let that baby have what he wants." "He has what he wanted, madam, and that is

why he is crying," said the nurse, "he has been grasping after a wasp—and he caught it."

The children of Israel asked for certain things,—and they got them. There is a certain treatment given liquor addicts which, I understand, involves giving so much liquor that they react against it. But before patients were thus treated, the people of Israel asked for flesh, and the Lord said, "Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even, a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you."

It will be wise for us to let the Lord fill out the order, to let Him have His will instead of our having ours. Again and again the children of Israel said, "Would God that we had died." And the Lord said, "All right; I will let you die"—and He did. Only two of them survived to enter the promised land.

When you give thanks to God to-night, thank Him for all the requests that He has refused to grant; for if all that we have asked God to do for us had been done, we should have been ruined, every one of us, long ago.

I remember years ago living in a town where they had some little stores that sold things for little people. I can never buy anything to fit me. The people of that town were dwarfs: I belong to the "climbing" variety (I am gardening just now). But I used to send away occasionally to a certain departmental store—the name of which you could not guess!—and they would send me printed order forms, that I might more easily send the next order. At the bottom of the form were some such words as these: "If we have not the article you order in stock, may we substitute?" Once I said, Yes—and ever after that I always said 'yes' in capital letters; for they wrote, "We are sorry we have not in stock the article you ordered, but we are substituting"—and they sent me something that was worth twice the price I paid. I did not exactly tell them that they might substitute every time, but that was the way I felt about it. They made it a rule, if they could not supply the article ordered, to substitute with one of a much better quality. Ever after that I always printed it out boldly so that they would understand it: Y-E-S.

When we pray to God, we had better put on the order-form that we are quite willing to let Him substitute, for every time He does He always sends us something far better, "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think".

One of the advantages of an extended pastorate—or disadvantages, if you like—is that one has time to see some things grow, and also to see some difficulties slough themselves off, without one's having to remove them. It is not often I have time, but occasionally I like to look back over the list of names on our church roll (Brother Greenway, we shall soon be in Jarvis Street like the children of Israel: we shall have to ask, Where is the old guard? They are nearly all gone. Caleb and Joshua are with us still, and a few others like them who have been here a long time; but thus they pass on, and God carries on His work.)

But how important some of them were! How important they were until God called them away—and then they did not seem to be important at all! How important we feel ourselves to be, as though nothing could get along very well without us! Do not give hospitality to that idea. That is an indirect challenge for God to show how well

He can get along without you. It will not be long before somebody else will be reading the list and saying, "They are all gone." That is life.

There is a very interesting story in the twenty-seventh chapter of the daughters of Zelophehad. They were very sensible women—as most women are! They told Moses that their father was dead, that they had no brethren, and that they were going to find themselves without any inheritance in the land because the inheritance descended by the male heirs. Read that chapter, and you will find that the principles there set forth obtain in nearly every civilized land to-day. If the man had no sons, the daughters inherited; if there were no children, the inheritance passed to his brethren; if there were no brother, his father's brethren were considered the next of kin. The inheritance was not shut up to one line. If you were lawyers instead of preachers I should recommend you to make a diligent study of the Pentateuch, of the law of Moses, to discover therein revealed the great principles upon which the world's liberties are based.

Chapters twenty-eight to thirty are very largely a repetition, the first two in respect to certain offerings, and the latter a repetition of that which we had some time ago respecting the payment of vows. Once more: if the Lord in His wisdom sees it wise and necessary to say the same thing more than once, we may learn of that necessity, and follow His example. Let us be teachers as well as preachers of the gospel. "He gave some pastors and teachers." I need not go into the particulars, because in essence we have covered them already.

In chapter thirty-one Moses speaks, by divine command, to the people instructing them to avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, after Moses should be gathered to his people.

As you come in contact with the Modernist philosophy you will find a great many people objecting to the Pentateuch, and very especially to the books of Joshua and Judges, because of what they consider their unethical standards, the avenging of themselves upon their enemies, the judgment meted out to the people of the land which they were to inherit. It is a difficult subject which requires very careful exposition, but I would remind you that this Book is the word of God, and it is written from the divine standpoint. It is written as a disclosure of the divine estimate of things, and the divine Surgeon has to consider the moral health of the world.

I hope you will become experts in historical study. I do not believe that any man can rightly appraise present-day values without some knowledge of their antecedents, of what has gone before. I do not think it is possible clearly to estimate the ethical quality of a particular principle unless you have studied that principle in operation in human life in days gone by.

For example, an outstanding and very simple case: when Jeroboam, as a matter of policy, devised a way that would obviate the necessity of the tribes of Israel going up to Jerusalem, when he had been made king of the ten tribes, and he knew the law required their presence in the holy city, he reasoned, "If they visit Jerusalem they will be won back to their old affection." That is the reason, when occasionally some people manage to turn a few of our friends away from us—we have that occasionally—they say, "Go anywhere to church but to Jarvis Street." They know very well if they came back they would stay.

That is exactly what Jeroboam did. They had a "split" in Israel, and Jeroboam said, "I must arrange it somehow

so that they will not go back to Jarvis Street Church to worship." It is only a small matter—quite proper, of course. They did what they nearly always do in such cases—set up calves to worship. Jeroboam said, "These be thy gods." You know what terrible results followed. If you had been a contemporary of Jeroboam, and you had heard his action denounced as wrong in the extreme, you would probably have said, "Now! Now! Be quiet. I do not think he is very far wrong. All he wants to do is to retain his own people, to gather them under his wing. He does not mean that the calves of gold are really gods: they are only representative of a principle. He is all right at heart. Do not be too hard on him."

Nobody who lived in Jeroboam's day could possibly measure the evil potentialities, wrapped up in that single wrong act. What did it do? Every successor he ever had in Israel walked in his ways, until at last the whole nation was destroyed. When the people were dispersed among the nations, Hosea prophesied, seeing the utter devastation that had been wrought by Jeroboam's single act of policy, saying, "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off."

You young men in the ministry, as pastors, will have to do many things that your contemporaries will not understand or justify. If you have any measure of prescience, any ability to look into the future, any power to diagnose spiritual realities, and to see how they operate you will sometimes have to do drastic things. People will hold up their hands in holy terror and say, "It is terrible to do that." But you will know it is the only way of salvation. You will have to put up with all kinds of denunciation until, in the outworking of the principle, at last wisdom will be justified of her children, and someone will come to you and say, "Pastor, I apologize. The only difference between you and me is that you saw it, and I did not."

God saw what no man could see—He saw that in Canaan's land was a moral cancer that had to be cut out; hence He gave those terrible orders to Moses.

Look back over history, and you will see many illustrations of that principle. Read the oration of Pitt the Younger in the House of Commons on his refusal to negotiate with Napoleon Bonaparte, when Napoleon had the world under his feet, and when many responsible people said, "It is of no use. We might just as well make the best terms we can and bow to the inevitable." Pitt the Younger—not Lord Chatham, but his son—delivered that great oration. He absolutely refused to have anything to do with the outlaw. Why? Because he saw the principles involved, and Napoleon went to pieces on the rock of Britain's resistance under Pitt's leadership—and the liberties of the world were saved.

You will have to deal with the Midianites, and take courses that only time will justify. I pray that God may give you discernment to see into these things, and the courage to do what you know to be the will of God when you have diligently enquired of Him, as did Moses in respect to these matters.

Just a word about the thirty-second chapter, in passing. In the thirty-second chapter there were two tribes, the tribes of Reuben and Gad—and the half tribe of Manasseh—who said to Moses, "If we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan." "And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? Do

you mean to propose that you, with your families and all your possessions, shall comfortably settle down on this side Jordan, and let all the rest of the tribes of Israel go over the river, and every one of them fight for his inheritance?" "No; we do not propose that. What we propose is that you assign this portion to us, and we will leave our wives and our children and our cattle here, and go over armed before the children of Israel and help every other tribe to get his inheritance too. Then, when we have possessed the whole land, we will come back and settle down here." "If that is your plan", said Moses; "you may have it; only every man must fight for his inheritance. If you are to have this fine land that is not now possessed by anybody because Sihon and Og have been dispossessed, so be it; only gird on your armour and help the rest of the tribes to get their possession" (Chap. 32:1-27).

There is a disposition sometimes to be interested in ourselves only—indeed, I find it is not unusual. I have known some ministers who were always interested in talking about themselves. I knew a very distinguished man once, a most eloquent man, who was never quite so eloquent as when he had himself for a text! What a sermon he could preach then! He was a great man, notwithstanding his egotism. And I have met many lesser men who will talk to you by the hour of their achievements, but they never even say to you, "How are *you* getting along?"—they do not care. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, have already entered into their possession.

I hope some day you will be like these tribes, and that you will find just the place where you ought to settle down, and that you will have, not a happy pasture—I read somewhere of a certain minister who was reported to have just entered a new "pasture". And there may have been more truth than poetry in that remark. But I hope you will find the place, as did these men, where you will fit. They were perfectly right in that. The place you fit was made for you, and you were made for the place; and there you will have blessing.

Then some neighbouring pastor, whose church is like a little Muskoka, all rocks and stones, whose heart is nearly broken, who has done his utmost to bring things to pass, but without success, hears of this new pastor. He hears that, although his neighbour has been in the church but a short time, he has already slain Og and Sihon, and the discouraged one goes to have a word with him. His neighbour tells him of the great time he had on Sunday, and of the wonderful things he is doing. He talks so much that the discouraged pastor does not get a chance to get a word in edgeways. At last he says, "Good bye", and goes back home, saying to himself, "I wonder what was the matter with that visit? I did not get much out of it. What was wrong anyhow?" After a while it will dawn upon him: "I know: my pastor-neighbour forgot that I am a minister; he forgot that I have a job to do. He was so enthusiastic about his own job that he did not know I had one." When that man needs comfort again he will go to someone else, to someone who has a hard job. They will have a good talk that will warm their hearts.

If God gives you any measure of success, do not forget the rocks in some brother-minister's garden; do not forget there are still enemies to conquer, that there are Jordans to be crossed. The tribes of Naphtali, and Benjamin, and Dan, and Simeon, are just as good as you are. If you inherit the land of Sihon and Og, let it be Og, and do not

spell it with an "H"! Moses was eminently wise in insisting that all the tribes must fight equally in order to possess that which God had ordained should be theirs.

There is a sad word here: the Lord tells Moses that his day is done, that because he too, for the people's sake, had sinned against God, he must go up to the mount and die there. Moses said a wonderful thing. I think we have been with him long enough now to know that it was not always green pastures and still waters that fell to his lot. He had difficult places.

It is especially sad that the Lord was angry with Moses for the people's sake. He made that one slip at the waters of Meribah, and the Lord said, "You cannot go in." It was rather disappointing, was it not, to have come so far, and to have borne so much, and yet not to have set his sandalled feet at last on the soil of the land of promise?

A good many people are called to prepare the way for others. David was a great man, and he wanted to build a temple for the Lord. His Pastor, Nathan, told him to do so; but the Lord especially communicated his will to Nathan, saying in effect, "David shall not build an house for My name. Let him gather the material, and Solomon his son shall build a house to my name." David was content to gather the material, and later said to Solomon, "I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto."

Moses was a big man, but he was pretty much of a hod-carrier: he gathered much material for somebody else to build with. But he showed his greatness when the Lord thus spoke to him. He thought only of the people—he always had thought of the people. Now when the Lord would remove him, he utters a pathetic prayer: "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd—they have depended on me entirely: appoint them a leader who will keep them together."

The Wise Man said, "I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?" Moses still was not thinking of himself, but thinking of the people, the cause of God in the earth. So the Lord laid His hand upon Joshua, the son of Nun, and set him apart, and said to Moses, "Put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient."

Next session we will come to the wonderful story of Joshua. We shall miss Moses: he will have fallen asleep,

and gone home. Another man will be in his place. But there will be the same Voice, the same sovereign Will. "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan."

To those of you who graduate and will not be returning, let me say this word about these studies. I wish we could have completed our study of the Pentateuch, although Deuteronomy is, in some respects, a repetition of what we have covered; but it is a very beautiful book. I urge you to read consecutively through the entire Bible. Open your hearts to the martial strength of Joshua; the individual heroism of Judges; the sylvan beauty and domestic loveliness of Ruth; the philosophy of history, the sequence of cause and effect in the historical portions of the Old Testament; the philosophy of tears in the poetry of Job; the universality of the experimental utterances of David; the practical wisdom of Proverbs; the Preacher's appraisal of the vanity of things under the sun; the holy passion of the Canticles; the seraphic fire of Isaiah; the threnodies of Jeremiah; the supernal splendour of Ezekiel's visions of God; the foresight of Daniel; the pathos of Hosea; the perisopic and telescopic discernment of all the minor prophets, until you open the new Testament and read, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king",—you will breathe the atmosphere of Genesis, and find principles reminiscent of Exodus, and feel as well as reason that the same Author speaks in every book. Read the Gospels, read the story of the crucifixion and of the resurrection, and gather with the apostles as the Holy Ghost descends. Read through the Acts. One by one the witnesses slip away, while their history recurs in part in the Epistles. Then read John's vision in the Isle of Patmos, and on through the book of Revelation, and you will hear the same Voice which has been speaking through all the Temple of Truth, saying, "Surely I come quickly," and you will be able to respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." When you have finished it all, I know you will say, It is God's book. Nobody but God could speak like that.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, Lord, for Thy great word. We thank Thee for the privilege of studying it. How highly privileged are we to have the word of the Infinite in our hands, in our own tongues! Bless our meditation this evening, and the meditations which have preceded it; and very especially, O Lord, let Thy blessing rest upon these young men and women. May they be men and women of God, men and women of one Book, who will ever cleave passionately to the truth of the gospel. Use them mightily in the years that are to come, even to the ends of the earth. Bless those who will be leaving us in a week or so. Wherever they may go, may it be the place of Thine appointment, and may the fruit of the Spirit be manifest in their lives and in their ministry. We ask these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dr. James M. Gray on The Rapture and The Tribulation In *The Moody Monthly*

In *The Moody Monthly* of August, 1931, Dr. James M. Gray, the Editor, had an article entitled, "Shall the church pass through the tribulation?" We quote the first three paragraphs of the editorial:

"A southern correspondent wrote us some time ago about a sermon in *THE GOSPEL WITNESS* (Toronto) by the well-known Dr. T. T. Shields, Pastor of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church

of that city. The theme of the sermon was, 'Are We on the Eve of the Great Tribulation', and it was presented with the clearness and strength commonly associated with that pulpit. However, the preacher saw 'no warrant for the theory of the pre-tribulation rapture', but considered that the church, the body of Christ, would be on the earth during the Tribulation, and apparently for the whole period. This troubled our correspondent who asked, 'Shall we have to reverse some of

our most cherished beliefs with regard to the Lord's second coming, and give up our hope that

"To-day, may be, He will come'?"

"We replied assuring her that such need not be the case, and while meditating on the subject, we concluded to write this editorial enlarging on our reply for the benefit of other souls who may be similarly troubled.

"There was much truth in the sermon referred to with which of course, we heartily agreed. For example:

1. That the world is not improving.
2. That the age will not end in righteousness.
3. That we should not lose the perspective of history.
4. That the Antichrist will one day rule.
5. That the Scriptures are given us for the confirmation of faith both now and in more difficult times through which we may pass.
6. That it is dangerous to make symbolical scriptures the standard of interpretation.
7. That the Tribulation will immediately precede the coming of the Lord."

We begin our reply by expressing our great appreciation of the gracious spirit Dr. Gray displays in the discussion of this question. If all people could approach a disputed subject in the same generous and kindly spirit, it would be easily possible for those who share like precious faith to compare spiritual things with spiritual in their discussion, to their mutual profit.

We are grateful for such a compliment as Dr. Gray pays us in the first paragraph when he says of the sermon under discussion, "It was presented with the clearness and strength commonly associated with that pulpit."

Coming to the discussion itself, we have traversed most of the ground covered by Dr. Gray in the sermon on this subject appearing in THE GOSPEL WITNESS of May 12th; but there are two or three points raised by Dr. Gray which have not been dealt with specifically in the sermon named.

We further quote from Dr. Gray's article as follows:

"All the references to the second coming of Christ up until the close of the book of Acts, pointed to His coming in judgment on the nations and for the deliverance of Israel out of their hands in order to the setting up of the kingdom. In other words, in all these references the contemplated sphere of blessing was earthly rather than heavenly. See for example, Christ's own words in Matthew, chapters 24 and 25, and their parallels, the words of Peter in Acts 3:12-26 and those of James 5:1-9. While none of these writings as such, may have been in circulation before the close of the Acts, say A.D. 61-63, yet their contents constituted the preached word of that period and were well known.

"But some one may say, Why settle on the close of the Acts, what has that to do with the matter? The answer usually given is that up until that time Israel, as a nation, had still an opportunity to accept Jesus as her Messiah and King, in which event He would have immediately returned to judge the nations and set up the kingdom. Study the words of Peter in Acts 3:12-21 to discover this, and for further confirmation turn to Paul's words, Acts 28:28. 'I will offer no conjectures', says Sir Robert Anderson, 'as to what the course of events would have been if the nations had accepted the divine amnesty proclaimed at Pentecost . . . The times and seasons rest with Him to whom a thousand years are as one day. And 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 (*Forgotten Truths*, pp. 72, 73)."

There are several suggestions in the above paragraphs from which we must beg leave to dissent.

First, Dr. Gray says, evidently with approval:

"The answer usually given is that up until that time Israel, as a nation, had still an opportunity to accept Jesus as her Messiah and King."

We cannot find any scriptural warrant for such a statement. The scriptures cited—Acts 3:12-21 and Acts 28:28, it appears to us do not suggest that the gospel was ever offered to the Jews as a nation. Salvation, whether for Jew or Gentile, is an individual, personal, matter; and we cannot find any scriptural warrant for believing in any sort of national salvation.

Dr. Gray further says:

"In which event He would have immediately returned to judge the nations and set up the kingdom."

We can find no scripture to justify the idea that the Lord Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth with a tentative programme; that He proposed that the Jews should be given a chance to accept Him as their King; and that, in the event of their acceptance, He would set up His kingdom immediately, but that if they rejected Him the establishment of the kingdom would be postponed to some future dispensation. This is what we call "positive error". We cannot think of God as arranging any matter tentatively. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

Nothing is more evident than that our Lord, during the days of His flesh, saw the end from the beginning. He perceived the thoughts of men. He forewarned Peter that he would deny Him. He predicted His betrayal by Judas. He predicted both His death and His resurrection. He carried out His programme to the last detail, a programme arranged before the foundation of the world, and a programme which became history—to employ the principle of a somewhat hackneyed saying—as it was run into the mould of prophesy. We believe the Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ is God. We believe too that the Scriptures represent God as omniscient and absolutely sovereign, doing as He wills among the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, there being none to stay His hand, nor to say unto Him, What doest Thou?

Dr. Gray 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."

We have great respect for such an honoured name as that of Sir Robert Anderson, but we insist that this passage is shot through with teaching that is utterly dishonouring, though not intended to be so, to our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot accept the teaching here implied, that the Lord Himself expected His hearers would go through the Great Tribulation; but that their doing so would depend upon their acceptance of Christ as the Messiah. He knew they would not accept Him. It was not by any special revelation, but by His own divine omniscience He spoke, when the elders of the people, their chief priest, and scribes, asked Him in their council, "Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go."

Nor did our Lord know less in the beginning of His public ministry. Passages abound which prove that all things were naked and open to His eyes. John the Baptist did not introduce Him as the King of the Jews, but cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." It is quite unnecessary to "conjecture", to use Sir Robert Anderson's word, in this matter.

There was no "perhaps", or "peradventure", or "if so be", in the earthly programme of our Lord. He finished the work the Father had given Him to do.

Our special objection to this doctrine is that, in our view—and we do not say it unkindly—its implications are quite as dangerous as many of the teachings of Modernism. The truth of our Lord's infallibility, involving His omniscience, is the rock upon which Modernism splits. Even as we dictate this article we can see on our shelves the work by Hugh McIntosh entitled, "Is Christ Infallible, and the Bible True?" If Christ is infallible, the Bible is true.

We have been accustomed to meet the challenge of Modernism in respect to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the historicity of the book of Jonah, and other scriptures attacked by Modernists, by quoting the dicta of our Lord. But we are told by our Modernistic friends that it is vain to invoke the authority of Christ in support of the divine authenticity of the Old Testament. It seems to us that Sir Robert Anderson, in his zeal for a theory, surrenders that citadel to the enemy; for if, in the Olivet discourse, our Lord really supposed the Jews would pass through the Great Tribulation (personally we believe they did) when in point of fact, they escaped it by rejecting the Messiah, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that our Lord did not know.

If that be admitted, of what possible value was, or is, His prophetic ministry? If the divine programme is dependent upon the caprice of the human will, then we can understand the Modernists' scorn of the predictive element in Scripture, and of that which some of them describe with such contempt as "apocalyptic". This sort of "dividing the word of truth", to us, is dangerous in the extreme; and we are convinced that it is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture.

Dr. Gray's references to 1st Thess. 5:1-3 and 1st Thess. 5:9-12 have been dealt with in the sermon appearing in THE GOSPEL WITNESS of last week.

We quote Dr. Gray once more:

"It is a righteous thing with God, says the apostle, 'to recompense affliction to them that afflict you', a righteous thing, not a cruel thing as some would charge upon God. And it is equally a righteous thing for God to recompense you who are afflicted with 'rest with us', that is to say, rest together with us (II Thess. 1:6, 7).

"But when shall that rest be entered upon? At the time 'when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God (Gentile nations), and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jew)'.

"This is the Tribulation, is it not? But will the 'rest' be entered upon before or after that event? In his First Epistle Paul gives us reason to believe it will be entered upon before and not after it, and can we imagine that he will contradict himself here? Indeed no, for at verse 10 he goes out of his way, if one may so say, to declare that it shall be 'when he shall have come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed, because our testimony unto you was believed'.

"When he shall have come.' The King James renders it, 'When he shall come.' But the word is *elthe*, and those familiar with Greek know that it is in the subjunctive mood and second aorist tense; and therefore should be rendered 'shall have come'. In other places, the translators so render it, and consistency would require that it be so rendered here. Any reader of the English only can determine this for himself by examining some of the other places where the word occurs, for example, Matthew 11:40; Mark 8:38; Luke 17:10; John 4:25; Acts 23:35; Romans 11:27; I. Corinthians 15:24, 25.

"As Dr. Bullinger says in his work, *The Church Epistles*, 'From these passages it is perfectly clear that when the judgment on the ungodly is revealed, the Lord shall have, already and previously, come to be glorified in His saints, and have given them the promised 'rest'. 'In that day' refers to that glorious day of which He had spoken in I. Thessalonians 4."

With all respect, we must declare that in our view, Dr. Gray's interpretation of II Thess. 1:6, 7, is the very opposite of what it manifestly means: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that afflict you; and to you who are afflicted (or troubled) rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven", etc.

In connection with Dr. Gray's rendering of II. Thess. 1:10, "When he shall have come", we consulted our Professor of Greek in Toronto Baptist Seminary, Rev. W. Gordon Brown. Mr. Brown writes on the subject as follows:

Dr. Gray's crucial question is, "But when shall the rest be entered upon?" He is right when he says that it is "at the time 'when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed'" But why does he ask further whether it will be entered upon "before" or "after" the Tribulation? It is possible for the King James version here to confuse the reader, when the translation uses a temporal clause, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed . . ."; the original, however, is quite clear, and must be literally translated, "in (or at) the revelation of the Lord Jesus." Paul uses the simple Greek preposition, "en," which occurs two thousand six hundred and ninety-eight times in the New Testament. It is a preposition of location either in place or time, and is also used to express means. Dr. George Milligan says that "en" is not purely temporal, but "in and through" is the meaning, which is quite possible. The programme of the revelation includes taking full vengeance on the ungodly. Thus it is clear, let us repeat for emphasis, that Paul is not concerned with the question of "before" or "after"; with him it is "in" or "at."

Referring to verses seven and eight, Dr. Gray says: "This is the Tribulation, is it not?" Well, "the" does not occur in the Greek, and tribulation is a common biblical term, occurring fifty-five times in the New Testament. The inspired apostle recognized the fact that the Thessalonian believers were being hard-pressed by the ungodly, and comforted them by the thought that some day the tables would be turned, that it was "a right thing with God to recompense to those who are troubling you, trouble, and to you who are being troubled, release with us" (as we may legitimately translate). Thus it is clear that Paul is talking about affliction in general, and not about a definite period of tribulation. It may be that affliction upon the ungodly will at last take the form of a great Tribulation, but these verses do not say so.

Believers will not have trouble but rest when vengeance falls upon the wicked. But when will that be? As if to explain his words, "in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven," Paul adds, apparently having certain Old Testament passages in mind, "whenever he comes to be glorified in his saints . . ." Here we must again call in question the editorial before us. The writer is sure that the translation must be, "When he shall have come," basing his argument on the fact that the Greek uses the second aorist subjunctive, and giving a list of references to prove the correctness of this translation.

Consider the following facts:

1. Paul uses an indefinite temporal clause: a literal translation would employ a clause beginning with "whenever." The construction of the original is used to refer "to a subjectively possible event, which has to, can, or must take place at some single point of time distinct from the actual present, but the exact epoch of which is left uncertain" (Ellicott). That is to say, the indefinite construction would remind us of the words of our Lord, that no man knows the day nor the hour of His coming.

2. The use of the subjunctive in itself tells nothing about a time element. It expresses "kind of action, not the time of the action" (Dr. A. T. Robertson, "Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research," page 824).

Dr. Gray refers to the translation in other places, but the list that he gives does not prove his point: Matt. 11:40 is evidently a misprint; the English future perfect is employed in the translation of the passages he lists only in Luke 17:10, and in the Authorized version of First Corinthians, 15:24-25; but in these two verses the American Standard version does not have it. The Greek construction here used is a common one, but the translation "shall have"—seems uncommon: e.g. Matt. 12:43; 18:32; 15:2; Mark 2:20; 4:15, 16, 29; Luke 11:24; 12:54; John 5:7; etc. "Consistency" therefore, does not "require" that we shall here render "shall have come." Indeed, this is a possible translation, being given by Alford, and Hogg and Vine, and admitted by George Milligan. Findlay, in the "Cambridge Greek Testament," translates "comes." Ellicott says that "shall come" is "the most natural and idiomatic mode of translation" and declares that all the versions so render the Greek.

We submit that careful examination of the grammar and syntax of this passage does not prove Dr. Gray's point.

Quoting the sermon under discussion Dr. Gray says:

"The author says at another point, that 'the Scripture does not put an extended period between the *parousia* and the revelation of Christ! We agree with him in this also, and inasmuch as he admits that there is a 'period' between them, we are perfectly satisfied to omit 'extended', as the Scripture throws but little light on the item of time between the first aspect and the second."

We cannot here agree with Dr. Gray's reasoning. Our saying, "The Scripture does not put an extended period between the *parousia* and the revelation of Christ", does not involve an admission that there is any period at all. We are referring there to the usual contention that seven years of tribulation intervene: hence the adjective. We do not believe there is such a period, as our words in the sermon plainly state: these are "three aspects of the same event".

This covers Dr. Gray's argument. We submit our answer to our readers as representing our conviction on the matter.

Before leaving this question we desire to add that we are happy to number among our best and most intimate friends many who do not at all agree with us in our view of the relation of the Rapture to the Tribulation, but we are good friends, and enjoy the happiest fellowship. That is our attitude toward Dr. James M. Gray and Dr. W. L. Pettingill. Two more gracious Christian gentlemen we have never known. We give thanks at every remembrance of them,—only desiring naturally that they should be delivered from this little error into which they have fallen!

TWENTY-TWO YEARS IN JARVIS STREET.

On Sunday, the 15th of May, 1910, we began our pastorate in Jarvis Street Church. Last Sunday therefore was our twenty-second anniversary, and the beginning of our twenty-third year.

These twenty-two years have been filled with difficulty. When we had been here but four years the Great War began. In October, 1919, we were compelled to take issue with McMaster University on the subject of Modernism. That precipitated the controversy which resulted in our separation from the old Convention, and the organization of the new one. The last ten and a half years have been especially eventful. THE GOSPEL WITNESS and Toronto Baptist Seminary have come into being, and Jarvis Street has touched the ends of the earth with her influence both through THE WITNESS and the large number of missionaries which have gone from her membership.

A militant church is bound to have enemies, and almost equally certain to have many friends.

In spite of our many vicissitudes, they have been twenty-two years of blessing: our records show that during that time, 2,152 have been baptized; 1,482 joined the church by letter; and 650 by experience; a total of 4,284. It would involve too much research for the time at our disposal to give accurate financial figures; but from our knowledge of the general average of receipts through the years the total cannot possibly have been less than a million dollars.

It is a great comfort to a Pastor, especially when all manner of evil is spoken against him falsely for the gospel's sake, to know that he has the confidence and affection of his own people who know him best. On Saturday evening last the prayer meeting was mysteriously transferred to the Lecture Hall, where an unusually large company assembled. Strangely enough, the significance of it never for a moment entered our mind, until toward the close of the meeting Deacon Greenway made a very neat and gracious speech; one of the young ladies presented Mrs. Shields with a basket of flowers, and the Pastor was presented with a handsome walnut library table, and an equally handsome walnut library chair upholstered in rich leather.

Sunday morning Deacon Greenway read the address which is published below, and after the evening service the Pastor was requested to attend a meeting in the B. D. Thomas Hall, where he found assembled the large afternoon class of young ladies who are unable to attend in the morning. After a kind and complimentary address read by the President, another basket of flowers was presented to Mrs. Shields, and a luxuriously upholstered easy chair, with foot rest, to the Pastor—such a chair as may render it necessary to hang up in our study for a motto, "Let us not sleep as do others"!

These events are recorded merely to let the world know that however storms may rage without, the church and Pastor rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory within.

The Pastor and Mrs. Shields have no words which can adequately express their great appreciation of the twenty-two years of kindness lavished upon them. They thank God unceasingly for such a loyal and loving people, and assure them that their love is most heartily reciprocated. We thank God, and take courage.

The address read by Deacon Greenway was as follows:

Toronto, May 15th, 1932.

Dear Pastor:

It is with pleasure we greet you on another anniversary of your pastorate in Jarvis Street Church. For twenty-two years the Lord has graciously permitted you to occupy this pulpit, and in all these years you have not failed to declare the "whole counsel of God". To-day this church family in its entirety—Deacons, Officers, Church Members, Bible School Staff and Scholars—together with those who constantly worship with us although not members, join in thanking God for your continued ministry among us. Your fidelity and fearlessness in preaching the gospel, and boldness in standing for the Word of God, give us much gladness of heart.

We would also express our conviction that there are thousands who read and appreciate your sermons in THE GOSPEL WITNESS who would heartily join with us on this occasion in thanking God for your ministry.

We desire, Pastor, to assure you that your people are loyal and true. They love and esteem you highly for your own, as well as for your works' sake, and count it an honour to have as their Pastor one whose loyalty and devotion to their Lord and His Word are so pronounced.

(Continued on page 16)

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 7 No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 23 June 5th, 1932

SECOND QUARTER.

ISRAEL AT KADESH-BARNEA.

Lesson Text: Numbers 13, 14; Deut. 1.

Golden Text: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."—I Cor. 10:6.

Daily Bible Readings:

Monday—Psalm 106:1-18.

Tuesday—Psalm 106:19-33.

Wednesday—Psalm 106:34-48.

Thursday—Heb. 3:1-19.

Friday—Heb. 4:1-16.

Saturday—Matt. 17:14-21.

I. THE REPORT OF THE SPIES. (13:1-33).

The Israelites had arrived at a most important part of their journey. After being safely guided through the wilderness they were at length at the border of the promised land. The realization of their hope was in view, the end of their wanderings in sight, and it looked as if they would soon enter into possession of a land flowing with milk and honey, and shortly thereafter enjoy rest from wandering and fighting. But this was not to be. They had not yet learned completely to trust the Lord, despite the many instances of His care which had been manifested, and they again failed in unbelief, and were not permitted to enter the land, (Heb. 3:19). In many a Christian the same experience is recorded. There is a coming up to the border of a deeper experience, and then a failure to enter in on account of the same spirit of unbelief. All blessings are appropriated by faith. Note the sin of unbelief, (John 3:18; Matt. 13:58).

The first act on arrival at the border of the land, it would appear, was the sending of the spies into the land of Canaan. This evidently was suggested to Moses by the people, (Deut. 1:22-24), although sanctioned by God. He gives the command to send them into the land, (v. 2), their names are given, each one representing a tribe, (vs. 3-16). Their directions are explicit; they are to investigate the land and the people, and bring a sample of the fruit of the land, (vs. 17-20). From the human standpoint they were doing wisely in spying out the land before entering it officially, but it seems like walking by sight instead of by faith. It may be that the Lord permitted them thus to do in accordance with their desire, as later He gave them a king in accordance with their request, warning them at the same time concerning the consequences of their action, (I Sam. 8:4-9). And in this case the consequences also were sad. Walking by faith is safer, more blessed, and more profitable than walking by sight.

The spies obeyed the command of Moses, and entering the land, searched it according to directions, returning after forty days with some of the fruit of the land in their possession, (vs. 21-25). They bore with them a "branch with one cluster of grapes", also pomegranates

and figs. These were evidence of the fruitfulness of the land, and also of the truthfulness of God's statement concerning the same. God's word is truth, and each fact discovered corroborates the same. This may be observed in the present day in relation to the Bible.

On the return of the spies they reported to Moses and Aaron and the people, and "showed them the fruit of the land", (v. 26). The nature of their report is given, wherein they state that the land flowed with milk and honey, the people were strong, the cities were walled and very great, the children of Anak were there, and they specify the location of the various people, (vs. 27-29). Evidently the report had been given in a somewhat discouraging tone, for Caleb stilled the people, and called upon them to go up at once and possess the land, for "we are well able to overcome it", (v. 30). To this the majority of the spies reply that they were not able to go against the people, the men of the land were of great stature, and they were but as grasshoppers in their sight; so they brought up an evil report, (vs. 31-33). There is a great difference between the recommendation of Caleb and that of the majority of the spies. He recommended an instant advance in the full assurance of victory, and thereby manifested faith in God, and the daring associated therewith. Such an attitude was distinctly helpful and inspiring and glorifying to God. The attitude manifested by the majority was one of unbelief and fear. They saw the difficulties, but failed to see God; they were conscious of the power of their enemies, but failed to remember the omnipotence of their God. They breathed discouragement, and distrust which tended to paralysis of all progressive action, and thereby sinned grievously in the sight of God. Note the possibilities of faith, (Mark 9:23).

II. THE MURMURING OF THE PEOPLE, (14:1-10).

The effect upon the people of the report of the spies was lamentable in the extreme. They "lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night", (v. 1). They were completely discouraged, and, as usual in discouragement, they murmured, venting their vexation on Moses and Aaron, (v. 2), and uttering complaint against the Lord for bringing them into such a position, (v. 3). This resulted in the proposal to return to Egypt. "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt", (v. 4). This was a serious decision to arrive at, implying rebellion against God, and manifesting a backslidden condition of heart. There is a temptation to the same action in the spiritual realm, when discouragement affects the spirit. The discouraged one at times feel the inclination to give up the path of spiritual progress and return to the world and its ways, and there are probably many who have so drifted. The remembrance of the nature of the life in Egypt, literal and spiritual, would have prevented return thither on the part of Israelite and saint, and if the Israelites had given serious consideration thereto they would not even have suggested such a thing. Egypt signified bondage under cruel

taskmasters and spiritually it implies the same.

Moses and Aaron realized the serious condition of the people, and "fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel", (v. 5). Joshua and Caleb also realized the seriousness of the situation, and appealed to the people not to rebel against God, but to enter into the land. They pointed out the delightful nature of the land, and the fact that the people could be easily conquered with God's help and enjoined them to "fear them not", (vs. 6:9). "But all the congregation bade stone them with stones", (v. 10). They would not listen to the truth uttered by men of God, their minds had been poisoned by error, and they were consequently in a dangerous condition. Their attitude was unwise, unjust, and fraught with serious consequences. The attitude of Joshua and Caleb manifested courage, faith, and hope, and implied obedience to the will of God. Such a spirit, if it had animated the army of Israel, would have meant victory, and the same possessing the Christian leads to spiritual triumph.

III. THE INTERVENTION OF GOD, (vs. 11-45).

The rebellion of the people brought the intervention of God. He "appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel", (v. 10). He complains of the unbelief of the people, (v. 11), and threatens to smite them with the pestilence, and to disinherit them, and to make of Moses a greater and mightier nation than they, (v. 12). Observe the displeasure of God, and its cause, the unbelief of the people, also the honour proposed for Moses, and the favour of God it implied. If Moses had been a self-seeking man this would have been his opportunity for advancement and distinction, but he is seeking God's glory and not his own, and therefore reasons with God against the acceptance of the honour. In his prayer the honour of God is the motive underlying the petitions. He reminds the Lord of what the Egyptians and other nations would say if He should destroy His own people, (vs. 13-16), refers to His merciful nature, (vs. 17, 18), and pleads with Him to pardon the people on the basis of His mercy, (v. 19). The prayer is characterized by reverence, confidence, selflessness, humility, earnestness, directness, and loyalty to God.

God answered the prayer of Moses and assured him of pardon for the people, (v. 20). Note the great power of prayer. He also informed him of the chastisement with which He would afflict them. None of the adults would be permitted to enter the promised land, except Joshua and Caleb; they would wander in the wilderness until death overtook them, and their children whom they said would be a prey, would enter the land, (vs. 21-35). This was a most severe chastisement, yet it was more merciful than they deserved. The men who brought back the evil report "died by the plague before the Lord", (vs. 36-39). Note the further disobedience of the people, their consequent defeat, and the uselessness of attempting progress without God's presence in the midst, (vs. 40-45).

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

DID YOU KNOW?

That Mrs. H. L. Davey and Mrs. G. D. Mellish, two of our lady missionaries in Liberia, have the distinction of being the only ladies who have ever walked across the Republic from the site of the Station to the French border? In recognition of this, both ladies have been presented with a leopard skin and a piece of native cloth by Mr. Dupignie-Leigh, Inspector of Internal Revenue, representing the Liberian government. It was a journey of more than two hundred miles; a great country was explored and much valuable information gleaned.

The fact that the ladies accompanied their husbands on such a trip has been received in the homeland with conflicting feelings of surprise and amazement, but the old saying is, "all is well that ends well" and we cannot but be proud of the accomplishment while hoping that in future the lady missionaries will be more careful of their health lest over-fatigue demands an accounting.

A sheaf of letters has been received from the field and their contents are of the most interesting character. Last week some further notes from letters received were prepared for which space was not found. They are published this week, but the readers of the *Union Baptist Witness* are assured that at the earliest possible moment the later news will be published.

The first pictures of the Gear-Bar-Zonda Station have also arrived and will shortly be shown on the lantern slides.

CONTINUING NOTES FROM LIBERIAN LETTERS.

Miss Stacey writes: "I wish you could see the school children. I am sure that you would fall in love with them. We have over forty here at Gear-Bar-Zonda and yet we wish we could have more. There is certainly a great work to be done among the children, for when they are saved they will witness for their Lord in the country round about. I trust the people at home will especially remember the school work in prayer. All the children are not small. There are some big boys and we long to see them accept the Lord Jesus Christ and take a firm stand for Him among their people.

"I enjoy so much visiting the towns. The natives listen to the Gospel message with much interest and what a joy it is when they believe. Often we are greatly burdened for them, as we see them come to the Mission and show some interest and then learn of their joining in the terrible medicine palavers. Much prayer is needed for this dark land. Again, we are rejoiced to see some who have been reached standing firm in the midst of great temptation and that is a great cause for rejoicing. Please tell the people at home to remember our Native Christians in prayer for they do not find it easy to always witness for Him.

"It is indeed a joy for me to be here with Mr. and Mrs. Mellish. I am so happy and I love the work. It would be hard for me to tell you all that has been accomplished back in this bush country by these two lone missionaries. They have done well and the greatest testimony to their labor of love is the way in which the school children and the people of the town love and trust them."

Then from Mrs. Mellish's newsy letter we have a description of "Mud Slinging in Africa". It is the real thing there and the mud is good, sticky mud, which is much like plaster when it is mixed and smeared. The occasion of Mrs. Mellish mentioning this is the fact that a place was being partitioned off for Miss Stacey that she might, as Mrs. Mellish states, "have a corner of her own."

NEW PICTURES FROM LIBERIA.

From Mr. Hancox we have received some splendid pictures; pictures which help one to see life as it is in Liberia and makes one feel quite intimate with the people with whom our missionaries labor. It may be possible a little later to see the pictures on the lantern slides, but just now as we look at the interesting scenes, we can hardly wait to describe them. Here is Cephas—the ironing boy, standing beside a rack of beautifully ironed garments, and here are three cooks, two of the school girls and a boy all busily engaged in preparing food in the native utensils; the mortar is in the foreground, a table at the side and the huge cauldron toward the rear and in the background the Liberian hills, covered with what we suppose is a sort of African bracken. Next we see our own Mrs. Hancox looking exceptionally well and holding for display a huge Liberian pineapple. At her side a little fellow proudly carries her precious auto-harp upon his head and manages to get into the picture as does a tiny African baby and an interesting study of an intelligent looking native man, and a small dog which beggars description for we have not seen the like of its particular breed in Canada. Then the mud carriers and the mud slingers are splendidly pictured. It must be a great sight to see them in action and it must be quite an experience for one should he happen to get in the range of these accomplished throwers at the wrong moment.

We are introduced to little Mary Jane, Mr. and Mrs. Hancox's little native girl, and such a demure little girl she is, shyly standing beside Mr. Hancox, a tiny bit of Liberian humanity in whom great possibilities rest.

The pictures of the villages where our missionaries have gone with the Wonderful Words of Life. It is improbable that these will be put on the lantern slides for they depict life in the midst of African bush country, unclothed men and women and little children, hearing for the first time of the loving Saviour of

the lost. Think what such a story would mean to you, reader, had you never heard it before. Try to place yourself in the place of these Bassa people and then pray for them without ceasing and support the missionary endeavor in a greater way than ever before.

THE MISSIONARIES' PICTURE.

Another supply of the small pictures is now ready for distribution and orders are being filled. The arrangement is a very splendid one in which the pictures of the nine missionaries who have labored in Liberia are shown. The 8 x 10-inch picture may be had for the small amount of fifty cents. Order without delay from the Union Office.

IMMANUEL, HAMILTON.

Special services continue at Immanuel Regular Baptist Church, Hamilton, and the Lord has given souls on each night throughout the campaign. Rev. James McGinlay spent one week with the Immanuel Church and for the past two weeks, Rev. William Fraser, of Windsor, has been preaching each evening. It was expected that a fuller report of the meetings would be in our hands for publication at this date, but this has not been forthcoming and the brief announcement is made that the meetings may be remembered and that readers may rejoice with the Immanuel friends that blessing has fallen in their midst.

RUNNYMEDE RD., TORONTO.

For the past two weeks the Runnymede Road Regular Baptist Church, Toronto, has been experiencing something of real revival blessing. Rev. Anton Cedarholm and his brother, Rev. Hilmore Cedarholm, have been engaged with the church in an evangelistic campaign. The Lord has richly blessed and owned the ministry of these brethren in stirring up believers and in the salvation of souls. Twenty-eight definitely professed conversion, twelve of whom have applied for baptism. In one service more than one hundred responded to an appeal and thereby indicated their decision to cut loose from the world and its questionable amusements. In another service more than sixty responded to an appeal, pledging themselves to personal work and soul-winning endeavor.

An encouraging feature of the campaign is the manifest quickening of Christians in interest, prayer and soul-winning.

Rev. Anton Cedarholm is a sincere, faithful and fearless preacher of the Word of God; a man with a timely message. In speaking of him, the Pastor of the Runnymede Road Church says, "I have never found an evangelist who fitted in so well with our stand and the principles of our Regular Baptist Churches."

Rev. Hilmore Cedarholm, a young man with unusual gifts as a musician, has assisted in the Runnymede Road meet-

ings. His work among the children, about eighty of whom were gathered together each afternoon, after school, was a marked success, as was demonstrated on Sunday afternoon when the children's choir, well trained and deeply interested, sang beautifully. The children were encouraged to memorize God's Word and much was accomplished in this respect. Mr. Hilmore Cedarholm's mystical music on the water glasses will long be remembered and the Runnymede Road Church is profoundly thankful for the visit of these brethren.

* * * *

WINGHAM.

A very definite prayer request comes from the Pastor of the Victoria Street Regular Baptist Church, Wingham, Rev. James Gibson, who writes:

"We cannot report any definite success, but we still continue to sow by tract distribution and other means. Our first open air meeting was held on Saturday, May 14th. The testimony is greatly

needed in this town where the claims of Christ are forgotten. Personal work, visiting in the homes and endeavoring to touch the unsaved through the children, are some of the means which we employ in the hope of reaching the unsaved, and while no definite conversions can be reported recently, we are gaining access to many homes. The work here is hard, just the kind of work that the Lord has ever given his servants. Once we were on slippery places, now we are in the rough places, perhaps the experience in both places is helpful. We covet your prayers for Wingham."

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THE MISSIONARY BULLETIN.

Words of encouragement from one who has had long experience in the Christian life and whose opinion we greatly value makes us humble indeed. Under date of May 15th, he writes—"This note is to thank you most kindly for again sending the Missionary Bulletin. The present one of May 14th is indeed rich in blessed

reports, gladdening to the soul and honouring to our Lord Jesus, fulfilling the verity of His living Word."

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

Tuesday, 24th of May

NOT A BUSINESS MEETING

Just

AN OLD FASHIONED INSPIRATIONAL MEETING AND MISSIONARY RALLY

Beginning at 10 a.m. and closing at 10 p.m.

(Daylight Saving Time)

JARVIS STREET CHURCH, TORONTO

Among the speakers will be
REV. AND MRS. H. L. DAVEY
of Liberia

Meals will be served in the B. D. Thomas Hall of the Jarvis Street Church at the small charge of 25 cents each.

TWENTY-TWO YEARS IN JARVIS STREET.

(Continued from page 13)

We are well aware that it is not easy to stand alone and be isolated as you are from many with whom, at one time, you had sweet fellowship; but we remember that Paul on one occasion said, "No man stood with me", notwithstanding "the Lord stood with me and strengthened me". So, dear Pastor, we would affectionately remind you to-day—

"'Tis not for naught.

Thine earthly loss is heavenly gain!

Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not,
The Master praises, what are men?"

Nevertheless we believe there are hosts of people the world around who believe you were raised up for such an hour as this; and we assure you that those who know you best, love you most, and, with a loyal and loving people—"workers together with God"—and led by the Great Shepherd of the sheep, Pastor and people will surely see great things accomplished—as, indeed, we have already seen.

Your ministry these twenty-two years has been wonderfully blessed. The loving hand of our God has been upon you for good, and hundreds have been brought to the Lord through your faithful declaration of the gospel of His grace.

We praise the Lord, and give thanks; and unitedly pray that for many years your life may be spared so that you may minister to this, the people of His choice.

We would also remember with gratitude the beneficent ministry of Mrs. Shields. In a quiet, unobtrusive, way Mrs. Shields has won her way into the hearts of the people, and we recognize too the sacrifice she makes in being deprived of your company while your time and attention are given to the work of the church.

We thank our God upon every remembrance of you both, and unitedly pray that the blessing of the Lord may be your portion.

With every good wish from all connected with Jarvis Street Church,

Signed on their behalf,

George Greenway,
J. G. Hyde,
Chas. Brownlow,

J. E. Jennings,
O. L. Raymer,
A. E. Maton,

Deacons.

THE GOSPEL WITNESS TEN YEARS OLD.

The first issue of this paper was published the 17th of May, 1922. This issue therefore marks the beginning of our eleventh year. The paper was begun as an en-

largement of the church calendar, chiefly with the view of publishing an epitome of one of the sermons. It soon became apparent that a verbatim report of the sermon would be welcome, and after a few issues such report was published, and has continued ever since.

We had no capital to begin with—we have no capital now. More than five hundred sermons have been published, in addition to lectures and other addresses. The Jarvis Street pulpit confesses to being somewhat longer in its deliverances than some modern pulpits; it will therefore be recognized that ten sermons such as THE WITNESS contains would supply enough material for such a volume as is usually printed; which means, if the sermons were put together, they would make fifty volumes. In addition, there have been editorials dealing with religious matters related to all the world. These things we need not review.

We are happy to believe the ministry of THE GOSPEL WITNESS has resulted in hundreds and perhaps more than hundreds of conversions. We have had hundreds of testimonies from preachers of the gospel, many of them saying they value it more than any other periodical which comes to their desk.

THE WITNESS now goes to about sixty different countries, and is read by hundreds of preachers, teachers, and Christian leaders, weekly. "Having obtained help of God, we continue unto this day." That help has been supplied through the medium of generous Christian friends the world around, and THE GOSPEL WITNESS takes this opportunity once again to express its thanks to the thousands of people who have made, and are still making, its continued publication possible.

We ask our readers to pray that THE WITNESS may bear testimony to the power of the gospel more effectively than ever.

SEMINARY GRADUATION EXERCISES.

Toronto Baptist Seminary will hold its fourth graduation service in Jarvis Street Church, Thursday Evening, May 26th, at 8.15. Diplomas will be presented to graduates, and brief addresses will be delivered by members of the Faculty.

All friends of the Seminary are invited to be present.