

The Gospel Witness

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

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RELIGIOUS SPREES

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We have heard of men who make their wives a meagre "allowance" for the upkeep of the home and the provisions of the family table, and who then periodically go off with their friends and lavishly entertain themselves and others with highly-flavoured, strongly-spiced, dinners, served with intoxicating or semi-intoxicating stimulants. But when their physical systems have become surfeited with such unhealthy diet, and their gluttony and drunkenness have produced the inevitable reaction in the impairment of health and the reduction of energy, they return to their homes and their faithful wives, that they may, by the wholesome food they supply and by plain home-cooking, nurse them back to their normal health again.

This has its parallel in religious life. Marriage is a divine institution, and was instituted for the propagation of the race; and the family was established for the nurture, rearing, and training of children. Similarly, the local church was instituted for the propagation of the gospel, for the propagation of a spiritual race, for the rearing of families composed of persons who have been born again, and for their nurture and training in the things of God.

But there are some professing Christians, like some women, who do not want to keep house; they refuse the responsibilities involved in house-keeping. They prefer to go about from one "tabernacle"-restaurant to another, and leave the cooking and dishwashing, and all the responsibilities connected with the getting of meals, to others.

And there are religious restaurants which cater to religious irresponsibility. They have no membership, they have no spiritual family, they produce no children. They provide a highly-seasoned religious menu, accompanied by all sorts of religious jazz. They hang their menu cards out in front. They advertise their successive cooks as "the most wonderful" (what would empty heads do without that word, "wonderful?"), the "greatest", the "most dynamic" (whatever that is); the "most scientific", etc., etc. Everything is in the superlative degree. These religious restaurants have the "most" salt, the "most" sugar, the "most" pepper (sometimes abbreviated to

'pep'), the "most" mustard, the "most" sauce, the "most" noise, the "most" excitement—and, incidentally, the "most" collections of any institution on earth.

The theatre and the circus can scarcely compete with their sensations. If they haven't the biggest elephant, they have the greatest "orator"; if they haven't the cutest monkey, they have "the most scholarly anti-monkey, anti-evolution "scientist"; if they haven't the "most" thrilling parachutist, they have the most daring elocutionary aviator who never takes the air without breaking all previous oratorical altitude records; if they cannot announce the visit of some renowned explorer, they exploit "missions" in the interests of a "Cook's Tour" to Europe. The operations of these religious restaurateurs are more than "child's" play, for they range from the Baltic to the Pacific. Their hearts are alternately moved for the heathen of California and Toronto, and then for the benighted of Europe, and then once more for Toronto. They have a multiplication table all their own. Their one hundred equal three or four hundred, and their five hundred are never less than a thousand. Their "tabernacle" dimensions vary from "Cosmopolitan" to "Metropolitan," and even to the local limitations of a little village like Toronto, and all within the space of about twenty-four months. The lumber of which some tabernacles are built must have been very green to shrink so much—and so quickly.

The fellowships of these religious exploiters vary as often as their enterprises fail: through many "alliances", "world-wide", European, and local, they run from the extreme of *defending* the veiled anti-supernaturalism of "Peter the Fisherman", to the ultra-emotionalism of Pentecostalism.

Some people estimate a restaurant by the number and colour of the bottles of condiments on the tables. And there are religious people who try to live on stimulants. They want the church to be like the midway, with merry-go-round, and everything that is spiritually abnormal. They would rather pay their money for a shot at a religious rifle-range, in an attempt to exhibit their religious marksmanship, than actually to wrestle with principalities and powers for the subjugation of evil in

their lives. They would rather pay to see some self-advertising religious giant (being in reality a dwarf on concealed stilts) than patiently cultivate their own souls so as to be "rooted and built up in Christ."

To this spiritually morbid taste for the unusual, abnormal, spectacular, sensational, these "tabernacle" purveyors of religious stimulants especially cater.

If the "tabernacle" type of religion made its appeal only to the religious toppers, to those whose religious experience consists of a succession of sprees, it would not be so serious. But the small boy is invariably more interested in the circus when it comes to town than in his school-books. So, too, religious infants, babes in Christ, whom the Scripture describes as "carnal", that is, those in whom the old nature is as yet more prominent than the new, are ever attracted by the spectacular and extraordinary. The passion for "signs" is ever an evidence of spiritual immaturity. Hence the advertised promise of "tongues" and healings, and extravagant—and untrue—professions of perfection, constitute a real menace to the life of young Christians.

The religious circus penchant is utterly demoralizing to normal church home life. It is as when the children come home from the circus and set up a miniature circus in their father's backyard. The growing plants are trampled down, the furniture is taken from the house and either scratched or broken; and unless parental authority intervenes, the usually well-ordered home is soon reduced to the vulgarity of a circus ring. Thus "tabernacle" habits are doubtful assets to any church. People, especially young Christians, return from these "tabernacle" sprees with utterly abnormal, and, hence, unscriptural views of the proper function of the church, and of normal Christian growth and development. They have developed "itching ears," and nothing but religious jazz will please them.

"What!" says one, "itching ears developed in orthodox tabernacles?" Yes, most decidedly, if by "orthodox" you mean the opposite of Modernistic anti-supernaturalism—namely, ultra-supernaturalism. "The magicians did so with their enchantments." The devil is both Modernist and Fundamentalist by turn. He will play any role to defeat the purpose of grace in the believer's life. Thus the "tabernacle" pabulum indisposes its guests for constant and patient soul-culture by steady study of God's Word; it indisposes people for the mastery of difficult lessons, and especially for the hard, regular, faithful, work of daily witnessing for Christ. The "tabernacle" habits are served, at least occasionally, with a diet of semi-profanity and gross vulgarity; and are encouraged in the development of an ultra-pious, ultra-spiritual, ultra-unctuous, superiority complex that approximates the ludicrous figure of a circus clown. Under such quackery a novice becomes an expert of great authority over night.

This writer humbly confesses his innumerable shortcomings; he recognizes and acknowledges that his ministry falls immeasurably short even of his own ideals, to say nothing of the exalted standards of God's Word, which like the lofty peak of a great mountain, seem to grow higher and higher, and more and more challenging, the nearer they are approached. For that reason he is grateful to many truly humble and spiritual friends who pray constantly that he may know more of divine power in his life and ministry. But while we would do justly, love mercy, and *walk humbly before God*, we regard with a holy contempt the insufferable insolence engendered by

these "tabernacle" hypodermic inoculations which leads some nondescript novice to write us extended epistles on how to substitute enervating stimulants for wholesome food, and render oneself as useless as he has ever proved to be. We never read beyond the first page of such epistles.

But to continue our argument; it has been proved again and again that neither the body nor the soul can be built up on stimulants. It has also been demonstrated that neither physically nor spiritually can life be proportionally developed, or enriched, or made useful, without regular exercise and constant industry—in a word, without work.

The "tabernacle" type of religious activity provides a grandstand seat for the accommodation of those who would witness a religious performance, but the spectators have no opportunity to participate in the performance except when the collection is taken. The "tabernacle" type we have described is a parasite. It preys upon other religious bodies. It is particularly injurious to small churches, which, if they would do their work must for a while at least be content with small things. The "tabernacle" spirit holds small things in contempt: better a big shell than a smaller structure of solid and enduring construction. Hence, small churches patiently do their work in school and church, and bring young people to Christ, and the "tabernacle" calls them with its promise of big things.

But at the end of a circus day even children grow tired and want to go home. Thus, too, God's true children, who by reason of their spiritual birth, "desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby", sooner or later weary of the religious merry-go-round, and go home to their church family. That is well. And then it is the church's task to nurse them back to normal spiritual health.

The chief virtue of a circus is that it stays but a short time in one place. It is "cosmopolitan", and a major portion of its staff spend their time in putting up tents and taking them down again. No community could endure a circus long, hence it must keep on moving. So also of the theatre. Even the most popular plays wear out, and the players must move on to find other people to pay to fill the seats.

So the chief virtue of these "tabernacle" movements is that they are short-lived. They wear out and move on. They usually make a spectacular beginning, because their authors have, by experience, become experts at beginnings, because they have spent their lives beginning things. But the inoculations lose their effect, and the patients refuse to respond. Hence, they become as "cosmopolitan" as a circus. Then with a pious profession of having prayed much, and being "wonderfully" "led," they move on and make another beginning.

"Then had the churches rest—and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." We had better abide by the Lord's programme which is to edify and multiply the churches. The family must be the social unit of the state if the state is to prosper. And the church as a spiritual family, the church founded and fostered by New Testament principles, is the social unit of the kingdom of God through which God will be pleased to propagate a spiritual race, "a holy nation," until, at His coming, that kingdom shall be manifested in glory.

This article has been scribbled on a Canadian Pacific train en route for Winnipeg. We hope it will be read more easily than it has been written.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

WHEN GEHAZI STANDS BEFORE HIS MASTER.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 2nd, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported—Broadcast over Station CFRB, 690 k.c.)

"But he went in, and stood before his master."—II Kings 5:25.

Prayer Before the Sermon

O Lord, we bow in Thy holy presence this evening with a deep consciousness of our inherent unworthiness to come where Thou art. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity. Even the heavens are unclean in Thy sight, and Thou chargest Thine angels with folly: what is man, therefore, that Thou shouldst visit him; and who are we that we should take Thy holy name upon our lips?

We marvel at this matchless wonder of Thy sovereign grace, that it has pleased Thee to set Thy love upon rebellious men, and that, notwithstanding we have said we will not have Thee to reign over us. Thou hast loved us in spite of our sin. Yea, Thou hast so loved the world that Thou hast given Thine only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We thank Thee for this infinite Gift, for the great truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. We bless Thee that though our iniquities have separated between us and our God, though we have explored the utmost reaches of the far country, though we have wasted our substance in riotous living, and have nothing whatever to present to Thee of character or of service which could possibly command Thy consideration, though we are utterly ruined, wholly, completely bankrupt, Thou dost still have compassion on us. There were no hope for us were it not that Thou art a God of grace, grace that doth ever abound, even to the chiefest of sinners.

For every one within this building who has been brought to a realization of his condition before Thee, by the operation of the Spirit of grace; who has been convicted of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; who has then been sweetly constrained to come to the feet of Him Who died for sinners—we thank Thee for everyone whose eyes have been opened to behold in Jesus Christ the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world.

We pray that Thy blessing may be upon Thine own people, and that they may view afresh the ascended Saviour, that we may rejoice in the assurance of His perpetual advocacy of our cause. We thank Thee that He has entered into heaven itself, not with the blood of others, but with His own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Keep Thy people true to this cardinal principle of the gospel, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scripture. We have no other hope than this, but we rejoice that this is hope enough, for He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We pray for any who are strangers to Thy pardoning mercy, who shall hear Thy word from this place this evening. Are there some within these walls who have no personal experience of Thy saving grace? Are there some to whom the Lord Jesus is still without form or comeliness, in whose eyes He has no beauty that they should desire Him? Let the light of Heaven shine upon their darkened understandings. May the God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Let there be a new creation. May God Himself say, Let there be light—and then there shall be light.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, to bless any of Thine own children who have strayed from the way of Thy commandments, who have not suffered the Good Shepherd to lead them in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. They have turned aside from the path of Thine appointment. They have got perhaps into bad company. They have lost their first love. They have defiled their garments. They have

brought reproach upon Thy holy name. They are pointed to by those who still mock at the religion of Christ as examples of the uselessness of a Christian profession. Oh, bring the backslider home again! Thou hast said that Thou wilt heal their backslidings, and that Thou wilt love them freely. Constrain the wanderer to return, to come back into fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

If there be any to-night who have come to the fork in the roads, to some crisis of life where some great decision must be made which will determine their character and conduct, their career in this life and their destiny in the life that is to come; be Thou at the great divide, Thou Spirit of truth. Turn their feet into the paths of peace. Save the young man for whose salvation father and mother long have besought Thy grace. Save the young woman, allured by all the challenging and seductive voices of the world to leave her mother's God, and to go with the giddy crowd. Give her spiritual enlightenment, and call her back to the Saviour's side.

We pray for those who are sick. We praise Thee to-night for the privilege of ministering to them, even this hour, in hospitals, in the sickroom at home, in sanatoria here and there. The Lord be gracious to His suffering people. Forgive us who have murmured to whom Thou hast given health and strength. Help us to thank Thee for it when we think of those who are laid aside. Give discernment, and skill, and patience to the physicians and nurses who minister to them.

For the aged we pray, for the Barzillais who can no longer hear the voices of singing men and singing women. The Lord give them a quiet yet radiant evening-time. Fulfil to them Thy promise that at evening time it shall be light. We thank Thee for the evening, and for the prospect of the morning. We bless Thee for the open gates into the glory, and for the promise of ultimate reunion with all our loved and lost. Put Thine arms about us this evening. Forgive all our sins; wash us in the precious blood; constrain us, O Lord, to find shelter beneath Thine overshadowing wings. Ere this service shall close, may everyone within these walls, and all in our larger radio audience who listen at a distance, be included in the household of faith, able to say they are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. For this possibility, for Thy sovereign abounding grace to all of us poor sinners, we humbly give Thee thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The subject of the text is Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God. The character of Gehazi was anything but admirable; notwithstanding, the record of his life is full of spiritual instruction. It is well for us to allow the mind to dwell upon things that are beautiful, to linger long and lovingly upon the things that are true, and just, and honest, and lovely, and pure, and of good report. But, however unpleasant it may be, the physician must not neglect post mortem study if he is to learn how to preserve life. For the same reason it is profitable to study the record of the lives of men who have failed, who have missed the mark, who have turned aside and gone over the precipice, that we may learn something of the tendencies of our own nature, that we may learn how to avoid the errors into which they fell.

Gehazi was the servant of Elisha. We talked a little about Naaman this morning, and saw how wonderfully God wrought in the life of a little girl, how He used her to bring healing and complete recovery to a man of great distinction and influence. You will remember that when Naaman came to Elisha, he came with ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. He came with large wealth, in order that he might pay for his healing. When he had been brought to wisdom, and had dipped seven times in Jordan, and his flesh had become like that of a little child, he returned, full of gladness and gratitude, to the prophet's house, and begged Elisha to receive a blessing at his hand. But Elisha refused. He desired that the healing should be all of grace. He refused to receive any recompense for the service rendered.

Then it was, you remember, that Naaman said, "Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord." Albeit, as we saw two weeks ago, he begged permission to bow himself with his master in the house of Rimmon.

After Naaman departed, Gehazi, who had heard it all said to himself, "How foolish it was to let a rich man carry his wealth away with him back to his own country, when he was so ready, so anxious, to leave it here.—Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him."

There is no excuse for anybody's doing wrong on the ground that if they do not do so, somebody else will do it for them. Elisha refused to receive a present, but Gehazi resolved to profit himself by it. "So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? and he said, All is well. My master hath sent me saying, Behold even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver and two changes of garments. And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed."

Now it is all over, and Gehazi is richer by two talents of silver, and two changes of raiment. All over? No!—"He went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? It is a time to receive money and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and manservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

"But he (Gehazi) went in, and stood before his master"—as we must all do some day, that we may give an account of our stewardship.

I.

With this story, then, for a text, let me remark that SPIRITUAL GRACE AND HIGH SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGE ARE ALWAYS EITHER A SAVOUR OF LIFE UNTO LIFE, OR OF DEATH UNTO DEATH, to those who are subject to them.

What a man Elisha was! He was one of the great prophets of Jehovah, one of the outstanding characters of all history. What a privilege it must have been to come into contact with such a godly character as this! Can you conceive of a man who dwelt in the presence of Elisha harboring evil within his heart, cherishing some covetous desire? Elisha was the servant of Elijah, and when Elijah was about to go to heaven he asked Elisha what he should do for him, and he asked for a double portion of his spirit. Elijah said, "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." How close to his master Elisha kept, and when at last he was parted from him, and carried in a chariot of fire into heaven, as he went up his mantle fluttered back to earth, and Elisha caught it. When he came to Jordan he smote the river with the mantle and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."

And Gehazi stood in somewhat the same relation to Elisha as Elisha had stood to Elijah. He was his natural successor in the prophetic order. He ought to have stepped into Elisha's shoes at last. What a privilege to be under the direct influence of such a man, to have the high privilege of daily contact with such a godly character! Such a privilege ought to have made a saint of Gehazi, but instead of its being a savour of life unto life it became a savour of death unto death.

I was long, as a practical matter, in understanding that principle. I used to think if children did not walk in the ways of their Christian parents that it involved rather a reflection upon the parents, that perhaps it was because they had not set them a godly example. But I have learned otherwise since then.

I recall at this moment one of the sweetest saints I ever knew, a woman who had been bedridden when I knew her first for thirteen years, and when I knew her last for about twenty years. She was ripe for heaven. To be in her presence was like holding converse with an angel. The very brightness of the celestial city seemed to be reflected from her countenance in spite of all her sufferings. And yet, although they ministered to her tenderly, of all her children, so far as I know, there was not one who was a Christian. I had every opportunity of studying that woman's godly life, and I know that she beautifully exemplified the spirit of Christ. Nor did her children ever say that she did not. They said she was a saint. But for some reason or another they remained unconverted, and were still unconverted the last I heard of them.

You remember the story of one of whom the Bible says he was a man "after God's own heart". He turned not aside from the commandments of the Lord in any save only in one matter, and for that he repented at last in dust and ashes, and was restored to divine favour. And yet David had Absalom for a son—one of the worst traitors of which history preserves any record. I remind you too of one Iscariot, who kept company with a Greater than Elisha for three years, subject to the influence of His

life, of His matchless character, through all that time, and who went at last from the very presence of Incarnate Deity to fathom the depths of the nethermost hell.

It puts upon any man or woman a tremendous responsibility to be brought under the influence of a godly life, and to refuse to submit to that influence, but to cherish some secret sin, and to go on in the way of evil.

What a teacher Elisha was! He was not only a prophet: he was the father of the prophets. He was the principal of a school of the prophets. He trained young men to proclaim the word of the Lord. Would you not like to have been in one of his classes? Must it not have been a privilege to hear Elisha explain to the prophets the word of the living God? Gehazi was there. He knew about Jehovah. He was not like one who had been brought up in a pagan land: he had held daily converse with one who had been divinely appointed to teach the word of God.

A faithful ministry anywhere becomes to those who hear a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, always. Some of the poorest samples of Christianity I have ever known I have heard boast that they were brought up under the ministry of C. H. Spurgeon or D. L. Moody. Well, if a Judas could remain a Judas, a traitor, a betrayer, under the ministry of Jesus Christ Himself, a man may remain hard of heart, and a son of perdition, under the ministry of a man like Spurgeon.

But there are some of you who have had the teaching of godly parents, the teaching of faithful Sunday School teachers. We lay no claim to any great ability or power in this place. All we can say is that we do seek, as God helps us, never to permit a service to close without making the way of life plain to everybody who comes within these walls. I think, after more than twenty-two years in this pulpit, I dare to say in the presence of God that I am free from the blood of all men, for we have warned sinners to flee from the wrath to come. We have urged men to come and wash in the precious blood. We have not failed to teach that salvation is by grace, and by grace alone. We have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God.

Some of you, my hearers, have been in attendance upon the services of this church for years, and you are not converted yet. I see some here this evening in that state. There are people who have been saved the first time they crossed the threshold of this place: there are others who have come year after year, and have rejected the gospel, the testimony of the word of God. I remind you of the possibility of even a Gehazi, a man in official position, under the influence of a most faithful ministry, still remaining at heart an alien to God, not having the root of the matter in him, not, as we should say in the New Testament sense, being saved.

And what a counsellor Elisha was! You remember how the king of Syria said to one of his officers, "Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. He is only a prophet, but he knows more about military tactics than all the rest of us. He is always warning the king against your strategy, and saving the king and his officers again and again." And when at last Elisha lay dying, and the king of Israel came to him, he said, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horse-

men thereof." He meant he would rather lose all his chariots and horsemen than lose the infinitely wise counsel of so great a prophet.

And yet Gehazi, the man who lived in the same house with him, who was scarcely ever out of his company, who had before him his godly example and teaching, failed to profit by his spiritual wisdom, and took the course that led to ruin at last.

How often it is so! Children who will not be advised by their godly parents, young people who will not be advised by a faithful pastor. People say, "That is old-fashioned", that we must be broadminded. After the sermon of two weeks ago, in which I had referred to certain worldly practices, and to the principle of compromise, a mother, troubled about her children, wrote me, saying she had asked her minister whether it was right for professing Christians to indulge in these things, only to be told that in this day we must be broadminded. Oh, the pity of it, that men of God will actually counsel young people to take the path of compromise that leads to ruin. God forgive them, and have mercy upon them before it is too late.

I say, how many there are who refuse to profit by wise counsel, as did Gehazi! And, lest any human counsellor should be in error, we have the Book of wisdom, the Bible itself, the word of all the prophets, and of the Prophet of all prophets, even the record which God has given to us of His Son. There is no excuse for any man with a Bible in his hand going wrong, no matter what his preacher is like. He can turn to God's holy Book, and receive the counsel of divine wisdom if he will.

Then once more, *Elisha had been the channel of grace and of power to many.* What miracles had been wrought by his hand! Gehazi had seemed for a while to be in perfect accord and in wholehearted cooperation with his ministry. And yet he was never a partaker of the grace that came from God. That covetous heart of his remained unchanged to the very last.

I used to wonder sometimes how it was that, right in the midst of a spiritual church, where the great majority of people do really walk with God, do really pray, do really seek to obey the commandments of God—that right in the midst of it, in the membership of it, there is sometimes found somebody who seems to be as black as a devil from the pit, although a member of the church, a professor of religion. You say, "How is it possible for such a man to remain in such a place?" I do not know. But I remember that after the Apostle Paul had preached and taught in Ephesus by the space of three years, ceasing not to warn everyone night and day with tears, he predicted that after his departure, from among themselves, men would arise speaking perverse things, who would draw away disciples after them.

Here is an illustration of the principle. You could not have found anybody blacker at heart than Gehazi if you searched all Israel, but he was found right in the house of Elisha. Every approach of divine grace that was resisted made that heart harder still. Every warning of conscience that was refused made that conscience less acute, until by and by the man was so hardened that while he lived—I had almost said next door to heaven—his whole affinity was not with Heaven, but with hell. That is possible, by dear friends. That is the teaching of Scripture, that the gospel is the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

II.

Once more: let me remark that WHEN THE MIND IS STEADILY FOCUSED UPON THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN AND TEMPORAL, IT BECOMES BLINDED TO ALL THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE THINGS WHICH ARE UNSEEN AND ARE ETERNAL. I should not be surprised if Gehazi stood somewhere not far off when Elijah went to heaven. Who knows but that he had seen the opened heavens? At all events, there had been a good deal of heaven about Elisha; and it is not improbable that Gehazi was among the sons of the prophets who saw Elisha smite the waters with the mantle of Elijah. The unseen world must have been very real to these ancient prophets, and Gehazi had long kept company with Elisha; but apparently he had never seen the King in His beauty, nor beheld the land that is very far off. He was of the earth earthy. His vision had been obscured by all that is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

The servant of Naaman, the heathen man from Damascus, taught his own master wisdom. When Naaman would have gone away in a rage, the servant said to him, "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" But the servant of the prophet apparently had no wisdom at all, and instead of humbling himself, he exalted himself. He said, "My master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him."

What a solemn reflection, that it is quite possible for professedly religious people to let the world into their hearts, and so to live for the things of time, as to forget all about eternity. How many preachers there are, who seem ready to go any length to get a university degree—especially if they have not earned it. I have seen men in the United States—and in Canada too—bribed with a presidency, or with an invitation to preach, or by something else which pampers man's pride. And what does it all amount to? Such "honours" are about as real and valuable as the tissue-paper crowns the children wear when they dress up for their entertainments; it is just a tinsel show. But if once you let that get into your heart, if once you begin to seek the honour of men, and the profit and preferments of this earthly life, you will find that you are unable to listen to the whisper of the Skies. "How can ye believe", said Jesus, "which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" Elisha, like his master Elijah, had lived for God, but Gehazi had lived for the world, although nobody knew it until the occasion revealed the man.

Let me call your attention to this, that *Gehazi's sin, on the face of it, did not appear to be a very black one.* His was a course of conduct that might be justified by any worldly standard. Here is a man who is vastly wealthy. He comes with his treasure, and wants to bestow it. He begs permission to leave a gift. Any worldling would say, "A man would be a bit of a simpleton not to receive the silver, and gold, and changes of raiment, when the man was so anxious to give it." Gehazi might have said, "I am not going to steal anything: I would not do that for the world. It is Naaman's own property, but, if he wants to give it, and if Elisha will not have it, I have no objection to receiving it myself."

I have little doubt that Gehazi started out on that mission without having his mind made up as to how he would obtain some of Naaman's wealth. It was a course destitute of any concern for the divine honour. Elisha took high ground. In effect he said to Naaman, "Go back and tell your people that you received healing by the free grace of God. Tell your king and your prophets that Jehovah is absolutely independent of Naaman and his master."

A Christian ought to take positions which are far above the standards of the world. "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Someone may say, "That is a very high standard; I think I need not concern myself about that." A young Christian comes to ask me about these worldly amusements, for instance, he tells me that he is very fond of music, and of art, and, of course, of literature—it is surprising how literary people become sometimes, when they want to justify a certain course! "I am sure, Pastor, it would do me no harm whatever to go. We are only to have a friendly dance, with a few select friends, at a friend's house, next week. Of course, there will be nothing coarse or vulgar. I am sure I could participate without any harm to myself, and I think I might well exercise my freedom as a Christian."

I shall not dispute that with you, my friend; but when I tell you that you may open the gate to a forbidden path, along which some other feet may travel to ruin, will you say, "That is not my responsibility"? I reply, It is your responsibility if you are a Christian. You *are* your brother's keeper. Your conduct should be regulated by considerations of high principle, and by a profound concern for the divine honour. There are many things which people who are not Christians may do with impunity, which a Christian cannot afford to touch because the name of Jesus Christ is named upon him.

Gehazi could not do this thing without involving his master's name and house. He could not disguise himself when he went after Naaman. When Naaman saw him coming he said, "Here is a representative of Elisha." You cannot put off your Christian profession on Monday: you must carry it with you to the office, the school, your place of recreation, everywhere you go. If you are a Christian at all, you are a Christian all the time. When the Naamans see you coming, they will know who you are, and they will hold your Master responsible for what you do. You will drag the honour of your Master in the dust, and in the mire; and some day you will have to give an account therefor.

But will you observe that *no man can take one wrong step without taking another.* As soon as Gehazi had made up his mind to possess himself of that coveted treasure, his evil mind began to work, to find out how to accomplish his purpose. When Naaman met him and said, "Is all well?" he said, "All is well. My master hath sent me"—What a lie!—"Behold even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets"—what a lie that was also! "My master hath sent me, saying: . give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments"—and there was not a word of truth in his tale.

Sin never travels alone. One sin always leads to another. When Achan by lot was at last discovered, and he was made to give an account, he said, "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two

hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." I saw! I coveted! I took! I hid! That is the course of sin always. That was the course of sin in the case of Gehazi. He went to Naaman with a lie on his lips, and even the lie multiplied itself before he left the Syrian's presence.

Let us beware of the beginnings of evil. Like the tiny rivulet trickling from the mountain-side, like the spark from which a mighty conflagration grows, like the secret greed that itches for thirty pieces of silver, sin may begin its course in any Gehazi's heart, and increase to the ruin of the soul—unless grace doth mercifully intervene.

Observe also that *Gehazi seemed to be successful*, and, returning, felicitated himself on his astuteness, on his marvellous cleverness; and before he came to the place where he might be discovered he dismissed the messengers. When he came to the tower, a "secret place", he sent them back, deposited the treasure in the house—and "he went in and stood before his master." Oh yes; if it were not for that! If it were not for that, there might seem sometimes to be wisdom in such a course. But at the end of the day somehow, somewhere, every one of us must go in and stand before his Master.

What will you do then? What will you do then? "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" "Thy servant went no whither." "Yes, you did", said his master, "went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee." There was One Who said of another man the opposite of what was true of Gehazi, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Nathanael said unto Him, "Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Phillip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." A Stranger met a woman at the wellside, and they began to talk religion. The woman was full of disputation, and ready to enter into a full discussion as to the respective merits of Jerusalem and Gerizim, but the Stranger cut her short by saying, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." The woman answered, "I have no husband." "Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. I know all about it."

Sooner or later, at the end of the day, we must all go in and stand before our Master. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.

When you go in to stand before your Master you had better leave all your forms of deception outside. I read to you this evening that He Who is our Judge understandeth our thought afar off. Said the Psalmist: "Thou hast beset me behind and before; and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness

shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

We cannot get away from God. Everyone of us at last must go in and stand before his Master.

III

Let me sound THIS WORD OF HOPE. Read the record, and you will find that Gehazi does not disappear from history, but at a later period he appears discoursing on all the great things that Elisha had done. I cannot find that the record of that testimony is out of its chronological order. I believe it is in its proper place. I believe it belongs to a time subsequent to the period with which we are now dealing. Therefore the question arises, Was Gehazi a leper still? Did he come into the presence of the king and talk about all the great things Elisha had done, himself having failed to participate in his grace? Did he tell about how he had raised the widow's son to life, how he had neutralized the poison in the pot, how he had multiplied the widow's oil, how he had healed Naaman of his leprosy while himself continuing a leper? You remember while he was yet speaking, the woman came in, and Gehazi said to the king, "This is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life." Do you think Gehazi remained a leper? While there is no specific record of it, I am inclined to think that God did grant him true repentance, and that, repenting of his sin, he was cleansed of his leprosy, even as Miriam was cleansed after her lapse into sin. If that be a correct interpretation, and I think it is, Gehazi came into the presence of the king, cleansed as Naaman was, and I think he would say, "And to me, O king, the greatest of all miracles is that he cleansed me of the leprosy my sin had so richly merited." He returned, and was cleansed and saved.

I would not speak as I have spoken to-night were there no hope for us. But I am authorized to tell you that our gracious Lord is ever ready to receive the penitent when he will come, as David came, saying, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." When anyone will pray, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which that hast broken may rejoice", our gracious Saviour will forgive. He will forgive all our backslidings, and He will receive us back into His presence and into His service, even as He forgave and received Peter. He will make us once again to be vessels unto honour, "meet for the Master's use." Oh, that we may all be brought into intimate fellowship with our Lord this night!

Call upon Him to-night. Pray that simple prayer, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Let us come now as we bow in a moment's prayer, every one of us confessing that, like Gehazi, we have all gone wrong, we have all sinned, and tell Him that you are coming back again without any reserve. He will forgive it all, and will wash you, and make you whiter than snow.

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, Lord, that the door of mercy still swings wide. We would fain come to Thee to-night. There is not one of us who has not sinned against Thee, not one who has not done that which he ought not to have done. Give us a sense of

cleansing this evening. Many of Thy dear people will come to the Table of the Lord to break the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Him. Help us to examine ourselves.

Now may we confess our sins, and receive Thy forgiveness. If we have spoken this evening to some in their homes, in whose hearts the convicting Spirit has been doing a work, reminding them of their spiritual declension, revive Thy work in every such heart. Save us all with Thy great salvation, and glorify Thy great name through this service here, and wherever it has reached by radio, and wherever it shall yet reach through the medium of the printed page, even to the uttermost parts of the earth. For Thy glory's sake we ask it, Amen.

MEMORIAL AND DEDICATION SERVICE.

We print below a communication which speaks for itself. The Pastor greatly appreciates the love which is here expressed.

MEMORIAL SERVICE AND DEDICATION OF ORGAN

In Memory of the Late Mrs. T. T. Shields
JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 9th, 1932

We are sure it is known to you as a member of Jarvis Street Church that the Church Organ has been in process of rebuilding for some months. It is the desire of the Deacons' Board that the organ, as now rebuilt with its new console, be dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Shields, and that a Dedicatory and Memorial Service be held Sunday, October 9th, at the Evening Service.

It is the Deacons' belief that every member of the church shares their deep sense of loss in the home-going of Mrs. Shields; and that as an expression of their love, will desire to have a part in this lasting memorial, our final public tribute to one whose sweet influence will long bear fruit in the lives of our people.

The first section of the Organ was built in 1873, and has been added to at various times since then. After an expert examination in the early part of 1914, the church was informed that the organ could not longer be used, and that its rebuilding was an absolute necessity. It was proposed to do this at an approximate cost of \$13,000.00. The church has been very fortunate in having in our organist, Mr. Penney, one who was able, by constant attention, to keep the organ in commission. Before Mr. Penney became organist, the organ used to fail, sometimes once or twice a month. But the organ has now been rebuilt. The new work consists of a complete new console, with all modern improvements. A complete new electrical system has been installed throughout. All pipes (about 2,500) have been overhauled, cleaned and retuned, separately.

This work has been made possible by the splendid genius of Mr. Penney and his two professional organ-builder friends, who have given unstintingly of their time and labour—far beyond any recompense they have received, or hope to receive, from the church. Practically all that was proposed in 1914 at a cost of \$13,000.00 has now been done at a much lower cost.

The Deacons, in conjunction with Mr. Penney and Mr. Hutchinson (Mr. Penney knows nothing of the reference to himself above), write you, enclosing an envelope for your memorial offering. We feel confident that every member of the church will desire to participate in this, and venture to ask you to endeavour to make your offering bear some proportion of your love for her to whose memory it will be dedicated.

Please make your offering this first Sunday if at all possible; if you cannot do so, will you please put a slip of paper on the plate on Sunday, indicating the amount you will give next Sunday. We ask this in order that we may definitely know in advance of October 9th that the full cost of rebuilding will be provided for.

Depending upon your hearty co-operation, we are,
Sincerely yours in the Master's service,

CHAS. BROWNLOW	J. E. JENNINGS
GEO. GREENWAY	A. E. MATON
J. G. HYDE	O. L. RAYMER

SEMINARY CONVOCATION.

A splendid congregation assembled last Thursday evening for the opening convocation of the Seminary. Addresses were given by Miss Ruth Dallimore, who told of her summer's work; and Mr. Bruce Hisey, who related his experiences in the Province of Quebec. Addresses were also delivered by Rev. Walter Fleischer, B.A., and Rv. W. Gordon Brown, of the Faculty, and a brief address by the President.

The congregation almost filled the auditorium downstairs, with some in the gallery. It was really a great night.

What the Seminary Students are Doing.

It will interest our readers, we are sure, to be informed of the practical work the students of Toronto Baptist Seminary are doing. The one who has charge of the Practical Work Department has given us the following report:

From January to May, 1932: Sunday School lessons taught: by men, 335; by women, 340; total 675. Sermons preached by men, 359. Meetings addressed: by men, 259; by women, 37; total, 296. Conversions reported: by men, 37; by women, 21; total 58. Bibles, tracts, gospels, etc., distributed: by men, 5,368; by women, 6,776; total, 12,154. Visits made: by men, 1,159; by women, 1,525; total, 2,684.

During the summer, from June to September, the report is as follows: sermons preached by men, 312. Meetings addressed: by men, 426; by women, 73; total, 499. Sunday School lessons taught: by men, 115; by women, 92; total, 217. Visits made: by men, 8,616; by women, 3,506; total, 12,122. Religious conversations held: by men, 1,355; by women, 85; total, 1,440. Bibles distributed: by men, 17; by women, 4; total, 21. Gospels distributed: by men, 487; by women, 13; total, 500. Tracts distributed: by men, 9,845; by women, 4,394; total, 14,249. Professions of faith reported: by men, 58; by women, 24; total, 82.

These figures will give a little idea of how the Seminary students exercise their gifts in practical work. We ask our readers to pray for this seed which they have been scattering, now in the ground, in the confidence that God's word will not return unto Him void.

FROM OUR WITNESS READERS.

Dear Dr. Shields:

California.

Enclosed find our subscription cheque to The Gospel Witness this year. We are glad to be of this family. We have found the "Table" provided with the "Finest of the Wheat," choice viands, not found in any other place, many times a delightful surprise in those things that build up in faith and practice.

It has never disappointed our expectations. We wish for it a more extended circulation, and continued ministry in those things that endure.

If there is some Minister here in United States who would be glad to have our copy after we read it, I should be glad to send it to him.

Mrs. J. F. D.,

P.S.—I had intended speaking of the "Series of Lectures on Biblical Theology", given to the Seminary students, which are so much appreciated. Fortunate are the students in having access to these, for we know when they go out to teach others, they are well grounded in the "Word."

Tacoma, Wash.

I am sending a Post Office Order for two (2) dollars to renew my subscription to the Gospel Witness. I must have it now to read, will get along without other things to pay for it.

Thanking you for the copies sent me right along, I enjoy those sermons above all.

Sincerely,
Mrs. J. D.

Bayfield.

Find enclosed ten dollars for the support of the Gospel as it is sounded forth in the Witness week after week. May God bless you in your work for him.

Yours very truly,
Mary K. E.

Needless to say, after reading the weekly messages in the Gospel Witness, and perusing the books issued by Dr. Shields, I have an increasing desire to sit at his feet. Undoubtedly, he is a man of God; and my prayer is that God will continue to bless his stand and witness to His own glory.

Thanking you for your kindness in sending the books and for your prompt attention to my enquiries; trusting that all will be now well,

Radnorshire, Eng.
———Mich.

The Gospel Witness,
Toronto, Ont.

Beloved in Christ:

Please find enclosed two New York drafts for \$100.00 each, made payable to The Gospel Witness and the Toronto Baptist Seminary. This is a portion of a fund that has recently come to hand, which is being used for the Lord's work, and we pray God's rich blessings on your ministry in those two fields,

Yours in Christ,
For Service,
Mr. and Mrs. W. S. E.
Bahamas.

Dear Dr. Shields:

I have been reading The Gospel Witness with interest and spiritual profit. After reading them myself, I always mail them to someone else, generally to an evangelist.

Toronto, Canada.

Dear Dr. Shields:

I promised \$5.00 for The Witness Fund as a birthday gift, it being my fiftieth birthday. I have not been able to give it until now, so include an extra dollar as interest.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. May He richly endue you with the Holy Ghost, and in the midst of trial fires give to you a laughing heart.

Middleville, Ont.

Dear Editor:

My subscription ran out the other day, and as I am not able to renew just now, will you please send The Witness on, and I will pay in a month or two. The paper is very dear to me, as I have not been able to hear a sermon for over thirty years. I am seventy-eight years old.

Willoughby, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Shields:

Am writing this to let you know I am renewing my subscription, but kindly send until the amount of subscription is received. Am asking for this favour because it would be wrong for a Christian to be without your paper.

Verona, Wis.

Dear Friends:

You will find herewith enclosed my subscription to the Gospel Witness for another year. I hope this will reach you in time, so I will not lose any copies of The Witness, as I value the paper very much. May God greatly bless the ministry of Jarvis Street Church.

Halloway, Ont.

Dear Dr. Shields:

I write to tell you of my conversion through your wonderful paper, The Gospel Witness. Although just a babe in Christ I am trusting my Saviour that I may grow in grace, and in a knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Will you please pray for the conversion of my mother?

Bellepoint, W. Va.

Dear Editor:

I am enclosing P.O. Money order for the sum of \$2.00 for renewal of my subscription. I overlooked this matter, and allowed my subscription to expire. Please send me the back copies that I have missed, and date my subscription accordingly. You can count me a permanent subscriber as long as I live, or the paper is published, because it is in a class by itself. There is, in my opinion, nothing to compare with Dr. Shields' sermons. May God spare him and strengthen him for many more years of inspiring service.

Galt, Ont.

Dear Miss Stoakley:

I am sending \$2.00 to renew my subscription. It is not easy getting money these days, but I feel that I cannot do without The Gospel Witness.

Cornwall, Ont.

Dear Sir:

I have enjoyed reading The Gospel Witness very much, and being a preacher have received many helpful suggestions.

Keene, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Shields:

With gratitude I wish to acknowledge your kindness in sending me The Gospel Witness. I can assure you that the paper is well read and appreciated. When I finish reading it I pass it on to an old man eighty-three years of age, who

was converted in our mission four years ago. He reads it, and then passes it to another elderly man he is trying to win to Christ.

Lethbridge, Alta.

Dear Sirs:

I think The Gospel Witness is getting better all the time. I wish it was in every home in Canada—and not in Canada alone, but in the wide world over.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Dr. Shields:

Just a line to thank you for The Gospel Witness. I get great blessing from your paper as I read the sermons, and the things you stand for as a Baptist.

San Dimas, Calif.

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing \$2.00 for one year's subscription to The Gospel Witness. A few old copies have fallen into my hand, and I find soul-food in them.

Borensberg, Sweden.

Dear Pastor Shields:

Peace of God! I am so very thankful to you for The Gospel Witness which I receive every week. God bless you and The Witness in the continuance. Two pastors have asked me to write you, that they may receive the paper.

Kingston, Ont.

Dear Gospel Witness:

Enclosed find money order for \$40.00 which Dr. Shields may use for The Witness, or for one of the other needy children as he sees fit.

Dear Editor:

It is with great pleasure I am able to send the money order for the renewal of my subscription to The Gospel Witness. I have been a reader for the past year, and I cannot express in words how much I have enjoyed it.

The Lettish Baptist Seminary, Riga, Latvia.

Dear Sir:

As the end of this year approaches I feel in my heart that I must tell you how grateful we are here for The Gospel Witness we have been receiving week after week. As to myself, then I can tell you that The Gospel Witness has given me mind inspiration and joy which I have not hesitated to pass on again. And I hope that The Gospel Witness will not be taken from us for the coming year. Believe me, we all here in the Seminary will be very, very grateful to you and to all who are concerned with the paper.

In the name of the Lettish Baptist Seminary,

Very truly yours,

R. E. Ekstein.

Makassar, Stalstraat 12, Aug. 22nd, 1932.

Dear Dr. Shields:

Is there any way whereby you could send The Gospel Witness and your books "The Most Famous Trial of History" and "Christ in the Old Testament" to me free? We are Chinese missionaries of The Chinese Foreign Missionary Union. My husband, Rev. Pouw, is always preaching the Gospel in the native language (Malay) in Southern Celebes, and he translates also Rev. Robert A. Jaffray's Chinese Bible Magazine into Malay, while I myself teach in the Sunday School amongst the Chinese.

I like your publication very much, especially your most helpful sermons, and the lesson leaf of Rev. Thomson, and I use them in our Sunday School work. A friend of ours loaned us a few copies, but he does not receive it regularly. We do not feel we can afford the subscription price, we have eleven children in our care.

I pray God that you will find the way in sending me this help.

Very thankfully,

Your sister in His Glad service,
MRS. POWW.

Stalstraat No. 12,
Makassar, Celebes,
D.E.I.

LAST SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

Sunday morning the Bible School attendance was 1,241. There was a large morning congregation, and several responded to the invitation. There was a great congregation in the evening. The sermon published in this issue was preached by the Pastor; several responded to the invitation. At the Communion Service following, which began at 9.15, 641 participated, and the Pastor gave the hand of fellowship to ten new members.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 7

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 43 October 23rd, 1932
FOURTH QUARTER.

JOSHUA'S CAPTAIN.

Lesson Text: Joshua, chapter 7.

Golden Text: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Gen. 4:1-17.

Tuesday—2 Kings 13:1-9.

Wednesday—Amos 2:1-16.

Thursday—Acts 5:1-16.

Friday—1 Cor. 9:16-27.

Saturday—Heb. 12:12-29.

I. THE DEFEAT, (vs. 1-5).

The overthrow of Jericho was but the beginning of the conquest of Canaan, and after the marvellous victory at that city, Joshua sent men to Ai, to view the country and report concerning the same. On their return they announced that inasmuch as the people in that place were few in number it was not necessary to send the whole army thither, two or three thousand would be sufficient. To this Joshua consented, and the men, to that number, were sent. This expressed the confidence of all concerned in a speedy and easy victory, but to their amazement instead of overcoming the men of Ai, the army of Israel was defeated, losing some thirty-six men in the conflict. The description of the scene portrays that which was evidently a panic, the men of Israel fleeing down from the hills before the men of Ai. Such a defeat brought discouragement into the breasts of the Israelites, their hearts, "melted and became as water". They had gained entrance into Canaan, but it was necessary for them to advance into the country in order to take possession of it, and here was the result of their first essaying to do so. The measure of the defeat weighed by casualties was not so great, but its significance from the standpoint of encouragement to all their enemies in Canaan, and from its manifestation of lack of the divine presence and power with them in their conflict was indeed startling and disturbing. Such a defeat was humiliating, dangerous, and unnecessary, and brought shame to the name of the Lord. In the spiritual realm such defeats also occur, and bring sorrow to the heart of God, and encouragement to His enemies in the world. It should be noted that all defeats of this nature are due to the actions of the people of God. Victory is theirs in Him, (I John 5:4), and if they fail to attain to this, something is seriously wrong.

II. THE REASON FOR THE DEFEAT, (vs. 6-23).

The effect of this defeat upon Joshua is seen in the rending of his clothes, and the falling to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, with the elders of Israel; all

putting dust upon their heads, (v. 6). These were very marked signs of sorrow, and were caused, not by the greatness of the slaughter, which we have noted was but small, but from the significance of the event. This is made clear in the prayer of Joshua, (vs. 7-9), wherein he betrays his discouragement, laments the condition of Israel, expresses his sorrow, and refers to the possibility of serious consequences ensuing therefrom; viewing the whole from the Godward standpoint. In this, Joshua and the elders adopted the right attitude. They were perplexed by the occurrence, and it was so unexpected they knew not what to do, therefore they came before God in prayer. Note the nature, necessity and blessedness of prayer, and the proper attitude in which to approach God, illustrated here in the humility, earnestness, supplication, perseverance and reverence of these men.

The prayer of Joshua did not go unanswered. God has promised to attend to the cry of His own when they approach Him in the right manner (2 Chron. 7:14), and He enlightened His servant concerning the reason for Israel's failure and gave directions concerning the remedy. Israel had sinned in taking of the accursed thing of Jericho, therefore her people could not stand before their enemies, and the warning is given that unless they destroyed the accursed from among them God would not be with them any more (vs. 10-12). It is well to note the significance of this statement. It meant that sin in the camp hindered victory, caused defeat, courted disaster, brought shame to the name of Jehovah, and compelled Him to withdraw His power and favor from His people. Sin is that which God hates. He is holy and cannot countenance it in the least. The same attitude should be taken by His people. The nearer we live to God the more we hate sin. And this applies to all sin, and not simply to the particular variety of it which we may happen to dislike. God hates sin because it affects His nature. It is opposed to His very being, and a realization of its nature would aid us in our attitude against it. The commission of it in any shape or form is always followed to a certain extent with serious consequences, not always observed at the time, but sooner or later manifested. These consequences affect others as well as the one who commits the sin. No man can sin unto himself and mingle with others, just as no man can have the measles unto himself and associate with others. Sin is infectious and requires restraint. Note the conscious and unconscious influence of each person, and explain the nature of sin.

The particular sin referred to in the lesson is that of covetousness, including as it did disobedience to the command of God, so clearly made known, before the overthrow of Jericho (6:17-19), and theft of that which belonged unto God. It was a secret sin, no one outside the limit of Achan's family knew it had been committed, and it arose from a desire to possess that which belonged to another. Two things are clearly seen in this. First, the evil nature of covetousness and its sinful consequences. It is condemned in the law of Sinai (Ex. 20:17). It is the root of all evil (I Tim. 6:10), for love of money is simply a phase of the

same thing. It makes men unhappy, prevents useful service, leads them to rob God and man, hinders the Lord's work, and rests under the displeasure and judgment of God. Note how Christians may rob God, in retaining for themselves that which belongs to Him (Mal. 3:8).

In the second place, note that the secret sin of one individual hindered the progress of the whole camp. God takes note of that which is done secretly, as well as of that which is open. He is the omniscient One and knows all things (I John 3:20). "Be sure your sin will find you out", ought always to be remembered (Num. 32:23). To have passed over this sin would have meant an increase of its corrupting influence throughout the encampment, therefore the command is given to deal with it. The arrangement is stated in detail concerning the calling of the whole assembly, and the taking of Achan as the guilty one (vs. 14-15). To the accusation he confessed, and, informing Joshua where the stolen goods were hid, these were quickly brought forth and laid before the Lord (vs. 19-23). Note the hindrance of sin at Kadesh Barnea (Num. 14), at Nazareth (Mark 6:5), and in reference to prayer (Is. 59:2).

III. THE REMEDY (vs. 24-26).

The guilt of Achan being clearly manifested, Joshua proceeded to put the command of God into operation concerning the punishment of the sin, death being the penalty suffered by Achan. If the members of his family were also put to death it was probably due to their knowledge of and acquiescence in the sin which made them equally guilty. The whole congregation or as many of them as possible took part in the infliction of the penalty in emphasis of its solemn legal character, and in manifestation of the abhorrence of the people at the sinful deed, and of their desire for the return of the divine favour. Such an action was unpleasant, but necessary. It cleansed the camp. It meant suffering for the guilty, but to spare him would have meant continued suffering on the part of the innocent and loss of the favor of God. The punishment was severe, but it fitted the sin in God's estimation; it was immediately put into operation, and it had the desired effect in paving the way for victory. Note the danger of light views of sin, the necessity for viewing the same from the Godward aspect, and the obligation to deal with the same in one's own life, and also in that of the church (Heb. 12:1; I Cor. 5:1-8).

The Union Baptist Witness

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MAKING HISTORY.

From Northern Quebec we have recently received interesting letters from Mr. Frank Wellington, a student of the Toronto Baptist Seminary, who during the summer months has been assisting his brothers, Stanley and Wilfrid, in their missionary work among the miners.

A meeting has recently been held in the Beattie Mine, and there some seventy-five to one hundred miners gathered in the cookhouse to hear the Gospel message. They seemed much impressed and at the close of the meeting quietly filed out, which in itself is worthy of comment, for their attitude is generally careless and mocking.

Then of another trip to the Sullivan Mine, Mr. Wellington writes and his letter is quoted:

"As I placed a copy of THE GOSPEL WITNESS upon the rough table in the crowded, stuffy bunk house of the Sullivan Mining Camp, the thought came to me that I was making history. This is, as far as I know, the first time that the noted paper has pierced the wilds of godless Northern Quebec, and it will, without doubt, be read by most of the men in that camp, and will be passed on to other camps guided by the hand of God, who will use that printed word in addition to the preached Word.

"In order to reach the hands of these men that WITNESS had to travel with us in a frail sixteen foot canoe through driving rain over the threatening, angry waves of Lake Malartic, waves which even intimidated experienced prospectors. The paper spent nights out in the forest with us when we had but one blanket between the three of us, the temperature below freezing, the moss-covered ground our mattress and the starry sky our roof. It also crossed with us the rolling waters between the Siscoe and the Sullivan mines in a driving, blinding blizzard which blotted from our sight the surroundings and caused us, in the gale, to be all but dashed upon the rocky shore near the landing. But the Witness, with us, found its way in safety and at last reached that rugged table around which the men sit at cards. We pray that it will be read with interest and with conviction by the Holy Spirit."

It is quite unnecessary for us to make comment upon the foregoing letter. We are certain that the readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS as they peruse their own copy will remember the issues that are passed on to others and find their way into far corners. They will surely pray very definitely that the messages of the WITNESS will penetrate and that the Lord will, through them, bring men and women to a saving knowledge of Himself.

Would it not be possible for readers of THE GOSPEL WITNESS to open a subscription list that would assure a copy of the paper being mailed weekly to the mining camps in Ontario and Quebec?

PASTORS' AND PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE, CHATHAM, ONTARIO.

The district Pastors' and People's Conference held at Chatham on Thursday, September 29th, afforded an opportunity for real fellowship, and throughout the day there was a feast of good things. Rev. E. C. Wood, pastor of the entertaining church, writes:

"The Lord was very present with us, and a time of uplift and soul-searching resulted. In the afternoon, after a devotional period, and business session, Rev. C. E. Scott of Courtright exhorted the believers in Christ Jesus to take full advantage of the fact that 'a new and living way' has been opened into God's presence by the rending of the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that by prayer and the study of God's Word we may 'draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith'. Thus we shall be able to 'hold fast the profession of our

THE FIFTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

of the
Union of Regular Baptist
Church of Ontario and Quebec
meeting with the Jarvis St. Baptist
Church, Toronto

Tuesday, October 18th

Wednesday, October 19th

Thursday, October 20th

Pray that there may be such an outpouring of blessing that it will redound to the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ throughout our Province of Ontario and Quebec and beyond, even to the uttermost parts of the world.

faith without wavering', and be better fitted to provoke one another unto love and good works.

"After a good time of fellowship around the supper table, our evening session was held. The church was well filled and our hearts were filled with gratitude to God for the wonderful way He has blessed the efforts of His servants in Liberia.

"Mr. and Mrs. Davey both spoke fervently and interestingly concerning the work in Liberia and the centre of attraction was 'His Royal Highness, Danny'. The curios that our missionaries displayed also attracted much attention and a large portion of the audience stayed until eleven o'clock to view them.

"It was a day of spiritual uplift, and it is our prayer that even greater blessing may attend the appearances of our missionaries in other places, so that the lives of God's people may be strengthened and built up, and sinners converted from their evil way to serve the living and true God, that greater fervor will attend our missionary work at home and abroad."

LATE NEWS FROM LIBERIA.

Since the arrival of Miss Lane's pathetic letter from which we learned of the Bassa baby who was so badly burned, we have probably thought much of that little one and realize now something more of the demands made upon our missionary-nurses. We have just received a letter from Mr. Hancox which is most interesting. Of the baby he writes, so we know that it has made some progress.

"For more than two weeks, Miss Lane has been giving her entire attention to caring for the little boy who was so badly burned. She has had him in her own home and has watched him carefully. Becoming alarmed, however, at his condition, she suggested that we send for Mrs. Mellish, and I feel that a word of praise for Mrs. Mellish will not be out of the way just here, and it certainly is due her.

"Two hours after our boy left to call her, it began to rain and continued raining for forty-eight hours with only a little break. The boy was delayed by swollen streams and lack of ferries, but Mrs. Mellish started away from her station within one hour of getting my letter and arrived here twenty-one hours later, having waded through streams with water to her armpits. When she arrived her clothing was soaking wet, but she did not seem to mind it and went to the work of attending to the little chap. Were courage lacking among the rest of the missionaries, Mrs. Mellish would have enough to supply a whole staff.

"After spending six days with us, she started back to her own station this morning (August 26th). Win and I went a little way with her, then returned by a different route to find new towns not yet visited with the Gospel. Nearly all were deserted owing to the fact that everyone is busy cutting rice. We had, however, the opportunity on one large farm of gathering a dozen or more folk together and telling them the story of salvation."

A Sunday Evening Meeting.

From Mr. Hancox's letter we also learn of the Sunday evening meetings held on August 21st. He tells us that Mrs. Mellish had brought the interpreter from the Gear Bar Zondo Station (pronounced Gabazonda by Mr. Davey) and it was possible to divide the forces and make two parties and hold services in four towns. In one of these towns, the Message was not welcome and only a mere handful gathered together, but in two other towns the people begged for a service, fearing that they might be passed by, and in the fourth, a splendid crowd listened attentively.

Gospel Services Held Throughout the Rainy Season.

It has been a matter of great rejoicing to the missionaries that they have been able throughout the rainy season to get out to village after village, Sunday and week day alike, for when the rains

are on, fewer people come to church because of the necessity of watching their farms, but when they are home for their evening meal, they can be brought together for a service.

Dying Alone.

As Mr. Hancox was wending his way down a path one evening, accompanied by two natives, they came to a clearing at the edge of the village and a low gasping sound reached their ears. "Some one is sick," said one of the boys, and as they listened and turned their eyes in the direction from which the sound came, they discovered that there was a small new hut, right on the edge of the thick bush and set away from the dwellings of the town's people. It was evidently a temporary abode for it was constructed of palm branches. Half a dozen branches matted together served as a door, and Mr. Hancox entered to find a young man lying on a low platform with a piece of sacking over him. The only response to the visitors' questions was the sound made as he fought for breath. Death was stretching out its hand towards another of Africa's native sons and it was clearly a losing battle for this suffering one.

It was evident that there was not a person in the village. The natives had gone to their farms, or possibly some of the men were fishing, and the poor helpless sufferer was left alone to die. "Into my mind," continues Mr. Hancox, "came the words of that old hymn, but to me they were—

'Into a tent where a Bassa boy lay,
Dying alone, at the close of the day.'

There was nothing that the missionary could do for the poor Bassa boy, and shortly the drums carried the story of his death upon the air and the mourning was commenced with its usual wailing and howling.

THROUGH BUSH TRAIL BY SADDLE HORSE.

Leaving Kitchener, Ontario, about July 28th, the Gospel Bus belonging to Mr. R. C. Bauer began its journey to Northern Saskatchewan. For nearly two months the bus was to be the home of six young men whose mission was to bring salvation's glorious message to those who had little opportunity of hearing it. Among these missionaries were two students from the Toronto Baptist Seminary, Mr. Arnold Dallimore of London, Ontario, and Mr. Francis Wright of Orangeville, Ontario, and from them we learn of a section of our country sadly lacking in respect to a gospel ministry and a people who are without knowledge of that which comforts men's hearts and lifts the burden from their souls.

By the bus, equipped with splendid accommodation for eating, sleeping and travelling, the young men covered some two thousand, four hundred miles before coming to their destination, a section about three hundred miles north of the city of Saskatoon, a district north of the prairie lands and occupied by those who experienced failure in Southern Saskatchewan and have begun life anew, clearing the land and planting their wheat and looking for a harvest, if not this year, the next, or the next. Their houses are built of logs, the roads are bad and are merely bush trails between sec-

tions. It is in many respects a new land. A few years ago it was swept by fire and the new growth is but ten or fifteen feet high and everywhere the burned stumps tell the story of the devastation wrought by the hungry flames, but the soil is rich and responsive and the people are optimistic and enthusiastic concerning their prospects and their ultimate success. In the meantime, they live in primitive fashion. They have the most meagre equipment and seem utterly apart from the rest of the world. A newspaper seldom reaches the district and there is little communication with the outside world. Many of the children have never seen a railway train, or a building with any claim to pretention.

One can imagine the interest created by the arrival of the Gospel Bus. It was then not possible, of course, for the bus to travel over the trail, and even on the wider roads it was necessary at times to await the cutting of a stump before progress could be made. The bus, in one instance, had to be parked beside a bridge several miles from the farms and the missionaries by horse-back began their visitation. They were well received by the settlers and were able to engage many in conversation, reading and praying in their homes, leaving with them gospel tracts and Scripture portions and inviting them to the services held in open air, or school house, or hall. In other places, the bus was stationed near the school-house, and as the school is in session throughout the summer months, it was possible to reach the children and through them publish the news of meetings. In most cases, the co-operation of the school-teacher was cordially given, and place after place received the Word. It was uncultivated ground, much of the Good Seed may have fallen on hard ground, but there was surely joy in heaven and in the hearts of the workers as some heard the Word gladly and received it. Prayer is asked that these, who now are numbered among Christ's lambs and are left without an under-shepherd, will be kept from the ravages of the wolves.

BIBLE FORUM AT MT. PLEASANT.

Those questions which cause one considerable concern when doing personal work and which are the snags which unbelievers so often delight in putting to the one who cares for their soul will be discussed at the Bible Forum to be held each Friday evening at the Mount Pleasant Regular Baptist Church, Toronto. Rev. Alexander Thomson is beginning this interesting discussion class next week, and all who have a question on a Bible topic, or concerning a Bible statement, are invited to send it in and attend the meeting. The announcement of the opening of this Friday evening meeting has already aroused considerable interest and many questions have already been sent to Mr. Thomson. Pray that there may be many who come to question who will find the Lord an all-sufficient Saviour, and that all who attend will find the innovation an opportunity for profitable study.

AT THE SCOTCH LINE CHURCH.

On Monday, September 26th, the people of the Scotch Line Regular Baptist Church had the privilege of listening to Rev. and Mrs. Davey, missionaries on furlough from Liberia. The church was filled, and all listened attentively as the missionaries related the story of the triumphs of the cross of Christ in that African Republic. Little Daniel, the black Bassa baby, was a centre of interest, and the whole evening was an impressive one, leaving in the minds of the people a more intelligent understanding of the work which is carried on in Liberia, Africa, and the responsibility of the home churches in connection with it.

Sunday, October 2nd, the Scotch Line Church held its anniversary services. Large congregations were attendant at each service, and Pastor John Cunningham gave searching gospel messages morning and evening.

THE FRENCH WORK.

Sunday, September 25th, was a memorable day for the Bi-lingual Section of St. Paul's Church, Montreal. The morning session took the form of a memorial service in memory of the late T. J. "Jimmy" Andrews, who was instantly killed some three weeks ago. Pastor St. James addressed the large congregation present on the subject of "Memorials", and from the Old Testament showed what a place they had in the life of the people; then from the New Testament he spoke of the ordinance of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, the church's memorials.

After the sermon, the memorial of baptism was illustrated by the immersion of two candidates, and when the ordinance had been administered, Pastor St. James from the baptistry made an appeal to the unsaved, and in response two came forward, man and wife, French-Canadian Roman Catholics. During the service, Mrs. Dodds sang two impressive hymns.

At the close of the morning service, October 2nd, the "memorial" of the Lord's Supper was observed, and possibly to those who partook, the ordinance had a greater significance than ever before, because of the "memorial" service.

THANKSGIVING RALLY

The Alton Regular Baptist Church invite the young people of the churches within motoring distance of Alton to meet for a Thanksgiving Rally, October 10.

Students will speak on their Summer Work.

Rev. and Mrs. Davey will be present with Daniel.