

The Gospel Witness

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

Editor: T. T. SHIELDS
Associate Editor: ALEXANDER THOMSON

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

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

Vol. 11. No. 35

TORONTO, JANUARY 12, 1933

Whole No. 556

"Of Whom Be Thou Ware Also"

At certain intervals along the streets of any modern city there are fire boxes painted red, many of them displaying a red light at night. There are also fire stations where expert firemen, equipped with the latest fire-fighting apparatus, await the call of anyone in the city who may be threatened by the devouring element. When, in spite of all precautions, a great fire takes place, and for a while gets beyond control, efforts are made to improve the fire-fighting system so as to avoid a repetition of the disaster. Thus the most painstaking efforts are made to protect life and property from the devouring flame.

Many newspapers nowadays regularly publish articles written by medical experts, instructing people how to maintain health, and how to fight disease. Every modern city has a public health department, where experts are employed to conserve the health of the city. With this in view, laws of quarantine, of sanitation, and of hygiene in general, are passed; and all this health legislation is based really upon experience of certain diseases and their results.

The police force of a city, if they are what they ought to be, hold it to be more important to prevent the commission of crime than to detect the criminal after its commission. Hence the finger-print system, the rogues' gallery, and the whole method of criminal investigation and detection, is designed to prevent a criminally-disposed person from repeating his offence. And when a man with a long evil record to his credit moves from place to place the authorities in various cities are forewarned.

The art of counterfeiting good money, happily, is but seldom practised now, but when a counterfeit is discovered, and it is found that counterfeit money is being put in circulation, it is common for the people to be warned of the fact. Occasionally we have seen notices in the newspapers warning people of the operations of certain imposters.

Years ago a neighbouring pastor warned us of a woman whom he had reason to believe was victimizing ministers by representing herself as a member of their congregation, temporarily in need of help of a few dollars, and asking a loan of the minister, with a promise of repayment by instalments. Our ministerial neighbour suggested it might

be to our profit to be on our guard against such a person. Sure enough but a day or so afterwards she arrived. It required only a few questions for us to ascertain that she had never seen inside the church where we ministered, and thus we identified her. Under threat of handing her over to the police, we induced her to accompany us to the home of the friend who had warned us against her. On arrival there she was immediately recognized as the woman who had sought help, but under another name than the name she had given us. She flatly denied ever having seen our ministerial neighbour, or ever having been in his house. We begged his permission to send for the police, but he would not give consent. A little later we found that a number of our ministerial neighbours had been victimized, and the mercy we had shown to the criminal had worked out as a grave injustice to those upon whom she preyed.

All this is but commonplace. These matters are all taken for granted. They are part of our civilization. If a fire, or a disease, or a thief, has injured someone, certainly an alarm should be sounded, that others may be put on their guard and warned against the impending danger.

But are there no dangers in the spiritual world? Are there no fires, no moral maladies, no spiritual bandits, no wolves to prey upon the Lord's flock? And if there are, ought we under any circumstances to warn people against them? Or if, indeed, they must be warned, must we be careful to leave these moral menaces without a name, lest we be charged with "dealing in personalities"?

Are false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, to be permitted to prey upon the Lord's flock without being identified and named? The Apostle Paul, like every other minister of Christ, had had some experience with, and had been in peril, among false brethren. One of them was named Hymenaeus, another, Alexander. And this experienced minister of Christ wrote to his son Timothy, advising him of their evil character, calling them by name, saying they belonged to the class who divorce faith and a good conscience, adding, "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." Not content with having thus described these enemies of the faith in one letter, in his second letter to Timothy, Paul said, "Alexander the

coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: of whom be thou ware also for he hath greatly withstood our words."

It is our conviction that when men become openly and unquestionably apostate, either in what they teach or in what they practice, those who have full knowledge of the facts are under solemn obligation both to God and their fellows to call the wrongdoer by name, and to warn others to beware of him.

"BELIEVERS."

In the fifth chapter of Acts and the fourteenth verse we read, "And believers were the more added to the Lord." A man's normal point of view is often more clearly and accurately revealed in his impromptu and casual remarks than in his studied and formal statements. For this reason a witness deserves to be studied in the incidentals of his tale quite as much as in the main body of his testimony. This verse is a mere incidental in an interesting though simple narrative; but it reveals the point of view of a spiritually enlightened and mature mind.

It is the story of the beginning of the church's evangelistic ministry. It relates simply that the ministry of the apostles resulted in "believers" being added to the Lord.

A Christian is distinguished from others by what he believes. It has been common to belittle the value of belief. It has become popular to decry creeds, and to magnify deeds. Yet the fact remains that the New Testament describes the people of God who have passed from darkness to light, as "believers". When Apollos went to Achaia he consorted with "disciples" who were distinguished for what they "believed". Therefore while belief, considered as an act of faith, or as the body of truth received, or as both, is not the only consideration of importance; it must be conceded that the Christian's distinctive feature is his faith, or his belief.

And a Christian's faith, or the body of truth upon which it rests, is not a burden but a bulwark; not an iron fetter but a betrothal ring; not weights but wings; not a uniform, but a character; not a laboured pose, but a living pulse; indeed the way of faith is not as the track of a laden camel through the desert, but as the flight of a lark in the summer air.

Through faith our moral natures find repose in Christ. We put this first because in actual experience our moral nature takes precedence of the intellectual. It cannot be gainsaid that the supreme considerations of life are moral. Questions of right and wrong are of first importance. Moral accountability cannot be ignored. Hence the right or the wrong we do abides. It walks by our side in the way; and when it is toward evening, and the day is far spent, it comes in to abide with us without invitation, and never makes as though it would go further. Thus beneath all disguises perpetual unrest characterizes the unbeliever: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked." But the believer finds infinite moral satisfaction in Christ. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

The man whose own moral nature, his sense of rightness, has been violated, who has sinned against his own soul, as well as against God, cannot long escape the consciousness of his lawlessness. He may labour to deceive himself and others. He may affect the utmost unconcern, and immerse his soul in pleasures of infinite variety. But he cannot forget the possibility of a day of disclosure and accounting. From the shuttered windows of his soul there is "a fearful looking for of judgment". But for the believer the day of disclosure and accounting has come and gone. He is not haunted by the spirit of a murdered past. To him "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness". The worst has come. The law has spent itself at Calvary; and a cloudless morning succeeds the night of forked flame and terrifying thunder. One can imagine a criminal under the lash of a guilty conscience, fleeing from city to city, and from country to country in perpetual fear of detection. At length, notwithstanding his ceaseless vigilance, the long arm of the law reaches him, and he finds himself shut away from all pleasant sights and sounds, from all friendly voices, within a living tomb. But when, to him, the slow-passing years are ended, and the great doors of his prison-house swing outward, and once again he breathes the air of freedom, one can fancy his looking back upon that pile of stone where so many of his years lie buried,

as with a shudder he says, "That is the end of the law for me! those years of darkness have atoned and I am free".

Thus faith regards the grave of Christ. Our sins are buried there, and for us a new day has dawned. Is it surprising that they should be distinguished as "believers" who know this to be true? Our moral natures find repose in Christ and look with joy unspeakable into the future.

But while faith in Christ is, at bottom, a moral act, it involves the exercise of the intellectual faculties too; and the true believer finds intellectual satisfaction in Christ. His intellect finds rest in the truth revealed in Him. The believer is not a stranger to enquiry. Faith is not blind acquiescence. On the contrary, faith has found so many otherwise unanswerable questions answered in Christ, that she is assured that what she knows not now she shall know hereafter. In the moral provision made for the soul by the death and resurrection of Christ, faith apprehends the work of God and gets a glimpse of the infinitude of divine resources. In "the Lamb as it had been slain," faith sees "the Word made flesh," and the express image of the Person of Deity revealed; and in His word concerning the soul's origin and destiny, and its relation to God and the universe, the spiritually enlightened intellect finds perfect satisfaction and repose.

The believer finds no faculty of the intellect violated, nor stultified, nor denied the exercise of its function, by his belief. He has used his judgment, and exercised his reasoning powers to the utmost on questions of life and destiny; and has discovered that his mental stature, and the range of his faculties forbid his seeing "very far off". But faith has come to his help. It has been to him what the aviator is to the general in the field; it gives him a higher point of view, and consequently a wider and longer range of vision; and from thence, looking beyond the narrow limits of reason's view, he sees that all is well.

Ignorance is not the mother of truly Christian devotion. That is born of an experience of the love of God revealed to the apprehension of the soul in an atoning Saviour. And in view of the cross and the empty grave, the intellect, as well as the conscience, finds rest and indescribable satisfaction. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." And in that fulness in which the Father finds pleasure, the intellect and conscience of the believer finds perfect rest.

But conscience and intellect are not the only elements in human nature. Our emotional and effectual nature also finds rest in believing: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

"No man liveth unto himself." Capacity for loving is a human characteristic. Like a climbing plant whose tendrils were made to feel after something to wrap themselves about; so human affections were designed to cling to something objective to the human soul. "It is not good for man to be alone." And from the beginning, the human heart has found that saying true. Thus baby hands reach out in affectionate appeal for mother's or father's answering love; and in maturer years the tendrils of friendship, of conjugal affection, of parental love, all wind themselves about some objective treasure for the strengthening and enrichment of life. But where shall these kindly, clinging tendrils of the soul find enduring support?

The plant in your garden lays hold upon another plant near by. But what if the rain, or wind, or a worm at the root, lay the object of its affection low? The clinging, trustful vine falls with its stricken support. So these immortal passions of the soul cannot find rest in mortality. We remember two mothers, each of whom had lost an only daughter. One of the mothers was a believer, the other was not. By that death the believing mother was lifted nearer heaven, while the mother without faith, prostrate with an unmitigated grief, found her heart buried in the grave of her child.

(Continued on page 12)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE."

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 8th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported—Broadcast over CFRB, 690 k.c., as is every Sunday evening service of Jarvis Street Church, from 7 to 9 o'clock Eastern Standard Time)

"But he answered and said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Matthew 4:4.

Prayer Before the Sermon.

We bless Thee, O Lord our God; for the privilege of access to Thy holy presence. As sheep that have been driven by the wolves, as mariners that have been tossed upon the sea, as hungry children at meal-time, we come to find in Thee the Shepherd of our souls, to find in Thee a safe and peaceful haven, to find in Jesus Christ the Bread of Life. We thank Thee for the open door. We bless Thee for the invitations of Thy gospel issued to all who labour and are heavy laden, to all who are in need of help divine. How should we come to Thee—how could we come to Thee—had we to depend upon our own merit, had we to plead in Thy presence any works of righteousness which we have done? We thank Thee for the sprinkled blood, for the perfect righteousness of Him Who is our Representative before the throne. We thank Thee that it is written, If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

We thank Thee that if we come we may be sure of a divine welcome. We bless Thee because we know Thou art ready always to hear the cry of the needy. We before Thee in this house of prayer this evening are a company of men and women, we doubt not, sorely tried, beset on every hand with temptations, helpless in the face of all our difficulties. We come to cast ourselves upon Thee, and to pray that as Thou dost care for the deficit of the past, and for all the incompleteness and deficiencies of life, making them up to us in Christ, so may we be assured this evening of Thy favour and of Thy promised presence even to the end of the road.

We pray this evening for many in institutions and in sick-rooms who will hear this service. We thank Thee for the privilege of thus ministering to multitudes whom we have never seen. We thank Thee for Thy blessing upon the testimony of Thy word by radio, for souls thus converted to God, for some brought back into fellowship with Thee, for many a weary and heavy-laden one who has been helped along his pilgrim journey. Bless all such this evening. May the presence of the Lord be realized by every one of them.

We especially pray for the aged, for those whose day is nearly done, who are far down the western slope, who are awaiting Thy call to come up higher. We beseech Thee to fulfil to them Thy promise that at eventime it shall be light. May the joy of the Lord in these closing years be their constant possession.

Be mindful, we pray Thee this evening, of any who know not Christ, of any within these walls or who hear by radio. Oh that the Spirit of God may convict men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, that they may be brought to repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Give us Thy help in the exposition of Thy truth. We thank Thee for Thy Holy Book; we praise Thee for this inspired and infallible record which Thou hast given to us of Thy Son. May its principles and precepts, as well as its promises, come to our hearts and consciences this evening with divine authority, leading us in the paths of righteousness for Thy name's sake. Bless us every one, since we offer our evening prayer in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

I shall direct your attention to a part of the record of the temptation of Christ, and shall continue the study of this subject for three or four Sundays, not binding myself to successive Sundays, but leaving myself free to turn aside to another subject before the series is completed,

if that should be necessary. But we shall begin this evening with the answer of our Lord to the first temptation, the third and fourth verses of the fourth chapter of Matthew: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

In this place we accept the teaching of the Word of God, that there is a wide difference between man in his natural state, and man as quickened into newness of life by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. We do not believe that men are "changed" by any sort of psychological process, but that they are changed, made new creatures, by the regenerating power of God—and all on the ground of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. Jesus Christ came into the world to work out a righteousness for us which should be a substitute for our own unrighteousness, to live a perfect life which should become a substitute for our imperfection. We believe here—and I want that to be clearly understood at the outset—in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We know no other way of salvation. But we are to remember that our Lord Jesus is also our Example, and as believers we are to study Him that we may learn what manner of men we ought to be; and how life may, and ought to be, lived in the power of the Holy Ghost.

So this evening we turn to Him as to our great Representative, our Federal Head, our great Example and Exemplar, Who exemplified in His own life the principles of righteousness, that by our study of Him we may learn what manner of men we ought to be. It is said of Him that He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin".

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." So spake the apostle Paul. But he did not know that the childish things were "childish" until he became a man. One cannot make a man of a child. The child must grow, and learn as it grows; and not until he comes to man's estate will he fully apprehend the difference between the speech and understanding and thought of the man whom experience has matured, and the speech and understanding and thought of an inexperienced child. The man of experience is like a mountaineer who, from his lofty eminence, is able to see that the path that is uphill, and winds about the mountain's breast, leads at last to the upland meadows where the sun is shining; the inexperienced is the child of the lowlands who sees above him only the boulder-bestrewn path winding round the hill, and the clouds which obscure the clear shining of the sun. He cannot have the wider prospect without the experience of the upward climb.

Have you observed how much of the Bible has come to us through human lives and lips of large and varied experience? What wonder that God did not choose a youth for the task which He gave to Moses. It was when Moses "was come to years" that he made choice of Jehovah's service; it was "when Moses was grown" that he saw his brethren's burdens; and it was "when he was full forty years old" that he rashly attempted the deliverance of a wronged Israelite by slaying an Egyptian, "for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not."

Then he fled into the land of Midian, and it was "when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush". But it was not until other forty years were added that he uttered this summary of the essentials of human life, which the Saviour quotes as the expression of highest wisdom: "Thou shalt remember", said Moses, "all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

The teacher was given eighty years of preparation, and his pupils forty years in which to learn the lesson of the text. But a young man, fresh from college, after a four or five years' course, boasts of a thorough equipment for the preaching of the gospel! Ah, we do not know very much, do we? One hundred and twenty years of preparation in the school of experience! What an education that was!

But these golden words of wisdom were not yet ready for use as the King's coin to purchase for men the best in the storehouse of God. Moses had had the widest experience of all phases of human life which a mortal could have. But he knew nothing of life beyond the stars. Jesus Christ did: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" He came down from heaven to bring into the deepest human experiences His own perfect knowledge of the largest, and fullest, and richest, possibilities of life. And He takes this gold, dug from the mine of the then deepest experience of human need, and stamps it in the mint of His own still deeper, and wider, and higher, and fuller, knowledge of life, with the King's image and superscription, as a coin representative of the sum of the irreducible minimum of that which is essential to a man's true life—not bread alone, but the word of God; not the material only, but the spiritual; not simply the temporal, but the eternal; not earth, but heaven as well.

And so I say to you that this conception of human need *must have place in the germinal deeps of the soul*; it must be borne as a *shield in the place of toil and of trial*; and we must use it as a *standard in life's resting-places where the values of life are appraised*.

I.

I remark then that this conception of human NEED MUST HAVE A PLACE IN THE GERMINAL DEEPS AND SILENCES OF THE SOUL.

Our to-days are the children of our yesterdays. Our Saturdays are the lineal descendants of our Sundays.

January will have something to do with determining the character of December: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." *Every soul has its germinal deeps where actions are conceived in thought.* True, we have the highest authority for believing that there are natures which have in them "no deepness of earth" in which spiritual exotics may root themselves; but even there there is no lack of rootage for evil things. Human jurists draw fine distinctions between that which is *premeditate* and that which is *premeditated*, but ever with the recognition that actions are not spontaneously generated, but spring from the seed of somebody's sowing. But "the God of knowledge by whom actions are weighed" knoweth full well that the whirlwind is reaped only by those who have sown the wind; and that even those actions which, like mushrooms, spring suddenly to light, like mushrooms have their mycelium, their roots, in darkness; and are bred from the decay of higher organisms; that the sudden and apparently unpremeditated act is born of some earlier sowing of good or evil seed. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Only God can estimate the potentialities of the soul. The soil of the soul is deep, and only as it is deeply cultivated can the character be rich in spiritual graces.

And every soul has *its periods of solitude and silence*—they may be but the briefest parentheses in a busy life, but they are there; times when, as the weary ploughman plods his way alone, the soul is alone and the seed-thought is dropped which will spring up by and by. We have all excused ourselves by saying, "I did not think." But we did think, if not at the time, then at an earlier time. Some seed is long in growing, and thoughts which have long been buried may spring forth and bud. That which we attribute to the impulse of the moment is a message flashed along wires long ago strung for its carrying; a runaway engine rushing like a thunder bolt—but over tracks before laid down; a torrent like a flood from a broken dam, yes, but pouring through channels, which, as Byron has it, are "the furrows of long thought" prepared for its passage.

But why have I said this? Only to make clear to you that no Jericho can be made healthily habitable until the salt is cast into the spring of its waters; that this truth of the text can never sanctify our tongues, or hands, or feet, until it sanctifies our hearts; that it must be planted in the germinal deeps of the soul, and pondered in its wilderness silences, if ever it is to make the wilderness and solitary place glad, or the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Whatever the noise and tumult about the gates, back there, back—back—back in the citadel of the soul—how thick the walls, how involved the plan of its chambers!—but far from the confusion without there is the secret counsel-chamber of the soul, from whose deliberations proceed the orders by which armed warriors issue from the gates to fight for good or evil. And when in that counsel-chamber, memory, imagination, reason, judgment, conscience, and will, confer, this truth of the text must preside and be heard and its judgment followed if the issues of life are to be pure, and sweet, and Christly.

So I put this case to you this evening, to you who are within these walls, and to you who hear me by radio: there are the garish lights of the streets, the noise of the traffic, the jostling of the crowd, the shouting of the surging multitudes who think it is all of life to "get on". And there are the allurements of the showy windows, the pomp of the parades, and all the gilt and glitter of what is called

success. There are the clamorous crowds, the strenuous struggling mass who think, and plan, and toil, and strive, and combine; and steal—or starve—for bread alone,—for the things which are material, for the things of sense, the things of earth, the things which are seen and are temporal. Is that picture to have the place of honour as a source of inspiration in the gallery of the soul?

Or there is the upland life, the green pastures, the waters of quietness, and the paths of righteousness. There are the open spaces where the whirl of wheels and the din of hammers do not obtrude, where there is no smoke to cover the heavens when the stars come out! And there—

“Hark, hark, my soul! angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore:
How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling
Of that new life when sin shall be no more!
Angels of Jesus, angels of light,
Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night!”

And from that place of privilege, of the white robes, and the angel-ministries, and divine companionship, the roads of ministry lead down to the street, to the office and the counting-house, to the place of traffic and of trade—and all are paths of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Whether of these twain shall be the objective of life will be determined by the place we give to the truth of the text in the deeps and silences of the soul. We shall be strong, and pure, and true, in the city only if we stay our minds on this truth in the wilderness, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

II.

But let us proceed a step farther. Of him that “dwell-eth in the secret place of the most High” the psalmist says, “His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.” Therefore I would remark further that this conception of human need involved in the text **MUST BE BORNE AS A SHIELD IN THE PLACE OF LABOUR AND TRIAL.**

The conscious possession of power constitutes a danger in itself. The tragic tale of the prodigal's descent to the swine-troughs was due to his misuse of his “portion of goods”. And we all have our “portion of goods”, a certain power which we may wield for good or ill.

In the presence of need we have power to make bread, not miraculous power perhaps, but power, no less real, to turn stones into bread. Whether a man digs in the ditch, or lays plans for a thousand other men to dig for him, each in his own measure knows that he can make bread. We know that we can get something out of life's estate; we can compel the stones beneath our feet, upon which we walk to our daily task, to yield us something of their treasure. There are thousands of young men and women in the colleges and universities of this city and elsewhere; there are tens of thousands of others engaged in offices, and shops, and factories. Of this great army I trust many have caught a glimpse of the City which has no cemetery and no hospital, and are not disobedient to the heavenly vision. But of this great host who toil with body and brain perhaps the majority are engaged in the work of making “bread alone”. That is the too common object of the student, and of the worker in office and shop, of the business and professional man, to discover the most economical way of making stones into bread. There

is not one of us but is aware that he has some little power to succeed.

But look at this picture of the God-man Who came to be the Saviour and Example of men who labour and are heavy laden, and see how His experience further parallels ours.

We are aware, I say, as He was, of the possession of power to make the bread we need; aware, too, as He, that that power *may be exercised in contravention of the higher laws of the spiritual realm.* There is not one of us but knows that the natural can be made to declare war upon the spiritual in the mere business of making bread. It is the old, old story. We can listen to the voice, if we will. We can listen, and heed the whisper out of the darkness that bids us eat forbidden things. We have it in us—say what you will of Genesis, we have it in us to repeat the history,

“Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe.”

Nor is that ancient history. It is the record of every industrial and commercial concern in this city, and of every toiler therein: you have the power to make bread, and you have the power to make it in the wrong way—and perhaps to make it in larger quantities in the wrong way than in the right way. You have power to mar the sweetness of the bread by the size of the loaf, to lower the quality by increasing the quantity.

You know what I mean? You call it the power of concentration, of organization, of business efficiency. It were more correctly termed the power of segmentation, the power to divide, to disintegrate, to put asunder that which God has joined. We all have that awful power: power to shut out the sun at noonday and burn candles, to imprison ourselves in one room of the house God has given us, and call it liberty, to fill our vaults with gold and starve millions. We have the power to make our lives segmentary instead of spherical, broken and incomplete, instead of whole. You can, if you will, banquet the body and starve the soul; you can write a big balance in your books at the bank, and at the same time a deficit enough to make “the cheek of darkness pale”, in the books which the angels keep; you can so live as to pass among men as rich and increased in goods, having need of nothing; while, before God, you are but poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.

We have power to spend our time in making “bread alone”. I speak to Christian men and women. Not willingly would we break the law of the spiritual realm. We are in more danger of injuring conscience by neglect of its warnings, than by deliberate and wilful attack upon its judgments. Napoleon was accustomed to eat so rapidly that his marshals, when commanded to dine with him, learned the need of dining privately before hand; for they found it impossible to satisfy their hunger in the time occupied by the Emperor. The passion for “bread alone” is a Napoleon which leaves the spirit no time for refreshment. We are in danger of starving the soul into impotence, for without being aware of the least offence against the highest standards of business integrity, a man may allow “bread alone” to monopolize his life. You see it in the man who has always energy enough for a full business day; and only strength enough to work half a day for God; who is afraid of the night air on a Sunday

or the evening of the prayer-meeting, but to whom the hour of eleven at night at the theatre or a concert is as healthy as the hour of noon; who has time for the newspapers and magazines, and all other books, but no time for the Bible.

In all this I have named some of the places of labour, some of the spheres of conflict; and my point is that in these places the truth of the text must be our shield and buckler: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

I urge upon you, therefore, the wisdom of bearing this shield in the morning. Believe it as the enunciation of the highest law of our complex natures. I will tell you something better than sitting down with a pad and pencil for an hour's quiet. Open the Word of God. Let the great principles of this holy law be heard for the regulation of your life. Wear this principle as a shield of faith wherewith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, when the battle is joined on the issue of the proportion of time to be allotted to breakfast and to prayer. Let it be the motto of the school-room, and of every place where young men and women build castles. See that you build your castles, like that of Daniel, the prime minister of the Medo-Persian Empire, with a window that will open toward Jerusalem. Let it be engraved upon the keystone of the arch of the main entrance to the castle as the principle which holds it all together, "Not by bread alone, but by the word of God." Take it with you to the office as of greater worth than Bradstreets—write it on your ledger, on your bankbook, on your printed instructions for manager, salesman, and office boy.

Make it the arbitrator between the demands of business, pleasure, and religion; wear it as signet upon your finger that it may suffice for the signature of your hand; bind it as sandals upon your feet as "a preparation of the gospel of peace"; fasten it as a frontlet between your eyes, and as a talisman about your neck, as the highest law of life for you, "not bread alone", but "the word of God"; not the body only, but the spirit; not earth only, but heaven; not time merely, but eternity; not mammon, but God.

Only thus can we really live, and live luxuriously. We may exist temporally on "bread alone", and on that which it represents. But we really live as we hold loosely to the things which are beautiful only in their time, that so, when the Babel voices of the world are hushed in the heart where God hath set eternity, the chimes of the city where they hunger no more shall ring the hope of immortality, and herald the day when the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead us unto fountains of living waters, and, as the choir sang a few moments ago, God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

III.

I had one other thing I wished to say, which I shall condense into a few sentences. The principle of my text must be used as a STANDARD IN LIFE'S RESTING PLACES WHERE THE VALUES OF LIFE ARE APPRAISED.

In every race there are many more runners who begin than the number of those who finish the course; and the Christian race is no exception: "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?" may be said of too many always. Why do the runners drop out of the race? Very often because they fear they have lost the chance of the prize. We all need something to hearten us on the way. It is not easy to be a Christian. It will be easier if we can always assure ourselves that it is worth while. When the king-

doms of this world flash their glory upon us we shall be in grave danger if we have not learned this lesson by heart.

I have seen a man pushing a handcart up a hill, and when halfway up I have seen him turn the cart across the road and rest upon the handles as he surveyed the road he had traversed, and that which remained to be covered. We all come to such resting places. We cannot be pushing the cart all the time. We must stop and take account of the journey and of our fellow-pedestrians who toil up the hillside. But we may see some other than pedestrians. Like a certain wise man, we may see "servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth", and be disposed to say that this also is vanity. Our continuance in our course will depend upon our estimates of what we see when resting on the handle of our wheelbarrow. That is not a very poetical figure, but perhaps you will remember it the better for its homeliness.

And in that time of reckoning let this principle be the rule of judgment. Remember it when you attempt the appraisal of human effort, and progress, and so-called "success". The temporal and material will lose their supremacy by this test. We shall be as little attracted by the worldling's show of success as by the course of the many-hued moth that circles round the flame. By this test the pre-eminence of the spiritual will be assured. We shall understand the Lord Jesus, and in Him all things will find their true perspective and value. We shall see that the world of the material and temporal was made like the streets of gold, for man to put under his feet: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Oh that we may know the meaning of life, why we came into the world, why we are permitted to remain, what life's true function is while here on earth we stay. With that understanding of life, we shall be saved from the delusion that life can ever—or that success in life can ever—consist in bread alone. With that Light shining upon the way, with such footprints up the hillside, we can go on walking while the servants ride, and be well content. And when the evening falls about us, after the long day of storm and stress, we shall be able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

What are you living for? Bread alone? Or the word of God? Have you learned how to begin with God? I am always fearful lest when I have tried to show you somewhat of the attractiveness of the many mansions, of the luxuries of life in Christ Jesus, I may have failed clearly to point out the door which leads to them. This is of no value to us if we have no place to begin. I think I have said before that many sermons remind me of a non-stop train, luxuriously furnished, and bound, it is said, for heaven—but it does not stop for poor sinners to get on. What is it good for?

We were born in sin, and by nature, the uppermost in us is that which asks for bread alone, and that has no taste for the word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

God. I tell you the old, old story with which we began this service, the old, old story of Jesus and His love. We have all fallen immeasurably short of this divine standard of life, and, falling short of it, have come under the condemnation of that holy law of which it is the expression. There is no way by which the past may be corrected, the deficits of life made up, the books balanced, and our souls made right with God, but through the absolutely complete and infinitely meritorious life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you trust Him? Will you trust Him? Will you begin with Him to-night? Will you say to Him,—

“Nay; but I yield, I yield,
I can hold out no more;
I sink, by dying love compelled
To own Thee Conqueror.”

Let us pray:

We thank Thee, O Lord, for all that Thou hast revealed of Thyself to us in Christ Jesus Thy Son. How different life appears when the light of Heaven shines upon it! How all of life, in retrospect, in its present possession, or in prospect, even to the end of the earthly road and into the world beyond—how all of life is changed when once the eyes of the soul are open to behold the Lamb of God! Help us thus to believe in Him to-night, to trust Him with all our hearts. Bless our radio hearers. Many doubtless have not offended in the grosser sense. They are religious, but they are not spiritual. They are church members in many instances, but they are not partakers of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. They are eminently respectable, men and women of unblemished character and reputation, and yet in their heart of hearts many know that they have been living for bread alone, for the things of earth, for the things of time and sense. They are blind, and cannot see the things that are afar off. O Spirit of God, come to every one such this evening! Lead us in the way of life, we pray Thee. Show us the path of life, for in Thy presence is fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

THE TREES SEEKING A KING.

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, January 5th, 1933.

Ninth in a Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on Biblical Theology (the sixth on the book of Judges) which is included in the Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: Judges, chapters 8:22 and 9.

Our lesson this evening once again is in the book of Judges, part of the eighth and the ninth chapter. I should like to give a little fuller attention to these chapters because of their very great practical value. This Book, like a mirror, accurately reflects that which is put before it. As you look into the Bible—and the more you look into the Bible—the more you will be impressed with its accuracy, you will find it true in every particular to human life.

We read of these biblical characters and feel that we have met them. The Bible is the best text-book on psychology that ever was written. If you would know how men are likely to act under given circumstances, if you would know what is in man, and what principles will govern his relationship to those about him, study the Bible.

We have had before us the record of Gideon, with his splendid and unselfish service rendered to his people Israel. After they were delivered, while the victory was still fresh, they came to him and said, “Rule over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son also.” They wanted to establish a dynasty of which Gideon was to be the first representative, and his sons were to be heirs to his sovereignty. But Gideon refused the crown, and said, “The Lord shall rule over you.”

You must expect to have Gideon’s experience. The people’s enthusiastic appreciation of his service, voiced at the first blush, soon died down. Men who have fought valiantly, like

Gideon, have refused to turn it to their own profit almost invariably. Men like Wesley, Spurgeon, Moody, Mueller, Conwell, and thousands of others. God gave them great powers, but like Gideon they said, “God shall rule over you; I will not.”

I do trust that you young men will resolve as you enter upon your ministry that you will try to be God’s men, and try to serve unselfishly, and be willing to do a thousand things for which you will receive no reward save the consciousness that you have pleased God.

“And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.” The Lord and Gideon were linked together, and as they treated the Lord so did they treat Gideon and his household.

I warn you of one principle. If you are going to be pastors and ministers your business will be “not to be ministered unto, but to minister”. That is what we are in the world for, to minister, to serve, other people—whether other people serve us or not; and to serve other people whether they reward us or not. I forewarn you that the greatest unkindness you will ever receive from anybody you will receive from the hand of those for whom you have done the most. You must be careful not to allow any kind of bitterness to enter into your soul, for that would ruin you.

This is a personal story, but it illustrates the principle. Years ago I went to a certain town to assist a pastor in evangelistic services. He met me at the station, and told me that he had a very difficult situation in his church. “In fact”, said he, “I have my resignation written. All that I have to do is to put on the date, and it is ready any minute. I do not know how long I can endure it.” He had been in the church about ten years, but it would have been very inconvenient for him to leave at that particular time. His children were in attendance at high school, and he did not want to transfer them to some other school. Then, of course, above all, on the ground of his work which he loved, he did not want to leave.

I need not give you the details of the mission, but the Lord blessed us. A large number of people were converted; some of the difficult people came back into fellowship with the Lord; and some who would not, left the church. The services of that mission cleared the air and this brother continued in the pastorate of that church for another three years. His children finished their high school career, one went on to university, and another came to the Toronto Conservatory of Music to study.

Some years after that this same minister, having moved to another church, wrote me a letter, and said, “I wish you could come and help me.” In the meantime his daughter had come into the membership of this church. When she graduated from the Conservatory she came to say good-bye. I asked her why she was leaving town, and she said she was going home to teach music. “But why do you not teach in Toronto?” “Do you think I could get a class here?” “Certainly, you can. We will help you.” We got her a class, and in a very little while she had a large constituency. Long before I presumed to drive a motor-car, she had one; and seemed to be quite prosperous. She had so many pupils she could scarcely keep up with her work.

Well, her father wrote me that he was in trouble. I was Vice-Chairman of the Home Mission Board, and was commissioned by the Board to go and settle the difficulty. A very happy settlement was effected, and I came home. I arrived by a morning train, and when I went into my study it looked like a conservatory. There were flowers on the bookcase, on my desk, on the table—flowers everywhere. I said to my wife, “What fairy has been here?” “Miss So-and-So came to me last night and said she was so grateful for what you had done for her father that she asked permission to put some flowers in your study.” And I enjoyed those flowers until, like all other flowers, they withered away.

Then her father resigned his pastorate and came to live in Toronto, having his family about him. One son, now a graduate of the university, was established in business; one daughter was in business, and the other a teacher of music. All but the son lived at home, and all were members of Jarvis Street Church. At that time we were conducting Parliament Street Mission, and we used this good brother

down there as occasional supply. But he was not the man to carry on the work. I would gladly have recommended his appointment, but the workers there were opposed to his permanent appointment and so informed me. But because I did not recommend his appointment over the heads of all the workers at the mission the entire family became my enemies; and when we had that great meeting in nineteen twenty-one, which Brother Greenway and Brother Hyde and others here will remember, right over in that corner there stood the minister to whom I have referred, his wife, his two daughters, and his son, voting for the termination of my pastorate in this church,—though I had saved his life again and again.

That did not hurt me. I knew very well that they could do me no harm. But you will have many experiences like that. Gideon had them. Every man has them. A little while ago when trouble was brewing in India, and the matter was under discussion, Sir William Mulock said something to this effect, "England is about due for trouble in India." "Why?" said the interviewer. "Because there is a peculiar trend in human nature which leads it sooner or later to turn against those who do the most for it. Everything in India that is good came through England, and it is perfectly natural that India should turn against the one who has helped her."

Remember it is written, "For my love they are my adversaries." After you have loved people, and served them, you will understand what the wise man meant when he said, "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." I promise you as young ministers that before you get to the end of the road you will have a good many broken teeth, and that your feet will often be out of joint. Be forewarned, and be happy about it. Remember whenever you are troubled like that what is said in the Word, "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Get your minds off people. Shun the practice of "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." Look not at Gideon, but at a Greater than Gideon, Who, though He died for our sake, has received such cruel treatment at our hands.

Then one of Gideon's sons, the least of them, the son of his maid—Gideon had no less than seventy sons. That was a real family, was it not? That was a small army—"Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also I am your bone and your flesh." He began at Shechem, the house of his mother's brethren.

Many people begin at Shechem. If they want to do something they begin with a nucleus of people who are likely to say, Yes, when it is expected of them. And when they have Shechem on their side they go out and try to find somebody else. "Do you not think I look rather a kingly man? Do you not think I have a good head to wear a crown?" Thus, in effect, spake Abimelech. And the people said, "We must have somebody, and perhaps you would do as well as anybody else." If people would give half the consideration to the selection of their rulers, that some men give to the choice of their cigars, we should have an ideal world. Abimelech proceeded to slay all his brethren. He slew all the sons of Jerubbaal save the youngest only, and made himself king.

But when anybody does the work of Abimelech, you do not need to punish him. Do not worry about that. You have received rather strange treatment from professing Christians? Leave them to the Lord. He will look after them; sooner or later Abimelech will find there is a rod in pickle for him. He will discover there is a law in life to the effect that "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again". The man who does wrong to another, does far more wrong to his own soul than to that of the other. Sin is always first a sin against God, and then a sin against our own souls.

Jotham then went up to the top of mount Gerizim, and addressed the people in a parable. The Bible is full of parabolic teaching; and one of the most interesting and instructive of the parables of the old Testament is the parable of Jotham, found in the ninth chapter of Judges, from the eighth verse to the fifteenth:

"The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my

fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

There is often a great difference between a man's estimate of himself, what other people think of him, and his real worth. The centurion said of himself, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." The elders said of him, "He loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." But Jesus said, and His is always the true estimate, "I have not found so great a faith, no, not in Israel."

Gideon was a quiet, unassuming man who entertained a very humble opinion of himself: "My family", said he, "is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Popular estimate accorded him a position scarcely higher than his own humble judgment of himself. But the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him as he threshed wheat by the winepress, and said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." And this man, the least in his father's house, was one of God's chosen mighty ones, whose record gives proof of that which is written, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

The story of how God, by the hand of Gideon and his three hundred, delivered Israel from the combined strength of Amalek and Midian, and all the children of the East, is familiar to every student of the Word. Following his great victory the men of Israel said unto Gideon, "Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you."

After Gideon's death Israel returned to their idolatry again, and "remembered not the Lord their God . . . neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel;" but very soon Abimelech, a son of Gideon, conspired with the men of Shechem, and he went to his father's house, and slew his brethren, the sons of Jerubbaal—seventy persons, upon one stone. And Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, only was left.

The city of Samaria lay in the valley between mount Gerizim and mount Ebal, from which, respectively, the blessing and the curse were pronounced when the people entered into the land. And Jotham, when he had heard all that Abimelech had done—how he had slain his brethren, and made himself king—stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice and preached to the people in the parable we have quoted.

The old question as to who shall be king is one that frequently recurs in all realms of life. We have not yet got beyond asking, "Who shall be greatest?" A vacant throne, or a vacant office, will always prove a temptation to some one. Indeed, though the throne be already occupied by a worthy ruler, there will never be wanting a potential usurper in the neighbourhood. And if the request preferred by the parliament of trees, "Rule thou over us" is still made, it is not because of a dearth of candidates for positions of honour; but only because of a lack of persons who are qualified to fill them. Jotham's parable, therefore, may still warn us to be on our guard. He represents that a crown went begging because there were some who had such a humble opinion of themselves that they considered themselves unworthy to wear it.

The reply of the olive tree to the invitation to reign is full of instruction: "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" The fatness of the olive in the oil of olives was used in the anointing of the priests when they were consecrated to the service of God; and was typical of the anointing by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, which our Lord Jesus received, and which qualified Him for His mediatorial work. We shall not unduly strain Jotham's parable if we regard the olive as saying, "I would rather have a share in

bringing about the exaltation of God's anointed than go to be promoted over the trees. It were far better to honour God than to be honoured one's self."

Do we not all need to learn that lesson? There is no employment so holy, neither is there any that will so certainly contribute to our own wellbeing at last, as that which has for its supreme end the glory of God. We may well choose to be olives, endeavouring to bear fruit by which our Lord shall be honoured. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit", said Christ.

The fatness of the olive was used also to give honour to men. Even the anointing oil, while it honoured God, conferred certain honours upon those whom it set apart to the holy office of the priesthood. It was with this oil the kings also were anointed—Saul, and David, and others. Thus the olive preferred to give honour to others, than to be honoured itself. That is a noble example, difficult to emulate. What heavenly comfort the lower seat provides for those who voluntarily take it! The happiest place this side of heaven is the place that is left when we have given another the higher place which we might have had ourselves. What luxuries are wrapped up in the quality of unselfishness! If we knew the joy of Him Who would not save Himself because He was determined to save others, there would be a holy rivalry among us to secure the lowest place; and only with the greatest difficulty could we be persuaded to leave our fatness wherewith both God and man are honoured, to go to be promoted over the trees.

Olive oil was used also for light. "Pure oil olive beaten" the people were commanded to bring for light. Thus the olive would rather be a light than a legislator. For mortals there is something better than sovereignty, and that is service. A believer, who is made of true gold, would rather be fashioned into a candlestick than into a crown: he would rather be a candle upon a candlestick, giving light to all that are in the house, than a king upon the throne. He would rather be an oil-producing olive, than, having great power, spread himself like a green bay tree.

Let us hear the fig tree's reply: "Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?" Thus the fig tree tells us that it is better to sweeten the world than to rule it. Sin has made life bitter enough for the best of us, and it must ever be a pity for any one to forsake his sweetness. Yet there have been those who, like Saul, when in humble walks of life have done much to sweeten the lives of others but who, when promoted over the trees, have made David and his Adullamites every one "bitter of soul". The men of Jericho said to Elisha, "Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth, but the water is naught and the ground barren." There are many lives like that which are in some respects pleasantly situated, but which are spoiled by some bitter spring—perhaps by a cynicism that is born of many disappointments. If only we are willing to forego promotion over the trees, we may hold to the quality of sweetness and play Elisha's part in sweetening the springs of other lives.

Naomi means pleasant; and when she returned from Moab to Bethlehem, the people said, "Is this Naomi?" And she answered, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." But if you read the story you will find that no one ever called Naomi "Mara", nor did she ever request it again. On the contrary, the story tells us, "So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest." Naomi never called God "the Almighty" again; for it was not long until she learned to say, "Blessed be the Lord!" And it was Ruth, whose name means friendship, who extracted the bitterness from her life, and by the sweetness of her faithful friendship gave Mara back her rightful name, Naomi.

There are many who call God "the Almighty". They know He is that, for they have felt, as they think, the ungentle touch of His hand; and they are disposed to call themselves Mara, only because they do not know God. Perhaps we can be a Ruth to some Naomi. It may be it is in our power

"To heal the wounded heart so sorely bleeding
And teach mayhap those widowed hearts to sing."

Those who are willing to forego promotion may make faith in human friendship possible to those who have met more Judases than Johns; and to those who murmur at the bitter waters in the wilderness, they may under God be the branch

that shall make the waters sweet: for life is far more in need of sweetness than of rulership.

But the fig tree had more than sweetness to lose: "Shall I forsake my good fruit?" We need the strength of sustenance. There can be no sweetness indeed without good fruit. Therefore, the fig tree chose the better part, to be a caterer rather than a king; for we all remember One Who, being hungry, came to a fig tree for good fruit but found "nothing but leaves". It is better to minister to the Lord than to wear an earthly crown.

But what was the vine's reply? "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" We cannot help remembering that Jesus said, "I am the true vine"; nor that He Who thought it not an usurpation to be equal with God, Who had the right to the throne and the crown, yet made Himself of no reputation; and this He did in order that He might minister, may we reverently say, to the heart of God, and bring salvation to men.

What is the wine which comes from the fruit of the true Vine? What is the very essence, the life-sap of the true Vine? Surely there is but one answer: "God is love". And we can minister to the Lord only by loving Him, and equally, love is the only wine that really maketh glad the heart of man. Love is at once the greatest and the scarcest thing in the world. In the Holy Spirit's analysis of love, we may hear the olive, the fig tree, and the vine, all speaking: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own." Hence love is better than lordship. If any of us find ourselves desiring promotion over others, let us try the experiment of loving them instead. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown", but happy, happy is the heart of him who loves.

Hear now what the bramble has to say. The bramble needs no persuasion, but readily consents to become a king: "Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." There are some heads that are always waiting for crowns, some hands always grasping for a sceptre. Such people unfortunately get into the church. Their conception of the church is not that it is an olive yard to produce oil for Christ's anointing; nor that it is a garden of figs into which the Beloved may come and eat His pleasant fruits; nor "a vineyard of red wine" where Christ and His friends enjoy the fellowship of holy cheer; but a place for some Abimelech to be crowned, where he can prove his brotherhood by bossing.

It is worthy of note also that those who aspire to rulership are usually the least fitted for it. It is ever the bramble that says, "Yes", to the invitation to wear the crown. It is natural for the bramble to wound and scratch. Abimelech is always cruel to the sons of Jerubbaal, to the very man who in the days of Israel's extremity had proved to be their deliverer. Depend upon it, Abimelech will be far more anxious to reap the fruits of Gideon's victories than to share Gideon's peril or, use Gideon's sword. He will be much more in evidence after Amalek and Midian are put to flight than when they are threatening Israel with destruction.

It is never difficult to identify the bramble. The men and women who have the bramble spirit in them are they who wound and scratch. "The poison of asps is under their tongue." They are never heard to speak a kind word of anybody. We have all been forced into their company at some time or other, and leaving it we have felt like one who had emerged from a bramble patch, scratched and bleeding everywhere. One is never so treated by one related to the olive, the fig tree, or the vine. The bramble is not anointed to bind up the broken-hearted, or if he attempt it, he must needs tear the bandage from another broken heart and leave it bleeding. Brambles are generous only in this respect, that they say kind things of one person only in order to afford them an opportunity of saying something cruelly cutting of another. They seldom speak without making somebody bleed, and on every hand inflict wounds which many years can scarcely heal. Such people think a church is like the House of Commons—not complete without an Opposition. They conceive it to be their sole duty to find fault with all that others try to do. They are of the class to which a certain candidate for eldership in a Presbyterian church belonged, who on examination proved that his only qualification for the position was that he could object. Such people

(Continued on page 12)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 5

January 29th, 1933

FIRST QUARTER

JEPHTHAH AND HIS VOW.

Lesson Text: Judges 10 to 12.

Golden Text: "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee."—Deut. 23:21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Lev. 27:1-13.

Tuesday—Lev. 27:26-34.

Wednesday—Job 30:1-11.

Thursday—Deut. 9:1-7.

Friday—Eccles. 5:1-7.

Saturday—2 Chron. 7:8-14.

I. THE MISERY OF ISRAEL, (10:1-18).

When men depart from God they bring misery upon themselves and others. This is clearly manifested in scripture, secular history, observation, and personal experience. Sin is at the root of the present world distress, and thousands are suffering as a result of personal transgressions of the law of God. Sin never gives real joy; it may furnish fleeting pleasure, but it leaves misery in its train. The Israelites ought to have understood the consequences of sin, but, like other members of the human family, they failed to learn from previous experience. As a nation they had sinned, and suffered in the days of Deborah, Barak, Gideon, and others, yet they are found again rebelling against God in the time of Jephthah. Between Abimelech's day and his, there ruled two judges, Tola, (vs. 1, 2), and Jair, (vs. 3-5). Then Israel forsook the Lord, and turned to idolatry, (v. 6), arousing His anger against them, resulting in their oppression by enemies, (vs. 7-9). This chastisement had its effect, for the Israelites cried unto God and confessed their sin, (v. 10). It is generally the case that when people get into trouble they turn to God for help, though not always in repentance. They realize their helplessness, and are conscious of the fact that in the Lord there is help. It is too bad they do not keep in touch with Him always, and realize constantly His indwelling power, thus acting honourably toward Him, and not making Him merely a last resort in times of need, with the only object of being relieved. However, God is longsuffering and kind, and bids all to come to Him with the promise that He will hear their cry, if they are repentant, (John 6:27; 2 Peter 3:9). Note the comfort of this knowledge, also the necessity for conviction and confession of sin before God.

The Lord heard the cry of the Israelites, but expostulated with them concerning their sin, before relieving them, reminding them of His former deliverances,

(vs. 11, 12), of the fact that they had forsaken Him in spite of His goodness toward them, and suggesting to them to cry unto their idols and see if they would deliver them, stating He would deliver them no more, (vs. 13, 14). This led the Israelites the more earnestly to confess their sins, and throw themselves on the divine mercy, and putting away their strange gods they manifested their sincerity of purpose, and touched the heart of God, (vs. 15, 16). Note the Lord's firm, yet kind, attitude in bringing home to His people the enormity of their sin. They served idols in their time of prosperity, now let them trust to such gods for help in their hour of trouble. If that upon which we trust fails us in our times of trouble, it then gives proof of its inherent weakness, and is not worthy of trust at any time. And God is the only One Who never fails us, (Heb. 13:5). Note the wisdom of God herein manifest, and His omniscience, and tenderness of heart, also the submissive and humble attitude of Israel. Salvation and revival come in this way, (2 Cor. 7:10; 2 Chron. 7:14).

II. THE VOW OF JEPHTHAH, (11:1-40).

The man chosen to lead Israel against her enemies was Jephthah. Respecting him certain things are stated. First, particulars are given concerning his tribal connection, his parentage, his exile from home, and his followers, (vs. 1-3). He was unfortunate in his birth, being born of a concubine, and his brothers on this account, and possibly through ill-will in addition to this, treated him in a nasty manner, leading to his exile from home. During this time of exile he gathered followers around him, and gained some reputation for leadership. To such an extent was his ability known that when the Ammonites invaded Israel the elders of Gilead requested him to be their leader, (v. 6). Before complying, Jephthah reminded them of the treatment he had previously received at their hands, (v. 7), and sought assurance from them that if he should consent to act, he would be their head, (v. 9). He desired to be sure of the sincerity of their intentions, and of the treatment which they intended to give them. Being certain of their attitude by their statement, (v. 10), the same being ratified by the people at Mizpeh, (v. 11), he assumed the leadership of the army of Israel. Note the divine and human aspects of Israel's deliverance, also the magnanimity, patriotism, and wisdom, of Jephthah.

After assuming command of the forces of Israel Jephthah entered into negotiations with the enemy, with the endeavour possibly of avoiding bloodshed. He sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites to enquire as to the reason for their incursion into the land of Israel, (v. 12), receiving the answer that they had come to recover the land, (v. 13), he sent the reply that the land was not theirs, it had been in the possession of the Amorites, but the Lord had dispossessed them, and given the land to the Israelites, just as, in accordance with their belief, their god had given them their land, (vs. 14-27). This explanation proved the Ammonites to be in the wrong in their aggression, but the king of Ammon hearkened not thereto, (v. 28). "Then the Spirit of the

Lord came upon Jephthah", and "he passed over unto the children of Ammon", (v. 29), and engaged them in battle. Before opening hostilities he "vowed a vow unto the Lord", promising that if he should be granted the victory over his enemies he would offer unto the Lord that which came forth from his house to meet him on his return, (vs. 30, 31). Gaining the victory, he returned home, and was met by his daughter who came out to meet him, (vs. 32-34). She was his only child, and he was greatly distressed when he realized the consequences of his vow, (v. 35). His daughter consented to the fulfilment of the vow, and the same was carried out, (vs. 36-40).

Concerning this vow, several things may be observed. First, it was a vow made entirely on the responsibility of Jephthah. He was not commanded by God to make it, nor need we think the Lord expected it. It was made of Jephthah's own free will. It was made with the purpose of showing appreciation to God for the victory gained by divine aid. In this light it is not without the bargaining spirit which promises to do something if the other will do his part. It was also unnecessary, though not unusual, regulations being given previously for governing the various kinds of vows, (Lev. 27). This vow was of a rash nature, in light of the fact that the one making the vow was not aware of that which would meet him on his return home, the vow affecting others as well as himself. Having made it, however, he felt the obligation to carry it out. And in its fulfilment the daughter of Jephthah was set aside unto the Lord in perpetual virginity, (vs. 37, 39, 40). This was more probably the case rather than that of human sacrifice, although should the latter be the case it would in no way commend human sacrifice, as the vow is not stated to be divinely sanctioned. Note the necessity for carefulness in making vows, and promises of all kinds, (Eccles. 5:2).

III. THE QUARREL WITH EPHRAIM, (12:1-13).

The men of Ephraim are recorded as again manifesting their quarrelsome and jealous disposition. They had chided with Gideon, (8:1), and now they complain that they had been passed over in the fight with the Ammonites, and threaten to burn Jephthah's house upon him with fire, (v. 1). Jephthah reminds them of the fact that he had called them, and they had not aided him. He had gained the victory without their aid, and he enquires why they had come to fight against him, (vs. 2, 3). The attitude of the Ephraimites was entirely wrong, and inexcusable. They should have fought the enemy when they had the opportunity to do so, instead of quarrelling with their friends after they had lost their opportunity. Unfortunately there are always some readier to quarrel with friends than to fight with enemies. Insult is added to complaint by the Ephraimites in their terming of Jephthah and his people as outcasts, (v. 4). A fight ensues in which Jephthah and his men are victorious, (vs. 5, 6). Note the use of term Shibboleth in its symbolical application in the present time.

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.

ENTERING INTO MISSIONARY EXPERIENCES

Saturday Afternoons

As long as we can remember, there has been a sweet savour about Saturday afternoons. It does seem as if Saturday afternoon is set aside for the doing of things just a little out of the ordinary here in the homeland, and we are not surprised to hear that the missionaries have set aside that afternoon as the one time in the week when they may have quiet. That that quiet time is often interrupted and the programme for the day rudely shattered does not discourage them for, after all, Saturday afternoon is just a little bit different from the other afternoons of the week.

A letter from Mrs. Mellish draws some comparisons for our benefit. She pictures the orderly housewives in the homeland going on a shopping tour on Saturday afternoon and buying in the provisions necessary for over Sunday, and then rather wistfully says, "Wouldn't it be nice to get dressed up and go down to Bloor Street to get our weekly fresh chop?"

When one is buried in the African bush country, we are told that there are times when the longing for some of the delicacies of the homeland, or some ordinary item of diet which is unobtainable there, becomes acute, but our missionaries never mention such things, they rather tempt us by telling of their delicious tomatoes, their luscious bananas, and their huge pineapples. We are not wholly ignorant, however, of the appeal that a good Canadian apple would make to those missionaries who are telling us of the growth of the pawpaws and their pleasure in seeing their gardens increase, for to one with the taste for fruit grown in the Northern hemisphere much of the tropical fruit is insipid and unsatisfying.

To go back to Mrs. Mellish's letter, dated November 19th, we learn that the peace and quietness of Saturday afternoons on the Gear Bah Zondo Station is something not yet attained, and though the missionary plans to stay indoors out of the hot sun's rays and attend to the pile of waiting correspondence, it is often impossible to do so.

An Anniversary Occasion

Does it seem like two whole years since we said good-bye to Rev. and Mrs. Mellish and Miss Minnie Lane? Mrs. Mellish reminds us that it was on November 22nd that they left Toronto and as the party drove away from the Seminary Building, we waved damp handkerchiefs and the years looked so lengthy. How time flies! Two brief years have passed and the missionaries write to say that they have been splendid years and that looking back on them they thank God for His wonderful care over them. "Blessings He has showered upon us," writes Mrs. Mellish, "and we are so unworthy. Only last evening we

had the joy of accepting three more candidates for baptism and church membership. These are three of our school boys and each has been under observation for a year and a half; they have been on probation for nearly a year and our church members feel they are ready. The boys are old enough to really understand as they are sixteen, seventeen and eighteen years of age and they are the first from our school. Do pray with us that many others may follow soon."

A Great Day for All

We have another version of the opening of the new church building from Mrs. Mellish and we must give it. Mrs. Mellish writes—"Last Sunday was a great day in our lives for we opened the new church. The day was grand and early in the morning the children started calling, 'Sewie Mrs.', in other words they were asking for soap to wash with. For the occasion everyone was dressed in his best, and if the people at home who so generously responded to the missionaries' pleas for clothes for the children could have seen them on this occasion they would have felt as proud of them as we did. The whistle rang and the Sunday School assembled. It was just a short session this time and then the children lined up and took their places for the church service. It was a matter of amusement that the old chief took our bench, but when the service began and from those native lips words of praise ascended, we were carried away from the trying experiences of life and revelled in the wonder of hearing voices raised in song. I was completely lost to all else as I listened to the words, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty'."

The Dedication

It must have been a beautiful picture to see the church members standing at the front of that native shelter while Mr. Mellish publicly committed the church into their hands and charged them concerning it. Then it must have been a solemn hour indeed when the words of the text were given in the Bassa tongue by Lafayette Payne—"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul"—Ezekiel 3: 18, 19, and the words were explained and driven home by this Christian native interpreter. How we pray with the missionaries that the service and all that was said and done will redound to the glory of God.

The Communion Service

After that great dedication service, the Lord's Supper was observed and there at Gear Bar Zondo blood-bought

children gathered to remember Him Whose words have rung down through the years—"This do in remembrance of me. . . . For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

The Enquirers' Class

That day when the new church at Gear Bah Zondo was opened was a day of days; a day crowned with blessings. After the communion service, a man who had confessed his faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour was received for baptism. He was a man well known to the missionaries. He had lived at one time in Zondo Bie town but had moved to Vey Bli, a town a few hours away, but the reports which come to the missionaries concerning his life are good and most encouraging. He has carried on regular services in the town where he lives and the missionaries are hopeful of having a real work established there.

The workers are endeavoring to impress upon the Christians their responsibility with regard to testifying, and they are contemplating having the church members take turns in going to the town each week for services on Sunday.

A BRAND NEW MISSIONARY

There has come to Rev. and Mrs. H. L. Davey, our missionaries on furlough from Liberia, a son who is named Neill Hague Davey, and whose advent is announced with praise to the Heavenly Father. Mother and baby are doing nicely, and it is expected that in due time Neill will accompany his father and mother and little Daniel Seypeyhen (the Bassa baby) back to Africa. He came just the day after Danny had celebrated his first birthday and his father tells us that he is a fine boy, taking an interest in things in general. It is expected that the taking of Baby Neill to Liberia will overcome much prejudice and will dissipate the prevailing superstition that any one touching the child of a dead mother would be deprived of children of their own.

As little Danny has won the hearts of many in this country and has come as a messenger from his Bassa people, we believe Neill Hague Davey will win the hearts of natives in Liberia.

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH Niagara Falls

A week or so ago, the announcement was made of the opening services of the Niagara Falls Regular Baptist Church in its new location, and now it is reported that since taking over the building, God has given blessing and encouragement. On Christmas Day, the first baptismal service was held in the new church home and at that time two men and one woman were obedient unto their Lord. At the prayer meeting service, the following week, a young woman from Buffalo publicly confessed Christ as her Saviour. A young man who has

been attending the services on Sunday evenings has been restored. He openly confessed that for twelve years he had been careless and unhappy, but that he had come back to the Lord. Since that time he has been rejoicing, taking part in the prayer meetings and helping. On Saturday night another young woman, the subject of many prayers, trusted the Saviour, and on Sunday evening two came forward expressing their desire for deeper consecration and three others came requesting baptism.

THE GUELPH WORK.

In the January 5th issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS, Dr. Shields set forth what had been accomplished at Guelph, and the needs of the work in that place. The Pastor, Mr. H. H. Chipchase, is moving to Guelph this week. We are trusting that the Lord will open the way for him to stay on the field and continue His blessing upon the cause.

Last Lord's day, the Pastor was greatly encouraged and his heart was rejoiced beyond measure when at the morning service one for whom prayer had been made, signified his acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the Sunday evening service, there were those who were under conviction and who have not surrendered as yet. At that service, however, a young lady raised her hand in response to the Pastor's invitation and it is expected that several will be ready for baptism and church membership shortly.

We are taking the liberty of quoting from a letter received from Mr. Chipchase, for this letter itself tells much of how the Lord is working through the York Road Mission.

"Dear Mr. Chipchase:

No doubt you will think perhaps at times I have seemed cold towards you and to the appeals that have been made from time to time and my prayer has been that some might answer your pleadings in Christ's name. But oh the joy to know that one who answered was my own child. Some time ago when you pled so hard for some to come forward, I said to W——— "Do you never feel that you would like to give yourself to Christ and be saved?" and she said, 'Yes', so I thought I would leave it to her, as you know how I felt about leaving our own church, but since then, I am grieved to say, they are wandering far from the word of God, and since I have listened to some of your sermons, especially the baptism of infants As you said, no one can be saved unless they of their own free will accept the gift of Jesus Christ and believe on Him, for He said, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God' and again, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God'. Sunday night I seemed too full to say much as I prayed that the Holy Spirit might guide and keep her from the evils and the temptations of the world. . . . My prayer is that W——— may abide in Christ and Christ in her, that she may be the means of bringing some soul or souls if it be God's will to use her. I have found this week, perhaps in answer to my prayer for her, that I have been blessed in the opportunities that have been given to me to cheer, and I pray it may be the means of bringing more to know my Saviour. How I love that hymn, 'I will never cease to praise Him, My Saviour, My Saviour. He's done

so much for me' I hope it will not be long before we call you our Pastor and how my heart goes out in love to you for the blessings I have received. . . . I know there are times when you feel the words you have spoken to us may have fallen on stony ground, but our Lord knows what is best and if only we are faithful we can leave all to him. . . . My prayer is that our work may increase as it has done in the past and I thank my Lord that some one has been given to us to bring our children into the Sunday School so that they may know and serve Him. Many years I have prayed for this and God in His own good time has answered my prayer. May many souls be saved."

While the above letter is a personal one to Mr. Chipchase, it is one written out of a full heart overflowing with praise. We are publishing it that we may join in prayer of intercession for the new converts and for those who have recently received the teaching concerning baptism and are contemplating obeying the Lord's command.

MEDINA (Indian) CHURCH.

The Medina Regular Baptist Church has recently held its annual business meeting and once again the church experienced the blessing of the Lord and saw His over-ruling power. Outside forces had done their best to disturb the church, secret and private meeting have been held, but the result of the meeting was most gratifying. The Pastor, Rev. Melchie Henry, was supported by his people and the officers of the church orderly elected. Continue to pray for the work on the Medina Reserve.

THE TREES SEEKING A KING.

(Continued from page 9)

are masters of the bramble trick. You have been in the woods, and when you came home you have found a long, deep scratch on your hand or face. You did not know how or when it was done. It did not hurt you at the time; but the bramble did it, and you feel it when you get home. Such is the effect of contact with bramble men and women. Their words come back to us, always with a stab. They are determined at all costs to be a king, and they have no crown for any other head unless it be a crown of thorns.

But here the bramble is associated with fire. It not only scratches, but its work is to devour the cedars of Lebanon. Bramble men and women are experts at making fires. It was bramble men who crucified the Lamb of God; and there is nothing so likely to kindle a fire, so likely to lead the faithful in Zion to exclaim, "Our holy and beautiful house is burned with fire", as the presence of the bramble spirit in the church. A useless bramble may destroy the mighty cedar in Lebanon.

In closing this lecture, it may be wise to utter a word of caution and of counsel. The attitude of the olive, the fig, and the vine, is most commendable, but it may be carried too far; and their refusal to occupy the throne may afford the bramble its opportunity. When men are specially qualified to hold office in the church, they should be careful how they refuse to take the position their brethren desire them to occupy and which God calls them to fill. We have often seen this occur in a church business meeting. A number of talented men successively decline office, and then the most incompetent person in the church is nominated in their stead. When the olive, the fig, and the vine, refuse to serve, the bramble is often elected by acclamation! Thereafter wounds, and scratches, and fires, are the inevitable result.

We should seek safety in the cultivation of Gideon's spirit who said, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." As we desire the fatness of the olive that we may honour God, and cultivate the sweetness and fruitfulness of the fig that our Beloved may

not be disappointed when He cometh seeking fruit thereon, and seek the life-cheer of the vine, we may also stand in readiness to serve at God's call. As we abide in the true Vine, and are by His abundant life made fruitful to the glory of God, we may obediently remember the words of Him Who humbled Himself and Whom God hath therefore now highly exalted and given a name that is above every name, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

BELIEVERS

(Continued from page 2)

Where shall the heart find rest but in Christ, "Who only hath immortality"? To them that believe the grave is open and empty, and beyond, life's broken pillars are completed and crowned; and all that is fractional and fragmentary, is rounded into a perfect wholeness in the glorious completeness of Christ. What magic sweetness is in the saying, "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"! Therefore nothing worthy to endure is lost. The treasures of the heart abide, and all that is true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and virtuous, and praiseworthy, find their immortality and perfection in Christ.

In the London Times there appeared on June 30th, 1915, a death notice, shot through with the light of hope: "Lance-Corp. Kenneth Seymour Boyd, A Co. the Honourable Artillery, killed in action, only son of Alexander and Charlotte Boyd, of Hull. No mourning. His last words were Psalm 23:4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

And now will you tell me that a creed is a burden, a bar to progress; that faith is a shackle upon the mind? Nay, nay, faith supplies wings to the soul by which conscience, intellect, and heart find rest in the heavenly places in Christ.

It is in every respect fitting that the disciples of Jesus should be known as "believers". "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."