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

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The Oxford Group Movement Analyzed

An Address by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, January 19th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported)

I must begin my discussion of the subject before us this evening with a brief statement respecting the motive which compels me to speak, and the object I hope to achieve.

In the first place, *a pastor is a shepherd of the sheep*. It is his duty to feed the flock of God over which he has been made overseer, and in the exercise of that duty he must lead them where green pastures may be found. But it is equally his duty to be on guard that he may protect the flock against their natural foes. The shepherds who heard the angels' announcement of the birth of Christ were found by the angels "keeping watch over their flocks by night". And that is a pastor's duty, to keep watch over his flock by night. If he is no more than a professional minister content, formally and perfunctorily, to fulfil his public duties, and to enjoy such emoluments as may belong to a respectable position, he will probably care more for himself than for his flock, and fulfil the scriptural picture of the hireling: "He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." It is therefore the true pastor's duty *to feed and protect his flock*, to teach them where they may find spiritual food and help, and in what places or principles dangers may be lurking.

In the exercise of that duty this pulpit has made many enemies. We do not complain of that fact, but rather expect it; and, while repudiating anything approaching a Pharisical attitude, we have been comforted by the Lord's saying, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

In respect to this particular matter I have received enquiries from many parts of the world. It may be known to some of you that we publish a paper weekly, THE

GOSPEL WITNESS, which circulates in about sixty different countries. The fact that we have been uncompromising and outspoken in our attitude toward some of the religious errors of the day, I suppose, would naturally lead people to expect that something would be said either for or against a movement like that which bears the name of the Oxford Group. Silence therefore in such a matter would be open to various constructions, and that of itself imposes upon me an obligation to make my position in respect to this matter perfectly clear.

I do not suppose I shall be able to secure everybody's approval of my position: I ask only that you will be charitable enough to credit me with purity of motive and sincerity of purpose.

My object in speaking upon this subject is merely that I may, so far as it is possible for a Christian teacher to do so, offer some direction to those who may look to me for some guidance upon the subject; and whether you agree with all, or any, of the positions which I shall set forth this evening, I trust I shall not effect any breach of fellowship between myself and any who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth.

I.

Having said this, I must take the next step and ask you to think with me as I endeavour to set before you CERTAIN PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS INDISPENSABLE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF OUR DISCUSSION.

Fundamental to everything is this principle: *I approach the discussion as one who believes, without any reservation, in the divine inspiration, infallibility, and supreme authority, of the Bible as being the very word of the living God.* To me, this Book is the supreme authority. My heart and conscience cannot consent to any appeal from its decisions. If there are any here this evening who do not believe the Bible to be the word of God, I have no hope of coming into agreement with them. They appeal to one court: I appeal to another. I shall not labour to

prove the authority of Scripture, for that is not my present object, but shall content myself with the bare statement of the fact, that to me the Bible is the Word of God, and that its decisions are final.

Having laid that down as the first essential, I am prepared for *the objection which some may raise in this connection*. Someone may say, "We, too, believe in the supreme authority of Scripture, though we may not, or do not, agree with your interpretation." For all such, I have the deepest respect, and recognize that all human interpretations of the Word of God are fallible, and therefore are matters for legitimate discussion and examination. Notwithstanding, I dare to say *there are certain principles that are generally recognized by Evangelicals of every name as being indispensable to saving faith*.

The first of these is an acceptance of *the essential Deity and eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ*, that He had a human mother, but no human father; and was—and is—with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, God. Jesus Christ is more than Teacher, or Friend, or Companion, or Saviour, or Master, or Lord: "From everlasting to everlasting he is God."

The second principle I name is *the expiatory nature of the death of Christ*. I insist that the Scriptures teach that the sinner may be saved only through the blood of Christ: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin." "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto

unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." "These are they which . . . have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood . . . to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

These are but a few of the passages with which the New Testament abounds in which *the blood of Christ is set forth as the procuring cause of the soul's redemption*. I hold therefore that faith in the blood of Christ, as the atoning principle in the soul's redemption, is indispensable to saving faith—and, indeed, to an understanding of the heinousness of sin itself.

Another generally recognized and indispensable element of Evangelical faith is *the principle of the new birth*. When one is saved he is not merely "changed" from without; but "if any man be in Christ Jesus there is a new creation." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Another essential to Evangelical faith is *the justification of the soul through faith in Christ*: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That doctrine was the very foundation of the Reformation, that a man is saved through faith in Christ, that "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Equally indispensable to Evangelical faith is *the truth that the new life, spiritually begotten by the power of the Holy Ghost, can be nourished only by the Word of God, and sustained and developed and guided—in a word, sanctified—by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God*. That is to say, the soul is justified, saved, made a new creature in Christ, sanctified, transformed by the renewing of his mind, and ultimately presented "without fault before the throne of God", as the result of the surrender of obedient faith to the sovereign Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not insist that babes in Christ shall know all this—simple as this outline of the gospel is. Many of the new-born know very little beyond the fact that they have committed themselves to a living Saviour. But we are not setting up a standard by which new-born babes are to be measured: *we are setting up a standard by which to determine the scripturalness of positions taken by those who claim to be leaders and teachers; and who, indeed, essay to teach those who have long been teachers themselves*. That many Christian ministers need to be taught the first principles of the gospel, and that all ministers are constantly in need of an enlargement of knowledge, and should therefore welcome the teaching of anyone and everyone who can enable them to understand Christ better,

we readily grant. We do not complain that any should endeavour to teach teachers: we are merely laying down the principle *that any who assume a spiritual knowledge and maturity which would render them competent to teach others, must be ready to be measured by standards appropriate to teachers of the Word.*

Having thus summarized what we hold to be some of the essentials of Evangelical faith upon which believers of every name have always substantially agreed, we next lay down this principle, *that a man must not be charged with uncharity who undertakes carefully to examine everything which he is asked to accept in the name of Christ.* The truth never suffers from discussion and examination. Nor does the truth ever object to such discussion and examination. Our risen Lord said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." And to the disciples on another occasion He said, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." John the apostle begins his first epistle with this extraordinary statement: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

Admonished to "Try the Spirits"

On the positive side, we go farther and point out that we are scripturally admonished to "try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Moreover, we are especially warned by our Lord Himself: "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before."

We say further that *we may not justly be charged with being unreasonably suspicious and uncharitable if we examine every religious leader's credentials in the light of Scripture.* It will not do for one to say this or that man is above suspicion. No one can be above suspicion; for the Word of God would set us on our guard against possible deceivers in these words: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." Another warning scripture is found in Peter's second epistle: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." Another such scripture is found in Paul's first epistle to Timothy: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speak-

ing lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Paul also admonished Timothy to be on guard against false teachers in these words: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

There are other scriptures to the same purport which need not now be cited.

The Apparently Miraculous Not Necessarily of God

I would remind you also that *we must not assume every movement to be of God which is accomplished by the apparently miraculous.* The religion of Christ is a supernatural religion, but it would be a mistake to assume that all supernaturalism is of God. There are supernatural and superhuman powers which are satanic, and which simulate the works of the Spirit of God. When Moses showed signs and wonders before Pharaoh, up to a certain point the magicians "also did in like manner with their enchantments." But when one of the plagues which Moses inflicted upon Pharaoh by divine decree was found to transcend their power, they said, "This is the finger of God." We must learn to distinguish between the magicians' "enchantments", and "the finger of God".

Miracles Wrought by Evil Powers

There is *in the Apocalypse a great passage to which I shall refer for the sake of the principle it enunciates.* I shall not dispute with the Futurists, or the Preserists, or with any of the numerous schools of interpretation which lie between; nor attempt an exact exposition of the passage, either chronologically or eschatologically: I cite it only for the principle involved. All schools of interpretation will admit that the dragon identified as "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world", and the beast which John saw "rise up out of the sea", and "another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon"—that these are all representative of the power of evil, inasmuch as they are in alliance with "the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world".

But this is what the Scripture says of this second beast representative of some great evil power, "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

Evil as this beast was, an ally of Satan as he is declared to be, he yet had power to make fire come down from heaven, to deceive men by the working of miracles, even to the point of giving life, for he had power to give life unto the image of the beast. Also it is written of Antichrist that his "coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness".

A Word of Reverent Caution

Having thus spoken, however, I add *this word of reverent caution*, and remind you that the truly awful utterance of our Lord respecting the unpardonable sin, for which there is no forgiveness here or hereafter, was directed against those who ascribed to satanic power the works which were unmistakably the works of the Holy Ghost. Surely that should teach us that, while it is important we should distinguish between the two qualities of the supernatural, the divine and the satanic, there can be only one safe rule by which it may be done; and that is, to bring all these things to the test of the Word written by men who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost".

The Finality of the Christian Revelation

I have but one word to add in respect to this background, and it is this, that the finality of the Christian revelation, and the necessity of rejecting all that is in disagreement therewith, together with the awful danger of being seduced to the acceptance of another gospel, is set forth by the Apostle Paul in the epistle to the Galatians: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

A Duty to Withhold Support From False Teachers

And the *imperative duty of withholding support from false teachers is set out in John's second epistle*: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

A Man May be Sincere—And Wrong

In my examination of this movement I desire it to be understood that I *question no man's sincerity*. There may be—doubtless there are found in some religious cults—some people who are deliberate deceivers. But among the

evil men who shall "wax worse and worse" there are not only deceivers", but many who are "deceived". It is even possible for many sincere lovers of the Lord Jesus Christ, who have had a real experience of His grace, longing to know more and more of God, to be led astray by a movement which promises that which they are seeking.

A clumsy counterfeit of anything will soon be detected. A counterfeit bank note will, as nearly as possible, be an exact copy of a good one. Counterfeit money has often deceived even bank experts who spend all their time in handling money. Sometimes a counterfeit note, in order to be detected, must be examined under a microscope to discover its variations from the original.

If the Oxford Group Movement be not a true expression of the gospel I am certain it is no clumsy counterfeit, and must be examined most carefully to discover its defects. Some may say, "But if it is so like the real gospel as to render it difficult to discover its defects, why bother about it?" *Why bother about the counterfeit money? Real money is issued by government authority, with the guarantee of the national treasury behind it, either directly or through some particular bank. And so the real gospel is divinely guaranteed, and is founded upon the promises of God that cannot lie.*

We do well therefore to discover whether these things which are put forth in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ are really clothed with divine authority. If they are, then the unsearchable riches of Christ are behind them. If they are not, they constitute but a vain hope.

All Christians Desire Revival

What genuine Christian does not desire a revival? Countless thousands are praying for it. Countless thousands of hungry believers are longing for it. With all sincerity, let me say that I would rather die than put anything in the way of its coming; and if revival, a genuine, heaven-sent revival could come through the Oxford Group, I, for one, would be glad to welcome it. But I want no counterfeit. Therefore to my task of examination and careful analysis.

II.

In order to be fair, we must first see **WHETHER THERE BE ANY GOOD IN THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT.**

And I remark that *its emphasis upon the supernatural in human life is to be welcomed*. The modern church, for the most part, has been engaged in the denial of the supernatural. The all too general acceptance of what I venture to call the greatest delusion of all history, the doctrine of Evolution—the evolutionary hypothesis, as I prefer still to call it—has all but crowded a personal God out of His universe: I mean, of course, in human thought. The universities of the world, including those conducted by religious bodies, have taught men that to expect anything supernatural in human life is an absurdity. It has been taught in theological institutions; they have turned out ministers who doubt the supernatural in everything. Thus the Bible has been cut to pieces, and every supernatural element in it denied and deleted.

Many, therefore, have ceased to believe in the Bible, or in prayer; have ceased to expect conversions; have ceased to believe that God is anything but a mere spectator in the ongoing of the world He has made.

Oh the crime of it, that thousands of the pulpits of the continent have now for many years echoed and re-echoed with the implicit or explicit denial of the supernatural!

This at least may be said in favour of the Oxford Group: they do claim that God can do something for a man.

Another point in favour of the Oxford Group is *the fact that they make religion an everyday affair*. Evangelical Christians have always believed it to be so. The true believer recognizes that God desires and promises to be a factor in all the details of the life of every one of His redeemed people.

Another thing in favour of the Oxford Group is *that they teach religion is not a thing to be ashamed of, but may reasonably be made the subject of every-day conversation*. Why should religion be relegated to Sunday? Why should the mention of the name of God be reserved for special religious occasions? I believe it ought to be perfectly natural for saved people to talk with one another, and to the world about them, about the Lord Jesus Christ. In so far as the Oxford Group has enabled anyone to break down that inexcusable reserve I welcome its contribution.

Another good thing about the Oxford Group is *that they emphasize the personal character of the Christian religion*. I fear that the modern church, having so largely lost the experience, and even the sense of the presence and power of God, has given itself to social service, in some form or another, instead of to the work of bringing individuals to Christ. Materially, they have ministered to individuals; but it seems to have been quite generally accepted as the true function of the church to elevate, not individuals, but the masses, by education and, if possible, legislative means. Thus have they substituted, in principle, the law for the gospel, and human works for divine grace.

The Oxford Group certainly does well to teach men that the all-important thing is a man's personal relationship to God. Whether they are correct in their teaching as to how a proper relationship to God may be effected is another matter: I merely recognize that they emphasize the fact of the necessity of it.

Another good thing about *the Oxford Group is their practical insistence that everyone should be a missionary*. Surely that emphasis is right in principle. Whether, I pause to say, their message and methods are in accord with the New Testament, is another matter. But that they insist every man should try to communicate to others that which he professes to have received himself is a sound New Testament principle.

We therefore gladly recognize and acknowledge the principles we have named—there may be some others deserving of mention—to be principles worthy the emulation of all believers.

III.

We come now to examine A FEW OF THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE OXFORD GROUP WHICH WE ARE BOUND TO REJECT BECAUSE OF WHAT APPEARS TO US TO BE THEIR UNSCRIPTURALNESS.

First of all, we dissent from the Group *on the ground that they give, at best, but a secondary place to the Word of God*. The substitution of human experience for the exposition of the divine Word is extremely dangerous. Our Lord's commission was, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Or Mark's version: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

If we are guided by *apostolic precedent*, we must remind ourselves that Peter's great sermon on the day of Pentecost was made up largely of quotations from the Word of God, and was an exposition of Scripture, showing that the crucified and risen Christ fulfilled in Himself all that God had promised in His Book; and that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost was in fulfilment of the Father's promise.

A study of the Acts of the Apostles will show that *every apostolic preacher magnified the word of God*. Stephen's sermon was largely a summary of Old Testament Scriptures. When Saul of Tarsus was converted, "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God". And in all his subsequent ministry the Apostle Paul magnified the Scriptures. He did relate his own experience again and again, but never in substitution for, or subordination to, the Word of God.

I would remind you, too, that *a true faith in God, and a true understanding of salvation, can come only through the Scriptures*. Thus the Apostle Paul, by inspiration, wrote: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

My criticism of the Oxford Group, therefore, is that *neither in their first approach to men, nor in their subsequent development of men, do they give the proper place to the Word of God*. They do not ignore it. Neither does Mormonism. Neither does Christian Science. Neither does Russellism. Neither does Roman Catholicism. The Word of God has some place in all these systems, but not the first place—nor even a fundamental place. And I would here say that *if the Oxford Group be right in respect to their attitude toward and use of the Word of God, then the whole course of the Christian Church, from Pentecost until now, has been a mistake*. It was by the Word of God Luther was emancipated from the thraldom of Rome. It was by the Word of God that the preachers of all ages, who have ever accomplished any lasting good for God and man, have wrought. And every revival that has ever blessed the world has been characterized by the preaching, the exposition, of the Word of God.

Once more: we object to the Oxford Group's message *on the ground that it has no blood in it*. Doubtless many associated with the Oxford Group believe in the blood. Many have brought into this movement a real experience of divine grace. Beyond question, there will be found many whose only hope of salvation is in the atoning sacrifice. We must, however, judge the movement, not merely by their private acquiescence in principles privately propounded, or their affirmative answers to questions privately asked: *we must judge of the place they give to the Great Sacrifice by the public utterances of their leaders*.

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, for the moment, that deep in their hearts they all believe that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures", that He

was buried, and that He rose again; and that only through the cleansing blood can anyone be saved. What then? I affirm that any Christian teacher ought always to make his position in respect to that great central fact of redemption so clear that it should be utterly impossible for anyone ever to misunderstand, or even to question his position.

The occupant of this pulpit has many defects. He pleads guilty to a thousand failures. But of one thing I am absolutely sure, that no one, on any occasion, can ever come within these walls when I preach, and go out without knowing beyond all possibility of doubt exactly where this preacher stands in respect to the precious blood of Christ. I affirm there is no deliverance for any human soul apart from that atonement of infinite value; and I declare that whoever preaches any other gospel than the gospel of salvation through the blood, preaches "another gospel" than the gospel of Christ, and therefore it is not a gospel at all.

If the Oxford Group leaders believe in salvation through the blood of Christ they are verily guilty of successfully concealing the fact. I think I shall presently show you that very much of what they teach shows that their leaders conceive of a salvation without the blood.

Once more: *their doctrine of surrender to Christ is inadequate.* To what Christ must we surrender? How shall we understand who and what Christ is, and what He requires of us, apart from the Word of God? I am aware that some place is given to the study of the Bible. But not a few of the members of the Oxford Group seem to assume that what they are pleased to call the "four absolutes" are a fair summary of the character of Christ, and of God in Christ. "Absolute honesty", "absolute purity", "absolute unselfishness", "absolute love".

I understand that this is set before them as an ideal toward which they may strive. I do not think any member of the Oxford Group would claim even to have approximated the absolute in any of these qualities. Let us assume that that is supposed to be largely a summary of the divine standard, for it is much referred to in their doctrine of guidance, of which I shall speak in a moment. The question to be asked is, Is it in accord with complete honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love? I affirm that that representation of Christ falls immeasurably short of the New Testament revelation.

There is more in God than Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, and Love.

The Cross declares the *righteousness* and *justice* of God—"set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Jesus Christ is our Melchisedec, "first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace". "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." There cannot be, for God is righteous. Would you represent God, the God of the universe, as an indulgent Father? The principles of righteousness, justice, truth, and equity, must lie at the base of all organized society, and there must be such principles at the base of the divine throne. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face", said the Psalmist. To represent Jesus Christ as a revelation of God in these four terms is to misrepresent Him. God is far more than that.

One could easily criticize this fourfold standard on intellectual grounds, and ask for a differentiation between love and unselfishness, for instance, but I shall not strive about words to no profit. To substitute that inadequate standard for the full-orbed revelation of Divine Holiness in Christ in Whom mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other, and justice, faithfulness, mercy, love, and power, are harmoniously blended into the effulgence of the glory of redeeming grace, is to substitute a rushlight for the meridian splendour of the sun.

IV.

Once more, I OBJECT TO THE INADEQUACY OF THE GROUP'S DOCTRINE OF SIN. It may be ingenious to describe sin as something with "I" in the centre of it. It is that, but inestimably more. It may sound very plausible to say, with the author of "For Sinners Only", that "the best definition of sin that we have is anything in my life which keeps me from God and from other people"; but can sin thus accurately be defined? By such a definition, sin is represented as a handicap, an inconvenience, a grain of sand in the carburetor which stops the flow of power to the engine, and prevents my making a journey to see a friend, or to render him some service.

Here is a chapter in, "For Sinners Only", entitled, "What Sin Is". One would expect to find a good deal of scripture woven into such a treatise. But there is very little. Mainly we are told that whatever is contrary to honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love, is sin. And so it is. But sin is more than that. There is not a word in this chapter about the guilt of sin. Nothing about its essential lawlessness. Nothing to suggest its abominableness in the sight of God. There is not a word to imply that it is something of which divine justice must take account. Nowhere is it suggested that it is deserving of punishment; or that it needs to be cleansed away.

"The best definition of sin is that it is anything in my life which keeps me from God and from other people!"

One might have expected the best definition of sin would be found in the Bible. And so it is! "Sin is the transgression of the law", or, more literally, "sin is lawlessness." Sin as defined in "For Sinners Only", needs no atonement; but as defined in the Word of God it is lawlessness, anarchy, and is directed against God Himself. According to the Bible, God's estimate of the heinousness of sin is Hell, and His estimate of the value of the sinner is the blood of His only begotten Son. The view of sin set forth in, "For Sinners Only", needs no atonement, no—

"Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins."

This poor sinner at least needs that cleansing blood. He has no other hope than that.

My objection, however, to Mr. Russell's definition of sin is not only in what is omitted, but I object also to its positive aspect, "Anything in my life which keeps me from God and from other people." What sort of people? It is surely not a sin to avoid the "counsel of the ungodly", or the standing-place of sinners, or "the seat of the scornful."

Does not the teaching of our Lord abound with suggestions to the effect that loyalty to Him, strict obedience to His precepts, a faithful following in His steps, will inevitably separate us from the world about us, and from the people that are in the world? Have not multitudes found

that following Christ has compelled them to separate from "other people"? Did not Jesus Christ say, "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

When the man who had been born blind bore witness to the power of Jesus Christ, and in defense of the One Who had opened his eyes, said, "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out." Thus his witness for Christ separated him from "other people". And so it has often done.

V.

We come now to CONSIDER THE GROUP'S DOCTRINE OF SHARING.

The confession of sin to God is perfectly scriptural. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "God be merciful to me a sinner." Peter said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Then there is David's great penitential prayer. But even to God, he does not detail his sin. He knew God knew the sordid facts—now he confesses only his guilt and his desire for cleansing. I wonder should I weary you if I should read it:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."

Does that fit in with the Oxford Group's "sharing" meetings? That is the cry of a heart that grace has broken, of a mind that has been illuminated by the Holy Ghost to see the dreadfulness of the divine holiness, and the necessity for some cleansing agent to wash away its sin, and blot out its iniquities.

Confession of sin, or of sins, to our fellows is scriptural, properly understood. Paul, to show the completeness of

his conversion, referred to a public act of his in consenting to Stephen's death: "When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." Again he said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

Confession to those we have wronged is a duty. It is right that we should publicly confess our public offences. But private offences should be privately confessed, "Confess your faults one to another"; "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." That is the principle of the teaching of Scripture. Of course, where the offence has been public the confession ought to be as public as the offence. Where the sin is a sin against God it should be confessed to God, and I remind you that in the penitential Psalm which I read a moment ago—you are familiar with that awful chapter in David's history in that, even when confessing to God, David did not mention the particular sin. He knew that God knew it. The penetrating shaft of the Word of God had smitten his heart as Nathan said, "Thou art the man", and he poured out his soul before God without any mention of his particular sin, but bared his soul before the Majesty of heaven as one who repented in dust and ashes.

Some Scriptural Examples

Let me give you *one or two scriptural examples.* The Samaritan woman was not a very exemplary character, yet having seen Christ, on her return to her own city she did not rehearse the details of her immoral life: she said, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" The Pharisees found a woman who had been taken in the very act of sin, and brought her to Jesus, saying that Moses commanded that such should be stoned, but "Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

It is not recorded that she went back to the marketplace and gathered a company of people together and polluted their ears and minds by a recitation of her sins. Nor was she enjoined to do so by her Lord.

What of the case of Magdelene out of whom the Lord cast seven devils? Is there anything in Scripture to indicate that Christ told that woman to unveil her secret life, and publish it to the world? Not a word!

Consider the case of Peter. Though he had publicly offended, though he had three times denied His Lord, there is no record of his confessing to his fellow-disciples. They came saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." The Lord Jesus, the great High Priest, gave him an opportunity privately to confess his sin; and afterward three times He said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" But it is not recorded that the

Apostle Peter ever once openly discussed his awful act of treachery.

Many of you here are Bible students, and are familiar with the letter of Scripture. Nobody is really familiar with Scripture: it is the word of the Infinite. But you are familiar enough with the letter to call to mind the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, and I ask you to find me one instance where there is the shadow, of a shade, of a ghost of scriptural warrant for the "sharing" practice of the Oxford Group. It is not there.

That is the negative side.

On the positive side, it is forbidden:

"But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you as becometh saints . . . Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."

Moreover, *where there is true repentance there will be a sense of shame, and a desire to forget the awful past.* I can understand if a man has been in the gutter, if he has explored the utmost reaches of the far country, if he has got down to the lowest depths of sin—on finding another man in the gutter and trying to point him to Christ, I can understand his assuring him that no sin is too great for His forgiveness. And when the man says, "But there is no hope for me", the man of contrite heart, with the blush of shame mantling his face, puts his arm around his brother to whisper, "I know He can save you for He saved me when I was as far down as you are." But I cannot understand a man who has ever seen his sin in the light that shines from the throne of divine majesty, and the effulgence of the divine holiness in the face of Jesus Christ, and has felt the shame of it, ever wanting to mention it again.

Why should we rehearse what God has promised to forget? Listen: "Their sin and iniquities will I remember no more." Hallelujah! Why do you not say Hallelujah? (Chorus of Hallelujahs). God tells me, a poor sinner, that there is one thing in the universe which His omnivident gaze can never penetrate: He cannot see through the covering blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Every time I think of it I feel like shouting, Hallelujah, what a Saviour! Why, then, if the blood of Christ purges our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God, should we retail our sins?

I remind you further that *there is positive danger in the practice of sharing sins.* I remind you of the Protestant rejection of the confessional on that ground. Surely there is danger in that, but the Group's practice is still more dangerous. I do not wonder the Group is so much in favour with Anglo-Catholics.

How our ears have been offended by the conversation of some in public places! I used to travel a good deal, and in the morning in the washroom of the pullman car on more than one occasion I have had to say to men, "Gentlemen, would you be kind enough to reserve that conversation for some other occasion, for my ears are not accustomed to listen to such things as that." Go to such places as that and you will have "sharing" enough—and more than you want—without giving it a religious name.

I say this with care, yet I feel I must. I remember crossing the ocean in nineteen hundred and seventeen, sailing from New York with a hospital unit, the first American contingent to go to the war. All the officers of that unit were doctors, and with one of them I became fairly well acquainted. We talked many times, and he told me something of the difficulties of his professional experience. He said, "There is a certain class of patient I dread to have come to my office. They come for one purpose, to ask me to discuss one subject. I have found there was nothing wrong with them except with their minds. I have studied the psychology of it, and have reached the conclusion that they come for a vicarious indulgence of the very things they want to discuss."

What is the psychology of the pornographic play or book? A vicarious or mental indulgence in the thing represented. There is danger of the same thing in these public "sharings". If you quote to me the motto of the Order of the Garter, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, "Evil to him who evil thinks", I answer, "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." We should soon have to employ public censors to watch over "sharing" meetings. That is not an exaggeration. The Pastoral visitor of this church attended a meeting for ministers held by the Group, in the King Edward Hotel, and his sensibilities were utterly shocked by the things he heard. He said he felt as though he had been dragged through a slime pit. I am positive there is no scriptural warrant for such practices. Nor do I believe that people who "share" in the telling or hearing of these things are seeking purity in any degree, much less purity in the absolute. Such practices are horrible in the extreme, and are without a vestige of warrant in Scripture, psychology, or in common morality.

Scriptural confession is first to God, then to such persons as we have offended if our sin has been against our neighbour, and should be made publicly only in so far as the offence has been public. When God is real to a soul awakened by the Holy Ghost, confession to Him of all that is in the heart is far more potent in effecting reformation of life than any "sharing" with a public assembly.

In one of the booklets published by the Oxford Group ("The Principles of the Group," by *Sherwood Sunderland Day*) an extraordinary statement is made. Incidentally, let me admonish you to study the psychology of the practice of "sharing." Do not be content with a cursory glance at it: study it carefully. Mr. Day says: "Confession to God alone is often not good enough in that it may cost nothing and may be merely the confession to a subjective picture of God which the person has built up for him or herself. In such a case, what actually happens is that the person does not confess at all—there is no real pain and repentance—it is an easy way of trying to ease one's conscience. Confessing to another person always costs and is thus a test of our honesty in hating sin." As though man were more real than God! Perhaps so with the Oxford Group. If the penitent confesses only "to a subjective picture of God", will confession to men give him any other sort of God? But when the Holy Ghost makes God real, and we see Him as Isaiah saw Him, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the

door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke", we shall cry with the prophet, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

There is nothing that will bring a man into the dust, and into the deepest humiliation, like a view of the holiness of God. Therefore I condemn this "sharing" practice as being unscriptural, a violation of all sound principles of psychology or mental science, and immoral in fact and influence.

VI.

Now a word or two about THE GROUP'S DOCTRINE OF GUIDANCE.

The Scriptures teach the subjective work of the Holy Spirit. It is by the power of the Spirit of God we are convicted of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. It is by that same Power we are regenerated. It is by the Spirit's power we experience "salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth". The Apostle Peter tested the great experiences of Pentecost by Scripture. When the people said, "What is all this? What does it mean?" He said, "This is that which is written." All the New Testament writers supported even their inspired writings by citations from the Old Testament scriptures.

The guidance of the Group is always exclusively subjective in its initial stage. They speak of "luminous words", and the quiet hour, when, with pad and pencil, they sit down and wait for guidance. One of the leaders, (Rev. E. McMillan, of South Africa) says, "I speak less to God than ever I did, but I listen more and longer to hear what God the Lord would speak." Less prayer, and more listening.

That is a dangerous practice. Religious subjectivism uncontrolled, unregulated by objective standards, has been the cause, the base, of nearly all the soul-destroying heresies of history.

I want you to think a minute or two with me on that point. I have something interesting here. These subjective experiences are to be checked mainly by the "four absolutes". The great question is whether the "guidance" is in accord with "absolute honesty", "absolute purity", "absolute unselfishness", and "absolute love".

I wonder if any of the Oxford Group have ever consulted the *Oxford* dictionary? It is not finished yet! But think of *absolute* honesty, *absolute* purity, *absolute* unselfishness, and *absolute* love. "*Absolute*" is a big word. "*Absolute*", in its real content, is as big as God. There is only one Absolute: He is the Absolute. These qualities in the absolute degree are found alone in God. That, by the way.

So I sit down with my pad and I write some strange message that comes to me. I wish I had a month to talk to you about the sub-conscious mind. I am a preacher, and am not speaking from the technical standpoint of a psychologist. Were I to do so I should speak more of theory and less of fact. But I could tell you much about the sub-conscious mind. There are many things in that "clutter-closet" that may come to the top when you do not want them—and when you least expect them.

When visiting England with my wife, some years ago, I visited a town I had not seen since I was four and a half years old. I will not tell you how old I was at the time of the visit—but more than five years had passed! I walked about the streets of the town with my wife, and

I said (having asked direction of no one), "I think this is the street for which I am looking. This is true to my mental picture." A postman was coming down the road and I enquired the name of the street. "So-and-So", he replied—and I went to the very house which I had not seen since I was four and a half years old, without assistance from anyone. And I think I will take you into my confidence by telling you that at least twenty years had elapsed since I had seen it as a child! That picture had been photographed on my mind. I had not thought of it for years, but it formed part of the sub-conscious mind.

All the books you have read, all the conversations you have heard, all the pictures you have seen, all the things you have ever done, all the objects which have challenged your observation, all the things you have desired, the sum-total of the procession which has passed before your mind in all your life's pilgrimage has been photographed on your mind, and has entered into that sub-conscious realm; and who can tell what will come to the surface and when? But sit down with a pad and write. I do not know what you will write, but I beg of you, do not call it divine guidance, without some objective regulation.

I believe the Spirit of God does work directly upon the hearts and consciences of believers. I believe the Spirit of God does guide us. I believe "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way"; but surely we must try all these impressions by the principles and precepts of the Word of God, and not by a vague and inadequate standard consisting in what we call honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love.

Aside from that for a moment, I do not believe the religion of Christ was ever intended to make an automaton of anybody, to make a man do things automatically. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The religion of Christ is for the whole man: for my mental faculties, for my reason, my memory, my affectional nature, my will—all there is of me. When God the Holy Spirit dwells within us He does not ask us to stultify any of our powers, but He so enlightens them, and so emancipates and energizes our faculties, that we act with a glorious liberty; and, like Mary, deliberately "choose" the better part that shall not be taken from us.

We shall be at one with the mutterings of Spiritism if we go on with the Oxford Group. Just to whet your appetites for Mr. Fraser's article in *The Gospel Witness* I will quote his article:

"The weird and ridiculous messages, such as are mentioned in an official publication of the Group, and written by Eleanor Napier Forde, where she tells of a three-year-old child receiving the 'guidance' from God when He is alleged to have said to her, 'You must eat more porridge in the morning' (I have known Scotsmen to do that without any guidance), and again when a convert publicly testified that while seeking 'guidance' she got the message, 'sausages', by which she took it that God wanted her to get sausages for dinner that day. Without doubt this feature of the Oxford Movement is positively dangerous, and utterly at variance with the scriptural doctrine of prayer and guidance."

I have no doubt the Lord is a dietitian, but that surely is reducing the Scriptural doctrine of divine guidance from the sublime to the ridiculous.

I shall have done shortly, but there is one other absurdity growing out of this subjectivism. There is all the danger of Christian Science in this movement. Indeed, all such errors as in here is unscriptural, emotional cults are wrapped up in this.

But I think I must give you a passage from "For Sinners Only". This is in the chapter entitled, "That Knotty

Marriage Problem"—and it is knotty enough. Remember this is written in all seriousness by A. J. Russell:

"I asked one happily married man in the Group: 'How did you happen to marry Anne?' 'Guidance', was the answer. This was a new one for me. I knew we had got beyond the stage where parents decided the question for their offspring. But my idea of pre-nuptial bliss was catch-as-catch-can.

"You mean you fell in love, and then God told you to go ahead?' 'Heavens, no! There was more to it than that. I had known Anne for some time', he explained. 'I knew she was the kind of person I wanted to marry. But one day during a Quiet Time on a railroad these thoughts came to me: 'Would you like to marry Anne?' 'Yes', I answered, 'if You think it's all right.' 'Well, then, why don't you go ahead and try?' came the clear but whimsical answer. 'I made up my mind I would. But before I committed myself I checked it with my friends, as people in the Group are wisely accustomed to do. Their guidance confirmed my own. Take the chance, and see what comes of it. I did. . . . We were engaged before the week was out, and it has been glorious ever since.

"That is the Group secret of marriage, where romance never fades."

One might almost suppose there were no happily married people to be found outside the Group! Doubtless there are many unfortunate and unhappy unions, but surely the divine institution of marriage had not to await the coming of the Oxford Group to achieve success.

One may form a fair opinion of the religious attitude and preconceptions of the author of, "For Sinners Only", by some of his incidental remarks. The idea of Christian people's seeking the Lord's guidance in the matter of a life's partnership, Mr. Russell describes as "a new one" for him.

The angelic Anne of the story was not a stranger to the young man under discussion: he had known her for some time. And what he knew of her did not even belong to the sub-conscious mind, for he had estimated her qualities, and had reached the conclusion that she was "the kind of person (he) wanted to marry". Was it surprising that one day, on a railroad, the question arose in his mind, "Would you like to marry Anne?" Of one thing I am certain, that such thoughts have come to many a young man outside the Oxford Group. Were it otherwise, so many of them would not come bashfully to me, requesting me to do them a favour!

After the young man had replied in the affirmative, he was asked, "Why don't you go ahead and try?" This it is assumed, was the divine Voice speaking. But in order to be sure of avoiding mistakes, this young lover tells us that before committing himself he checked it with his friends, "as people in the Group are wisely accustomed to do". We quite admit that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety, but that is not usually applied to the choosing of a life-partner.

Suppose a young man were to come to you and say, "I think I should like to marry Anne (or whatever her name may be). I have divine guidance on the subject. I think I heard a Voice say, 'Go ahead and try'." What would you be likely to say? If you are wise, I should suppose you would say, "That is your affair. It is agreeable to me if it suits you." But the other members of the Oxford Group had also received "guidance" respecting the marriage of Anne—and all this brought about the engagement before the week was out!

The Methods of The Oxford Group Are Scarcely In Accord With Apostolic Precedent

I have no objection to the King Edward Hotel as a hostel. That is not the point. But the appeal of the Oxford Group openly is to what they call the "dinner jacket

crowd". I never cease to thank God that in this place we have many poor people. My Master spent His earthly life chiefly among the poor. And when John sent messengers, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" He said concerning His Messiahship, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Wherever missionaries of the Cross have gone they have invariably begun with the poor. "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith."

Do not misunderstand me. The rich should not be neglected, not by any means. But within these walls we do not know whether a man has a million dollars, or one cent—nor does it make any difference. Nor should it ever make a difference among the people of God.

During the Chapman-Alexander Campaign in Massey Hall shortly after I became Pastor of this church, I observed a man dealing with an anxious soul at the close of a service, when a man who called himself a "business man" came along and condescendingly said to the enquirer, "If I, in my position, if I a prominent business man, can accept Christ, with all that that involves, do you not think you can?" Then turning to me he said, "Do you not think that is a legitimate argument, Mr. Shields?" To which I replied, "The King of glory does not care whether you are a business man or not. Neither do I. All I know about you is that you are a poor, hell-deserving sinner, and that you need the blood of Christ."

A dinner jacket will not cover the filthy rags of your own righteousness. The gospel ought to be preached to the rich and poor alike, but I insist that in this matter the rich should not be treated as rich men. The gospel recognizes only two classes, saved and unsaved; those in a state of nature, and those who have been redeemed by grace. I have no sympathy with any movement that recognizes such distinctions. And what of the "house parties"? House parties? Many people just now would like to go to a house party if somebody would pay their expenses, and dress them for the occasion. (Voice from the floor: "I should"). There is one awaiting such an invitation. But the Group house parties are usually held in expensive hostels, and only those who can pay their own way are welcome.

The appeal of the Oxford Group to the more comfortably circumstanced people of the community, or the recognition of any sort of class, is surely contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Our Lord was the centre of interest in several house parties during His earthly ministry, and one was in the house of one of the chief Pharisees whither He went to eat bread on the sabbath day. And when He saw how they chose out the chief rooms He said to him that bade Him, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

In further confirmation of this, I quote here the scripture quoted by Mr. Fraser in his article to which I have already alluded:

"My brethren, have not the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel,

and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs to the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

Another serious objection to the Oxford Group's method consists in the company they keep. Sin is "anything in my life which keeps me from God and from other people." Not necessarily. Be loyal to the Word of God, and you will find that that will keep you away from some people—or it will keep some people away from you. I mention but one name, the name of one man whom I respect very highly as an advocate of social righteousness. When he writes on that line I find myself in agreement with many of the principles he enunciates; but when he writes on religious subjects I abhor his teaching. Religiously he is anti-Christian, is opposed to Scripture, and to everything for which the Bible stands. I speak of the writings of that arch-enemy of Evangelicalism, the very amiable and respectable Dr. Salem Bland. There is little the Bible teaches that he does not deny and hold up to contempt—yet he approves of the Oxford Group!

Modernists who deny the Deity of Christ, His virgin birth, the authority of the Bible, the precious blood, the necessity of regeneration—everything that is cardinal Christian, can find a place in the Oxford Group without repentance or change of mind.

I could name preachers in this city who never preach without saying something that would tend to destroy the faith of young men and women in the Word of God. I care nothing about their "sharing" of sin—though they might better keep it to themselves—but it is time for some of them to come out and say, "I have been wrong. In my preaching I have cast doubt upon the Scriptures, and on the efficacy of the blood of Christ. I repent, and I come back to the faith of my fathers. I accept the Bible as the Word of God, and Jesus Christ as His Son." But I have failed yet to discover where the Oxford Group in this country, in England, in South Africa, in China, or elsewhere, has led men to repudiate the tenets of Modernism, and come back to the principles of Evangelical faith. On the contrary, the Oxford Group can consort with Modernists and near-Modernists, Unitarians and near-Unitarians, Anglo-Catholics, and whatnot, without effecting any change whatever in their attitude toward the Word of God; and without saying one word which is disturbing to these fellowships. If it be argued that Unitarians and others need the gospel, we agree. But it is folly to exhort men to surrender to the Christ of the Unitarian. That is not preaching the gospel.

There is scarcely anything about the Oxford Group which more certainly establishes its unscripturalness than its ability to mix with all these contrary beliefs without effecting any change. I remind you of the scripture read by Mr. Brown at the beginning: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

VII.

WHAT ABOUT THE "CHANGED" LIFE? I am no advocate of Christian Science. It is neither Christian, nor science. Some American wag said it was like a guinea-pig, which was neither a guinea, nor a pig. I believe that of Christian Science. But Christian Scientists in greater numbers than have ever testified to what the Oxford Group has done, testify to what Christian Science has done for them. Spiritists will say the same thing. Nearly every erroneous, anti-Christian cult will say the same thing. The "change" effected must also be appraised by the standards of Scripture, and over an extended period of time. A few instances of the making of restitution are recorded. They are all to the good, but they prove nothing, for such restitutions are sometimes made independently of any religious influence.

The "Oxford" Group! It would not do to pass that by. I notice by the press—though I do not judge men by press reports, I have been too often misquoted myself—but I read that a minister of the city called attention to the fact that the Group is using the name, "Oxford", when they are not entitled to it. "Absolute honesty" ought to lead them to be more accurate. The "Oxford" Group originated in the United States. It is not *Oxford*. It is not *English*. It is American. I intend no reflection on anything American. Usually people of the United States make no attempt to disguise their origin. The leader of the Oxford Group began his work in America, not in England. He went to Cambridge, and later to Oxford, and then to South Africa. A few students from Oxford went with him, and in South Africa it was called the "Oxford" Group. That was a rather shrewd move. He has been to Oxford, don't you know! I am an Englishman. I know something about England, and English ways—and English speech too. How dignified it is to have an "Oxford" flavour!

The world is full of religious snobs. Do you know what a snob is? He is a "I-would-if-I-could". Some people would like to be associated with the "Oxford" Group. There is a world of psychology in that. Think it over. It lends rather an intellectual flavour to things that are utterly absurd. I join with my ministerial brother in another part of the city and say, Absolute honesty ought to lead the Oxford Group to repudiate the name, and frankly to admit they are not exclusively or even distinctively "Oxford"; that the essence of this Group is not specially Oxonian, but is largely repudiated in Oxford itself. But "Oxford" carries it a long way.

Someone may say, "But look at all the prominent and professional business men who have adopted it." That proves nothing. Business men! Professional men! Big business men! I have the profoundest respect for men of great executive ability. When I view some of the big business organizations I admire the genius that could create them, and the administrative skill which directs them. But many a business man in the last three or four years has utterly failed, even in his own sphere; proving that they are much like common men, and liable to make mistakes. But I long ago learned that men of any calling, whether in business or the professions, while prominent and deservedly renowned in their own sphere, may be but babes in matters of religion.

The Bible likens men of all ranks and conditions to sheep. There are fads and fashions in business, as there are in law and in medicine, and in the sphere of education. In all these realms of human activity men act like sheep.

But of no expression of human life is this truer than of religion. I have sometimes wondered if five per cent. of people even attempt to think in matters of religion. They are just like a flock of sheep, and will follow any bell-wether—especially if he come from "Oxford", or is reputed to be a little above the social average.

Twenty-five years ago, or thereabout, the "Laymen's Missionary Movement" promised to bring in the millennium in its own generation. We heard big business men declare that henceforth their one business should be to serve the Lord, and that they were going to make money only for the furtherance of the gospel. But they soon forgot their resolution, and the "Laymen's Missionary Movement" ceased to be.

Then came the "Men and Religion Forward Movement". And we were virtually told by certain laymen, who suddenly became religious experts, that the Great Commission had been practically pigeon-holed until the "Men and Religion Forward Movement" was born. But that, too, died an early death. Peace be to its ashes!

Not so very long ago the "Service" Clubs came into being: Rotary, and Lions, and I know not what else. They were going to fulfil the millennial condition where the lion would lie down with the lamb. I have been at some of their meetings, and have heard a hundred or two business men listen while a few men discussed some picayune matter that an office boy in the employ of any one of them could have done in five minutes. Yet a couple of hundred of them came together and spent their noon hour discussing this great problem, and went home, patting themselves on the back that they had rendered some conspicuous "service"!

What infantile performances these are! How utterly silly! Their only justification is that they afford a heavily burdened business man an opportunity to get away from his office in the middle of the day and play baby for half an hour. If it affords the dear man some relief perhaps he ought to be given the opportunity.

And now it is the Oxford Group. And in a little while we shall have "big business men" going out as missionaries to tell everybody what they ought to do. It will last for a few weeks—until the weather makes golf possible again, and we shall find some of the Oxford Group on the golf links on Sunday.

I have read what literature of the Oxford Group was available to me, and I confess that in my humble judgment it all belongs to the kindergarten class. It is very much like father playing with the baby's toys that Santa Claus brought him Christmas morning. Perhaps when they become men, if they ever do, they will "put away childish things". Meanwhile I would exhort you to steadfastness of faith in Christ: "As ye therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."

And further, I exhort you to seek that "unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" that will make us at last perfect men according to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning

craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

THE LECTURE ON THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT.

The foregoing lecture was delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Thursday evening, January 19th. Announcement of the lecture was made through the press on Saturday, and at the services on Sunday. No later advertisements were published. Notwithstanding, Jarvis Street was packed to capacity, with many standing upstairs and downstairs. Extra chairs were brought in for the accommodation of the Seminary students, and some others; and chairs were occupied on the platform. The delivery of the lecture was begun at 8.30, and concluded at 10.50. The deep interest of the people was manifest throughout the service.

Friday morning, orders poured into the office for copies of the lecture as soon as it should be published. Enquiries on this subject have reached THE GOSPEL WITNESS from many parts of the world. The intense interest manifest in Toronto, and the numerous requests for copies, led us to publish the lecture in booklet form. This was done before the appearance in this issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. The booklet consists of forty pages, the size being four and a half by seven and a half inches. THE GOSPEL WITNESS does not plan to make any profit on the sale of these lectures: we are chiefly anxious that the booklet should be as widely distributed as possible.

The first edition, the printing of which was completed to-day (Wednesday, January 25th) consists of ten thousand copies. On the last page of this paper will be found an advertisement, giving the price of these booklets. The price has been reduced to actual cost of printing and postage. We shall greatly appreciate the co-operation of all our readers in spreading the message of this lecture as widely as possible.

We are convinced the principles of the Oxford Group are non-evangelical, and involve, in reality, a substitution of human effort for the grace of God. It is one of the most subtle errors of our time; all the more deceptive and dangerous because at first blush there seems to be much of good about it. It will have its day, and cease to be. But the danger is that many of the Lord's own people may, in the meantime, be led astray.

THIS WEEK'S "GOSPEL WITNESS."

We are sorry to be under the necessity of burdening our readers this week with two long addresses. THE GOSPEL WITNESS came into being for the publication of the sermons, and whatever else has been omitted, for the nearly eleven years of its publication, THE GOSPEL WITNESS has never failed to carry a sermon from Jarvis Street pulpit. We thought the best way to advertise the Oxford Group Movement lecture would be to publish it in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. We know it is long, but WITNESS readers are, without exception, thoughtful people! We greatly enjoy the writing of briefer editorial articles upon subjects which weekly demand treatment, but the importance of the subject treated in this issue must be our justification for the presentation of so heavy a meal.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE WIFE OF JEROBOAM.

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 22nd, 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)

"And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in thou wife of Jeroboam: why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings."

—1 Kings 14:6.

When, upon the accession of Rehoboam to the throne of Israel, the people demanded of him a lightening of their burdens, and he insolently refused their request, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, described as a "mighty man of valour", found himself borne on a wave of popular favour to the throne of the newly-established kingdom consisting of ten tribes. Perhaps never in history did any man face an opportunity so fraught with inestimable potentialities for good or evil as Jeroboam did when he became the king of the newly-established kingdom.

He might have brought the people back to God. He might, like David, their shepherd-king, have led them in paths of righteousness. Thus he would have exalted the nation. But instead of that, after what he considered a master stroke of strategy, he set up calves of gold at Bethel and Dan, providing the people with an easy religion. He said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Thus he introduced into Israel an idolatrous form of worship. Thus he led the people still farther from God. Thus he sowed the seed of future disintegration and decay. He became known in history as "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin"; for throughout the rest of Israel's history—that is, the history of the ten tribes, with Samaria as their capital, known in the prophetic scriptures as well as in the historical scriptures as Ephraim—it is said with wearisome monotony of every king, without any exception, who succeeded to Israel's throne, that "he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities", until at last the prophet Hosea is given a prophetic vision of the utter ruin of Ephraim as a nation, and he cried prophetically, "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off."

Early in Jeroboam's history, for he reigned twenty-two years—and incidentally let me remark that a man need not live to be very old to do a great deal of damage in the world. A year or two may well suffice to sow the seed, the reaping of which may cause multitudes to perish—but early in Jeroboam's history, and when the sin he had committed was beginning in his own family to bear fruit, the shadow of death fell athwart his own home. His little child was taken seriously ill, and apparently stricken unto death. Not knowing what to do, Jeroboam bethought himself of the prophet who had taken his mantle in the beginning and rent it in twelve pieces, saying to Jeroboam, "Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." He remembered the prophet, and decided to seek counsel of him.

He commissioned his wife to disguise herself so that she should not be known as the queen, as the wife of Jeroboam. She was to take a basket on her arm, like a peasant woman from the country, with "ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey", and go to the prophet—very much as people go to a clairvoyant or palmist, to steal some counsel from him, without letting him know who she was.

The wife of Jeroboam disguised herself, but before she arrived the Lord spoke to the prophet. Why should He not?

Some years ago a Salvation Army friend said to me, "I do not understand your ministers." "Well, what is wrong with us? We are a bad lot, I know, but what criticism have you to pass upon us?" "You prepare your sermons before you see your congregation. I never do: I wait until I see the congregation, and then I know what message they need." I said, "I do not know what message the people need, whether I see them or not; but I assume the Lord knows who will come to church on Sunday, and I ask Him for a message."

The Lord visited Ahijah the prophet, and told him who he would have as an auditor shortly. Ahijah was all ready, and as the congregation assembled "it was so, when Ahijah (the blind prophet) heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings."

We shall turn over that story with a view to our spiritual profit this evening; and, in doing so, I want to try to find out *why this woman went to hear the preacher; secondly, how she went; and lastly, what she heard when she arrived.*

I.

WHY DID THIS WOMAN GO TO HEAR THE PROPHET AT ALL? I have often thought it would be interesting if it were possible for the preacher to ascertain the motives which move the members of his congregation to come to church. I wonder what moved you to come to church to-night?—for I should like to speak this evening as though I were speaking to one person. I know the Lord by His Spirit will discover the one person to whom His message is sent—or perhaps more than one—but I say, I wonder why you have come to Jarvis Street Church to-night?

I remark in the first place that *this woman did not come to seek spiritual profit for herself.* She did not expect that the prophet would have any special spiritual message that would be advantageous for her. She went for another reason altogether.

What a blessing it would be if all people who come to church were to come hungering and thirsting after righteousness! if the preacher might fairly and reasonably assume that every member of his congregation has come

to church for no other purpose than to hear what God the Lord would say unto him or her! if only we could know that people come saying, "Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." But I fear a very large proportion of any congregation attend church for some other reason than that they are in their heart of hearts expecting that God Himself will speak peace unto His people, and bless His people with peace.

It is comparatively easy to sell goods to a customer who stands on the outside of the counter desiring to buy, but he is the true salesman who knows how to sell his wares to the people who do not want to buy. It is comparatively easy to teach those who are eager to learn, who have a natural and insatiable desire for knowledge. Almost any teacher who has an understanding of the subject in hand may succeed in imparting knowledge to such students. But the real teacher is the one who, somehow or another, gets the truth into the minds of scholars who are indifferent to that which is being taught.

It would be easy to preach if only we knew that all our people were eager to hear, but it requires superhuman power to gain entrance to a mind that is shut against the truth, the mind of a person who comes to church for some other reason than with a desire for personal good.

I wonder are there some here this evening who were actuated by some other motive than that, in coming to this place? Do not be alarmed; I shall not ask you to state your motive. I suppose we might have an interesting diversion if we were to pause to do that. But I deal simply with heart and conscience that you may enquire each for himself or herself, "Did I come with a desire to see God in Christ, to hear a message from the Skies for my soul, really to worship?" Not many do. The wife of Jeroboam was one such.

The wife of Jeroboam *did not go to hear the prophet because it was her habit so to do*. Whether she had ever heard him before, I do not know; it may have been the first time she ever heard his voice. At all events, she did not come because it was habitual with her to wait upon the prophet's ministry. I congratulate those of you who are habitual church-goers, even though you be not Christians. You remember when Mary lost the Child Jesus for a little while, where she found Him? She found Him in the Father's house. Multitudes of people have found the Saviour there since then. If you would know Him, it is a good thing to develop the habit of going to church.

That is what some of you who hear me by radio this evening ought to do. We are admonished not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is". I am glad, however, to have the opportunity of speaking to you, even though I do not see you. But I do enter a plea for the formation of the church-going habit, even though, I repeat, you are not a Christian. At least put yourself in the way of blessing. When Zaccheus ran before the crowd and climbed up into the sycamore tree that he might "see Jesus who he was", we are told that he did it because he knew that "he was to pass that way". Is not that what the choir sang just now, "Jesus is passing by"? So He is. And it is well for people to form the habit of regular attendance at the place where our glorious Lord has specially and specifically promised to be, "for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them".

But this woman did not go to the prophet on that account: it was not her habit. But even though it is not your habit to go to church, I am glad some of you have come once at least. I am glad for once you are where you ought to be frequently. We have had many people come to this church who had not attended a place of worship for years, and who were converted the first time they crossed the threshold. It may be there is someone here this evening who has not been at church for many a year, but for some reason known to yourself you have come this evening. You are here—and the Lord will find you out, and address a message to your soul if you will but pay heed to it.

She did not come because it was her habit, but *she did come because there was some kind of trouble at home*. Things were not very happy at home for the wife of Jeroboam. Her husband was terribly concerned, for their little child was sick. So she came to the prophet. If nothing else will bring people to church we may be thankful that sometimes the Good Shepherd sets His dogs of trouble upon them, and drives them to church. Some people never go to church until they are in trouble. Some people have no larger conception of religion, than that it is useful in the time of real distress.

I remember once going to a funeral when the undertaker expressed his deep sympathy with me. I said, "I am not aware that I am in need of special sympathy. What do you mean?" "Your particular calling, sir." "In what particular does it call forth your sympathy?" "I have always thought it was such a melancholy thing to be a minister"! And that from an undertaker! One of Dickens' characters, Mark Tapley, who had a reputation for being invariably cheerful when under the necessity of earning his living, and desiring to do something that would do him credit, thought if he could only find a job as an undertaker's assistant, he might really earn credit for his cheerfulness.

But in all seriousness this undertaker sympathized with me, and I said, "I should like to say without offence that it has always been my impression that the undertaker and gravedigger monopolized gloom", to which he replied, "We are called in when the worst has happened, but you come in before to try to comfort the sorrowing."

I remember a little boy who had the same idea. When I was a Pastor in Hamilton I was walking down the street one day when a little lad said, in a whisper loud enough for me to hear, "Say Jack, there must be somebody dead down this street: there goes the minister"!

That is the conception some people have of religion, that it is useful in the time of trouble. It is! It is! That idea is not without some foundation in fact, because the only time some people become religious is when they are in trouble. A certain Anglican clergyman told me some years ago that he was astonished at the number of Anglicans there were in the city. "I never know anything about them", said he, "until I am asked to conduct the funeral." I know it is a terribly inadequate idea of religion. I know that it is an insult to Him Who said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Notwithstanding, this is the view many entertain.

He condescends in grace to meet us where we may be met; hence many people come to church because they are in trouble, because they have no other place to which they may go. It is probable there are some here to-night under those circumstances. You have tried many things, like

the woman who "had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." Thus you made up your mind that you would go to church. I hope the Spirit of God will find you for me, and not only find you, but discover your heart and conscience; and that the word of God may prove "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

I do not know what your trouble is, if trouble has driven you here, as it drove this woman to the prophet.

Singularly enough, *this woman came to church because her husband sent her*. I know husbands who have tried to keep their wives from church, but in this particular instance Jeroboam sent his wife to the prophet. Perhaps one of you here is out of sorts, and your husband said to you, "Why don't you go to church?" "I will go if you will go with me." "No," he replied, "but you go in any case." Some people think that church is a good place for people of sorts, and so it is. We are all out of sorts, out of tune, and badly in need of the redeeming grace of our God.

It may be some wife has come this evening because you thought it might be *more comfortable in church than at home*. Oh, these men! What uncomfortable companions they can be sometimes! Even professing Christian men—"professing", I say—may be very awkward to live with. A friend told me that he once heard a man get up in prayer-meeting to testify to what the Lord had done for him. He did not know his wife was there, and he said, "Before I was converted I was like a great grizzly bear"—and his wife, sitting in the back seat, spoke up and said, "And you are not very much better now". There are men who are just about as agreeable companions as grizzly bears. Some women may be excused for going anywhere to get out of the society of men of that type. You may have come from a home where things are all awry. You said before coming, "I am not much attracted by any church, but nothing can be worse than where I am, so I will go." And here you are.

This woman came because the prophet had been associated with her husband in one of the great crises of his life. Years had passed very probably since Jeroboam had seen Ahijah, but he remembered the day when, as a younger man, the great responsibility fell upon him of being appointed king, and, as leader of the ten tribes, he was borne triumphantly to the throne in fulfilment of the prediction which this same prophet had uttered.

I have known people to come to church—even to hear me—because at some earlier time I had married their second cousin, or had conducted a funeral in the family. Strange influences play upon human life, and God, in His sovereign mercy, makes use of all these things to bring people under the sound of the gospel. This woman came, sent of her husband, because he had been associated with the prophet at a time of great crisis in his life. Perhaps he thought within himself, "He may have some word of comfort for me in this hour of trial."

I imagine *this woman came with a very curious interest in the prophet*. She may have wondered what he looked like, what his voice would be like, whether he were tall or short.

All sorts of people come to Jarvis Street Church. But you have heard strange reports about this preacher. If I had an album of the things that have been said I could

entertain you for some time. I see a brother down there smiling at the recollection of his own impression. When we were holding our services in Massey Hall this man attended. He told me afterward, "I saw a man come on to the platform, and turned to my companion and enquired who he was, and where Dr. Shields was. When told you were he, I could not believe my eyes. I had thought of you as being a very short man, and notwithstanding your narrowness religiously, a very broad man physically, a man with a beard and a moustache of a very heavy character—and all standing on end, very much like a human porcupine. I really expected to see a replica of Leon Trotsky."

I do not know why you came. I do not care if you came with just such curious interest in the preacher. I felicitate you on being here—not to hear me, but to hear some message from the Lord. Who knows but for you this may be the crisis-hour of your history? Who knows but this may be the parting of the ways, the one great opportunity for you to decide whether you are going to heaven or to hell, whether you will choose Christ or Barabbas?

II.

This woman came, but let me tell you *HOW SHE CAME*.

She came disguised as to her dress. She did not dress as a queen, but she put on the garments of a peasant woman, so that the prophet would never guess who she was; because her husband had strictly enjoined her that she was not to be known as the wife of Jeroboam. Therefore it was necessary for her to wear a complete disguise.

I do not suppose we have anybody here deliberately disguised, unless it be that there is a particular dress of which you are very fond, and which some of your friends know, and you have said, "If I were to put that dress on, someone would recognize me at a distance; I think I will wear another, and unless I get close to someone I know, people will never know I have been there." That may be so. Even the ordinary clothes we wear are sometimes a disguise. The clothes we wear to go to church, what amiable spirits they cover! What a lot of agreeable-looking people you are! I cannot see any sour-looking people here. You all look as though you might be very agreeable to live with. Of course, I have not lived with you! You look as though you hadn't a bad temper, and as though you never lost what you have. But if you did, perhaps someone would soon return it without asking a reward! When people are arrayed in their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes they are rather presentable, are they not?

It may be some woman is here this evening who looks very attractive, but who has left someone at home smarting from the wounds inflicted by a cutting tongue; who said some sharp, acid thing before leaving to come to church. Nobody would guess it to look at you, but I wonder if you did? I look out on this congregation tonight and I see some very motherly-looking souls here. You look as though you would be very happy with the children about you. But perhaps your sweetness is reserved for other people's children, and you are a perfect terror to your own. I wonder if you are? I wonder if your children—I know they will when they are small—when they are older, will climb up into mother's lap, put their arms about your neck, and speak words of tenderness to you? Has your treatment of them been such that they look upon mother as the best friend in the world? Or are you alienating their sympathies? I wonder if, in a year or two, when they need your help most, they will

go down the wrong road because of your abrupt speech and display of temper?

You look a very comfortable lot of people, as though anybody could be happy where you are. But, as I say, I do not live with any of you. If your outward appearance is a disguise, "why feignest thou thyself to be another?" As we were singing just now, you heard a very sweet voice near you, and it may have crossed your mind how pleasant it would be to be called to dinner by a voice like that. And perhaps the man who is called to dinner by that voice does not appreciate the music! How often have I known of men who used terms of endearment toward their wives when there was company at dinner, who used harsh and angry speech when no one was around.

What disguise have you? If the clothes you wear on Sunday, left hanging in the closet during the week, could speak, when perhaps you are careless of your appearance, with no effort to make home happy and bright when the poor man comes home tired by his efforts to keep a roof over your head and his head and those of the children, what a tale they would tell! When a man finds, instead of a "little bit of heaven", a little bit of something else, if those clothes that disguise you on Sunday could speak, they would say to you, "Why feignest thou thyself to be another?"

This woman was disguised as to her character. She was really the queen, but she came as only an ordinary woman, having no relationship to the king upon his throne. It was not only her dress that formed a disguise, but she was especially charged to conceal the fact that she was the wife of Jeroboam. Thus she came.

How many people come to church in false characters! For instance, you are a church member, you profess to be a Christian; and in your heart of hearts some of you know you have never been born again; you know you are not a new creature in Christ; you know that you have no right to come to the Lord's Table, and take the bread and drink the wine; you know that your religious profession is nothing but an empty sham. You know that, and yet you appear as a church member.

I do not know how often, when I have asked someone if he were a Christian, he has said to me, "I am a church member." That does not mean you are a Christian. Thousands of people in this city are church members who do not know the alphabet of the gospel. I fear me there are ministers in this city—not one but many—who have never been converted. I cannot understand how some ministers preach as they preach, if ever they have known what it is to be cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. It is possible, I say, to disguise ourselves as to our character, and to assume positions to which we have no title in fact and in truth. I might multiply instances of that. There are religious professors of all sorts, men who hold office in the church, elders and deacons, who have never been regenerated. I wonder if that is true of any member of Jarvis Street Church. I am not responsible for other churches: I am in some measure responsible for being faithful to you. You have professed faith in Christ, you have been buried in the waters of baptism in the likeness of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ: but unless you have in reality put your faith in Christ; unless you have, by the power of the Holy Ghost, been made over again into a new creature, the fact that you have been baptized and are a member of the church will not save you. What I want to get at this evening is the facts of

the case. Are you really what you profess to be, or are you feigning yourself to be another, either by the dress you wear, or by the characters you profess?

This woman was disguised as to her gifts. If she had come with costly presents the prophet might have wondered whence she came, but anybody could bring "ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey". That would not indicate that she was a woman of wealth, or that she was related to a man of position and prominence. She came with these simple presents to the prophet as a further disguise.

We may disguise ourselves by our works. How many people there are who flatter themselves that because they carry a basket on their arm to the poor, they are therefore doing something that will commend them to God! It may be only a few loaves of bread and some cracknels. "It is very simple, but I do the best I can. What I have, I share with others." That is well enough, and never was there a day when it was more necessary that that should characterize the true Christian than our day. But the basket on your arm may be as much a disguise as the dress on your back. It may be an attempt to appear what you are not at heart.

I may not have penetrated your disguise yet. There are people who disguise themselves with a "cruse of honey". I have known many people of honeyed speech. How "dear" we are! How "sweet" is some man's wife—when the neighbours are in! I have no objection to your calling your wife, "Darling"—but I would rather would do it when you are alone. I should have more confidence in you if you reserved that sort of thing for the time when you are alone with your wife. Why parade the honey all the time? In my experience as Pastor I have been brought into contact with many perfectly satanic persons who had honeyed smiles, smiles that beamed as though the very radiance of heaven were upon them—and yet in their heart of hearts there was little of heaven about them.

Thus people assemble in God's house: "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not." They bow in prayer, they sing the hymns of praise, they seem to be worshipping; but their hearts are far from God. That is how this woman came to church.

III.

Shall I tell you WHAT SHE HEARD WHEN SHE GOT THERE? It is evident that both *she and her husband had an innate fear of the truth.* They were afraid of being recognized for what they were. Hence the disguise. What a sad thing it is that we should be afraid of the truth! "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

I heard of a man coming home from the "four corners" in the country once with a terrible tale of what the neighbours were saying about him. His wife—wifelike—tried to comfort him. She said, "I would not trouble about that, so long as you know it is not true." "But I know it is true! That is the trouble", saith he.

Of course it is! That is the thing that disturbs people. That is why some people are afraid to come to Jarvis Street Church. I have told you of a deacon I once had who complained of my preaching. He said, "Do you know what some people say about you? They say they can go to such a church, feel very comfortable, and come away thinking this old world is not so bad after all; 'I am rather glad I am in it.' They can go to another church and come away saying, 'I sometimes have a feeling that I am rather mean, but after hearing that preacher tell me that the worst of a man is on the outside, I feel I am a pretty good fellow.' But when they go home after being at Jarvis Street they say they cannot sleep for a week."

I wish I could deserve that reputation. I know many people who ought to stay awake for a week—and longer than that; they ought to stay awake until they get right with God.

What did Jeroboam's wife hear? Only the truth. Only the word of God. "that liveth and abideth for ever". "Come", said the Samaritan woman, "see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" "How did that preacher find out so much about me?" says someone whom the sermon has hit. I will tell you how this preacher found out about his congregation: he had a talk with the Lord, and He knew who would be at church.

You students who hear me, mark this: this is the secret of effective preaching. "The Lord said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman—You will not know her, Ahijah, but I know she will be there, and I will give you the sermon to deliver to her."

When Jeroboam's wife came she heard something: she heard the truth. If you have been discovered this evening I bid you beware what you do with the message. Beware what you do with it. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?" If God has found you out, if the word of God has pierced "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart", if He has found you out, face the facts, and settle with Him.

I think I will tell you a story I told the students in my Homiletics Class a week or so ago. One Saturday night as I sat in my study after the tea hour, having, as I supposed, prepared my message for the morning, the sermon seemed to lose all interest, and I soon knew it was not the message for Sunday morning. I was a young preacher, and had had little experience, and how, at that late hour, to find another message I did not know. I knelt before the Lord and said, "If Thou hast taken away this message, give me another." As I prayed there came into my mind this text; "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him . . . Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Sunday morning came but a few hours later; and I preached from that text. I was conscious of the presence of the Lord, but there were no outward signs of blessing. Later in the week I got an anonymous letter from a mem-

ber of the church, who said she was to undergo an operation that might cost her her life. She said it was not necessary that she should identify herself, but asked that I pray. Thursday afternoon a man came to see me whom I knew very well, and enquired, "Did you get an anonymous letter this week from someone who was to have an operation?" I said that I received such a letter, and he said it was sent by his wife. "The operation was to have been to-day", he said; "there was no time to ask the church to pray because there would not be a meeting, so we wrote to you. But the doctor has postponed the operation until Friday. He says it is a serious operation, but that there is a chance of her coming through. For myself, I fear it is a remote chance. My wife would like to see you if possible this afternoon, that you may pray with her before the operation."

I went to see this lady. They had rather an unusual family. Most of the children were grown, and two or three of the older ones were married; but there was a little curly-headed boy of about four years. He had nephews and nieces who were older than he, for between him and the next child there were many years. He was the idol of his parents, as well as of the older brothers and sisters.

This woman told me that she had gone before the Lord when the doctor gave his verdict, and had surrendered her dear ones one after the other. "Then came my husband, and I said, 'Yes, he can do without me.' I yielded him to the Lord's care. Then I came to my curly-headed boy, and there was a fight. For hours I fought, and I could not be resigned. Sunday morning I said to my husband, 'Let us go to church. I think I am strong enough, and it may be the last time that I shall ever go.' We were a little late in getting away", she said, "and as we were entering the door you rose to announce your text; even before we were seated the text reached me, 'And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him . . . Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.' Before the sermon was over, deep peace settled upon my spirit; I had made my surrender; I had given up the lad to the Lord; and now, perfectly resigned, I am going to the operating-table to-morrow. But I thought I would like you to pray with me."

We did pray, and she recovered. So far as I know, she is still living. She may be listening to-night.

Thus does the Lord sometimes speak through His servants—sometimes in comfort, sometimes for the conviction of the soul.

The strange thing about this is that Jeroboam's wife disguised herself as she came to a blind preacher. Ahijah was blind, and yet she heard this salutation, "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings." All preachers are blind in that respect. I do not know where you live, you who are listening. I do not know anything about your private life. In that respect, this prophet might be a blind man; and if any word of mine has found its way to your conscience, put the responsibility somewhere else. It is not Ahijah: it is Ahijah's God Who speaks.

What did she hear? She heard that the little child would die; she received a message of judgment. Said the prophet, "Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the Lord
(Continued on page 20)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 7

Feb. 12th, 1933

FIRST QUARTER.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS CONFUSION RESULTING FROM DEPARTURE FROM GOD.

Lesson Text: Judges 17-21.

Golden Text: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—Matt. 4:10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Ex. 20:1-17.

Tuesday—Prov. 11:1-11.

Wednesday—Matt. 4:1-11.

Thursday—Rom. 1:18-25.

Friday—Matt. 18:15-20.

Saturday—Micah 5:1-7.

I. MICAH'S IMAGE AND PRIEST, (17:1-13).

The chapters composing this lesson form an appendix to the book of Judges, the incidents recorded taking place at an earlier time in the history of that period. They are, therefore, not chronologically arranged. The whole period was one in which each man did that which was right in his own eyes, (v. 6), and the consequences of such a state are graphically related. Using this descriptive statement as a text, one may show the reason for the condition, in the departure of the people from God, and the evils arising therefrom, such as the loss of the presence of God, the lack of understanding of His will, the loss of His favour, and help, the lowering of the standard of life, the insecurity of life and property, and the committing of evil deeds, such as robbery, fighting, idolatry, and kindred acts, resulting in misery and loss of life, and leading eventually to the coming of divine judgment upon the people. Note also the natural tendency of man to drift away from God, contrary to the theory of evolution, but in agreement with the teaching of scripture, (Is. 53:6). His salvation depends on God. Observe the nature of the divine plan.

In the story of Micah we have the account of a religious man who sought to serve God, but in the wrong way. Instead of following the directions of the law and worshipping God in the central sanctuary, he erected his own house of worship, and placed images therein, the whole possibly a model of the sanctuary of Shiloh. Note the number who act similarly, as in Roman Catholicism, under the impression that God can be worshipped through the use of external objects, when such a way is contrary to the divine command, (Ex. 20:4). In the early days God was worshipped on the basis of sacrifice, (Lev. 1:4), in these days through His Son, the Antitype of the sacrifice, (1 Pet. 3:24, 25), His worship being spiritual in nature, (John 4:24). Note Micah's location, (v. 1), the

restoration of the stolen money, (v. 2), the making of the images, (vs. 3, 4), Micah's religious house, and his son priest, (v. 5), the state of the country, (v. 6), and the Levite priest, (vs. 7-13). Observe also the desire of unregenerate men for material vehicles of worship. It is generally the case that the farther from God the greater is the desire for outward ceremonies in religious services.

II. THE REMOVAL OF THE DANITES, (18:1-31).

To each tribe had been allotted a certain part of the promised land, but, for some reason or other, possibly due to departure from God, the tribe of Dan had not received its full portion, (v. 1). This would mean possibly some overcrowding in their territory, leading to a desire for the possession of more land. Spies were sent out to investigate, (v. 2), who travelling northward visited the house of Micah, (v. 3), and receiving what they considered a favourable answer from the Levite, (vs. 5, 6) they departed and came to Laish, where in a fertile spot, they discovered a company of Zidonians dwelling in a quiet and careless manner, (v. 7). Returning to their brethren they informed them of their discovery, (vs. 8-10), and they, to the number of six hundred armed men with their families, set out for the place, (v. 11). On their way, being informed of Micah's priest and religious images, they take possession of the same, (vs. 12-21). Being pursued by Micah they threaten him, he returns, and they proceed to the capture of the coveted territory, settle therein, and set up Micah's image, (vs. 22-31).

Concerning this incident several things may be observed. First, the working out of the evil principle that might makes right, and to the strong go the spoils. This is only too much in evidence these days in various spheres. It manifests a lack of a sense of justice, and of the fear of God, as well as a gross disregard for the rights of others. Note also may be made of the lack of the consciousness of sin, and of the religious feeling of the Danites even when they were doing wrong. Religion which condones wrong-doing is not of God; that which is of Him leads to right living.

III. THE LEVITE OF MOUNT EPHRAIM, (19:1-30).

This incident recorded in this chapter gives evidence of a low moral condition among a section of the people of Israel, and shows clearly the evil condition of society due to the lack of fear of God, and central governmental control. The record informs us of several particulars. First, the lack of a king, then the residence of the Levite, (v. 1), the departure of the concubine, (v. 2), the husbands' journey of reconciliation, (v. 3), the success of his mission, his departure for home, (vs. 4-10) and his fearful experience in Gibeah, (vs. 11-30). Concerning this observe the eastern custom of wayfarers lodging in the street, (v. 15), the invitation of the old man and its acceptance by the Ephraimite, (vs. 16-21), the demand of the wicked men of the city, (vs. 22), the weakness of the master of the house in offering to surrender the women, (vs. 23, 24), the sinful action of

the Levite in bringing his concubine forth unto the men, and their wicked conduct toward the woman resulting in her death, (vs. 25-27), which was made known to Israel in a rather singular, yet effective and dramatic manner, (vs. 28-30).

Two things stand out distinctly in this incident; one the wickedness of the men of the place, and the other the callousness and lack of chivalry on the part of the Levite, and the man of the house in relation to the women. They ought to have defended them to the last, even to the extent of life itself. Explanation may be given, and emphasis laid upon the proper attitude of men toward women. In the conduct of the men there is evident the wickedness of the human heart. When men forsake God there is no depth to which they may not sink. These were Benjamites, people of God, sunken to the level of the heathen whom they had displaced. Man's only safety from the power of sin lies in obedience to the will of God. Note the nature of sin as failure to reach the mark, transgression of God's law, and crookedness, (Ps. 32:1-2), and the awful possibilities resident therein, as well as the consequences attached thereto now, and hereafter.

IV. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE BENJAMITES, (20-21).

The method used by the Levite to call the attention of the Israelites to the murder of his concubine was effective to the extent of gathering the people together in a great assembly, (20:1-2). To those assembled the Levite rehearsed the crime, (vs. 3-7), leading on the part of the host to the decision to send an army against the wicked city, (vs. 8-11). To the Benjamites the request was sent to deliver up the guilty persons, but refusing to do this, fighting took place between the army of Israel and that of Benjamin, (vs. 12-21). At first the Benjamites were successful, (vs. 21, 25), but eventually Israel conquered, and slaughtered many of their opponents, (vs. 35; 46-48). After the heat of battle was over the Israelites regretted the consequences, in the almost total extinction of a tribe of Israel, and inasmuch as all the women of Benjamin had been slain and they had sworn that they would not give their daughters unto the Benjamites for wives they were in a quandary concerning the perpetuation of the tribe, (21:1-4). The matter was solved in a two-fold way. First, through the action at Jabesh Gilead, (vs. 8-15), and then through that at Shiloh, (vs. 19-23).

The ravages of sin are again manifest in this tribal warfare, and fearful slaughter of brethren, women and children. When men's passions are aroused desperate deeds are done for which they later repent, as in this case. Punishment, no doubt, was necessary, but it went too far. Note the mistake of Benjamin in supporting the guilty persons, (20:13). Sin should never be condoned, and the guilty should not be supported in their sin. Observe also the manifest lack of central government control, and the illegality of action supported by Israel (21:20, 21). God's way is the best way for nations as well as for individuals, (Prov. 13:24).

The Union Baptist Witness

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THE SPRINGFIELD CHURCH.

It has been many months since we have reported upon the work which goes steadily forward at Springfield, where Rev. J. K. Yalland advises that there is much to encourage him as he ministers. The district has, however, been visited by severe epidemics, which have considerably effected the church attendance, but with the waning of these enemies, the church is nearly filled again, and many new scholars are enrolled in the Bible School.

Mr. Yalland is of the opinion that the Lord will shortly give them a reaping time at Springfield. Again we ask the prayers of the readers of the "Gospel Witness" that there may be a time of revival blessing experienced, and that the enemy of men's souls will not be successful in hindering it.

OUR COMFORT IS OF GOD.

(Eileen Priddam Baillie.)

Last February, Mrs. Eileen Priddam Baillie, wife of Pastor D. H. Baillie of the Nissouri churches, suffered an attack of influenza, from which she never wholly recovered, and on Monday, January 2nd, 1933, she was called Home. Those days of suffering were patiently borne and her faith in God supreme through the days of trial. Mrs. Baillie was baptised in the Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, and to her joy she was able to listen in to the services Sunday after Sunday. Her interest in the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec and the work which the Lord had given it was always keen, and when the students of the Toronto Baptist Seminary were working at Mitchell during the past summer, she followed their labours prayerfully. The memory of the girls' visit with Mrs. Baillie will not be forgotten, and her testimony will be remembered wherever she was known. The leaving of the little year-old son, Harvey, must have been particularly hard, but we remember that the little lambs are dearer to the heart of the Saviour than to the hearts of earthly parents, and so through the years may the double benediction of his mother's love and His mother's Saviour keep him in the Paths of Peace.

To Pastor Baillie and the members of the family the sincere sympathy of the Union is expressed.

A SHORT ITINERARY.

Rev. H. L. Davey is expecting to visit several of the churches within the next two or three weeks. He will be with Rev. H. E. Buchner at First Regular Baptist Church, Trenton, on Sunday morning, January 29th, and with Pastor R. J. Armstrong at the Belleville Regular Baptist Church for the evening service on the same day. Then on Tuesday,

January 31st, and Wednesday, February 1st, Mr. Davey will be at Bethel Church, Orillia; on Friday, February 3rd, Mr. Davey will visit the Cannington Baptist Church, and on Sunday, February 5th, he will be at Shenstone Memorial Church, Brantford, Ontario, for both services. Other appointments are being made, and it is possible that Mr. Davey will be able at this time to visit many of the churches which he could not visit last fall.

THE JANUARY BULLETIN.

It has been necessary for another set of the January issue of The Bulletin to be run, and we are delighted that the requests for the leaflet have been so numerous. May we ask that those who have been able to trace blessing through the Missionary Bulletin, or who have personally had the joyful experience of leading souls to Christ, tell us that we may pass the news along? We heard this week of one intercessor who spends the time when riding in the street-car in praying for the work as requested by The Bulletin. She finds the letter easily fits her purse and serves as a splendid reminder.

ATTENTION!

CHURCH TREASURERS

will greatly help the work of the Union and the Executive Board if they will forward without delay all Mission monies designated for the Union Mission enterprises to the Secretary-Treasurer,

REV. W. E. ATKINSON,
337 Jarvis St., Toronto.

REMEMBER LITTLE DANNY BOY.

We have just heard from Ottawa that Danny has been quite ill with a heavy cold. We believe that he is on the mend now but that he is still in the hospital, and Mr. and Mrs. Davey have been much concerned lest the little chap so dear to their hearts should suffer seriously from this ailment. Even a mild Canadian winter is not kind to a little one coming directly from his home in the tropics.

SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR.

From a letter received from Mrs. Mellish on the 13th of this month, she tells us that often her mind reviews her departure from Canada and pictures the farewells. She expresses her feelings when she left her homeland two years ago as being somewhat of the nature of those which must well up in the hearts

of one who is making a last farewell. Mrs. Mellish felt that the miles which would separate her would completely overwhelm her and she said by the time she had reached England the distance from that country to Canada seemed limitless. At the Geah Bar Zondo Station, the Station which is buried among native villages, in the heart of Liberian bush, it is altogether different, she does not seem so separated from us, but day by day she spans the distance in thought and by prayer.

When visiting the Beach and taking in as much as eye can see of that great rolling ocean across whose expanse lies South America, Mrs. Mellish tells us of how she thinks of her friend, Miss Alberta Jennings, and she wonders if Miss Jennings ever has the same experience. How near and yet how far apart they labour, each with the same purpose although in different lands and among a different people.

ANNUAL WINTER CONFERENCE

Of Regular Baptist Churches of Montreal and Ottawa District

With Emmanuel Church

(Mr. ROY HISEY, Pastor)

350 Woodland Ave., Verdun, Que.

Thursday, February 2nd, 1933

Programme:

Chairman: Rev. M. Doherty, Buckingham, Moderator; Pianist, Mr. Brodie Jamieson, Montreal.

Afternoon Session.

2.00 Devotional Period, Pastor C. Hardy, Westport.

2.30 Address of Welcome, Pastor R. Hisey, Verdun.

Necessary Business.

3.00 Address: "Our Missionary Obligation", Mr. S. Goldsworthy, Lachute. Offering. Vocal Duet.

3.45 Praise and Testimony, Rev. R. E. Jones, Sawyerville.

4.15 Address: "The Holy Spirit", Rev. James Hall, Ottawa.

5.30 Supper.

Evening Session.

7.30 Devotional Period, Rev. A. St. James, Montreal.

8.00 Address: "The God-Planned Life", Pastor L. Hisey, Gore.

Vocal Duet.

Offering.

Vocal Duet, Mrs. A. Rawlings and Mrs. J. Horrel.

9.00 Evangelistic Address, Rev. F. W. Dyson, Dalesville and Lachute. Benediction, Rev. Jules Danthony, Montreal.

THE WIFE OF JEROBOAM.

(Continued from page 17)

God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, and rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes. But hast done evil above all that were before thee—I cannot trust you, Jeroboam. I will take the child home; I cannot let you bring him up; I will put him where he will be safe. The child will die."

I wonder if that is not the explanation of not a few babies' funerals? I know this: I have seen many parents whom I thought should not be trusted with the tender lives of little children, and many homes that seemed to me unsafe for their upbringing. Think of a child's hearing oaths from his father's lips! Think of a child's having a mother who never teaches him to pray! Think of godless parents trying to bring up a child at any time, but especially in a time like this! What wonder that God plucks these flowers from His garden, and takes them to Himself; their parents are too godless for Him to trust His children with.

As for the rest: there was nothing but judgment. Jeroboam and his wife had sinned, and they had made other people to sin. There was no good thing in them. "Go home," said the prophet, in effect, "and tell your husband that the clouds of judgment are black, and that they will soon break upon you."

That is true of all of us by nature. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." The only good thing there can be in any of us is that which the Spirit of God works in us: "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ", ere the judgment falls.

I have a better message than Ahijah had for Jeroboam. I preach to you the gospel. I tell you that Jesus Christ

has anticipated all our folly, and all our sin. "The Lord hath made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all." He has borne the judgment for us. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." If you will but trust Him, and open your heart to Him, thy sins, which are many, shall all be forgiven. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will wash them all away, and you shall have fulfilled in your experience His promise, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." God send us home washed in the blood, made new by the power of divine grace!

Let us pray:

O Lord, we beseech Thee, by Thy gracious Spirit, make us willing in the day of Thy power. May many this evening yield themselves to Christ, and, in yielding, bare their hearts to Him. Help them to pray, Hear Thou the prayer that goeth not forth out of feigned lips. Save us from ourselves. Make this a night of salvation, for Thy name's sake, Amen.

**REV. WM. FRASER'S ARTICLE ON THE
OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT.**

Our front page article of last week by Rev. Wm. Fraser, of Windsor, Ontario, dealing with the Oxford Group Movement, has met with a very wide acceptance, and will immediately be put in pamphlet form. It will be a companion to the lecture announced above, and will be of the same size, but of eight pages instead of forty. The price of single copies will be five cents, but we are not yet able to announce the price of this pamphlet in larger numbers. This pamphlet may be obtained within a week from this date, either from: Rev. Wm. Fraser, 207 Curry Ave., Windsor, Ontario; or from THE GOSPEL WITNESS Office, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto, Canada.

THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT ANALYZED

AN ADDRESS BY DR. T. T. SHIELDS

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