

The Gospel Witness

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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"THE DAY OF SALVATION"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, March 12th, 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

"I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee:
behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."—2 Corinthians 2:6.

Prayer before the Sermon

We rejoice, O Lord our God, in Thy love. Though it surpasses all our powers of expression, though Thy love is more than tongue can tell, we rejoice that we may know the love of God that passeth knowledge. We thank Thee that many in Thy presence have been made partakers of the grace of life, that many have tasted that the Lord is gracious. We have come this evening that we may worship Thee, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Grant us a sense of Thy presence, we beseech Thee. We know Thou art here, for Thou hast already fulfilled to Thy servants the word upon which Thou hast caused us to hope; but help us to experience the fulness of blessing. Thou art here to bless Thy people, and to quicken those who are dead in trespasses and in sin.

Vouchsafe Thy blessing to all who share this service by radio. We know not who they are, or where they may be, but we know that among them there are those whose hearts are tender toward God; and we beseech Thee to find among them those who as yet know not the Lord. Make it a night of blessing, a time of salvation.

We are about to open Thy Book, and to seek to understand Thy thoughts. We acknowledge our incapacity for response to spiritual things. We confess our entire dependence upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit. We invoke Thine aid. We remember how Thou didst meet with Thy disciples after the resurrection, and, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, Thou didst expound unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Thyself.

Draw near, O Lord, wherever men and women listen to the message of this hour: draw near to them and to us. We thank Thee that Thou art everywhere present, that Thou art not a God afar off. Thou hast come to us in the person of Thy Son, and we remember for our comfort this evening His word, It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you. We thank Thee that the Comforter is come to be our Teacher and our Guide. May He instruct us out of Thy Word. We thank Thee that He even gives us a capacity for an understanding of spiritual

things. We do not understand it, we cannot explain it; but we know that those dead in trespasses and sins do hear the voice of the Son of God, and live; we do know that the sheep upon the mountain, though they do not hear the voice of strangers, do hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. May the voice of God be heard by many a heart and conscience, that through this service here and elsewhere among the thousands whom we do not see, many may pass from death to life, and from the power of Satan unto God. Amen.

It is not surprising that a general departure from the Word of God on the part of the professing church should have resulted in many of its leaders entertaining religious conceptions that are utterly at variance with the teaching of the Bible. According to the modern view, one is sometimes led to wonder what is really the function of religion: whether it is designed mainly to bring in a better social order, whether its chief value is the shaping of the course of nations, or whether it is designed to minister to the individual directly at all.

For instance, I read an article in an evening paper last night—a paper that seems to be essentially anti-Christian in its general attitude. There we are told that a man who even denies the existence of a personal God, who utterly rejects the Bible, and any sort of revealed religion, or religion of any sort, who scoffs at it all, is destined to a great and happy surprise when sometime he is to be welcomed beyond the River,—notwithstanding his infidelity. In the same article we are assured that a man whose whole doctrinal position is based upon the principle that Jesus Christ was not, and is not, God; who denies the scriptural doctrine of the Incarnation, of the virgin birth and atoning work of Christ—that that man is, in

principle, essentially one with another man who calls himself a Christian. Surely we have come to the day when religious teachers do set darkness for light, and error for truth, when the most axiomatic truths are boldly denied, and when we are told that it matters but little what one believes. What is the ordinary man to understand from such discussions?

Certainly in this place we "have not so learned Christ". We still believe in the inspiration and authority of the Bible.

What is the function of Christianity?

I.

I begin my exposition of the text this evening with the remark that CHRISTIANITY POSTULATES THE NEED OF A SALVATION OF SOME SORT; that that, in fact, is why God has visited men, why God came into the world in the person of His Son Jesus Christ.

But three or four years ago people on this continent, in Canada and the United States, were riding upon the crest of a wave of unexampled material prosperity. It was very easy to persuade men who were happily situated, as they were at that time, that the world was getting better. It is not difficult for a man with whom everything is prospering to believe, because of the fascination of the temporal, that the world is outgrowing its troubles, and that one may reasonably hope for some kind of utopia here. But surely now it must be admitted that there is something wrong with the world. He would be a bold optimist indeed who would advance in this day his theories about a happy solution of all our difficulties. In all nations, and in all departments of human thought, men are at their wit's end to know which way to turn. Certainly there is something out of centre, there is something gone wrong somewhere. One cannot believe that the world, as at present constituted, that human society as at present ordered in any nation, ours or any other, is ideal, or is even approximating what the Divine Author intended it to be.

What is that something that is wrong? What if salvation be defined in terms merely of the material and temporal? The nation to the south of us has awakened to a realization of the fact that in a material and temporal sense she needs a deliverer. And we at the north of the border are but little if any better off. We too are beset with difficulties. Think of this city of over seven hundred thousand people which must feed every day one-seventh of her population at the expense of the taxpayers. When in a city like ours one hundred thousand people are dependent upon public relief for their daily bread, surely one must admit that something is wrong. In parts of the United States—in the larger cities, and I suppose that is inevitable, that the larger the city the more acute the problem—there is even a larger proportion; and that in the richest nation on earth. I say, if salvation could be defined merely in terms of the physical and temporal, if we close our eyes and cease to think of the life beyond the grave, even then surely some kind of deliverance is needed.

One cannot help asking, What is the root of the trouble? Can you charge it to Anyone above? Can you say that God is to blame? The earth has not withheld her fruits. The harvests have been as bountiful as ever. The store-houses of the world are filled with grain. There is enough for everybody in this earth. It is so ordered that the earth does produce enough for every man and woman, boy and girl, to have sufficient for the maintenance of life. Yet

at this hour there are millions of people who are starving for want of bread. It must be admitted by thinking people that something is wrong.

Where will you place the blame? Our Communistic friends think they have a remedy. Our Socialistic theorists believe that in the state they may find salvation. Political economists of every shade of opinion each have their nostrum for the alleviation of the world's ills.

Is our economic system at the base of our trouble? No! It must be something more than a system. I read last week that the President of the United States—God bless him! I hope you pray for him every day—made an announcement through the government at Washington that unless things were remedied, the government would ascertain and publish the names of those who were hoarding gold. What! in a day of scarcity, in a day when millions starve! In a day when some simple creatures talk about "universal brotherhood", are there to be found men anywhere who hoard gold?

We read yesterday about the terrible earthquake in Los Angeles. Scarcely had the first tremors ceased, with buildings falling, thousands crying out in anguish because of their pain, and scores dead, than men began looting; and it became necessary to land forces from the warships in the Bay to take command of the situation. Yet we live in a day when men are all "brethren"! Well, I do not want my brethren to treat me after that fashion. Instead of the hearts of men being made tender by such a catastrophe, and filled with a desire to be of service, the natural evil, the inherent corruption, the very hellishness of human nature, comes to the surface.

I heard the inaugural speech of the President of the United States, in which he denounced the money changers of America. I could detect in that speech no suggestion that he had ever got the idea that the ideal of universal brotherhood had been attained. He seemed to think that men in high places could play the devil as well as men in low places.

What kind of salvation do we need? A better economic system? If all the wealth of the world could be pooled, and could be equally divided, money and goods, to-night, we should be as badly off as ever a month hence. It is not the system under which we live, it is not any particular form of government, that determines human welfare exclusively. They play a part; but there is something far deeper than that; and I affirm that the man who does not recognize that in this hour is a man who has not learned to think.

What if we define salvation in terms of nationality? My business then this evening should be to preach disarmament? Some man wins great applause by saying war is the great crime. Any properly-minded man must hate war with all his soul. I do. I hate it—but there is something I hate more than war, and *that is the necessity for it*. Somebody says, "There is no necessity for it." Is there not? There was a man down in Miami a few weeks ago who tried to kill the President-elect of the United States, and instead, shot the Mayor of Chicago. He was sentenced to be electrocuted the other day. What a pity! He ought to have been given his liberty! Why does not the preacher who prates about "universal brotherhood" denounce the electric chair and the whole system of punishment that awaits the law-breaker?

A while ago there were several banks looted in Toronto; one of them by two men. One was arrested in Canada,

and the other in the United States, and was brought back. At the trial one was sentenced to fifteen years in the penitentiary, and his brother to ten years. Why was the one meted out the severer sentence? As he sat in the prisoner's box one of his arms was in splints. Why? Because he had been shot by a policeman. Bad policeman! Naughty policeman! Why did he shoot? Because, if he had not, the bandit would have shot him—as he attempted to do.

Why do not these superficial preachers who talk about disarmament and the horrors of war condemn the arming of the police? Why do they not propose that our policemen be disarmed, that the doors of the jail be thrown open, and that our whole system of jurisprudence be scrapped, so that wicked scoundrels might be allowed to work their will? Why a government at all? Why policemen? Simply because of the principle enunciated in the book. "It (the law) was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come." The principle of law and order must be maintained, and when a nation becomes lawless, when a nation runs amuck, what will you do?

Why not let Germany have her own way? Would you not like to have to salute the Kaiser? Would you not like to be a subject of that country? You would have been subjected to her brutality had it not been for the principle of compulsion. I hate war, but I hate more strongly than I hate war that which makes war necessary. I am sorry policemen in this country have to carry revolvers; I do not like to see the revolver at a policeman's belt. But I hate still more intensely the criminal tendencies of human nature which make that necessary to the public welfare.

Do you not see that these modern preachers, who preach the salvation of a social order and of the nation, are missing the one and only thing that will ever prevent war, and that is a radical change, the regeneration, of the individual? Until you have a regenerated state that is no longer under law, but under grace, you must have law. And you will never have a regenerated state this side of the millennium.

And law is worth nothing without a penalty. Last week United States Congress passed a law which received the Executive's signature, a law which was designed for the regulation of men of importance, bank presidents, and so on, and there is attached to it a penalty of ten thousand dollars' fine or ten years in prison. Why any sort of penalty? Because there was never a law that was worth the paper it was written on, to which no penalty was attached—and the penalty is utterly valueless unless there be behind it a force adequate to enforce it.

The League of Nations a dead letter? I told you so. That is not polite, I know; but I never could understand how, philosophically, any man could believe there was salvation for the world from any kind of league that had not behind it a power adequate to compel men to do its will. I have nothing to say derogatory of the League of Nations. I think it is well to have such a court, in order that the passions of men may be cooled, and to avert conflict whenever and so long as it is possible. But we come to this at last, that human nature is of such a character that until it is changed it needs some controlling or compelling power external to itself.

I see no chance of making things better in the domestic realm, or anywhere else, apart from the grace of God.

To-morrow morning there will be some man and woman down in the court of domestic relations. The man has been playing the brute in some way or another, and the court will put him on his good behaviour and bind him over to keep the peace—and then his wife must try to live with him after that! He may not lay hands upon her, but who wants to live with a man who has to be "bound over to keep the peace"?

The gospel of the grace of God goes always to the root of the matter, and it teaches us that human nature is so bad there is no redemption for man unless he be born again. I know it is a small contribution that I can make, but I hold that the minister who preaches Christ's gospel to the individual, and seeks to bring him to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, involving a change of heart and of nature, is making a larger contribution to the world's weal than the man who discusses world economic theories—especially when he knows little or nothing about them. Christianity postulates the need of salvation. That is what it is for. This old world has been alienated from God, and it must needs be brought back again.

II.

On the basis of that major premise I proceed to say that SALVATION BELONGS TO A PARTICULAR DAY. This Word speaks of "the day of salvation". And this is "the day of salvation." What is "the day of salvation"?

What you observed in the ordinance of baptism you witnessed to-night. I know it is old-fashioned, but I repeat it: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; the payment of a price; the enduring of the penalty which you and I have incurred; the acceptance of that remission of sins which the death and resurrection of Christ have made possible. That is the gospel. Nothing less than that is the gospel. It is a proclamation of liberty to the captive, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, a proclamation of the "acceptable year of the Lord". This is the day of salvation. He died, rose again, and has ascended into heaven.

What are the characteristics of this "day of salvation"? First of all, *the Bible is the message*. I saw a photograph last week of the executive of the nation to the south of us signing a proclamation; that made it law. This is Heaven's proclamation to a bankrupt world; the divine signature is attached. It is the "word of God that cannot lie". It is the word nations need to hear. It is the word that legislators need to hear.

I published in THE GOSPEL WITNESS last week an address delivered by Senator Hughes in the Canadian Senate. I do not know Senator Hughes, but he has the most cordial invitation to come and preach in Jarvis Street pulpit any time he likes. I should like him to come and deliver the same address. He goes to the root of the whole matter, and places the responsibility for the present chaotic condition of the world upon universities and pulpits that have taught people to disregard the Word of God, to doubt the Deity of Christ, and His power to change men's lives.

This is the word of God, and we shall never get back to peace until the Book is given its proper place. This is the day of salvation. We have a message about which there can be no doubt. It is stamped with the authority

of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and has been corroborated by the testimony of nearly two thousand years. It has been put to the proof by countless millions of people; it has passed through martyr fires and dens of lions. It has survived every effort that man and devil have devised to destroy it. It is here to-day unmutated, the "word of God that liveth and abideth for ever". It is the gospel of salvation.

More than that: now at the throne, before the presence of the Father, *the crucified and risen Redeemer intercedes in our behalf*. That is characteristic of the day of salvation; and as long as Jesus Christ remains at God's right hand as an Intercessor for poor sinners the day of salvation shall last. That is the measure of it, His waiting at the right hand of God on high. He pleads for us to-night. Unworthy though we are, sinners though we be, though we have not a fraction of merit to plead as a reason why God should take account of us, we can come in the name of that perfect High Priest and plead our cause: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." That is characteristic of the day of grace: a gospel upon earth, and a Saviour and Mediator in heaven.

One other great fact must be borne in mind, namely, *this is the day of the ministry of the Holy Spirit*. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." But this is the dispensation of grace, and that means the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, wherein the Spirit of God waits to be gracious, to quicken dead souls, to illuminate the understanding of those whom the devil has blinded, to sanctify through the truth all who will receive the truth in the love of it, and thus by the power of His indwelling presence to transform us into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. This is "the day of salvation", I tell you; and it is the salvation we all need.

III.

Once more. As there is a "day of salvation," there is also AN ACCEPTED TIME: "I have heard thee in a time accepted." Our Lord Jesus said, when He opened the book in Nazareth, that He had come to "proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord".

Let me be personal for a moment. There are some people here this evening, and some who are seated before their radios listening to this message, who believe all that I have said. You dissent from none of it. Many will dissent, but I speak for the moment to those who will not. You say, "I believe that. I believe the Bible is God's word, that the message of the Bible is the gospel of the grace of God, that Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God, and that the Holy Ghost is here to bless those who will receive Him. I believe all that, and some day I intend to settle the matter of my soul's eternal welfare—in my own time." Some will say, "I am too young as yet. I want to have a little while in the world first, and then I will turn to God." I remember years ago preaching in a certain place, and one night as I gave the invitation at the close of the service, a man who was principal of a school in the neighbourhood, gripped the front seat in the intensity of his feeling, and said he wanted to be saved. The next

night he was as far away from God as ever. I said to him, "I thought you said you desired to be a Christian?" "I thought I did last night, but I have been reviewing my past and looking forward into the future. I have made certain plans, and I can see that a Christian profession would be incompatible, would be out of harmony, with those plans; therefore the matter of my relation to Christ will have to wait until I have attained my ambition in life, then I will give it attention."

There are many things which claim our attention. It may be there are some who are so depressed, who are in such desperate circumstances, who are unemployed, with no prospect for the future, that they say, "What is the use of my making a profession? If I had work, and were able to maintain myself, it might be all right; but I fear I should bring reproach upon the cause I should espouse." Whatever be the obstacle, whatever is in prospect which would lead you to postpone the acceptance of Christ, I point out to you that the fundamental error of which you are the victim is to assume that you can determine the time of your salvation. You will have to accept God's time. He will not allow you to make appointments for Him.

You are going to see a doctor to-morrow? How did you make your appointment? You enquired as to his office hours, and because he is a busy man you have conformed to his programme. You are going somewhere by train? If you sleep in I suppose you will telephone the station and say, "I have been detained; will you please hold the train for me an hour or so?" Is there any man here foolish enough to take such a course? No! You know these things run on schedule, and you have to adjust yourself to that schedule.

I have marked the difference between the underground system in New York and that of Old London. They both have their time, but when the trains come in at the New York stations, the conductor throws open the door and shouts, "Step lively! Step lively! Watch your step! Move on!" There is such a din that you want to close your ears, and run. I suppose the people "step lively" in response to his shouts. But in Old London, where John Bull does not talk very much, the train comes in, the doors are opened—and scarcely a word is said. The door is open for a fraction of a minute, it is closed, and the train goes out—and if you do not "step lively" you are left standing on the platform when the train is gone. It has its time appointed, and it does not wait. You must get on quickly, or be left standing on the platform.

My friend, what about the morning? Daylight comes earlier now, does it not? The evenings are a little longer too, and after a while we shall, I suppose, go back or forward to daylight-saving time. When we do, and all the town clocks are put forward, Old Sol will look down upon us with a smile and say, "You cannot change my time. I will get up at the usual time, and go down as usual." He has his time appointed, his accepted time. Let me remind you that when you are dealing with God you must come at His time. "Now is the accepted time." It is His time, not yours.

When the ark was preparing, and all was in readiness, God said to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark . . . and the Lord shut him in." Everyone who did not accept God's time was left outside.

This is "the day of salvation", and this is the "accepted time".

What time? Now! "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation." I do not know whether I shall ever preach again. I do not know whether you will ever hear another sermon. I know that is old-fashioned. But has it become old-fashioned for people to die? Is the grave-digger out of business? Are there no undertakers? Has death been voted out of human society? "*Now—Now—NOW—is the accepted time.*"

Sometimes when we see great evils stalking through the land we wonder that God is silent. Have you not wondered? I have. I have wondered that He did not rend the heavens and come down. But I read to you the explanation of it this evening: "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

There are some of my friends who tell me that when Jesus Christ comes the church will be caught away, and that after the church has been caught away, and the Spirit's ministry ended, the Jews are to be saved, and there is to be such a revival as the world has never seen; that the multitude which no man can number, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, are the fruits of that revival—after Jesus Christ has come. If that were so, I should still be perplexed—and more perplexed—at the delay of my Lord. If that were possible I should say, "O Lord, come now." Surely, surely, He ought to come now, if His coming could bring salvation to countless millions. Not so does the Word of God teach. We are to account that "the longsuffering of the Lord is salvation", because the Lord knows that when Jesus Christ comes the day of salvation will forever end. I affirm that that doctrine is a delusion and a snare. There is no salvation after Christ comes. *When He rises from His seat as Intercessor, and there is no longer anyone to plead before the throne of heaven, there will be no mercy for anybody.* Why does He wait? "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." There is no other time, no other day, but now. Now! Oh, my radio friends, is it to be *now* with you? Or shall it be, may it be, never? And you within these walls who have not yet received Christ, shall it be *now*? I know that it is God's time *now*. I know that He waits to be gracious *now*. I know He will save you *now*: I cannot promise you in His name that He will ever save you at any other time than now. "*Now is the accepted time.*" May He help you to receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour *now*.

Let us pray:

Bless to us, O Lord, our meditation upon Thy truth. Save us from the folly of postponing the consideration of these matters until another day. May this prove the accepted time, and the day of salvation. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

(Many responded to the invitation.)

ELI AND SAMUEL

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, March 9th, 1933.

*Sixteenth in a Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on
Biblical Theology which is included in the
Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary.*

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: 1 Samuel, chapters 2 and 3.

Last Thursday we glanced at the first chapter of the first book of Samuel. The object of these Thursday evening studies is not, of course, to treat any matter exhaustively—that is always impossible. Nor can we treat it with any degree of thoroughness. Our main object is that we may know, from these studies, something of the principal highways of Scripture. I suppose you have sometimes been in a strange city. The worst part of any city, as a rule, is roundabout the railway station. If you have had a little time to spend waiting for your next train, and you have walked roundabout a few streets, as a rule you have gained a very unfavourable impression of the city. When visiting it again, if you have gone up its main streets, and have walked through some of its great stores, you have said to yourself, "It is not such a bad place after all. I think I could find my way about here, and soon learn where to go to secure whatever I might need."

There are many professing Christians to whom the Bible is a strange city. They do not know their way about. They do not know where to find the great storehouses where the precious jewels are stored. The object of these hasty pilgrimages is merely that we may orient ourselves, that we may know where we are, so that when by and by meal time comes we shall know which road to take to find our way to a good restaurant or to anything else we may desire.

I.

The second chapter of the first book of Samuel begins with what is called "the prayer of Hannah", and yet it is a word of rejoicing and of praise. I think if you were to examine it you would find that larger space is taken to record Hannah's thanksgiving than was required to record her petition. Our thanksgiving ought at least to be in proportion to our petition. Many of us come to the Lord only when we have need of something—and when our need is supplied we forget to give thanks. I suggest that at your leisure you give these first ten verses a very thorough examination, and see how abundantly Hannah's heart is filled with thankfulness. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is said of God that He "inhabiteh the praises of Israel". "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright." The Psalmist said, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." So ought we to be ever praising the Lord.

I shall not take time to analyze this psalm of thanksgiving, but I recommend the students particularly to examine it very, very carefully, to see what it teaches of sound theology. Hannah was a woman. I do not suppose she had ever been to any kind of college, that she had been taught by any human teacher; but if you study this psalm of hers you will see that she knew God. She knew who He was, and what He was; and she was able to give

thanks for some of the great attributes of Deity. I shall not point them out to you—I may ask you students to point them out to me later. So examine these first ten verses, and see what they reveal of the character of God.

I content myself with this observation, that you cannot know God by reading about Him, any more than you can know any human personality by reading about him, or by occasionally meeting him. You may read the biography of a great man—I suppose we shall find all the magazines filled with biographical sketches of the new President of the United States. We shall be interested to know what sort of ties he wears, where he gets his suits, and in other matters of greater importance. But when you have read all you can about him, you will not know him.

Most people know how to be on their good behaviour in public. The only way you can know anyone well is to live with him. And that is the only way to know God. You cannot learn about God from a book. "Not from the Bible?" someone asks in astonishment. No! not from the Bible if the Bible be only a book, and we content ourselves merely with its statements of truth, with what it says about God; without knowing the Person that the Bible describes, we shall not know much about Him. Job had a very interesting experience with God, and he said in the end, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

The great principle coming out of those ten verses is that if you and I pray to God in our need, and receive answers to our petitions, and prove in our own experience how wise He is, how good He is, how mighty He is, how just He is, how faithful He is, we shall come to know God for ourselves—not the God of a Book only, but the God of our own experience, proved by our experience to be what He is revealed to be in the Book. Hannah knew God; and I suggest to you who will be ministers some day that when you call, in the course of your pastoral work, upon an old saint, a man or woman perhaps in a very obscure position, but a man or woman who for many years has walked with God, and has put His promises to the proof, and knows by a long and happy experience how gracious God can be—when you come into the presence of someone who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, allow yourself to become a student again. I hope you will always be students, but sit down in the presence of such an one and learn.

That is why many a humble man or woman who has had very little schooling knows far more about God than some supposedly learned theological professors. Understand, I am not minimizing the importance of the intellectual side of things. Know what the Bible says about God, for we can know God only through the Bible; but do not be content with a mere verbal acquaintance with Him; I mean, with an acquaintance with the words which describe Him. Know Him for Himself, as Hannah did.

II.

Then we come to the story of Eli, both a judge and a priest; and of his sons who were also priests because they were of the house of Levi, and were born to the priestly ministry. The rest of the chapter is a very sordid story. It tells how the sons of a good man went wrong.

Incidentally, you may learn that goodness is not transmissible. "Ye must be born again." It does not render one immune to evil to have had a preacher for a father.

Ministers' sons are proverbially bad! There are a few exceptions, of course, like Brother Brown! That is their reputation anyway, but it is only because they are usually more conspicuous than other people's sons.

Certainly the sons of Eli lived evil lives. They profited by their position, and took advantage of the people. Instead of contenting themselves with that which was rightfully theirs as priests, by law, they conducted themselves in such a fashion that they made the offerings of the Lord to be abhorred by the people. It is always an evil thing to make trade of religion.

When I was in London, Ontario, there was a certain firm in which appeared the names of two families. The family of each of the principals was fairly large, and they spread themselves through as many churches of the city as possible. There were no two members of either family who belonged to the same church. The husband belonged to one church, the wife to another, a daughter to another, a son to another, a second daughter to another, and so on. They distributed themselves through as many churches as possible in order to get all the business they could. If anything in the world is contemptible, that is.

But it was no worse than the conduct of the sons of Eli. They took more than their share, and commercialized religion. The people were made to stumble, and instead of presenting their offerings to the Lord with gladness and delight, they abhorred the offerings.

We here are all Levites. We belong to the royal priesthood. There is but one High Priest, and we all, "as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ". Let us see to it that our practices are in accord with our religious profession, and that we do not give occasion to others to mock at us, to stumble, because of our inconsistencies, our wrongdoing. It is a sad thing when men go into the ministry as a profession, as a means of livelihood. I hope none of you students will ever be guilty of that. If you do, I hope you will be on short commons until you are surfeited with it. I do not think you will.

In contrast with the conduct of Eli and his house, we are told of Samuel that he ministered before the Lord, being a child. He was visited annually by his father and mother, who brought him a new coat each year. We are told of Eli's declining years. It is a dangerous thing to outlive one's usefulness—as some preachers do. They get old, but they are quite sure when they are old that they are as vigorous as when they were young. I suppose we shall all be guilty of the same folly, if the Lord should spare us to grow old.

I remember meeting a prominent business man coming home from New York a few years ago. I really thought he was a man of sixty or sixty-five years of age. When I learned he had passed the four-score mark, and expressed my surprise, he looked at me quizzically and said, "That shows you know how to talk to an old man." I insisted that that was my frank opinion, that I really thought he was much younger. "I am not sure", he said, "old men like to be flattered, to be told they are young; and I think you are trying to please me."

Eli was old, but he retained his position and continued in office until he was ninety-eight years of age. He had had a long "innings", surely. Whatever he may have been in early years, certainly his authority over his sons in later years was practically nil, and brought only trouble

upon the people, and reproach on the name of the Lord Whom they professed to serve.

In the twenty-seventh verse there is a prophetic utterance and prediction that the day should come when the Lord would find him another priest, that Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, should both die in one day, and that God would find another priest to do His will.

I think it is of special value to young ministers to recognize that the position they are to occupy is one of very great responsibility. The ministry of the gospel in our day is at a discount. There was a day when ministers were respected; they were looked upon as among the principal moulders of public opinion. Their public ministry was regarded as having a certain educational as well as a religious value. They were respected because religion was respected, and as men occupying official positions they were looked upon as leaders in the community. I suppose there is no calling in life that has suffered such a decline in public estimation in the last quarter of a century as that of the ministry of the gospel. Ministers have themselves to blame for that, very largely—just as the sons of Eli had themselves to blame for dragging the office of the priest, with all the honour that might have attached to it, in the mire. Here and there you will find godly men, men of strength and ability, who stand out, and who retain in some measure the good name of the ministry; but they have to fight against the evil influence of those who have made it nothing more than the means of a livelihood.

When Mr. Fraser was with us, perhaps four years ago, an invitation came for me to attend a meeting of all the ministers of the city in the Central Y.M.C.A. I was out of town at the time, so Mr. Fraser went in my place. Those who spoke complained that the church was losing its grip upon the people, that it was no longer being supported as it once was because, apparently, it had lost the respect, for some reason, of the people. People were leaving the churches by the hundred, and it was almost impossible to hold them. These reverend gentlemen, the pastors of the city, discussed among themselves what means could be adopted to revive the public interest in the church. They suggested athletics, Sunday night movies, dramatic societies, theatrical performances, and all the rest of it. One of them was bold enough to say, "Gentlemen, we shall have to do something, for it has become with us a question of bread and butter"—and that in Toronto the good! I hope they will miss the butter—and if I had anything to say about it, the bread would be pretty thin, and stale too.

That attitude toward the ministry on the part of the people is deserved when the ministry lowers itself to the level which was characteristic of the priesthood of Eli's day.

We do well to remember that the Lord is never at a loss to find someone to carry on His work. I delight to trace through the Bible the operation of God's sovereign purpose of grace. We look upon the work that Mr. Roosevelt is doing now with interest. I suppose it is so complicated, and belongs to a realm of life to which most of us are strangers, that we are unable to understand all the implications of these great measures. But the one refreshing thing is to see that a man has at last arrived who is making himself felt. God brings a nation to such a state sometimes that people wait upon Him for someone to lead them out of the chaos, that He might providentially lay His

hand upon somebody as His instrument to bring deliverance.

That was so in Israel's day. The prophet came to Eli and gave him a message from the Lord: "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind."

Eli was a good man—and as weak as he was good. Let me say this to you budding preachers: I hope you will all be good. There is no place in the pulpit for anybody who is not a good man. But there are thousands of people who are good, who are not fit to be preachers. You must have strength, courage, resolution, determination, and enough personality to make people know when you arrive that a man has come. Try it out some time and see whether people know that you have arrived.

The late Dr. R. S. MacArthur, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New York City, told me of two assistants he had. They were both related to him, remote nephews, I believe. One was called Donald, and the other Peter. Donald was a very precise young man. He was very nice! Did you ever see a model in a window, one of those things on which to hang a suit of clothes that nobody on earth could wear? Donald was like that. He was such a lovely boy. Peter was Peter. Peter came first, and Donald afterwards. Dr. MacArthur, in relating his experiences with the two young men, said, "Peter was clumsy. He made many mistakes. But he could not come into a room without bringing something to pass. He would knock a chair over if he could do nothing else, but everybody knew that Peter had arrived; that he was there. Donald could come in and go out without anyone's even noticing his entrance or exit."

Eli was a good man, but he did not restrain his sons. Sometimes as pastors of churches you will have some restraining to do. You will have people in your church who will almost worry the life out of you. You will find some of the greatest saints who ever lived, and you will find some people who are not saints as yet! They may be Christians, but they are not perfected saints, and you will do well to remember that a pastor is put in the church "for the perfecting of the saints". And you will have plenty of work to do! If they are diamonds, they are diamonds in the rough. I remind you that ministers of the gospel need to be men of ability, men of personal force, men who can say, No, and mean it; and men who can say, Yes, and mean it; men whose whole characters are of such a quality that they cannot be ignored. A minister is not a mere cypher.

I have seen churches get into just such trouble as Israel got into, for the reason that the good man in the pulpit was only a "good" man; he let everything go at loose ends until by and by the church was like a skein of wool after a kitten had been playing with it—all because it had had no leadership.

There was no charge against Eli that he lived an ungodly life, that he ever did anything that was flagrantly wrong: the sole defect of his character and of his regime was that they were weak, and evil became rampant throughout his judgeship.

When things are dark, let us encourage ourselves by the reflection that God always has a little boy growing up somewhere. Samuel was not known in those dark days; he was only a little boy whom a pious mother had lent to the Lord, who ministered to Eli in his declining years. Nobody knew what was in that little boy,—but God knew. It was no accident he was there. He was there in fulfilment

of God's faithfulness in response to Hannah's prayer; and it was in the plan of God to raise him up for that day, to lead His people in the right way.

The thirty-sixth verse is a very significant one. You may have heard me quote it. The office of the priest was so degraded, and the descendants of the priest, the sons of Eli, were to be so reduced, that the prophet predicted that the time would come when they would come begging for silver and for bread, saying, "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

During our controversy of a few years ago a minister came into my office and said to me—it was at a time when churches were taking sides on this great issue as between Modernism and Evangelical Christianity—"If I should come over to your side, what could you do for me? Could you get me a position?" Sometime later that same man said to another minister somewhat younger even than himself, "Do not line up with Dr. Shields; he will not do anything for you." "I am not expecting him to, but how do you know?" "I know because I asked him, and he did not do anything for me." When he asked me if I would get him a position I said, "You know that it is not within the power of a Baptist minister to get another a position, but if I had the power of the Pope himself I would not do anything for you. I do not want you on our side at any price. I bid you good afternoon." He went out whipped. What a contemptible thing! "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." I expect that is all he ever received—and that was too much!

III.

We have a very interesting story here. That dark chapter closes, and Samuel is ministering before the Lord. We are told "the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." The Lord was not appearing to His prophets. Occasionally, as in this second chapter, in special emergencies, the Lord communicated His will to somebody; but, speaking generally, the Heavens were silent. There was no open vision. The word of the Lord was precious because it was scarce.

"And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I: for thou calledst me. And he said, I called you not; lie down again." You know the story of how this was repeated.

I suppose Eli had often called Samuel. I suppose Samuel knew Eli's voice well. Did you ever think of that? There were not many to call Samuel in the temple. Samuel ministered to the old priest, and he must often have called him by name. On this occasion Samuel did not think there was anything unusual about it. Perhaps he was expecting a call. Be that as it may, when he heard that Voice he identified it with the voice of Eli. It was not a human voice: it was God's voice. Still God speaks in such a way that some people think it is a human voice. I believe it is our privilege—your privilege and mine—as messengers of the gospel to be mouthpieces of Deity, so that the Spirit of God may speak through us; and the man will go away and say, "I heard a sermon that disturbed me very much. I do not know what to think of that

preacher. He certainly stirred me up, moved my heart and conscience"—and the poor man, like Samuel, thinks it is only a man's voice.

As yet "Samuel did not know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him." Samuel had never heard the voice of God. He was a good boy, surrounded by godly influences, and yet face to face with most ungodly examples in Eli's sons, but preserved from their errors, perhaps by Eli's counsel, and by his mother's prayers. But as yet he had had no contact with the supernatural; he did not know the Lord.

The fourth time, when the Voice called, he did as Eli had directed him: he said, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." I have had some cases in my experience which illustrate this principle. Here is a man who is not a Christian. Like Samuel, he comes to the temple. Perhaps after a certain service he comes to the minister to talk over what he has heard. As you talk with him, if you have had any experience in divine things, you know that that man is like Samuel: he does not know the Lord; he does not know that the word which has smitten him is the word of God. He thinks it is the preacher. He may come with his compliments, he may tell the preacher that he never heard anything quite like that before. He may tell him his difficulties, his intellectual difficulties, and go away, saying, "I am not a Christian, but I am very glad I came because I must say that your sermon to-night made me think." If the preacher is wise he will not congratulate himself that he was able to awaken a thoughtful man. When any man comes to you like that, young men, that is the time to go home to your knees and pray that God will never let that man go.

He may come the next Sunday and say to you or to somebody else, "The sermon this Sunday was more searching than that of last Sunday." He may have a very pronounced opinion about the preacher. He thinks he knows his voice. That may continue, but be sure you do as Eli did, pray for discernment to perceive when the Lord is calling; and be sure you say to the enquirer, "My friend, I did not call you. My voice can never make itself heard to a soul that is dead in trespasses and in sins. If your heart and conscience are stirred Somebody else is calling."

Eli said at last, "Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." So must we sometimes preach and preach again, and keep on preaching, until at last those who have heard us shall wake up to discover that they are being pursued by the Good Shepherd Himself, and that it is His voice which calls.

Samuel had rather an unhappy time of it in the beginning, had he not? I shall not go into particulars. It is amazing that a mere child should have been chosen of God to receive that message of judgment, and to deliver it to the old man of ninety-eight.

You are young men. Remember the Apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth." You will meet some aged people in the churches where you minister who will try to look down upon you. I remember an old deacon in a place where I went to help a pastor, telling me that he had been more years a Baptist deacon than I had lived, that I was not much more than a boy, and did not know very much. I told him that I was sorry the date of my birth did not please him, that I was getting over my youth as fast as I could, that it was not my fault

that I was not as old as he. You will find among your church officials good men who will tell you they know more than you do. Some of them may—but they ought not to know more about your job than you do.

I had a deacon once who, when I recommended a certain thing to my deacons' board, shook his head and said, "Pastor, I am an older man than you are. Some of us have had a good deal of experience, and I only wish I could live to see you as old a man as I am now, and see how you carry the burdens of life." He talked down to me. When he got through I said, "Mr. So-and-So, how long have you been a Christian?" He told me; I think it was about forty years. I had a paper and pencil, and I said, "What time have you given to the practical work of the church?" He had always been regular in his attendance, and I put down on the paper all the Sundays of the forty years. I did a little arithmetical calculation, and then said, "Do you see that you would have to live to be over one hundred years of age before you would have as much experience in this matter as I now have?" He worked at it twice a week: I lived with it all the time. He thought of it a couple of hours a week: I thought of it in the morning, at noon, and at night. I dreamed of it all night—and sometimes it was not a dream but a nightmare.

It will be your duty as pastors to know your job, and knowing it, not to hesitate to take the full responsibility that belongs to the man who has to drive the car.

Samuel was only a boy, but God had spoken to him. There was no mistake about it. He was young, but God's message had been communicated to him. He held his peace that night, but in the morning when Eli said, "What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he said unto thee", Samuel "told him every whit, and hid nothing from him". Eli said, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good."

However young you are, if you are in touch with God, as Samuel was, and can receive God's message as Samuel did, you will find many people years your senior—if it is the word of God at your lips—gracious souls who will receive it. Deliver your message without apology. "And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." That was a great day.

We in the Seminary do not know whether you students are prophets of the Lord or not. We never say to new students who come, "We believe you are called to the ministry." Nobody knows whether you have been called or not; you must prove it. We endeavour by every means in our power to offer you opportunity for mental and spiritual development, but the gifts that are in you, bestowed by the Holy Ghost, if they are there, must manifest themselves. By and by people will say, "I do not think there is any doubt about that young man's having been called to the ministry; the seals of his ministry are apparent."

Samuel, as a good minister, proved that the word of the Lord was in his lips, and all Israel knew that he was chosen to be a prophet. If you are called to preach, somebody will be called to hear. If the Lord has called you to preach, He will be sure to make it possible for you to find somebody to hear you preach. The two things go together. In the quiet of the night God called, "Samuel", and Samuel said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

And thereafter he so spake the word of the Lord that "all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord". It is for you to prove you have been called. It is for you to prove, by the ministry you exercise, that you are a prophet of the Lord.

"WITNESS" AND RADIO LETTERS

Dear Dr. Shields: Whitinsville, Mass., Feb. 28, 1933.
I am going somewhat below the "bottom dollar", and am borrowing one to prove my sympathy in your heroic endeavour in behalf of the kingdom of God. I am a superannuated minister, and my income is very limited.

Dear Dr. Shields: Tillsonburg, Ont., Feb. 27, 1933
Enclosed please find cheque for \$10.00 for the work of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. We enjoy THE WITNESS very much.

Dear Dr. Shields: Sparta, Ont., Feb. 27, 1933
Enclosed please find gift for THE WITNESS Fund. I wish I could do more. I prize the paper very much. You preach and teach just what the churches stood for years ago, and I am glad some stand for the truth still.

Dear Dr. Shields: Hillsburg, Ont., March 1, 1933.
Enclosed you will find \$10.00 for THE WITNESS Fund. Praying God will bless every effort put forth by your great church for the advance of His kingdom.

Dear Dr. Shields: Halloway, Ont., March 11, 1933
Enclosed find \$2.00 to cover the renewal of my subscription. I am past seventy-four years of age, and it has been such a blessing to me that I do not want to miss a copy. I pass THE WITNESS on when I have read it, and one dear lady found the plan of salvation made so clear that the light dawned and she was soundly converted, and is praising God.
I praise the Lord every day for the sweet fellowship we have through THE WITNESS.

Dear Dr. Shields: Paducah, Ky., March 6, 1933.
Enclosed you will find \$5.00. I should be glad to make a larger gift but we are paying for our own church building.
I want to say without flattery that the work you are doing over the radio cannot be estimated; there is no voice on the air, and no message that I read from paper, that plants my feet so firmly on the Rock Christ Jesus as do your messages.

Dear Dr. Shields: Weston, Ont., March 1, 1933.
Enclosed please find \$7.00 toward GOSPEL WITNESS expenses. We are glad you have been able to continue publication, and sincerely hope that your GOSPEL WITNESS family will make every effort to see that your fearless and splendid work is upheld.

Dear Dr. Shields: Westmount, Que., Feb. 25, 1933.
Enclosed find cheque for \$40.00 to be divided among THE GOSPEL WITNESS, Radio Fund, Liberian and Home Missions. Should like very much to have made larger contributions to each of these objects, as well as to the Seminary work, but like many others, my revenue has been much reduced. I am glad to be able to give to the Lord's work.

Dear Dr. Shields: Sault Ste. Marie, March 1, 1933.
I am reminded through THE GOSPEL WITNESS of your "three hungry children" who always ask for more, and am led to believe those three children are deserving of at least enough to keep them active. We are not experiencing the palmy days of a few years ago, still God has met our every need and recently we received a bonus we did not expect, and feel we must return to God a thank-offering; with this and other stewardship money we are enclosing herewith New York Draft for \$80.00—\$30.00 for the Radio; \$25.00 each for the Seminary and GOSPEL WITNESS. May God continue to bless all three objects to the salvation of souls.

Dear Dr. Shields: London, Ont., Feb. 3, 1933.
I thank God for the great message which went forth from your pulpit last Sunday evening. If only people would take heed! I rejoice with you in the blessing which I hear you are experiencing, and enclose my monthly gift to the Radio Fund.

(Continued on page 11)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 14

April 2nd, 1933

SECOND QUARTER

SAMUEL, PROPHET, PRIEST AND JUDGE.

Lesson Text: 1 Samuel, chapters 6, 7.

Golden Text: "And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines."—1 Sam. 7:8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Numbers 4:1-15.

Tuesday—Exodus 19:1-13.

Wednesday—Psalm 130:1-8.

Thursday—Psalm 99:1-9.

Friday—Matt. 6:19-34.

Saturday—John 15:1-11.

I. THE ARK RETURNED TO ISRAEL (6:1-21).

Notwithstanding the suffering caused by possession of the ark and the general desire to get rid of it, there evidently was doubt in the minds of some of the Philistines as to the proper course to pursue. The ark had been in their country for seven months, (v. 1), when a conference of their wise men was called to decide the matter, (v. 2). The advice given by them was to the effect that, if the ark was to be sent back, it should not be returned empty, a trespass offering should go with it, (v. 3). In answer to the question concerning the nature of the trespass offering, they stated that such should consist of five golden emerods, images of their disease, and five golden mice, images of the little creature which marred their land, (vs. 4, 5). This seems to have been a propitiatory offering unto God, in the endeavour to gain His favour, and be relieved of the manifestation of His anger. The divine judgment on Egypt is recalled, (v. 6), and the direction is given to return the ark on a new cart, drawn by two untrained milch kine, (vs. 7, 8); and the suggestion is made that they should observe the direction taken by the animals, and conclude thereby concerning the cause of their trouble, (v. 9). This suggestion was in accordance with the superstitious belief of the people, but it was overruled by God to convince them of His action in the matter.

The direction of the Philistines concerning the cart was at variance with the command of God which enjoined the carrying of the ark in a particular manner, (Number 4:15). The divine way was simple, and did not lend itself to human manipulation or elaboration. The method of transportation was fixed, not to be altered. Keeping in mind the fact that the ark was a sacred article of furniture associated with the worship of God, we have here presented the spectacle of unregenerate man adding to the

simplicity of the divine arrangement, and encasing the divine in the human. By such an action we are reminded of the action of those who add to the simplicity of the spiritual worship of God by their traditions and ceremonies. Comparison of the early worship of Pentecost and the days immediately succeeding that, with the Roman Catholic service of the present day, to take the extreme of ritualism will clearly illustrate the fact of the Divine being encased in the human, so much encased indeed, that it is difficult to discern it. Between these two there are various degrees of human accretions in religious worship. Worship is spiritual in nature, (John 4:24), not aesthetic, or sentimental, and man must act in accordance with divine directions if he is to please God. Note the present-day tampering with the divine plan of salvation by ritualist, Modernist, and others, and explain the scriptural teaching concerning the same.

Acting in accordance with the advice of the wise men, the kine and cart were sent off, and making straight for Bethshemesh, followed by the Philistines, it was received in that place with joy, (vs. 10-13), the kine were offered as a burnt offering unto the Lord, (vs. 14, 15), but disaster speedily overtook the people, in the divine judgment meted out to them for their unsanctified curiosity in looking into the ark, (v. 19). This led them to request the people of Kirjath-jearim, who lived on the higher lands, to come down and get the ark, (vs. 20, 21), which they did, placing it in the house of Abinadab, (7:1). By this incident may we learn the necessity for handling reverently all that pertains to the service of God. It will aid us in adopting a proper attitude if we remember the Omnipotence, majesty, and holiness of God, and our own uncleanness, (Is. 6:5).

II. THE DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINES (7:1-17).

The ark remained a long time at Kirjath-jearim, during which time the people lamented after the Lord, (vs. 1, 2). No explanation is given as to why the ark was not immediately returned to Shiloh from whence it had been taken, (4:3), we are left to our own conclusion in the matter. The condition of the people led Samuel to give them the divine message concerning their deliverance from the Philistine power, (v. 3), concerning which certain things may be observed. First, the realization on the part of the people of their subjective condition to the power of their enemies. This was one of the first steps in their deliverance, as a similar realization concerning the power of sin is necessary in the spiritual realm. Until a person realizes his condition as a sinner, (Rom. 3:23), he is not likely to seek the way of salvation, (Acts 2:37). Such realization, or conviction of sin comes through the work of the Holy Spirit upon the sinner, (John 16:8).

The second thing of note is the desire of the people to be free from their bondage. To what extent they were subject to the exercise of Philistine power we know not, but such subjection of any kind, with the constant fear of enemy incursions into their land, was distinctly unpleasant, and humiliating as well as

implying the deprivation of liberty, and we do not wonder that the people desired to be freed from it. In the spiritual realm, however, there is a worse bondage, for sin affects body and soul, and realization of this leads men to desire and cry out for deliverance therefrom, (Acts 16:30). Third, observe the desire of the people to return unto the Lord. They knew that their affliction had come upon them through their disobedience to the law of God, and understood also that no improvement in their condition would take place until they returned unto the One Whom they had forsaken. The root of the world's troubles, individually and collectively lies in the same disobedient attitude, and the remedy in the same kind of return. Note the nature of turning to God, in the spiritual sense, and the scriptural invitations so to do, (Ezek. 14:6; Acts 26:20).

In the fourth place, observe the command to put away the strange gods, and to prepare their hearts unto the Lord that they might serve Him only. We cannot serve God and idols, (Acts 6:24), there must be a forsaking of that which is evil, (Is. 55:7), a complete turning from idols to serve the living and true God, (1 Thess. 1:9). If we would serve God we must be done with sin, (Prov. 28:13) for He is a holy, just, and jealous God, (Ex. 20:5; Ezek. 39:25), and must have first place in the life which He honours with His presence. Note the justice of this, in the light of the fact that He is both Creator and Redeemer of men, and also the necessity and wisdom of yielding thereto. Obedience brings blessing, and the Israelites are given the assurance that adopting this attitude God would deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines. And they obeyed the command and put away their idols, (v. 4).

After delivering his message, and being assured of the compliance of the people therewith, Samuel gave the command to "gather all Israel to Mizpeh, that there he might pray for them, (v. 5). The Israelites assembled as directed, and confessed their sins before the Lord, and Samuel judged them there, (v. 6). They manifested the right spirit for acknowledgment of sin precedes forgiveness and cleansing, (1 John 1:9). The gathering together of the Israelites stirred the Philistines to action, fearing rebellion possibly, and they came up against them, (v. 7). This constituted a severe test for the children of Israel, and they were very much afraid, and called upon Samuel to cry unto God on their behalf, (vs. 7, 8). This attitude is in great contrast to that of the early years in the land, when they boldly attacked their enemies; but forsaking God they lost the assurance of victory, and became weak in the face of their foes. Sin brings defeat to the people of God. In compliance with their request Samuel cried unto the Lord and God answered by thundering upon the Philistines, and granting Israel a decisive victory, (vs. 9-17). Note the efficacy of prayer, the significance of the offering, speaking of dedication, the Ebenezer stone, recalling the times when God has helped us, the restitution made by the Philistines, and the work of Samuel.

The Union Baptist Witness

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THE ANNIVERSARY NUMBER OF THE MISSIONARY BULLETIN.

We are announcing the Anniversary Number of the Missionary Bulletin issued on March 15th because it appears this month in celebrating style. Please send in your requests as soon as possible and let us know if the Bulletin is proving helpful to you.

NEWS FROM GUELPH.

A letter from Pastor H. H. Chipchase bearing the date of March 6th, reads in part—

"My, what a time we had last night. Our service lasted for over two hours and what a manifestation of God's power was in our midst. Ten came forward; nine seeking salvation and one for baptism. Three of the ten were ladies for whom much prayer has been made. There were those under conviction who did not come forward, please pray for them. One of the ladies who came forward got up in the after-meeting and testified. I wish that you could have been with us to enjoy the real old-fashioned revival service. Please pray for three men who were under conviction last night; their wives have been converted so let us lay hold of the promises that they will be next.

"We have had two baptismal services since we moved here—thirteen have been baptized and there are some ten or thirteen on the list now since last Friday evening. Next Sunday morning we are to hold the first Communion service of the York Road Mission. We are looking forward to that service . . . fourteen will be received into membership."

(Our readers will remember an appeal we made for Guelph some weeks ago. Mr. Chipchase went there without promise of any remuneration. Through our appeal nearly \$100.00 was contributed

for his support, but to carry on for the whole year we need much more than that. The above account of the work in Guelph will show that money invested there pays large spiritual dividends. Send any contribution you can for Mr. Chipchase's support either to THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard St. East, Toronto; or to Rev. W. E. Atkinson, 337 Jarvis St., Toronto, Canada.—Editor, GOSPEL WITNESS)

REJOICING CONTINUES AT BOBCAYGEON.

Blessing continues at Bobcaygeon, the church has been revived and the Lord has done a great work in their midst. Pastor James Forrester who has been assisting Rev. M. B. Gillion has returned to Toronto and he is rejoicing in the privilege which has been his on that field. Pastor Gillion is continuing the meetings and prayer is asked that the work which is being done by the Holy Spirit will suffer no let or hindrance. Remember the new converts and those who have been restored, praising Him that prayer has been answered.

ALTON.

Pastor R. Le Drew reports a deepening of the missionary interest of the church and two conversions and one restoration recently.

It has been necessary, however, for him to leave the field for a few weeks that he might fulfil the request of a relative who died last week at St. Agathe, Que. Pastor Le Drew is taking the body back to Newfoundland, proceeding from Montreal by train; then to Change Islands by steamship and from thence eighty miles by airplane. From the airport to the home he will go by dog team. During Pastor Le Drew's absence Mr. Wm. Layzelle of the Toronto Baptist Seminary will have charge of his church at Alton.

BRISCOE ST., LONDON.

Pastor Robert D. Guthrie requests the prayers of the churches for special meetings to be held at Briscoe Street Church, London. The Lord has been working in the midst of his people and expectantly these meetings are contemplated. Rev. Clifford J. Loney of Stanley Ave. Church, London, is assisting Mr. Guthrie.

ITINERATING WITH REV. EDWARD HANCOX.

We have just received a report of the trek made by our missionary Rev. Edward Hancox who is located at the New Cess Station, Bassa County, Liberia, West Africa. It is an interesting report and shows us something of the need of the people.

Mr. Hancox writes—"From the 5th to the 15th of December I was away from the Station on evangelistic work, travelling as far as River Cess, three days to the East. Four days were spent in and around the town of the Paramount Chief of this entire section from the River Cess to the River New Cess. A most hearty welcome was accorded us and many pleaded for the establishment of a Mission in their district. They begged me to leave Kanga, one of our young church members who accompanied me as interpreter, with them that he might preach the Gospel. Before leaving quite a number of the people had learned to sing, 'Follow, Follow, I will follow Jesus', and one woman declared that she would truly follow Him. It was a joyous visit and I believe a profitable one.

"When we got into the canoe to leave their town a group of people stood on the river bank singing in English and Bassa the chorus which they had learned, and they said good-bye with tear-filled eyes.

"The trip afforded opportunity of preaching in many towns where no missionary has ever been."

WITNESS AND RADIO LETTERS

(Continued from page 9)

Dear Dr. Shields: Bowmanville, Ont., Feb. 18, 1933.
Enclosed please find \$13.00 for your radio fund, covering my gifts to the end of February. We enjoy the messages each week, and wish it were possible to help to a larger extent.

Dear Dr. Shields: Bangor, N.Y., Feb. 12, 1933.
Our family have been enjoying your Sunday evening services for some time. We especially like the invitation to confess Christ, as we do not hear one very often in these modern times.

Dear Dr. Shields: Philadelphia, Pa., Feb. 12, 1933.
I listened with great profit to your sermon this evening. Yes, I believe He is the Son of God and the Saviour of men. I'm sure many souls were touched to-night, and while you were inviting folks to believe Him, and the choir and congregation were singing, "Just as I am without one plea", I dropped on my knees and prayed that many in both the seen and unseen audiences would come under deep conviction and be saved. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Dear Dr. Shields: Rochester, N.Y., Feb. 20, 1933.
I listened in at my home at Rochester, N.Y., and heard your sermon and baptismal service last night. Tell those baptized I could hear their response as plainly as though I

were sitting in the auditorium. I also wish to say how greatly I rejoice in your ministry to Toronto and the nations. It is heartening to hear a defense of the Word and the Deity of our Lord from a Christian pulpit in this day of infidelity. (From a minister)

Dear Brother Shields: East Milton, Mass., Feb. 12, 1933.
My parents and I enjoyed your message this evening. We praise the Lord for those who are preaching a full gospel in these dark days when so many are turning from the truth. May God richly bless you in His service.

Dear Dr. Shields: Sherbrooke, Que., Feb. 13, 1933.
We listened last night to your service, and were glad to hear the gospel preached over the air. May God bless you in your work. We enjoyed your service very much, and will look forward to next Sunday.

Dear Dr. Shields: Phoenix, N.Y., Feb. 23, 1933.
I heard your message last Sunday evening, and it did me good. God bless you and all your helpers. Times are hard, and jobs scarce, but now is the time to help in the Lord's work.

Dear Dr. Shields: Toronto, Canada, Feb. 22, 1933.
I enclose \$6.00 for the Radio Fund. Those baptismal services are stirring people to the depths. As the service Sunday evening went on my nephew walked up and down the room, and said there is certainly a shaking among the dry bones. May His own people be stirred to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

NOW THEN—ALL TOGETHER!

FOR MARCH 31st, 1933

TO JARVIS STREET MEMBERS

We must always begin at Jerusalem. Before God works a miracle He always asks, as did Elisha of the widow who had a creditor, "What hast thou in the house?" We must bring our pot of oil, however small, then God will multiply it. We cannot justly ask others to share our burdens until we have taken our full share upon our own shoulders. If every member of Jarvis Street Church will bring his or her pot of oil to the Lord we are sure He will so multiply it that this will be an outstanding miracle year in Jarvis Street history.

We therefore urge all weekly-offering contributors whose contributions may be in arrears to do their utmost to make up their arrearage by March 31st.

We ask every member also, old and young, rich (if there be any) and poor, to present a thank-offering for all the blessings we have enjoyed during the year. Let every member give something, if it be only a cent or a dollar, and let us every one give as many dollars and as many cents as possible. We suggest a new thing: A Unanimous Thank-offering.

TO ALL GOSPEL WITNESS READERS

All our readers know that the subscription price pays but a fraction of the cost of production; and since we carry no advertisements, our only other source of revenue is the Witness friends who send us contributions to the Witness Fund.

During the year the Witness has published fifty-two Sermons and nearly as many Bible Lectures; fifty-two Sunday School Lesson expositions, as well as the Union Baptist Witness pages. Thus the paper has endeavoured to plead the cause of many worthy works.

We remind all the Pastors of the Union and their churches, that the Union Baptist Witness costs The Gospel Witness Fund not less than \$1,500.00 a year, for which we receive nothing in money. We urge all our friends of the Union to try to send The Gospel Witness a contribution not later than March 31st.

This note is written also to remind all our subscribers to whom we have written of our need, and to ask of each the question, **Have you answered the Editor's letter yet?**

Elsewhere in this issue are a few of many Witness letters which tell something of the good the paper is doing.

TO OUR SEMINARY SUPPORTERS

Our Seminary fiscal year ends March 31st also. This has been the best year we have ever had in every respect but financially. We admit that our Seminary Fund is in very urgent need. Our readers know for what the Seminary stands, but only yesterday we learned of an unusual evidence of the divine favour resting upon the Seminary.

Among many others who responded to the invitation to receive Christ last Sunday evening, there were four brothers—the youngest a bright lad of twelve years, the eldest twenty-two years, the others, fifteen and seventeen, respectively. Last evening we had an extended interview with the four together. We learned their mother died when the youngest was about a year old, and that her last words were a prayer for the baby's salvation. That prayer was answered Sunday night. All four splendid boys will (D.V.) be baptized Sunday evening. We learned that last Sunday was but their second Sunday in Jarvis Street (Oh, how often that occurs!) When we enquired how and why they came to Jarvis Street, they said, "A Mr. Watt called at the door, and came in, preached Christ to us, and invited us to church." Mr. Watt is one of our devoted Seminary students, and that story, with variations of course, could be multiplied many times.

Send as generous a contribution as possible to the Seminary at once.

TO OUR RADIO HEARERS

Our Jarvis Street financial burdens are so heavy we really feel our Broadcast Service ought to be supported by our Radio Hearers, including such Jarvis Street members (if there are any) who hear by Radio instead of coming to church. If everyone will do something, and that something his best, we can balance our Radio account March 31st. If our Radio Fund were to show a deficit March 31st we could not recommend the continuance of the Broadcast Service. Please send your contribution by March 31st. Radio letters of last week and this indicate in some measure the blessing attending this service.