

# 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

"HE STAGGERED NOT"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, June 11th, 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 Daylight-saving Time.

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in  
faith, giving glory to God."—Romans 4:20.

### Prayer before the Sermon

We rejoice, O Lord our God, this evening in our salvation. We rejoice in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus of which we have been singing, and which Thou art pleased to impute to all who believe. We thank Thee that faith is still counted for righteousness, as in the days of Abraham. Though we are deeply aware of our own unfitness to come where Thou art, deeply conscious of all our inherent sinfulness, yet we rejoice that we may come because Thou hast covered us with Thy righteousness. We are pure in Thy sight, and complete in Him Who is the Head of all principalities and powers. Therefore we bow in the name of the crucified, risen, and ascended, Christ. We bless Thee that we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, Who is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world.

May every member of this congregation now be enabled by Thy gracious Spirit's ministry really to pray. Forbid that any should merely bow in Thy presence without entering into commerce with the Skies. May the precious blood of Christ speak peace to every heart and conscience. May the assurance of Thy favour be given all who put their trust wholly in the sinner's Saviour.

We are ever in need of Thy benefactions. Though Thou dost open Thy hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing, Thou hast daily loaded us with benefits, it is ever necessary for us to come again. Like the brethren of Joseph, we come back to the great storehouse because our sacks are empty and our souls are hungry. We thank Thee for the fulness there is in Christ. We are so subject to limitation, to straitness in every direction in this lower life, we cannot do the things we would, nor have the things we desire. But when we come to Thee we come into a larger realm, even the realm of the infinite. Help us that we may say to our own souls this evening,—

Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such  
None can ever ask too much.

Enrich us, we pray Thee, out of that fulness of grace which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We desire, those of us who are Christians, to be better Christians. We desire to be growing

men and women, increasing always in the knowledge of God, putting on the whole armour of God, putting off the old man, putting on the new, running with patience the race set before us, forgetting the things which are behind and pressing forward to the things that are before, we would press toward the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Give us a holy ambition to be prize men and prize women. Forbid that we should content ourselves in being merely in the race. Let us desire all that Thou hast for us, that so we may grow up into Christ in all things. For this steady, constant, unceasing, development of Christian character we pray this evening in behalf of every believer here, and of every believer who shall hear this service by radio.

We remember those who are not Thine own. Some have never seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Some have not yet learned that Jesus paid it all, and that all to Him they owe. Oh that many this evening may find wrought in them, by the Holy Spirit, that heavenly gift of faith which will enable them to appropriate the infinite merit of the Lord Jesus that they may stand complete in Him. May there be many real conversions this evening here and wherever the message of the hour may reach.

We especially pray this evening for institutions to which this message will come. Some will hear Thy word in hospitals, in sanitariums, in places where they are not privileged as we are in health and strength to attend a place of worship. Oh that Thou wouldst come to them in the fulness of grace. Uplift every soul; be Thou their Glory, and the Lifter-up of their heads. Put a song, not only in their mouths, but in their hearts, even a song of praise unto our God.

We pray this evening for the careless, the chance hearer, the man who did not intend to hear, but who hears in spite of himself. It may be in a garage, it may be in a restaurant, it may be going along the street, he may hear this evening's message. May it be the voice of the Holy Ghost quickening dead souls, revivifying dead souls. Command Thy blessing upon any whose duties deprive them of attending the house of prayer. The Lord use this service everywhere for the salvation of men and women, and for the glory of Thine own great name. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ Who died for our sins according to the Scripture, Who was buried, and Who rose again the third day, Amen.

We shall turn for our meditation this evening to the epistle to the Romans, chapter four, and verse twenty: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." What pregnant phrases constitute our text! "He staggered not"; "The promise of God"; "Strong in faith"; "Giving glory to God".

At the beginning of the South African War President Paul Kruger, the President of the Transvaal Republic, said he would make Britain pay a price for the Transvaal which would "stagger humanity". She did not pay the price—whether just or unjust, I shall not say—she did not pay the price without staggering. But standards have changed since then. Gold has a lower purchasing power—and so has blood. Within our memory it has taken more blood to secure human liberty than formerly was required. But still men are disposed, under pressure, to stagger at many things.

It is the function of faith to save us from the weakness and wavering and confusion of mind which is characteristic of men and women who do not know God.

Abraham received a promise from God. He believed it—and what is more, he kept on believing it, awaiting the divine hour of fulfilment; and, in the meantime, he "staggered not".

There are no new elements in human experience. Just a few years ago we were accustomed to hear men speak as though the war had discovered a new world, as though new elements had entered into human life, as though everything were radically, at the root, in essence, changed. But it is not so. It was not so then. Men spoke of the war as being "unprecedented". It was unprecedented only in dimension: in intensity and severity it had been anticipated a hundred times. And now men ask whether the present situation has any parallel in human history. We talk of the depression as though it were something new. The world has become manifestly a little more sensitive, and men have been brought into closer relationship with each other, so that we know almost in a moment what all the world is doing; but the fact is that the elements of human life have always been the same. Human desires have always been the same. Human need has always been the same as it is to-day.

The story of Abraham is not ancient history. The experiences of Abraham were in no sense unique: they are common to the race. Everybody has his burden to bear, his time of waiting, his staggering experiences—or experiences which have a tendency to make men stagger. What we need to know is how to maintain a balance of life, how to meet the exigencies of life calmly and with due mental poise, so that we may avoid the amazement, the bewilderment, the stupefaction, gathered up in this phrase, "he staggered".

What is the secret of Abraham's poise? I would if I could this evening bring some message to you which would lighten life's burdens, make crooked places straight, help you to "keep on" a little longer with the load on your back, save you from giving up when you have almost reached the goal. So I turn back to one of the most ancient stories of all, to the outstanding example of Abraham, the pattern believer of all days, and of all ages. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

## I.

I direct your attention first of all to what I shall call this UNIVERSAL DESIDERATUM, "the promise of God". How much there is in it! Let me have the ear of all dreamers of dreams, and seers of visions, of all forward-looking men, of all men and women who fain would live in a house whose windows are toward the morning.

Abraham received what? "The promise of God." That was his great enrichment, that was his supreme asset; it was that which differentiated him from all others, that God had come to him, and had said something to him—and that something was a promise of what God would do for him in the days that were to come.

Perhaps you would say that that promise was the promise of a son, that Isaac should be born. So it was. But the promise of God was vastly bigger than that. I should be the last to belittle the importance of studying the letter of the Word of God. We must save ourselves from that folly of assuming that the spirit of the Word is magnified by ignoring or violating the letter. Nothing could be farther from the truth. And that is a wise industry which exercises itself with the grammar and syntax of the Word, to find out precisely, literally, what a particular promise, or a particular text, means. But when you have brought to bear all your erudition, and have poured light from every quarter on the text, I would remind you that the Word of God is always more than the letter. It is bigger than the letter, just as this electric current is more than the carbon filament through which it is manifest. The letter is indispensable to the communication of divine truth.

It may be that I shall speak in mysteries, even "the hidden mystery", when I speak to some of you this evening, but not so to men and women of faith. You know how the grace of God, the power and glory of God, outshine the mere letter even of Scripture, divinely inspired and infallible as we in this place are sure it is. The promise to Abraham was of Isaac, but it meant more; it meant blessings multiplied as the "stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable".

I do not know how the content of the promise was conveyed to the mind of Abraham, but I know that in the promise of Isaac Abraham apprehended the promise of Christ. We have our Lord's own authority for saying, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." So the promise of God to Abraham brightened the whole prospect of life, filling the future with light and hope and music; enabling Abraham to live joyously, even in the waiting time.

There are people who are concerned about finding particular promises. Men were thus employed during the war—and some people are similarly employed to-day. They must find an exact place for the great figures of current history. They feel they are on pretty comfortable ground if they can, as they think, discover some allusion to a man like Mussolini, or Hitler, or Stalin, or somebody else. They have a passion for the letter. Are there particular promises relating to our present situation? I have no doubt there are. Many a special promise has come to me in particular circumstances, as I am sure it has come to you, enabling you to rest upon it, and to await the unfolding of God's plan and purpose. But

I am not concerned to find that the Bible says something about automobiles jostling each other in the street! I think that kind of thing is mere child's play. Suppose you find it, what then? What profit is there in the discovery? What have you done but satisfy your imagination? What profit does it yield to find a scriptural tag that you can put upon Mussolini or Stalin, or upon a particular period, or a particular situation in life?

What I insist upon is that the promise of God is always large enough to meet every emergency and every exigency. I shall not quote to you chapter and verse—perhaps for the reason that I cannot—but I speak of the entire Christian revelation. God in Christ has blessed a bankrupt world with a great promise—and what is it? A promise of Isaac? Yes; but in Isaac more than Isaac: a promise of an overruling Providence Who is making things work together for good, and leading us all forward to a tearless life, in a graveless land, in a nightless city, where all at last shall be well. So I say that the true child of faith, in spite of all difficulties—and depression—and staggering experiences, will say, "I worship in a temple whose prospect is toward the east. I look in the direction of the morning. Already I see the coming glow, and am confident that the record of His last week, his wonder-working week in my life—in the life of all who believe, and in the life of His redeemed people, will be as the record of the week of His first creation, 'The evening and the morning'." We live in a house whose windows face the sunrise; and there is no room, no proper room, no legitimate place in the heart of a true believer for any kind of pessimism in respect to his own life, or the life of the world at large.

Abraham received a promise, and in that promise there was wrapped up the wealth of divine grace for him, and for all his seed; and we are Abraham's seed if indeed we are children of faith.

I say that this promise of God which Abraham received was one which would naturally fill anyone with amazement. It promised the unusual, the extraordinary. It spoke a language the idiom of which is unknown to any but to the citizens of the heavenly country. Have you ever heard a man or woman who had travelled in some tropical land, discourse with someone else who had some measure of familiarity with the same experience? They speak of the climate, of the flora of the country, of the fruits in which they delighted, and it almost makes one's mouth water. You say, "I cannot buy those things. I never see them in the stores. They belong to another country altogether." And when God makes His divine communications to the souls of men, His word is ever a word from a limitless land, from a land that knows other resources, other habits, other standards, than those with which we are here familiar. It is a message from a world in which there is no poverty of any sort, a word from Him who is sovereign of all realms; Who says, "I will", and the believing soul awakes to a realization that there is no goldmine of earth, no market in the world, no bank that ever was conceived, that could possibly contain such riches as are wrapped up in the promise of the Infinite.

Our desires outfly our reason. We dream audaciously. I love to dream of the impossible. I love to get away from this cribbing, cramping, life, and fly to some place where I feel I am a millionaire. When I get back to

earth and put my hand in my pocket, I may find nothing there, but I had a good time while I was above the clouds! When we see the promise of God, amazing as it is to men who look at it from this lower level, even though they die "in faith, not having received the promise", they have been enriched by the prospect, and live in anticipation of the joy and glory of it.

I would call your attention to the fact that this promise which was given to Abraham seemed to take no account of time. How slowly God appeared to move! I can remember when everything seemed to move slowly. When I was a lad the day after Christmas was the darkest and most dismal of all the year—because the next Christmas was never so far away as from that day. It seemed it would never come. I remember as a youngster I sought counsel of my father, and asked favours at his hand. He was a busy man, and used to utter a word which I, in my childhood days, used to abhor: "All right; wait until to-morrow." To-morrow! That was ages away! We have grown older since then, and now we wish the leaves of the calendar did not require turning so rapidly. Our days, as Job said, "are swifter than a weaver's shuttle". The years roll around, and inadvertently, and quite unintentionally, we speak of something that occurred twenty or thirty years ago—and then, not wishing anyone to know we can remember so long, hasten to recall the statement. How rapidly time flies! And the older one gets, like going down hill, the nearer the bottom the faster the vehicle goes if you have no brakes on.

Abraham was an old man. We are accustomed to remind ourselves that time is an element in our contracts. If we fail in their fulfilment, we are defaulters. It will not do to say, "I will do it next week." Of course, in these days people have become accustomed to that. But the essence of the thing is that it should be done when the contract requires. Abraham was old, and the peculiar character of the promise required, apparently that it should speedily be fulfilled—yet it was not. The years dragged out until perhaps twenty years had passed, and he longed for the coming of the laughing Isaac—but he did not come! Yet "he staggered not". Notwithstanding the promise of God seemed to ignore the clock, the calendar, the rise and set of sun, and seemed to him to be a word of Somebody Who was working in a realm where He had infinite leisure, and where He was under no necessity of numbering his years, still "Abraham believed God".

Oh yes, we have longed for God to do something for us. And men have said, "I fear my dreams will never be realized. The children will be scattered, and I shall be old and without capacity for the enjoyment of that which I have asked of God, before it comes. Here is another year and still another year, and still another year, and the promise, as I have interpreted it, is as yet unfulfilled to me." So is it in the providence of God in respect to the life of faith that God often keeps His children waiting, as he kept Abraham.

I would direct your attention also to this fact, that the promise of God, in this particular case, seemed to set at defiance all natural law. It was not only a promise which involved, in its fulfilment, the exercise of supernatural power, but it required supernaturalism at its utmost; it required a power that could give, and that could restore, life.

Scientists tell us—at least, one year they tell us, and the next year contradict it—that life will yet be chemically produced. I remember that was in the address of one of the Presidents of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, but the following year his successor declared that so far as the origin of life was concerned science had made absolutely no progress, and knows nothing about it. Life is produced by antecedent life, and the origin of it man has never discovered. I should like to have the privilege of speaking to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and I could say to them, I am sure, "I can tell you where life came from, and can tell you in a sentence: 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men.'" There is no life anywhere else. All life proceeds from God. He has reserved a point at the genesis of life for His own direct appearing.

God gave to Abraham a promise that not only required the action of God, but God in His peculiar prerogative as the Giver of life, something that nobody else could ever do.

That is always in the promise. God's promises are not shut up to the realm of the natural: they always have to do with the supernatural in some form.

This promise counted itself undefeated by Death itself. We are shut up to the limitations of time. We say we have but a short time to live, and if we are going to do anything we must do it within these well-defined restrictions. We have so many hours of the day, and so many years or days, to live and to work, and the night cometh when no man can work. We must do it now.

I love to turn to the eleventh chapter of John—it is not only history, but it is prophecy—and in its type and symbol to see Death outrunning the Lord Jesus, and the sisters sending frantically, saying, "He whom thou lovest is sick." Although there was no telephone, no telegraph, no radio, Jesus Christ received the message, and interpreted it to His disciples: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe." When He heard of Lazarus' illness the record says, "He abode two days still in the same place." So to speak, He folded His arms and said, "Not yet. I will give Lazarus time to die, then I will go and show that even Death itself is subject to My power."

All that was in God's promise to Abraham. Nowadays people protest against that. I wonder do you protest against it to-night? I wonder do you say, "Your sermon, to be acceptable and helpful to me, must be shut up to the dimensions of this life. I am not so much interested in what life holds beyond the grave: I want a religion that will give me better food to eat, better clothes to wear, a better house to live in, more comfort materially." I said this morning, and I will say it again over the radio, that I read of a certain church's declaring war on something. Oh yes; how people are ready to fight about material matters! The honour of the Lord, the integrity of His Word, and the authority of the Book, may be trampled under feet, while men say, "I do not believe in controversy." You are not to raise your voice against those

who uncrown Jesus Christ and lower Him to the level of a man. There must be no controversy! Here in this place we have the reputation—undeservedly I think—for fighting. We contend for the faith. I tell you frankly I have something worth fighting for.

A dear brother came to me who had been touched by the Oxford Group and said, "I have something." To which I replied, "I had something long ago." I have no gun in my house, but I think if I were awakened in the small hours of the morning, and heard someone tramping around, although I have little of value because I have had burglars two or three times, and I think they have told all the others there is not much to get, and they have left me alone. Spurgeon used to say that the best protection against thieves was to put a plate on the door, "Baptist minister lives here." Notwithstanding, if anybody should break into my house, while I am not much of a fighter, I think I should try conclusions with him, and say, "Hold on, friend, that belongs to me, and you will not get out with it without a fight."

This Holy Book is our treasure, our casket of jewels, and when anybody comes to rob me of it, and to deny the Deity of my Christ, I shall not submit to it tamely. While the church to which I refer will not fight for that, it is going to declare war on capitalism. I have no doubt some capitalists need the grace of God, but what nonsense to shut the promises of God up to material considerations. Long, long before their utopia is realized ministers and laymen will have to face God, and give an account to Him. We need a religion that takes Death into account, and laughs at it, and says, "We offer men something which even Death cannot take from their grasp."

"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. Give him up to Death." That was the requirement of God. Rather severe, was it not? My text is taken from Romans, but the story is from Genesis. And we should not go to Genesis for a text! Poor simpletons who talk like that! Everything that is in Genesis is in your life. You cannot have Genesis without Jesus; and you cannot have Jesus without Genesis—nor can you have life without either.

The war came and we were forced to a new appraisal of life. Death held high carnival. Your expounders of economic theories, your Social Service experts, failed utterly when the telegram came. Nor did Death cease his activities when the Armistice was signed. He is just as busy as ever. I was at the cemetery yesterday, and I saw other graves open; they are opened every day. It makes no difference who the man is, wise or unlearned, rich or poor, Death comes. What you and I need is a promise that counts itself undefeated by Death itself, a promise that looks across the grave and illuminates the whole future, and fills us with the hope of immortality, even beyond.

That is the Christian revelation. "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." And I read to you this night that our gracious God has prepared for us a city. I love Toronto, but I am going to be a citizen of a better city than Toronto some day, a city that has no hospitals, and no cemeteries, a city where God is supreme—but it is yonder: it is not here.

## II.

Now ABRAHAM REFUSED TO ALLOW ANYTHING TO OBSCURE HIS VISION OF THE GOD WHO WAS THUS REVEALED TO HIM. The promise was given, and I suppose it means that he always refused to allow that promise to be measured by human standards. Will you think of that? This is a hymn book, and this is a Bible. The book of praise is good, and has some element of divine inspiration in it. That is to say, God came into the hearts and lives of men, filling them with joy so that they wanted to sing. But I can find plenty of defects in the hymn book. There are many hymns in it I never announce. I do not like them—not perhaps because they are untrue, but they give the wrong perspective. But there is no comparison between the hymn book and the Bible. One standard is set up by which to judge the hymn book, but I will not allow you to measure this Book by the same standard.

We sang this evening that glorious hymn of Isaac Watts. I used to have Watts quoted to me when I was a boy: "Birds in their little nests agree", and, "Let dogs delight to bark and bite." I have lived long enough to learn that Isaac Watts was not always right.

But there is a different quality of inspiration in the Word of God. This is the word of God, an inspired record, absolute accuracy everywhere. You must not measure the promises of God by human standards. How the critics have delighted to tell us about the "literature" of the Bible, and that it must be subject to the same standard of criticism as other books.

I once heard my late friend, Dr. Keirstead, deal with that. He pictured a young man going to college, and after a year or two finding his eyes wandering to another side of the room where somebody else sat. After a while he graduated, and *she* graduated. He went away off to the West without saying anything to the young lady except they had mutually agreed to write. After a while he got himself into a position where he thought he might set up a home, but he had never got anybody's promise to share it with him. In his dreams he had always pictured a day when he would find that one, and would make that proposal "in person", as they say over the radio, not by letter. But he found it would cost a great deal to travel east, and he could not wait: he wrote a long letter.

Then Dr. Keirstead described this young lady in the east receiving that letter. Her friend had majored in English. He was a fine English writer; every letter was "literature". When she got this particular envelope it was heavier than the rest. She studied the postmark, she studied the date, and the stamp. She examined it minutely, and thought the "S" in the first line was a little different from the "S" in the second. She thought it might have been written by another hand. She got a microscope and turned it on the envelope to see who addressed it. After a while she enquired if there was a writing expert in the town, and submitted the envelope to him; she went to the source of things. She did not know what was in the letter yet, but she was examining the foundations.

After a while—a long while—the letter was opened, and every sentence of every page was subjected to the same critical examination, until at last she came to the signature. Now Dr. Keirstead said, "That young man was capable of producing a letter that might be regarded

as 'literature' of the highest class, but was it 'literature' to that young lady? Did she indulge in any such nonsense as that? She did not wait to find a knife: she tore the envelope open and read it hungrily until she came to the last work. It was 'literature'. It was accurately phrased. It was worthy, from every point of view. But it meant something to her that no other letter could possibly mean."

Such is the Bible to every believer. It is the Father's love-letter, giving us a promise, saying, "I am going to do something for you." Do not dare ask me to compare my Bible with Tennyson or anybody else. This is the word of God. I will not limit it by human standards, nor consent to its being reduced to that level. Ours is a great God, for a great emergency.

Here was Abraham lonely and impoverished in his old age, going out of life not sure that it was worth while to have come into it. God came to him, drew the veil aside, and said, "Take a look into the future"; and through the medium of faith he gazed and said, "I see a multitude that no man can number, a company as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable, and a great outstanding Figure, a Lamb as it had been slain. And I hear that great multitude of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, praising Him Who has redeemed them from all iniquity out of all kindreds and peoples and tongues, and I hear all creation join in the praises of the Lamb." And God said to Abraham, "Abraham, so shall thy seed be", and in his heart there arose to heaven a great Hallelujah: "I cannot understand it. Away from me those of you who would limit my God. I have a promise from God, and I stagger not through unbelief."

## III.

So I could go on, and on, and on. There is no end to it. But just let me tell you that Abraham was "strong in faith, GIVING GLORY TO GOD". That does not mean that he had more faith than other people. But it means that he had a faith of a different quality. It is one thing to believe in the engineer who drives the locomotive of the train upon which you travel, to believe in the captain who steers the course of the ship on which you ride, to believe in the physician who prescribes for you, or in the surgeon who wields the knife. It is well that we have confidence in these realms, but faith partakes always of the character of its object. If you trust a man, you can trust him only so far as he may be trusted. The engineer may fail, the captain may fail, the doctor may fail—any man may fail. But Abraham's faith was strong in this respect, that it gave all glory to God. In other words, it was a faith which separated God from all others, which exalted God above all others, which made Him God. It was an exclusive faith, a faith which excluded from his consideration everything that would dull or diminish the supreme glory of the God of all the earth.

"You are a fool, Abraham, to believe." "I know it." "Science tells us that you are a fool, that what you expect to occur never has happened. Science talks about the fixity of nature's processes", about the inexorability of its laws. Abraham would have said, "I know all that. My reason tells me all that. But my faith is not unreasonable. I believe as I do because I believe in the God Who made all these laws, and Who can suspend them

if He wants to. I believe God is above nature, above His whole system of laws. When He speaks it shall be done, when He commands it shall stand fast."

Through all the years Abraham went on from one crisis to another with steadfast step, not staggering. You know what that means. "Up to now", some man says, "I have been all right; but there will be a crisis to-morrow." You reel and stagger like a drunken man, like a man on shipboard. Nay, say, rather, "I will take God into my circumstances. I believe God is in my circumstances", and though you must meet Death, you will meet him smiling, and say, "Good morning. My God is greater than thou art, and what He promises He will perform."

I speak to some this evening who need a God Who is superior to Death. Some of you may change worlds to-night, or if not to-night, before very long. I would fain introduce you to a Guide Who will lead you in peace, and with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, into the pleasures of the morning land. We have had a hard time here, all of us. I am not a pessimist. I thank God for the flowers, for the birds that sing, for the music of life, for all glad things, for friends and fellowships; and I know well that we may have a little bit of heaven on earth. But it is all short-lived, and sooner or later we must fly away. Some of you have written me who never expect to be well again, and I thank God if I may speak a word of comfort to you who lie on a hospital cot. I want to tell you that the best is yet to come. Our God has prepared for us, for all who believe, a city; and He will conduct us thither in His own good time.

I wonder are there some who hear me this evening who would say, "I am tired of churches; I am tired of ministers; I am tired of all the priests of religion. I have gone again and again and again, and have found no help"? What is wrong with you? "A burden on my heart and conscience, sir, that I cannot remove." Quite so. "A debt that is bigger than all the war debts of the world." I introduce you to a rich Friend Who has paid it all for you with His own precious blood. What is wrong with you? "The trouble of to-morrow, sir; and all the difficulties of life: how to live soberly and righteously in this present evil world." Our God will see you through if you trust Him. Is there a father troubled with the family? A wife distressed to the point of heartbreak? I care not what your trouble is, He is the solution. That is why I did not select a particular promise, because I wanted to tell you that the whole Christian revelation is yours, for God in Christ provides everything you require.

The promise of God is the great desideratum. It is something we all may have, a realization of which may be the blessed experience of every one who hears me to-night. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." On the Lord! On the Lord! "On the Lord Jesus"—that means Saviour; "the Lord Jesus Christ"—the anointed or Chosen One. Accept God's plan of salvation for time and for eternity, and He will never fail you.

Let us pray:

Give us of Thy grace, O Lord, that in the midst of plenty we may not be poor, that in the midst of infinite wealth we may not want. Oh help us in faith to say even now, the thousands who have heard this message, with all within these walls, The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. Amen.

## UNIQUE WINSOMENESS

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
Sunday Morning, June 11th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported)

"For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."—Acts 9:16.

Prayer before the Sermon

We rejoice, O Lord, that Thou art our Shepherd, and that we are assured we shall not want. Thou wilt not withhold any good thing from those who walk uprightly. We thank Thee that Thou hast come to us in a way that enables us to understand Thee. We thank Thee for the manifestation of Thyself in the flesh, in the person of the Man Christ Jesus, Who was Himself also God. We rejoice that He took our sins upon Himself, bearing them in His own body on the tree. We rejoice in the fact of His resurrection, His ascension to Thy right hand and His mission there, to intercede for us.

We come to Thee in His name, the name of the great Shepherd Who gave His life for the sheep. Make us conscious of Thy presence this morning. We are aware of the presence of each other; we are influenced by the things we see and touch and taste and handle. May the spirit world be just as real to us. May the things which cannot be apprehended through the senses become, in our consciousness, eternal realities.

We thank Thee that Thou hast come to abide with us, that this morning we have the divine Teacher with us, that just as truly as Thou didst gather Thy disciples about Thee, and expound to them the ways of God, interpreting, privately, the parables which had been puzzling them, so this morning it is our privilege to sit in Thy presence with the Spirit of truth as our Teacher. Bring to our remembrance the things which Thou hast told us; enlighten our understanding so that we may understand the scriptures. May this be our blessed experience this morning! We would worship Thee in truth, through the understanding of the truth. May we receive the truth in the love of it! May we receive the things of God gladly as they did on the day of Pentecost! Help us this morning to rejoice in Thy revelation of Thyself through Thy word, so that, like the Psalmist, we may rejoice in Thy word more than one who findeth great spoil.

So instruct us this morning that those of us who are Christians may be better men and women in the days to come, because of this morning's service.

And then we come to Thee to-day for comfort, and for rest. Many of Thy people are troubled because they have been severely tried. There are few who find life easy, and some who find it so difficult as to be almost unendurable. We pray Thee to gird us with strength for the journey. Arm us for the battle. Give us rest by the way as we pursue our pilgrimage. We remember how careful Thou wert of Thy disciples; how Thou didst forbid the sending of the multitude away lest they should faint; and how Thou didst say, The Spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. We thank Thee for such an High Priest who is able to have compassion because He Himself is touched with the feeling of our infirmity.

We appear before Thee this morning, not as valiant spirits, not as those who have known no defeat, nor weariness: we come rather like those of old who were faint, but who yet pursued the enemy. So help us that we may have strength to stand in the evil day, and having done all, even though we be greatly wearied, and severely tested, having done all, help us still to stand.

So may this service minister to every one of us the peculiar grace our special circumstances require, that when we leave this place we may leave it feeling that God has been here, and has found us out, that we have not been passed over, but that He has come into our lives, teaching us how we may serve Him.

And for those who are still without we pray, for those who have never, personally, met with the Lord Jesus, though they have heard of Him by the hearing of the ear. Oh, what a difference it makes when we meet Him for ourselves! We beseech Thee, O Lord, if there be any here this morning upon whose consciousness the light of the world has not yet dawn-

ed, upon whose darkness the morning of hope has not yet arisen, grant we beseech Thee, that in this service the Day-spring from on high may visit us. May light come to darkened and befogged understandings, that we may see our privileges and duties in Christ Jesus; that the unsaved may be saved, and that such as are Thine may be further sanctified and separated unto the service of God.

Similarly we pray for all congregations at home and abroad. May heaven's richest benediction rest upon them all this summer morning, that this day may mark a distinct advance in the interests of Thy kingdom throughout the world.

Be mindful of those who are sick, and of those who suffer; for all who are in hospitals, or on sick-beds at home, for doctors and nurses we pray, that Thy grace may be given. And we pray for those who are engaged in public duty, driving cars, in ships, preserving order in our streets, for policemen and firemen, and all men whose duties keep them from the place of prayer. Make every place of service a veritable Bethel, where the angels of God shall come, and where Heaven shall be opened to the aspiring soul.

Hear us in all these things, and do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, for we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

This surely was a strange introduction to the new life to which Saul of Tarsus was called. He was not led step by step gradually to a recognition of the price of discipleship, but he was told right at the outset something of what it would cost him to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. And nobody knew better than Saul of Tarsus the price of true discipleship. It was at the feet of this young man, Saul, the men who stoned Stephen to death cast their garments for safe-keeping. Saul had been one of the foremost persecutors of the church of Christ. And now he is suddenly summoned by the Lord to His own service; and Ananias is commissioned to deliver to him a very plain message. The Lord announces His purpose at the beginning to show him, not only that he must suffer, but how much he must suffer, what it will cost him to turn from his Pharisaism and become a member of the despised sect of the Nazarenes, a sect which was everywhere spoken against.

I mention that at the outset because it is so contrary to all principles of psychology recommended to ministers to-day. You are first of all gradually and pleasantly to meet people. You are to win your way into their confidence. You are to say nothing that would stir up their animosities, or that would discourage them from setting their minds toward Christ. You must not be abrupt: you must be very tactful and diplomatic. If possible get the persons you are interested in to spend a few days at a house party, or in some other way—not to be too religious all at once; thus you must challenge their attention and engage their interest.

Not so were the preachers of the New Testament commissioned to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is no place for any degree of deception in the service of the Lord. We need withhold nothing of the divine counsel in order to make converts. Ours is a God of truth. The convicting Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and it is God's way to see to it that those who would enlist in His service shall know something at the outset of what that service involves.

There was a time during the days of His flesh, when our Lord was extremely popular, when the multitudes came desiring to make Him a king, when they would have enlisted as His disciples in thousands. But He discouraged them. He delivered to them a most searching message, the most searching of all His earthly ministry. He showed them that He knew the measure and the quality of their interest, that they were seeking Him not because

they saw the miracle, but because they did eat of the loaves and were filled, and He bade them labour not for those perishing things. And then, profoundly, He taught the great mystery of religion: that life consists in union with God, and refreshment from the heavenly springs; that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. And the multitude, even as He preached, melted away. Then even His professed disciples began to leave Him by the hundreds.

It is not always an evidence of unfaithfulness on the part of the preacher if some people forsake his ministry. Our Lord Himself was deserted by an innumerable multitude. He was acclaimed by them as Messiah the coming King; and yet in the face of one sermon they were dispersed until at last of all the crowd only twelve were left, and He said, "Will ye also go away?" But He knew they would not go. And Peter said, "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." That has ever been the divine method. It is so throughout this Book. Nor has anyone yet been authorized to reduce the terms of discipleship, to eliminate the things that are offensive to the flesh, and so to shade down the objectionable features of the gospel that they will become acceptable to men of the world. There is nothing like that in the New Testament. There is no warrant given to any Christian minister to make the terms of the Lord's discipleship less onerous, less exacting to-day than they were in New Testament times. What is the explanation of this severe introduction? What if the gospel be preached after that fashion to-day? What if the standard be held up as it is here revealed? What if it be insisted that there can be no compromise, no lowering of the standard, no modification of the terms of discipleship; that we must conform to the divine regulation or we cannot be His disciples? What if they preach after that fashion?

I recall when I became Pastor of this church a certain family who were in attendance upon the church. I cannot remember at the moment whether the young people were actually members or not. But they discontinued their attendance. I called upon them, and I asked one of the young ladies why she had left Jarvis Street. "Because," she said, "you have no tennis club at Jarvis St., and no tennis courts." The proper thing, I suppose, would have been immediately to buy a piece of land, and lay out a tennis court, for it would never do to lose that young lady, to lose anyone from a church because there was not a tennis club! And if that is not enough, well what else do the children want? Let us get all and placate them and please them, because you must win the young people! Win them with a tennis racquet! or some other kind of racket. What folly! There is no warrant for that sort of thing in the word of God. I am quite aware that some young men go to college mainly to play football, or to join in the sports of the educational institution. There are a few light-headed and light-footed people of that sort, but no man or woman of serious intention, going to an educational institution, would ever measure its acceptability by any sort of recreational standard. They would go for educational purposes, and apply themselves to advantage.

There is no warrant whatever for thus lowering the standard. What if we preach it? Shall we have any converts? Will all you young men go away if I tell

you it is a hard thing to be a Christian? Will you young ladies be dissuaded from an acceptance of, and confession of, Christ? Are we of that character that we must have some easy thing? The only way by which we can consent to go to the skies is to be carried on flowery beds of ease! Is that true? I do not think it is; I do not think it ever was true. I think the psychology of the modern church is all wrong.

I was thrilled last night when I read that the United Church was going to declare war on something. Upon my word, I am not so particular what they do, if they only get a little of the militant spirit, instead of looking on life as a continuous picnic.

A United Church minister—I honour him, I respect him—came to see me a little while ago. I think he thought I needed the ministrations of the Oxford Group. He had actually had a great change in his life. Someone had a daughter who died a year ago, and he, as his pastor, had had no message for him. But after a year he had been so touched by the Oxford Group that he had been able to go to that father and say something to him. I say, God bless you brother; I am glad you had something for him. But what are we here for, if it is not to do something for a needy world?

I am afraid I should not agree with the programme of the United Church, but after a while we shall be able to make merry with them. They actually believe in controversy now! They are going to fight! What for? Bread and butter. They are going to fight capitalism. But the honour of the Lord, the integrity of His word, let that go by default! But when a man's weekly wage is touched, when something is wrong with the material world, let's get together and fight. What does that mean? That they are materially minded, that is all; that the things which are seen and temporal really matter, not the things which are not seen and are eternal.

The foundations of the Christian church were not laid by what we used to call in my school days, "milk-sops", and what sometimes now are called "sissies", effeminate gentlemen.

"Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me . . . and I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Sometimes we speak about Christian assurance, of the need of our being assured of our salvation; and that is very important, although one may be saved and not know it. You have seen a sick child who did not know its own name, but father and mother knew it, and knew whose that child was. And when the shepherd who left the ninety and nine to go in search of the one, found the sheep that was lost, he laid it on his shoulders and began to rejoice. I do not suppose the sheep had much assurance but the shepherd had; for he was sure he would never let him go.

Here is a lesson in divine assurance: The modern professor of psychology, even if he were very orthodox, would have been inclined to say, "Don't preach the gospel that way, you will discourage people. Do not tell them it is hard: they will find that out soon enough. When they get rooted and established it will be time enough to warn them of that." But the Lord had no misgivings; He knew it was not possible for Him to lose His grip upon Saul of Tarsus. What is there of grip and magnetism in the Lord Jesus Christ that He can afford to talk after this fashion? as though he would say, "I am going to make it as hard as I possibly can; I am going to draw the veil and show him the full price he will have to pay."

But will you not lose him, Lord? "No, I shall not lose him. He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

That is the line of my enquiry this morning. What is there about Jesus Christ that makes it possible for Him thus to present His service, His discipleship, in the most forbidding guise, and yet be sure that of all that the Father hath given Him He will lose none?

### I.

Well you see, Saul of Tarsus was introduced to the Christian religion, and to Christ his sovereign Lord as ONE WHO HAD BEEN TRULY CONQUERED. Saul's conversion was a conquest; he was conquered of the Lord, subdued utterly, and the Lord Jesus knew it. He knew that He had Him in His sovereign grip, and that He could do anything with him. He knew that He had completely mastered him.

Look at him for a moment. *What a revolution had been effected in the life of Saul of Tarsus by the revelation which had come to him.* As to the law, Saul of Tarsus boasted that he was blameless. As to the person of Christ he was sure that He was dead; that He had been either a dreamer who was self-deceived, or a deceiver who had deliberately deceived others. He believed that He was dead, and that His body had been carried away somewhere, even as the soldiers said. He had no idea that Jesus Christ was risen, or that He was the Son of God, or that in Him all the prophecies of scripture had been fulfilled; and he thought with himself that he ought to do "many things contrary to the name of Jesus Christ". Perfectly conscientious in his opposition to Jesus Christ, and in bringing men bound to Jerusalem who called upon His name, he thought he was doing God, service. What a startling experience that must have been when he heard a voice from heaven calling him by name! And even when he heard it, he had no idea who the Speaker was.

Saul was not an agnostic; much less was he an atheist; Saul did not disbelieve in God. He was a religious man, profoundly religious. He had been religiously trained from infancy, and he believed in God, but he did not believe in Christ. Now you will remember what Jesus said, "Ye believe in God; believe also in me. The faith you have in God, repose in me, for" He said in effect "I am God." But Saul did not know that. Can you imagine how in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, his whole mental concept of life was revolutionized, when his question, "Who art thou, Lord" was answered by this voice and in this way, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." All that he had believed about Jesus was dissolved instantly, slipped off from him. Alive, not dead! Not in the grave, but in the glory! Not man, but God! Not somebody to be persecuted, but Somebody absolutely to be obeyed. What wonder that instantly he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

What sort of conversion have you had? Have you condescended to take upon you the Christian name? Have you condescended to be baptized? Years ago a lady in this church said to me, "Have you been to see Mrs. So-and-So?" I said, "Yes." "And is she coming into the church." I said, "I do not now." "But surely you are not going to lose that woman, are you?" I said, "It is not for me to find her; she will have to be found of the Lord." "But", she said, "of course she was brought up a Presbyterian, and she has just married a Baptist, but

she is quite willing to be baptized. You will not allow her to slip through your fingers, will you?" "I never baptize people" I said, "who are merely *willing* to be baptized: she must want to be baptized as an act of obedience to Jesus Christ."

You have been baptized,—why? Because somebody else was baptized? Or, you would like to be baptized—why? "Oh, I rather like this church, you know." Is that your idea of conversion? I insist that there is not an infinitesimal fraction of the principle of evolution in conversion. Conversion is a revolution, a right-about face, a complete change of everything. The centre of life is changed; the authority in life is changed; the outlook of life is changed; the object of life is changed. Everything in life is changed. And when it is, our religion means something. And when thus the soul is really surrendered to Jesus Christ, conquered by His sovereign grace and power, then it is for the Lord to dictate, not for us to pick and choose between His commandments.

"I will show him what I demand of him. I will let him know what it means to keep My commandments. There shall be no misapprehension on his part as to what discipleship involves. It will involve suffering, great suffering, not for his name's sake, but for my name's sake." We shall have heroic Christians and heroic service just in the measure in which those who profess the name of Jesus have been conquered and subdued by His sovereign power.

## II.

"I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." THE LORD JESUS KNEW THAT HE COULD HAVE NO COMPETITOR. That He had taken such a place in the heart of this man, Saul of Tarsus, that He was sure that neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil could successfully compete with Him. He knew that He could turn Saul of Tarsus loose with safety because he had had such a clear vision of the true character of Christ, His Person, His work, His power, His prospect, that nobody anywhere, and nothing that this World could give, could enter into competition with Him.

Is there anything in your life, or mine, to compete with the Lord Jesus? Has He any rival, or is He supreme? That is the question. Whose name is of greatest concern? Whose honour is of greatest moment? I could write volumes on the doings of some people who become incensed at everyone who stands for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They are so pacifically disposed, so entirely agreeable to everyone but to those who do stand for the defence of the faith. At them they gnash their teeth. Of them they have no good thing whatever to say. And they do not know how sadly they contradict themselves when they complain of our militancy, at the same time clenching their fists as they do it. I have seen these same gentlemen sit in a convention and hear the name of Christ dishonoured, the integrity of His word impugned, the supreme authority of Jesus Christ called in question, His Deity challenged, while they remain silent. But the moment one word is said which reflects upon them personally, they are all on fire, and ready to fight the world. Why? Because they are far more concerned about their own honour than they are about the honour of Jesus Christ. Jesus so appeared to Paul that He said, "I am going to deal with that man in such a way that My name and the honour of My name,

the glory of the sovereign God shall be the supreme end of life to him, and for that he will suffer anything rather than bring a stain upon it."

Some of you young ladies were invited to some kind of a party last week, and you knew they were going to do certain things at that party of which you could not approve as Christians. There was going to be a friendly game of cards; perhaps they were going to have a dance, I do not know what. And you did not want to go; you really had no interest in it. But you found in it—I hope you resisted it—but you found in it a little bit of temptation. Now why? Why is it ever difficult to say "No" to certain things? Why is it not easy? It is sometimes a good thing to be able to say, "I cannot do that". But that is not how we ought to get out of these things. I want to ask you why you find it difficult to say "No" to certain invitations. It is a very simple application of the principle; and I know that the young people of this church are being perpetually worried by the appeals of the world, and sometimes they come from very respectable, good people, and perhaps very religious people. A certain young woman says, "Oh, I wish they had not asked me." Why? "Because I do not want to go. I do not think I ought to go." Well, tell them so. "But I don't like to do that." But why? "Oh, I—" You are afraid of what they will think of you. You say, "I do not want them to think I am narrow, bigoted, fanatical." In other words, you think more of your own name, or you are in danger of thinking more of your own name than of His name. That is what Jesus meant in principle when He said, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" It saves us from a thousand snares to have a fixed centre in life, a fixed objective, to be a man or woman of one idea, as was Paul. And no more massive intellect has ever been known to the world, no man of greater natural powers than the apostle Paul. By common consent of friend and foe he stands out in all history as an intellectual giant, a scholar of the first order. And yet he was one of the narrowest of men, with one course in life, and one idea. And when at last he was near the end, he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the faith": "This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The Lord Jesus said, "I am going to give Paul a commission, the biggest commission that man or angel could have—to bear My name. I am going to entrust My honour to him; and for that he will suffer greatly." If we put the name of the Lord Jesus first everything else will dwindle into comparative insignificance.

## III.

And then WHAT LIGHT THIS THROWS UPON GOD'S METHOD IN CONVERSION. People are not saved by mere persuasion. That is my criticism, fundamentally, of this Oxford Group Movement, that it is wholly, or almost wholly psychological, instead of spiritual, psychological instead of pneumatological. It is of the mind rather than of the spirit. It is the impact of one personality upon another, instead of the result of the divine disclosure of Christ in all His glory and His power. And there is no safety for any one of us but to see Christ, and then to yield to Him. Then the things we must suffer will not amount to very much.

I was last week reviewing in my own mind the

last twenty-three years in Toronto, and thinking of some of the prominent men in it. And I remembered walking over the foundations of Toronto's largest residence up on the hill, now unoccupied. It costs millions to build, but you could have got it a little while ago for twenty-eight thousand dollars, for taxes. The sale price would not have built a quarter of the wall around the place. And I look at it every time I pass it, and say to myself, There was a man who set his heart upon something, and he poured millions of dollars into an enterprise like that, and did not live in it a year. Now the weeds are growing up all around it, and it is empty, and the laughing-stock of all the country—all in the space of twenty years. And this man was but the chief among many. What wonder that the wise man, sweeping the whole realm of human interests by his scrutiny should have said, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

"Who art thou, Lord?" The One Who has overcome the world, and is now in glory. Come along, Saul, have fellowship with Me. Get My secret. Tread the world beneath your feet. Never mind the suffering. And some day when sin and sorrow and pain and tears and death have all passed away, you shall reign with Me in glory." I can tell you it is worth while. Better a thousand times to live for God to write your record, by God's grace, in the lives of other people whom God shall use you to bring to the feet of this conquering Christ, even though at last you have to say, Life has profited me nothing. It has given me nothing but sorrow and suffering. The only joys I have ever had have been the joys that have come to me in fellowship with Jesus Christ." That is the only thing that can make life, here or hereafter, worth while.

Do you know Him? Do you really know Him? Only a few years and we shall all be gone. Somebody else will be standing in this pulpit. Others will be sitting in those pews. Life's tale for us will soon have been fully told. What shall be the record which God and the angels must read?

Let us pray:

O Lord, for Thine abounding grace, for Thy matchless mercy to us all, we give Thee thanks. And for this unimagined, indescribable, honour of being called into the service of God, we bless Thy holy name. Help us who are Christians that we may rejoice in it. And if any are not yet enlisted in the divine service, may they ask Saul's question first, "Who art thou Lord?" and then "What wilt thou have me to do?" For Jesus sake, we ask it, Amen.

### RANDOM RADIO LETTERS

Dear Sir: Richland, N.Y.  
Please send me a copy of last Sunday's sermon as announced over the radio and any copies of any back sermons you could send would be very much appreciated. I would also like to know the subscription price of THE GOSPEL WITNESS and would appreciate a copy of that also.

Dear Sir: Hamilton, Ont.  
Please enclosed find a small amount for your radio broadcasting fund.

If you have any, I would like to get two copies of THE GOSPEL WITNESS containing your Sunday evening sermon of the 16th inst.

I have been down to your church in Toronto, and am coming again when opportunity affords.

Dear Sir: Sundridge, Ontario.  
I wonder if you would please send me the sermon preached by Dr. Shields on April 30th on the text "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?" Also the sermon preached on May 14th—Anniversary Service. I have been a shut-in for

many years, but this past winter have enjoyed the church services preached by Dr. Shields. He does present the fundamental truths of the Gospel so very clearly. Would love a sample copy of your GOSPEL WITNESS.

Dear Sir: Peterboro, Ont.  
Would like a copy of your Easter Sunday Evening sermon on Recognition in Heaven. We enjoyed it very much and found it helpful and inspiring. Enclosed please find five cents in stamps for same. We are praying for the work.

Dear Sir: Port Huron, Mich.  
Please send me a copy of your radio message of April 23 p.m., using Romans 4:16 as your text. We enjoyed the message very much. Would appreciate hearing more often such wonderful truths.

Dear Sir: Clifton Springs, N.Y.  
It was a wonderful experience to hear the edifying and inspirational sermon preached by your pastor last Sunday evening. If not too late, I shall be most grateful for a copy of it.

Dear Sir: West Hill, Ont.  
I was very much impressed by your address on the Divinity of Jesus Christ broadcast last Sunday night.

Please send me a copy, as there are several people that I know who are wallowing in a mire of doubt upon that point, and your address would have helped them so much had they heard it.

God bless you in your work for Him.

Dear Sir: Westfield, N.Y.  
We enjoy your services over the radio very much receiving many blessings. We have had the pleasure of attending your church while in Toronto, also expect to do same this summer. Will you please send me your sermon of to-day as stated over the radio. Thanking you.

Dear Sir:  
I just thought I would like to tell you how much I enjoy your broadcast over the radio. It was through this medium that I received my conversion and wishing to thank you for your much help you have given me through your talk on the radio on Sunday nights. I would like to come and attend one of your meetings if I could but this seems impossible. I hope you will excuse the writing.

Dear Sir: Orillia, Ont.  
Would you kindly send me a copy of the sermon you preached on Sunday evening, Jan. 22nd. My best friend on earth passed away in Jan., and yours was the last service he listened to. He always attended service at his own church (Presbyterian) in the morning and listened to you in the evening. When I came home from service at night he said to me, "Well, I have listened to the two best sermons over the radio to-night I think I have ever heard." On Wednesday he took a stroke and just lived a few days after. I know he is present with the Lord, but Oh how I miss him, and I would like a copy of the sermon he liked so well if you have it. May God bless you in your work and may you long be spared to preach salvation to men and women as clearly and plainly as you do.

Dear Brother: East Williamson, N.Y.  
Will you please send me the copies of THE GOSPEL WITNESS containing the last two sermons of Dr. Shields, on "The Deity of Christ" and on "The Blood of God". I enclose ten cents.

Allow me to say that I heard these two sermons on the radio with immense satisfaction. If every pulpit spoke out in such a positive and clear-cut way, the progress of the Gospel would be quite different from what it is.

Dear Friends: Washington, D.C.  
Once more I am sending money order for \$2.00, to be applied to the radio fund or to the Seminary, or divided, as you see fit. Wish I could make it \$200,000 for each one, and for the Witness and the Church! From now on I hope to send at least an occasional gift.

It would be wonderful to attend the graduation of the Seminary this year. My Witnesses go faithfully to Ken-

tucky and Africa missionaries, a family in the mountains of Montana that passes it on to a colored family there,—and it sometimes reaches good Baptists here in town,—one man who seems to be getting a different idea about Jarvis Street Church!

Dear Sir: London, Ont.

I am a retired minister of the Detroit conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. I heard your sermon last night, over the radio, and would be pleased to receive it. Your views agree with mine exactly.

Dear Sir: Cobourg, Ont.

Enclosed kindly find cheque for Radio fund. I noticed with satisfaction that you closed your year with a balanced budget, my cheque not arriving on time, did not affect the balance, which goes to show how insignificant we are and how unimportant our gifts are. It shows me that my little assistance means so little but I want to share anyway in the great and glorious work just to be a small stockholder. I sometimes come all the way from Cobourg on Sunday night to be at your service (Jarvis Street Baptist Church). I know of no place to stop on the way where I can hear the old, old story told over and over again.

I am a stranger in Jarvis St., but not a stranger to God's grace, love and care.

Dear Sir:

This encloses just a wee mite towards the Radio Fund. I would it were more! It is a joy and a privilege to listen in on Sunday evenings whenever possible to hear the "old, old story of Jesus and His Love" proclaimed so faithfully and so tenderly Sunday by Sunday.

May He our wonderful Saviour grant you many years of such ministry, many souls won for His Crown, of rejoicing when He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. So shall we "when we awake in His Likeness".

I wonder if your choir would sing some Sunday evening "Tell me the old, old story," as perhaps only the Jarvis St. choir can sing it. I will be listening in next Sunday, and after that be away in Montreal for three Sundays visiting and then home again to Toronto.

Dear Sir: Arlington, Mass.

Enclosed find cheques for fifteen dollars, for March, April and May; five dollars for each month.

My Dear Brother: Glenwilliams.

I listened in to your very excellent sermon delivered in your own pulpit last evening and was very much profited thereby.

As per your announcement I would very much appreciate a copy for my study and perusal.

May God bless you, and enable you to continue such timely, interesting, and most of all, such spiritual messages.

Dear Dr. Shields: Alliston, Ont.

I am visiting my brother here for a few days and had the great pleasure of hearing the Jarvis St. service over the radio last night.

We took up a collection and raised 45 cents. Enclosed you will find postal note for \$1.50. One dollar is my subscription for the Radio Fund for the month of April, and the collection.

Dear Sir: Claremont, Ont.

We heard part of your last Sunday evening's sermon and enjoyed what we heard so much we thought we would like to hear it all. Since it was announced the sermon would be sent on request I am taking the privilege of writing for it.

Dr. Shields: Port Huron, Mich.

Will you please send me a copy of the sermon you preached Sunday evening, April 23rd. I enjoyed every word of it, and may God richly bless you and keep you true to His Word.

Very sincerely yours in His Blessed fellowship.

Dear Dr. Shields: Port Credit, Ont.

I listened to your service last Sunday night and enjoyed it so much I thought I would take advantage of your offer

to get a copy of your sermon. Your views on our knowing each other, and knowledge of what is taking place here, after we have safely landed on that better shore, appeals to me very much. I do thank God for the sure hope we can have of heaven.

Praying God's blessing on your work, and thanking you for your offer, I will look forward to receiving a copy of your sermon of April 16. Text: "Their eyes were opened."

Brother in the Lord: Lansford, Pa.

I was listening to your service this Lord's day p.m., and I sure thank God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that there are still some who are not afraid to preach Christ and Him crucified for our sins.

May God continue to bless your ministry, and may precious souls be saved through your breaking of the Word, not only in your church but also over the air.

My dear Dr. Shields: Buffalo, N.Y.

I enclose one dollar for the Radio Fund and only wish it could be much more. The Lord does greatly bless your ministry over the air to many hearts. He will send, through many, the money needed.

Dear Brethren: Newark, N.Y.

Enclosed find small contribution toward the radio work, sorry it cannot be more. Am very pleased to help such an honest presentation of the way of salvation.

Your sincere expression of your faith in the Scripture, as the Lord's revelation, is very inspiring, and despite some differences of viewpoint on some things, am most pleased to assist one of the few ministers giving a public witness in such a faithful, Christian spirit. These are times when there is dire need for the "Comfort wherewith we ourselves have also been comforted."

Your brother by His grace.

Dear Dr. Shields: Harrisburg, Pa.

Both my husband and myself mightily enjoyed your sermon last night and received a real blessing from it.

We are members of Dr. J. M. Haldeman's First Baptist Church in New York City but the depression marooned us down here, in the seat of Modernism, where Satan reigns supreme, both in and outside of the majority of the churches.

Shall appreciate having a copy of your message. The reception was as clear as if you were right here in Harrisburg.

May God shower His blessings upon you and your work.

Dear Sir: Wiarton, Ont.

I appreciate very much your services over the radio, and feel that you are doing a great service for the glory of God and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Long may you be spared to lift up your voice in His praise and to His honour in this day of Modernism.

I enclose a small contribution for the support of your radio ministry.

Dear Pastor: Chautauqua, N.Y.

Will you kindly send me your sermon that you broadcast Sunday evening, May 28 as we enjoyed it very much. Hoping to hear you the following Sunday. Thanking you in advance.

Dear Dr. Shields: South Bend, Ind.

I am enclosing an order for five dollars (\$5.00) for the Radio Fund.

On rare occasions, when the air is just right we are able to hear your messages for about half an hour. Then Cincinnati comes in with its jazz programme and your voice is drowned out but we know it is still there for others to hear. The short time we are privileged to listen we enjoy so much because we still have the memory of our visit to your church two years ago, when we heard you "in person."

We are not able to hear Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse of Philadelphia any more, and I believe Dr. Dodd of Shreveport, La., has gone off the air, so we are not hearing any radio sermons of the old faith.

I am sorry that my offering is so small but it is all I am able to give at this time.

May God keep you and greatly bless your ministry and your church.

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 27

July 2nd, 1933

## THIRD QUARTER

## DAVID MADE KING OF JUDAH

Lesson Text: II Samuel, chapters 1-3.

Golden Text: "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul." II Samuel 2:4.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Psalm 113:1-10.

Tuesday—Lam. 1:12-22.

Wednesday—Prov. 13:1-10.

Thursday—Matt. 21:33-46.

Friday—Phil. 2:1-11.

Saturday—Heb. 4:12-16.

## I. DAVID'S LAMENTATION FOR THE DEATH OF SAUL (1:1-27).

The record of this chapter clearly manifests the generous disposition and entire lack of hatred or spitefulness in David's attitude toward Saul. He had been cruelly persecuted by the king, and had suffered many things on his account, yet there is only sorrow on learning of his death. David esteemed him as the Lord's anointed, even though he had been disobedient, and had acted in an evil manner toward him. And because of this he refused to take personal vengeance on him when the opportunity presented itself. He left him to his divine Master's judgment, and took no part in his ruin. This respect of David for the office of Saul is worthy of note, and likewise his continued affection for the king and his family, despite the wrongs which he had suffered. May we learn to rise above the petty things of life, and not to be characterized at any time by smallness. There are already too many small people in the world, who stoop to do mean things, and rejoice when adverse circumstances affect their adversaries.

In the record several things are mentioned. First, the place of David's abode, which was Ziklag, (v. 1). Second, the time and manner in which David received the information concerning the death of Saul and his sons, (vs. 2-16). This was given him by a man who had come from the scene of the conflict. Note the nature of his story, which seems improbable when compared with the inspired record of the former book, (I Sam. 31:4), and was probably given for the purpose of ingratiating himself with David. Note also the effect on David and his men, and the punishment meted out to the Amalekite informer. David thus not only showed his respect for Saul but absolved himself from all complicity in his death. The informer doubtless received a different kind of treatment from that which he expected. He was a self-seeker, endeavouring to turn the misfortune of others to his own advantage, and he was given the well-merited reward of the same. Warning may be given concerning the evils and dangers of the self-seeking spirit which is so evident in the world, and even in the church these days.

The third thing of note is the lamen-

tation of David over Saul and Jonathan, (vs. 17-27). Such a lamentation was in accordance with eastern custom on the death of a chief or person in a position of authority, when the various qualities of the deceased are recited. Before relating the lamentation the information is given respecting the teaching of the use of the bow in Israel, (v. 18). Possibly the deficiency in the use of this weapon had been evident in the late disastrous battle, and David was but embarking on a preparedness campaign. He had no wish to be at a disadvantage in the face of his enemies. In the lamentation there is a poetic reference to the character and position of the fallen leaders, (v. 19), the triumphant attitude of the Philistines, (v. 20), the great sorrow of David, (v. 21), the bravery of Jonathan and Saul, (v. 22), the characters of Saul and Jonathan, their union in death, (v. 23), a call to the daughters of Israel, with a reference to the attitude of Saul toward them, (v. 24), and a very particular lament over Jonathan on account of the love which had been manifested between them, (vs. 25-27). Note the sincerity of David's love, his capacity to mourn for a departed friend, his true patriotism, and the fact that after death he dwelt upon the good in the lives of his friends, and not the evil. The coming of death tends to minimize the importance of the unpleasant features of the character, and love covers a multitude of sins, (I. Pet. 4:8).

## II. DAVID ANOINTED KING OF JUDAH (2:1-7).

The death of Saul opened the way for David to ascend to the throne. He was the Lord's anointed, and the successor of Saul by divine right, but he did not seek to possess his right. Without the Lord's direction he would not move, and in this, as we observed in a former lesson, he is an example to us. Receiving the divine guidance he and his followers went up to Hebron in Judah where they abode, (vs. 1-3). In going to this district he was settling among his friends who undoubtedly welcomed him into their midst. He was among his own people. A proof of this is seen in the fact of their anointing him as king of Judah, (v. 4). Some men in his position might have declined this honour, considering it beneath their dignity to accept part of the kingdom, when entitled to the whole, but David acted wisely and humbly in accepting that which was so willingly given him. As the Lord's anointed he was coming into his own, reminding us of that One who is termed the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5) who some day will be acknowledged as King of kings, not by one tribe only, but by the whole world, for every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father, (Phil. 2:10,11). In the present time he is accepted in His exalted station by only a part of the population of His kingdom, the larger number rejecting Him. Explanation may be made of the sinfulness and danger of this attitude of antagonism toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

After, or at the time of his anointing, David was informed of the good deed of the men of Jabesh-gilead in burying Saul, (v. 4), and he sent messengers unto

them to express his appreciation of their action, promising his personal reward for the same, and announcing the fact of his ascension to the throne of Judah, (vs. 5-7). There is manifest in this attitude the spirit of real gratitude, also wisdom and political sagacity of the higher type. Note the duty and privilege of doing good unto others, whether or not we are rewarded for the same, and the further duty of manifesting our gratitude for deeds done on our behalf.

## III. ISHBOSHETH MADE KING OVER ISRAEL (2:8-32).

Saul and his three sons were slain, but there yet lived one son by the name of Ishbosheth who was placed upon the throne of Israel by Abner, captain of Saul's host, (v. 8), and Saul's uncle, (I Sam. 14:50). Evidently the whole of Israel was subject unto him with the exception of Judah, (vs. 9,10). Note the duration of Ishbosheth's reign, and also that of David in Hebron. The purpose of Abner in this action is not stated. Inasmuch as he was related to the house of Saul, it may have been a family affair, coupled with the belief that as the son of the king Ishbosheth had the greatest right to the throne. It may possibly also have been due to a somewhat self-seeking spirit, in a manifest desire for a continued high position in the nation. There may further have been a dislike for David. Whatever the reason, the action was wrong, for David was the anointed of God, and the divinely chosen successor of Saul. David was God's choice. Ishbosheth was man's choice, and the population was divided in Israel between these two men. The ultimate end of the matter was not in doubt for God's will could not be finally thwarted, but Abner and his followers did what they could in this direction, although they eventually gave in, thus bringing peace and unity to the land, (3:21).

In the spiritual realm a similar condition prevails. The Lord's anointed, the Christ of God, has been accepted by many, though numerically they are in the minority, while the majority of men follow leaders of their own choosing. Such a division of the population is clearly contrary to the will of God, and as in the case of Israel in David's day it can only mean misery for multitudes. Our Lord stated that He came not to send peace, but a sword, (Matt. 10:34), intimating that loyalty to Him would arouse enmity on the part of those who rejected Him, which would vent itself against His followers, (John 16:2,3). There was conflict in David's day, beginning with the battle between the forces under Abner and those under Joab, (vs. 16,17), and in the spiritual realm the same has been, and ever will be true until the final overthrow of those opposed to our Lord. The cause of this antagonism is worthy of consideration. In the case of Israel it was due to the wrong choice of Abner and his followers, and their rejection of the Lord's anointed, and in the present day the same cause affects man in his relations with God. Note the foolishness of such an attitude, manifest in the various spheres of world activity, the dangers attendant therein, and the necessity and blessedness of reconciliation with the Lord's anointed, (2 Cor. 5:20).