

# 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 PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 2nd, 1934

(Stenographically Reported)

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you,

"Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."—I. Peter 1:18-21.

Once again I ask you to ponder the significance of this great phrase, "the precious blood of Christ". This is ever our theme: there is no other subject of abiding interest. Those of us who are saved can say,—

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die."

#### I.

The text which I have read to you suggests to us that THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WAS THE CULMINATION AND REVELATION OF GOD'S LONG THOUGHT. The Lamb was slain "from the foundation of the world". We may well speak of the gospel as the "old, old story", for the reason that of all stories it is the oldest.

*The plan of the Cross antedated creation.* It was not an afterthought. It was not the result of an unconsidered impulse. It was not ordained without premeditation; much less was it the result of any process of human evolution. Whatever there may be in the Cross, it was planned, ordered, before the foundation of the world.

That perhaps is, in the letter of it, but a commonplace. But how many of us have duly meditated upon the principle therein involved? Our men of science speak to us of long periods of time, and of space which defies computation. They speak not of a thousand, nor of hundreds of

thousands, but of many millions of years. I am not a scientist. I am not competent to dispute with them in the special spheres of their investigations, nor have I any special inclination to do so. But when the physicist admits his bewilderment, when he tries to unravel, let us say, the history of the rocks, or the tale of the most distant planets, when he assures us that he is dealing with matters of great antiquity, I feel like answering him, "I have a subject of study that antedates the oldest of all the things upon which you train your telescope or your microscope." Before ever the foundations of the world were laid, the plan of redemption was formed in the Eternal Mind, and the whole scheme of salvation, revealed in the gospel, was designed and settled. That is a truth worth bearing in mind.

Then you will remember too—for it is here implied—that *the plan of redemption was perfected* before the world's foundations were laid. There is nothing new in the gospel. Through all the innumerable ages, through vast stretches of time which the human mind cannot possibly estimate, our gracious God did not change His mind. He had made a plan which was as perfect as Himself, and which, therefore, was no more subject to change than its divine Author.

I fear there are some people who conceive the gospel to be a comparatively modern product. There are supposedly wise men who speak somewhat contemptuously of the gospel which Spurgeon preached, or which Wesley preached. There are men of our generation who are so wise that they would undo the Reformation, for they tell

us that nothing matters very much. There are some who go a little farther back, and speak of the influence of Paul, as though the gospel were a religious system elaborated by apostolic minds on the basis of certain recognized and acknowledged historical facts, but that it is essentially human, and comparatively modern, when contrasted, let us say, with the geological ages.

Some are prepared to amend the gospel to meet the exigencies of the present day. But I have never heard of any man's even proposing such folly in the realm in which scientific investigators exercise their minds. No man of science ever proposed to change the laws of light and of heat, of chemical action and reaction, of gravitation—or any fixed law of nature, whether it be in the stars or in our human bodies. All that man ever does is to seek to ascertain, with what accuracy he may, the method by which these invisible forces work; and, having done so, he describes that method as a law of nature. Thereafter in all realms of science men would teach us how to accommodate ourselves to principles, to laws, which are fixed, invariable, and inexorable.

I have never heard of a man's proposing to change the course of the sun. In the early summer we take our little watches and put them forward an hour, and when the summer is past we turn the hands back an hour—but the sun goes on just the same. Even the cows will tell you that! All nature is adjusted to that clock which never varies by the fraction of a second. Yet this great machine, this material universe, is young and modern compared with the plan of salvation. If you may not alter the one, who dare presume to alter the other?

Let me go farther and say that the plan of the Cross not only antedates the work of creation, but *all that is involved in it was predetermined*. It is not a mere abstraction, a scheme written in a book. Some years ago I attended a meeting where there was a discussion of a certain measure, a certain act that had been put upon the statute books just before the dissolution of Parliament. The appeal to the people was made on the basis of that proposal. The leader of the party opposing the measure from the political platform had said that if he were elected he would not rescind it. There were many people who supposed that that meant he would enforce it, but I recall an experienced parliamentarian's saying, "Sir So-and-So speaks wisely when he says he will not rescind the measure. It is not necessary so to do: no law will enforce itself. When you pass a measure, and it becomes a statute of the country, it will prove but a dead letter unless you put behind it living men who are determined to give that legislation executive effect."

The plan of the gospel is not merely a plan, something that is conceived and written for somebody's guidance. It is an expression of the divine will. There is dynamic in it. Foreordained and predetermined, it is God's way of redeeming lost men. Just as surely as recuperative powers are placed by creation's fiat in our bodies, and in the material world about us; just as surely as nature has ways of repairing and restoring the wastes effected by the passage of time, so surely did God anticipate all the moral requirements of the race. Knowing that men, of their own will, would depart from Him, He foreordained a path that would lead them back home again.

It is a little late in the day for anyone to propose

an amendment to the gospel which antedated the stars, and is vastly older than the rocks. I know there are those who are always attracted by that which is new. I know there are those who seem to be allured by fantastic and extravagant promises so that, in the realm of religion, of economics, and even in the realm of a science falsely so-called, every sort of vagary finds its devotees. But wise men, I think, will consider that the things that have stood the test of time, and plans that have been perfected and have remained unchanged, and which have been continuously operative for ages, are deserving of a respect and a trust which is not due the thing that is new and untried.

I love, for the confirmation and further inspiration of my own faith, to dwell frequently upon the eternal, unchanging, counsels of God Himself. They provide a foundation for faith.

"His every word of grace is strong  
As that which built the skies;  
The voice that rolls the stars along  
Speaks all the promises."

He who said, in the material world, "Let there be light," and there was light, with no lesser power decreed that *the* Light, the only Light which can light the wanderer back to God, should shine for the world's illumination in the face of Jesus Christ.

So much for the plan of the gospel, which is older than the foundation of the world.

## II.

Observe, further, that THE GRACE OF THE CROSS HAS BEEN MANIFESTED FOR THE UNDERSTANDING AND INSPIRATION OF FAITH: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." The Cross, then, was a manifestation of the secret and eternal purpose of God. The Lord therein discloses to our view His way of saving men, in order that faith might become possible.

The Cross is a revelation of the ultimate wisdom of God, "to the Greeks"—or their modern representatives, to the men of carnal reason, of natural intellect, who would square everything by their rule and compass—the preaching of the Cross is now, as it has always been, "foolishness"; but it is in essence, in fact, "the power of God, and the wisdom of God". "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." Quite as truthfully one might say, "O Lord, how manifold are thy words; in wisdom hast thou spoken them all." But of all the works of God, the mightiest is that which He wrought in Christ:

"God, in the gospel of His Son,  
Hath all His mightiest works outdone."

The revelation of God as contained in the Bible respecting the Cross is that it is an exhibition of the highest, of the ultimate, wisdom of God; that God Himself—may I reverently say—can be no wiser than He is. His nature and counsel are changeless, and by His eternal wisdom He has determined man's salvation shall be effected by means of the Cross. He has no other way.

There are some who think they have! There are preachers in Toronto who think they know a better way, because they have discarded—denied in some cases, and in not a few instances even repudiated—God's way of saving men. The only way the Bible holds before us, is the Cross of Christ. It is the acme of divine wisdom. It is the fullest and ultimate manifestation of the wisdom of God. If the Cross be the wisest thing that God could do, if it is representative of a principle upon which the mind of God has dwelt with satisfaction from before the foundation of the world, and has found no necessity for the slightest modification—if that be so, then surely there is provided in this revelation a foundation for the faith even of reasonable men; for we cannot hope to be wiser than God. That which satisfies Him, may well satisfy us.

What is the Cross? I speak not of a thing of wood, of the tree which symbolized the curse and all that is offensive not alone to God, but to man too. Not by the Cross itself, as such, are men saved; but by "the precious blood" which flowed therefrom. We are redeemed by "the precious blood of Christ". How often we use that phrase! How little we understand it! How glibly we quote it in our prayers and in our praises! "The precious blood of Christ". What do we mean? And why is the blood of Christ "precious"?

It is precious, of course, *because of its source, whence it came*. I do not understand how Deity could become incarnate. I accept the fact, for "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh". No one can explain it. Though history records it as an indisputable fact, attested by unmistakable manifestations of divine power, no one understands it. But this I know, that in the person of Jesus Christ humanity and Deity were joined in a mysterious unity, for "verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham". He was made in the likeness of man; and He who died on the Cross was in a very real sense God, the Son of God, and God the Son. The blood which flowed, flowed from the heart of Incarnate Deity.

When blood is needed for transfusion, it must be of a particular type, of a distinctive quality. "The life of the flesh is in the blood." The life-tide of the perfect Man, and Who was also God, was of a quality that could not be compared with any other blood that ever flowed.

Once during the war, I was asked on a Saturday if I could make room for a certain famous man who happened to be in the city; for I was told that he had a great message for he had been to the front. He preached, and in the course of his sermon he told us that he had no misgivings whatever as to the eternal future of any man who died in the service of his country, no matter what his past had been. He said; "I will take my chances for the eternal future of any man who dies in others' service." Not often have I been put in such a position, but I felt it necessary to dissent from that teaching in announcing the closing hymn. There is a quality in the blood of Christ that belongs to no other blood, and the flowing of that blood, and the filling of that Fountain, made all other sacrifices, whether of individuals or of millions of individuals, entirely superfluous, because they were valueless for the world's salvation. It is the *precious blood of Christ*.

It is "precious" too because *therein are concentrated all the qualities of Deity, all the virtue of the Godhead*. I cannot explain it any more than I can tell you how an opal came to be, or how a diamond retains its light. There are men who think they can. But I can hold the gem up to the light, and let you see it flash. It is said of this glorious Saviour that He is "made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an indissoluble life". That life of His which was eternal was in the blood, and He laid down the life which no man could take from Him—and He said that He laid it down for the salvation of men, which He would give "a ransom instead of many". In that precious blood were all the moral and spiritual qualities inherent in Deity.

The suffering Jesus was a suffering God. The blood which flowed from His wounds was the "*precious blood of Christ*". There is one passage which uses a very strong term. You recall when Paul addressed the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, he gave them instruction in respect to their calling as ministers, and said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." That is a fathomless phrase! The blood of God! I do not know what it means. I revel gratefully in the fact, and have some dim apprehension of the reason for its being called the "*precious blood of Christ*".

The blood of Christ is "*precious because of what it accomplishes*". What wonders have been accomplished by the blood of Christ! "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." There is nothing the devil hates like the blood. It is the most powerful weapon in the Christian's armoury. There is nothing that will put the powers of darkness to flight like pleading the merits of the Blood.

I am not careful of what the modern critics say. I am inclined to hold dispute with them and say, "Show me by all your modern methods such miracles as have been wrought through faith in the precious blood." There are many here this evening who, if I were now to turn this service into a testimony meeting, would say, "I agree with you, Pastor. I cannot explain it, but I know that when I was washed in the blood, I was made a new creature; old things passed away, and all things became new."

How it changes the nature of men! How it supplies inspiration for the noblest of all achievements! Have you ever been called where death is hovering about? Have you been to the place where it is evident a spirit is about to depart? How dark it is where there is no hope in Christ! How terrible the situation when the spirit of the man is going out into the unknown with no assurance of an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom! How different when a soul has been redeemed by blood, and is resting sweetly in the assurance that that blood has somehow prepared him or her for admission into the divine presence!

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head."

Nothing else will do there. How "precious", for the sake of what it has accomplished in those who now live! How precious for what it has accomplished in

that innumerable multitude of the redeemed which sing to the praise of the slain Lamb in the presence of God. They and we are one:

"One army of the living God,  
To His command we bow;  
Part of the host has crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now.

Thus all our hope is centred in the "precious blood" manifested for us, that through Christ we might understand God's plan, and believe in Him.

### III.

Once more: THE POWER OF GOD IS MANIFESTED IN THE CROSS FOR THE CONSTANT REPOSE OF FAITH. It is something simply to believe in God as an act of faith. It is still better to have the mind brought, by divine grace, into a settled, steadfast, attitude of trust, so that we believe in Him, not only for the past, but for the present and for the future—"manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." It is imperative that we should be weaned away, separated from all partial, and still more from all false trusts, that our faith and hope should be reposed in God alone as our only confidence for the redemption of a ruined race.

"Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead." Who was Jesus? Son of God? Yes. What was Jesus at the Cross, and during that segment of His eternal existence when He appeared among men in the days of His flesh? Who and what was He then? He was the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. He came to become the Head of a new race. He went to the Cross as our Representative and Substitute; dying in our room and stead, He was buried as one upon whom the sentence of the law had been executed, and by whose blood the law's utmost requirements had been satisfied. But it had been folly, it had been vain, for me to preach to you if Jesus Christ had remained in the grave.

Do you not see that in the person of our Lord the whole scheme of redemption found its exemplification, for He went into the grave as we must go, and God "raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory". Why? In order that He might show His purpose to do for all who believe in Him what He did for Christ Himself. He was the "firstfruits of them that sleep". Ascended to the Father's right hand, there is One—Oh the wonder of it—there is One of woman born, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, our Fellow, our Kinsman, our nearest relative, if I may dare to say it,—seated on the right hand of God. He raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, to make it possible for you and me to believe that what He had done in the person of Jesus, through Christ He would do for us, that your faith for a present salvation, that your faith for the blotting out of all your transgressions, that your faith for a renewal of fellowship with God, might be in Him alone; that your hope for all the future might be alone in God.

When governments fail, and all human institutions threaten to crumble, and when all human effort toward the uplift of society seems so often to be futile, how blessed a thing it is for the believer, that we are enabled to believe in God, and to centre our hope, for time and for eternity, in Him!

## THE ABSALOM SPIRIT AND PRINCIPLE

A Bible Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,  
Thursday Evening, November 29th, 1934

(Stenographically Reported)

Second in the 1934-35 Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on Biblical Theology, which subject is included in the Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary

Lesson Text: II. Samuel, chapters fifteen to nineteen

Last Thursday evening we found in these chapters certain examples of human conduct which supply us with illustrations from which we may learn something of the course of duty in all the ordinary things of life. This evening I desire especially to turn it to spiritual account as we look beneath the surface of the historical text to observe its spiritual suggestiveness.

There is a philosophical doctrine known as *Dualism* which assumes the eternal existence of good and evil, two positive principles which always were, and always will be; and which will strive together for the mastery without end. That, of course, is a doctrine which believers in the Bible cannot possibly accept, and yet there is an element of truth in it. There is a dualism which is scripturally true. There are principles of good and evil which manifest themselves recurrently in history—have done in the past, and will do again. But so far as human existence is concerned, the Bible teaches us that there was a time when within that sphere there was no evil. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Thus evil became operative in the realm of human life; and, accepting the teaching of the Bible as the word of God, we are bound to believe that the light must ultimately triumph over darkness, and good over evil; and God shall become—must become—all in all.

But I say there is a scriptural dualism. You will observe these two principles of light and darkness, good and evil, contending one with the other on every page of human history, whether it be the record of an individual life, of a limited community, of a nation, or of the world at large. The Cain and Abel principles are always with us. Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. The principles of good and evil—the principle which is from God, and has in it a place for God, and the principle of the profane Esau (as he is described in the New Testament, by which we are to understand that his was a life from which God was excluded) reincarnate themselves, and reappear in successive generations.

In the text before us we have the case of Absalom and David. The principle finds its ultimate expression—it is more than the expression of a principle, but on the purely human plane, looking upon Him as a man as He really was, as well as very God of very God—on the human plane, the principle finds its fullest and complete expression in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it appears in greater or lesser measure all down through human history. Our Lord joins them together, "I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple; verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation." There was a cumulative expression, all down through the ages, of that one principle: the contact of each generation with

that principle made that generation responsible to God for all that had preceded. Thus the principle that found its manifestation in Cain finds its expression again in Absalom, the son of David.

Let me remark, then, that *the good in human history is never immune from attack*. Every worthy plant in any garden will have its natural foe, its blight. The principles of righteousness and of truth will always find their antagonists; goodness will never be permitted to come to maturity without opposition in this present evil world.

That is true in the life of *the individual*. If we are new creatures in Christ Jesus, if principles of life, of light, of truth, of righteousness, of goodness, be implanted within us, being a new creature, we must not suppose that we shall be permitted to grow up into Christ in all things without struggle, or without opposition. Nothing is more self-evident than that, for there is not one of us who does not understand what Paul meant when he said, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." Though there be the new man in us, the old man will always be ready to strive against the new: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

That will be equally true of *the church*. As you read the history of the Christian church you will observe certain errors, certain principles called by different names in successive ages, and yet in essence philosophically they are the same old errors revamped, old enemies of the truth re-appearing from their dugouts, renewing attacks upon the gospel; therefore, it is impossible that the truth shall be so established in the life of any generation that it will not be opposed. The necessity for contending for it, and the defense of it, will ever more be with us. Never allow yourselves to suppose, when you become pastors of churches, that when you have put one difficulty behind you, and are able to say, "Thank God, that is over; now our feet are set once more in a large place", that you have done with it. The enemy will re-appear. Do not throw your spray away: you will have to spray the plants again next year. The difficulties of to-day will repeat themselves in years to come.

The Apostle Paul was a faithful minister, and certainly he was an "able minister of the New Testament", to use his own phrase. He ministered to the church at Ephesus for three years, night and day. He was "instant in season, and out of season". If ever there was a church that was highly privileged it was the church that enjoyed the personal ministry of that inspired apostle; for three years successively he exercised a faithful ministry of the Word among them. I do not wonder that the Epistle to the Ephesians should lead us to heights and depths scarcely discernible in the other epistles. I do not wonder that among the letters to the seven churches, the letter to the church at Ephesus should be most commendatory of them all. It had enjoyed a unique ministry. It had been highly privileged. And yet, when Paul said good-bye to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, where they came to meet him, reminding them of his ministry among them he said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For

I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Paul admonished the elders to be watchful over the Lord's vineyards because the Absaloms would reappear. That spirit of opposition to the Lord's Anointed, and to the things of God, would inevitably recur with the passage of time.

That is true in *national life*. A few years ago, within the memory of many here this evening who are not among the older ones, we fondly assumed that the days of absolutism in government were over, and that the principle of democracy was so firmly established in human society that it would be quite impossible to revert to conditions obtaining in the middle ages or earlier. Now we see democracy surrendering to some form of absolutism in many places: in Italy, Germany, Russia—and perhaps in Ontario! These principles will show themselves again and again, when the Absaloms will strive to overwhelm the Davids of the day.

*Evil invariably follows the same course, and employs the same tactics*. In the Garden of Eden, in the first temptation there was the pattern of all temptations that have ever been presented to the human mind from that day until now. The fruit of the tree was "pleasant to the eyes"—it was good to look at; it was so attractive to the sight that it was "to be desired to make one wise". So "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat". Evil has always known the art of dressing well. The devil is never shabby in his attire. He is always perfectly groomed. It is said of Absalom, "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." And again: "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." I do not know why we should think it especially praiseworthy to make virtue, and the things that are good, as ugly as possible. But certainly the devil knows how to use a paint-brush, and he knows how to dress himself in the fashions of the day, and to make his appeal to men in the most attractive way.

Evil is always very subtle. You know the story of how Absalom rose up early in the morning. You have an illustration of the spirit of Antichrist, of the devil himself, in the methods which Absalom employed.

I heard some business men talking on a train the other day. One man was speaking to the other of a certain very successful business man, who had amassed a great fortune. He said that one of the characteristics of this man who had succeeded in business was that he was always perfectly frank with everybody. To all his employees, no matter what rank they held in his establishment—the ordinary workman, the superintendent, manager, director—he said this one thing, "I want no secrets in this place. I conduct my business in a house that is made of glass. Everybody can see it. I want no deception anywhere. I shall be frank with you, and I shall expect you to be frank with me." Nothing upset him more than to see a few workmen getting their heads together, and whispering together. He knew it spelled trouble.

Be on the lookout in any church when people begin to gather about one person in whispering conferences. You may be sure the devil is busy there. That was Absalom's method. When you observe that he sure somebody needs to be put in quarantine. Absalom got up early in the morning, and sat in the king's gate to intercept all who would come to the king for judgment.

Before I became pastor of this church there was a deacon here who was said to be a wealthy man. He got across the pastor of that time. Before he got out of sorts he was one of the most dignified, independent, men imaginable. He was anything but sociable. But when he became disaffected toward the pastor he was found at the main doorway both before and after every service, busy shaking hands with the people, and whispering his poison into the ears of the people. He was a modern Absalom sitting at the king's gate. To the honour of his fellow-deacons it should be said that they demanded his resignation from the deaconate, and he then withdrew from the church.

There is an editorial in *The British Weekly*, from which I want to read an extract. People talk about circulars and advertisements that are put in your door as "literature"! The average newspaper is not literature. But *The British Weekly* is literature. I do not agree with it always, but it has a fine style. Let me read you a few paragraphs from the issue of November 15th, 1934:

"We know of a zealous preacher in the north who, after a season of notable effectiveness, seemed gradually to lose power even over those who continued to honour him. An explanation was given by a friendly man: it was that he *rubbed it in* so persistently that he *rubbed it out!* He was a good man. But he had withdrawn his *mind* from the Bible as Revelation—as History, as Philosophy, as the record of how things work out inevitably in this world, God being what He is, and we being what we are. He had come to regard the Bible, and to make use of it, as a treasury of texts and of incidents to enforce, with the very minimum of intellectual and spiritual variety, the good man's one concern.

"Christian preaching is not so easy as that. The Bible also is God's gift to the *world*; though the church of Christ alone, so far, has had the faith and wisdom to stake everything upon the Bible and upon the Eternal Spirit which we perceive to be in it all and through it all and over it all, God blessed for ever.

"For those who have lived sensibly and familiarly with the Bible over a term of years and have kept their own souls alive upon its warnings and promises, not trying to evade its tendency, on personal matters of behaviour, to deal with us at close quarters, the Bible becomes indeed the master light of all our seeing.

"There are occasions in our reading of its pages, and this quite frequently when those pages deal with primitive days and unsophisticated emotions, when we stop in the midst of our reading. For what we have been reading seems to fit something which has just taken place to ourselves, it may be, or within our recent knowledge. Or what we have just been reading would seem to have been written with an intention towards a state of matters which has come about in our neighbourhood, or in the life of the nation, or in some still wider world-embarrassment. There are occasions when, reading one of its stories or still savouring one of its comments, we cannot avoid associating it, say, with someone who at the moment is making a noise in the world.

"There are times when the parallel between something which happened long ago in Syria, or in Egypt, or by the waters of Babylon, which the Bible reports, proceeding to tell us how God Almighty dealt with the thing—there are times when the parallel between some Biblical episode and some contemporary situation (for which God has not yet made known His final treatment) is so precise, that we wonder whether we are not putting pressure upon what we read. And yet when we go into the coincidence more closely, we have in every single

case to admit that it is as we felt, the very situation which the Bible recorded a thousand, two thousand, three thousand years ago, with God's verdict upon it and His action with regard to it.

"The best illustration of this quite eerie correspondence between the Bible and contemporary events, a correspondence which makes the Bible a very uneasy volume to have always on hand—the best illustration is the book of the prophet Isaiah. One rubs one's eyes to read in Isaiah how there were smart men in Judah who, with their country in jeopardy and an overwhelming enemy at the gate, were detached enough from the general panic to make a corner in wheat! An incident of that sort ought to be sufficient, by the way, to remove from certain minds the vague notion that the Bible is a *naive* book, mainly agricultural. It may be true as

'John P.  
Robinson he,  
Said they didn't know everything  
Down in Judee!'

But evidently in 'Judee' and in the time of Isaiah there were those who knew how to feather their nests out of a national emergency!

"Isaiah also has a brusque way of dealing with ecclesiastical matters which, were one to quote him *ad hoc*, would have something of the effect of a lit fuse upon explosive matter."

That is all true. You will find in these histories suggestions as to how to deal with your personal problems, and as to how to deal with problems in the church.

I repeat, evil is just as it was in Absalom's day. It makes itself attractive, and employs the same methods. It sits at the gate where the people come up to the King for judgment, and says, "See, thy matters are good and right . . . Oh, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice"! That is almost like a modern politician! The day before election he will promise anything in order to get your vote: "If I were made judge in the land I would wipe out all evils at once." Absalom was canvassing for votes as he sat at the gate when the people came up for judgment.

The attractiveness, the subtlety, the aggressiveness, the unscrupulousness, of this anti-Christian principle, with the devil behind it all, find application in your own life, and in the life of the church, and to the world at large. The spirit of Absalom is reincarnated. We are never without temptation to follow after Absalom. Like the poor, it will always be with us until the Lord shall come. There will always be the offer of great advantages, even the kingdoms of this world and the glory of it, if to those who will fall down and make Absalom king. That is what Absalom promises.

Notwithstanding, on the other hand, never are we without an opportunity to display a heroic loyalty, as did many in David's day. I have not time even to mention all their names—read the record.

For our encouragement let us remember that this philosophic principle of dualism in the light of revelation must be regarded as being utterly wrong. Absalom at last will come to the bough of the oak. The Absalom principle will fall in the wood of Ephraim. Light will triumph over darkness, and righteousness must triumph over unrighteousness. You need never have any question in your own mind as to which is the wise and profitable course to take where right and wrong are concerned. Whenever you are required to give your verdict between Christ and Barabbas, you had better vote for Christ, for Barabbas is always a robber—and he will rob you. He is a murderer: he will kill you.

On the other hand, the principle of evil is death-

stricken, and is bound to fail. If that be true, then the Absaloms in us, if we are Christians, the old man in us at last will be overcome. I shall be glad to be done with him. Here when I part from some people there is a sadness of farewell. We are sorry to have to say good-bye to our loved-ones even for a little while. But there is one person to whom I shall be able to say good-bye without the slightest regret! I shall be glad to be done with the "old man" for ever. It will not be *au revoir*: nor even good-bye, but good riddance. That happy day is to come, for that is the promise of the Word.

That is true of the world at large. Some minds are troubled about Russia, and some about Germany. There is much talk to-day about war. I will venture into the realm of prophecy. I feel morally certain myself that Germany will have no opportunity to trouble the rest of the world as she will trouble herself. Why? I do not speak thus because of any confidential information I possess, save as such information is involved in the principles revealed in the Word of God. For instance, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The Absaloms, proud of their beautiful locks and of their craftiness, at last must come to grief. I believe Germany will destroy herself, and visit herself with such punishment as all the nations of the world could not inflict upon her, a judgment richly deserved. There are principles operative in the life of the individual, of a community, of the state, of the world at large, that are inherently mortal; they are self-destructive. We need not be greatly disturbed by Absalom, notwithstanding his apparent success.

On the other hand, God's kings can never be killed in advance of their time. David seemed to bear a charmed life. How near to death he was again and again!—at the paw of the lion and the bear, at the hand of the Philistine, at the hand of Saul when he had a javelin by his side; in the land of the Philistines, and again at the hand of his own son. And yet, in spite of all the fiery darts directed against him, David emerged triumphant out from them all. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" I do not believe you need to defend yourself. Fight for principle when necessary, but, you may depend upon it, the Lord will look after His Davids.

When Shimei cursed David and Abishai proposed to take off his head, David said in effect, "Leave him alone. If the Lord has sent him to curse me, well and good. But if the Lord has not, he cannot harm me. If the Lord has pleasure in me He will bring me back to Jerusalem—and if He does not, nobody can." "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

A few years ago I used to get letters marked with skull and cross-bones, threatening me with violence. One I remember was soaked in something red which was said to be blood, and warned me to be careful or my blood would soak the next. I did not tell anybody about them at the time. It never occurred to me to call the police, because my theology assured me of my safety. I believed then—and I believe now—that if there were anything in it beyond a vain threat, there was only One who could protect me, and that was the Lord Himself. If He did it, nobody could harm me,

and if He did not, anybody could destroy me. You have been studying the life of Job in the Sunday School. The devil wanted to destroy him, but the Lord said, "I will lengthen your tether, but you may go only so far. Do not touch his life." In the New Testament Paul suggested to the Corinthians that they should ask the Lord to "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." But even the devil himself can not touch one of God's children until God permits it.

So was it in David's case. And so did David believe: "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." God was his salvation. David came to the throne, then there was a reversal of his prosperity. Again he was driven into the wilderness. But he said to the priests who offered to go with him, "Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation." And David came back again!

Is it not a high privilege to be a servant of God, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, to know that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them"? That is literally true. God's kings must come to the throne.

Let me say this word to you who are prospective ministers. I say it strongly but kindly. I find myself half inclined to apologize for the ministry, when I see men who believe they have been ordained of God to preach the gospel, striving for positions. In the Old Convention they had a "Ministerial Settlement Committee," a sort of stationing committee. I have always had the conviction in my own mind that if a man is really called of God to preach the gospel, as David was called of God to rule over Israel, God has a place appointed for him; and if that man will be true to the Lord, trust Him, and look to the Lord for settlement, the Lord will open a door of opportunity. Let the Lord be your settlement committee. He will put you in the position of His appointment—if He does, all the bishops on earth cannot keep you out; nor can the demons in hell turn you out. While the Lord wills you shall stay.

When Paul addressed himself to the elders at Ephesus he said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves"—look after yourselves first, cultivate your own spiritual life; watch your own hearts; be true to God. "Take heed unto yourselves." That must be our first concern. Then "to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." If a committee, or if the Seminary Faculty, or the Union Secretary, or anybody else, appoints you to a certain church, and effects your settlement there, inasmuch as you were put there by human power there is no guarantee that you will not be unsettled by a human power. But if you are in the hand of God, and the Holy Ghost makes you overseer of a flock, and you have the clearest possible indication of His leadership and are convinced that you are in the place where God has put you, you will not only be useful there, but you will be invincible. Nobody can move you if the Lord plants you. Be like David. Do not worry about your own position or your own security.

I am glad the Seminary gives no guarantee to any student that it will place him anywhere. If you are men and women called of God, and trained by His Spirit, you will not need anybody to settle you. The Lord will look after you. Make sure you are divinely called, that the anointing oil has been poured upon your head, and all the attractive Absaloms in the world cannot compete with you. You will come into your own at last in spite of all opposition.

Let me suggest to you that the story of these chapters illustrates the vicissitudes of the cause of Christ through all history. The church of Christ has always had its ups and downs, times of declension and decadence and apostasy, when it seemed the spiritual Jerusalem was to be overwhelmed by the enemy. Absalom and Ahithophel sometimes have had their own way for a long time. David has departed, and the priests that are left with the ark are with an ark that has no worshippers. How many dark days in the history of the Christian church there have been! And yet in due course the tide has turned, and our David has come back again. Our glorious Lord takes to Himself His great power—and there is a great revival.

I do not think we have here a picture of the second coming of Christ: that is another story. When He at last shall come He will make an end of all these rebellions, and He will reign for ever and ever. But in the meantime we may expect just what happened in the kingdom of David. There was a time when everybody called him the Lord's anointed, then there followed a time when only a few people recognized him—something like our time. At the beginning of my ministry I did not feel it was necessary to preach on the virgin birth of Christ—I thought everybody believed that. I did not think it was necessary to preach on the Deity of Christ, the eternal Sonship of Jesus, because everybody believed it. All pulpits preached it except a few Unitarians here and there. It was not necessary, when speaking to professing Christians, to insist on the necessity of regeneration—everybody professed to believe it. It was in every creed of the church. It was not necessary to argue that Jesus died to pay our debt, to wash our sins away, but only to declare it. There was not a hymn-book anywhere that had not in it such hymns as—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains."

And yet, in the space of a few short years, another generation has arisen to say, "What have we to do with David? Jesus? He is a good man, but that is all." The things for which the church universal stood, in theory at least, within the lifetime of some present here, are now almost as generally denied.

But Absalom was slain, and the king came back. It is said that when David turned his face toward Jerusalem to return he "bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man". They ran a race with each other to see who could do the most to bring back the king into his city, and to re-establish him in his kingdom.

I do not know whether the present apostasy is the last one or not. There will be a final apostasy. If this is the final one, it will find its culmination and climax in the glorious appearing of the great God and

our Saviour Jesus Christ. Then shall the wicked one be "consumed with the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming". But if it be not the final apostasy, then history will repeat itself, and we shall have revival. God's purpose cannot fail, and His gospel is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth".

But you say, "What of the meantime?" Ah, yes; what of the meantime? That is the great question. While the King is absent, while the spirit of Absalom is in the ascendancy, while Ahithophel acclaims him king, what can loyal Israelites do? Is there nobody that will help us?

There were not a few who must have asked such questions during David's absence. There was Mephibosheth, lame on both feet, utterly helpless; but he did not dress his feet, or trim his beard, from the day the king departed until the day the king returned again in peace. Mephibosheth spent the whole time mourning the absence of the king, and longing for his return.

Beware lest we accept present conditions and say, "Oh well, it is the best that can be, and we may as well be resigned to it." Far better that we emulate Mephibosheth. Even if we cannot improve things, let us refuse always to accept anything short of the absolute supremacy of Jesus Christ. We must, like Mephibosheth, mourn His absence until He comes again.

There were others: Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar; and Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah; and Barzillai, the very aged man. Young and old they ministered to the king of their substance, and longed for His coming back again. In the meantime, dear friends, we can be faithful witnesses to the Lord of grace. Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, we can firmly take this position: we will have nobody but Jesus Christ. We say to the Absalom spirit, "We dissent from your proposal entirely. David is the Lord's Anointed, and nobody else can be—and we will accept nobody in His stead.

What then? When Jesus Christ comes to reward His servants, what then? We are saved by grace. We are not saved by anything we can do for our David. We are saved solely, exclusively, by what our David has done in doing for us, saved by grace alone. But, on the other hand, I believe that every faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus, over and above the gift of eternal life, will be rewarded according to his works. That is the teaching of Scripture: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

A day will come when what we have done will be tested. If we have humbly witnessed to the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing Him only our poor lentils, our little couches, ministering to the King, we shall receive a rich reward.

Do not neglect to read these chapters that tell how the king came back. All these men who had refused to accept Absalom during the king's absence, when he came back, were rewarded justly and generously.



Study especially Barzillai. His is a wonderful story. He was a very aged man, and a very great man; and he, with others, went out to meet the king. When the king saw him he said, "Is it you Barzillai? I remember when I needed a friend, you were my friend. When I needed a helper, you stood by me. When those who were with me needed provision, you supplied them. Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem. You fed me in the wilderness: I will feed you in the palace. I was your guest in adversity, Barzillai, now you shall be my guest."

That is what our Lord Jesus will say. It will be a glorious day when He comes to reward His servants. When He comes we shall wish we had lived for that day. We shall not trouble about what people have said against us then. We shall not be disturbed by the fact that our names were not in the papers—or that they were in the papers too often. That will not distress us when the Master of the house shall say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

There is one very suggestive principle here to which I call your attention. By our service for God, by all the discipline of life, we are, of His mercy, developing a capacity for the enjoyment of the things which he has reserved for those who love Him.

When David invited Barzillai to come with him to Jerusalem, Barzillai said, "I am so happy to have the king back again, but the reward comes too late in life for me. I am an old man, and I am hard of hearing. I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king. . . . Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee." Then the king kissed the old man, sadly, I think, and they said good-bye to each other, and Barzillai went back home, while David returned to Jerusalem.

But when the Lord shall come to reward His servants we shall not have to say, "We shall not be able to enjoy the music", for there is a song which only the redeemed can learn. We shall all be in the choir, and heaven will be wonderfully sweet. We shall have a capacity such as we have never dreamed of for the enjoyment of all the delights of the celestial city: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." We shall have a capacity for the enjoyment of the heavenly food.

And as to behaving ourselves: we shall be "without fault before the throne of God". Are you living for that day? Dr. A. T. Pierson said a beautiful thing when Dr. A. J. Gordon died. He said that Dr. Gordon was wont to take long walks with his Master, and that one day he walked a little farther than usual, and his Lord put His arm about him and would not let him come back again, so he went all the way home, and like Enoch, "he was not, for God took him". And one of these days, if we live for Him, and work for Him, and serve Him as best we may, and walk with Him, and

talk with Him, He will bid us walk on and on until the gates of pearl swing open, and we shall be forever with the Lord.

"Forever with the Lord!

Amen! so let it be;

Life from the dead is in that word,

'Tis immortality.

Here in the body pent,

Absent from Him I roam,

Yet nightly pitch my moving tent,

A day's march nearer home."

## REPORTS OF THE SPURGEON CENTENARY MISSION

### The Editor's Visit to England, Ireland, and Scotland

We print below an extract from a letter of the Honorary Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. W. J. R. Horsburgh. Following this is an article from *Our Outlook*, the quarterly magazine of the Highgate Road Chapel, London; and the third article is published in the same magazine, but is reprinted from *The Witness* the monthly magazine of Trinity Road Baptist Church, London, of which Rev. Henry Oakley is the Pastor. Having received communications assuring us that many in different parts of the world were praying for spiritual blessing upon this Mission, we think it will interest our readers to print these reports of Great Britain and Ireland.

#### Extract from Mr. Horsburgh's Letter

In regard to reports of Meeting I have had very warm letters from several centres, and there is no doubt that Dr. Shields took all the centres visited by storm. One of the features of his visit to Porth was that crowds had assembled before the doors were opened and many could not gain admission owing to the Hall being full before the hour of commencement.

Briefly I offer the following quotations as sent to me:—

**PORTH.** "During the four hours Dr. Shields was in Porth every minute was charged with Power. The gatherings were large, hundreds failed to gain admission to the evening meeting. Almost every town in South Wales was represented—as far west as Swansea and Llanelly East as Cardiff, Barry Newport, etc. Faith was strengthened and spiritual life quickened in many a heart."

**BELFAST.** "We were delighted to have with us Dr. Shields, Mrs. Shields and Mr. Fisher. But I cannot use the word delighted in connection with the friends (and those who are in sympathy with) the Oxford Group Movement. However, the first Meeting was held in the Town Hall Portadown where although it was Saturday night I believe there were about 700 people present. The Doctor was then hurried to Belfast where he addressed another gathering of about 600 in St. Victoria St. Baptist Church.

Mr. Frizelle gives the numbers attending each service on the Sunday and mentions that on the Monday in the Y.M.C.A. at 3.30 and 8 o'clock the great Hall was packed to its fullest capacity with a Choir of 150 members.

Additional Meetings were held at Bethany Presbyterian Church where at least 900 were present. This Church is that of Mr. Simms who was most enthusiastic over the visit of Dr. Shields.

**GLASGOW.** Mr. Troup has written me in great enthusiasm and I quote extracts from his letter:—

"I can only say his visit has been a great blessing and the meetings were a great success. On Thursday night we had 2,000 in the Hall and he delivered a wonderful address, everyone present was stirred and the Lord was mightily in our midst, the expressions of appreciation have been many; the only regret is that his visit was so short. I honestly believe if he could have stayed another night or more our Hall would never have held the people.

"On Friday afternoon at the special gathering for Christian Ministers and Workers it was a glorious gathering—about a hundred were present representing all parts of the Church. The Moderator of the Baptist Church was there and also the

Moderator of the Free Church and a great many others of note."

Similarly great Meetings were held in Liverpool and Edinburgh and Pastor Wilmot was present at all these latter.

I think the above extracts will convey to you something of the blessing and interest which has followed these arrangements.

I hope to send final advices within ten days or so after all matters of detail have been cleared up.

With Christian greetings:

Yours sincerely,  
WM. J. R. HORSBURGH.

#### DR. T. T. SHIELDS AT HIGHGATE ROAD CHAPEL

##### Brief Review of the First Week of the Spurgeon Centenary Mission

From "Our Outlook", The Quarterly Magazine of Highgate Road

This was an outstanding "week". It stands out in bold relief from all the weeks of my more than ten years at Highgate Road. I rejoice in all my eyes looked upon and my ears listened to; a full chapel and a full message. Other opportunities were mine in London, Edinburgh and Liverpool of fellowship with Dr. Shields. He is a great soul. I am indebted for the kindness shown in permitting me to share so much of his choice company. I esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. And I shall hope to see, some day, if God will, his chiefest work, which is indeed a "workshop of the Holy Ghost", in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto!

The Mission was never designed to be of the modern type. Dr. Shields would be no more sympathetic with that than with modern theology. He is a believer emphatically in the local church as the divinely appointed instrument equally for evangelistic effort as for doctrinal edification. The evangelist, no less than the pastor, is the Lord's gift to the church. The mission was organized definitely for the reaffirmation, by exposition and application of Holy Scripture, of the great verities of the Faith as preached by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and consequently, for the defence and confirmation of that gospel which was characteristic of Spurgeon's ministry throughout.

By Dr. Shields' permission I am printing in this number a sermon preached by him during the second week of the Mission. Many of our friends heard it; others heard about it, and have asked me for its substance in some form. Although it occupies considerable space in our modest little Quarterly, I venture to give the sermon practically verbatim, so that nothing will be lost, save that which is inevitably lost when the spoken word, spoken in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, is presented in cold type. May that same Spirit use this written message!

I also reproduce in these pages a general review of the Mission written by Mr. Oakley in his November magazine. The article appears substantially as written by our friend. It so aptly represents my own judgment that I take the liberty of making it my confession, that is, I would write or speak the same thing.

A review of Dr. Shields' ministry during our week reveals design, the design of the Holy Spirit, I believe, rather than that of His servant. Dr. Shields was concerned that the respective messages should be appropriate to the needs of the occasion. Once and again he consulted his brethren as to the general constitution of the congregation. He did not select and announce definite subjects—as, for example, those enumerated in Mr. Spurgeon's manifesto, published in connection with the Mission; he did not take subjects or topics *as such*. But it could be readily perceived from his handling of Scripture that these great truths are the very warp and woof of the Word of God, and as immutable principles of the divine revelation, persist throughout the entire Book.

At Highgate Road I believe we received that which God intended we should receive. I say, *received*; yes, received the messages as given to the congregation in general; but let us receive them *indeed*, as Mr. Spurgeon said the truth of God *demand*s to be received, "with faith, with reverence, with penitence, with personal application, with self-dedication,

with abandonment of soul to God our Saviour". Then shall we have heard to profit.

Following, then, I give the bare outline of the messages, in their order, with their conspicuous character or content, by which, I trust, memory may be quickened and the truth recalled, as also that which it is impossible for me to describe, namely, the conviction, and power, and fulness, and humour, and loyalty, and eloquence, and affection, in which Dr. Shields was enabled to deliver them.

**Sunday Morning: THE WORD OF GOD: ITS FINALITY.** (John xiv. 5, 6.) The confessed ignorance of men concerning the future, and the confident intelligence of Christ, the testimony of Jesus being the spirit of prophecy, that is, of the entire Scriptures.

**Sunday Evening: THE WORK OF CHRIST: ITS SUFFICIENCY.** (Heb. x. 11, 12.) The contrast between, not only Judaism, but, all religions based upon human works, and the perfect imputative and expiatory work of the Son of God.

**Monday: THE WORLD WITHOUT: ITS INFIDELITY,** and therefore Opposition to the preaching of the Word. (Acts iv. 14.) The unifying of contrary elements of unbelief against Christ. (We were informed that on Sunday evening some went away in a rage because of the exposure of Rome's pretensions; how fitting, therefore, this subject following!)

**Tuesday: THE CHURCH WITHIN: HER INDIFFERENCE,** and therefore, Offence at the prodigal's welcome. (Luke xv.—the elder brother.) A masterly handling of a timely subject. Sonship without Responsibility; Service without Fellowship; Heirship without Happiness.

**Wednesday: DIVINE REDEMPTION: THE SOVEREIGN LOVE OF GOD.** (2 Samuel ix.) (On Tuesday the Doctor had remarked, "If God, cannot save men *by means of us*, He will bring the prodigals home *in spite of us*," and here is an illustration thereof!) Kindness shown to Mephibosheth; representing initiating, effectuating and consummating grace.

**Thursday: HUMAN RESPONSE: THE SAVED SINNER'S LOYALTY TO GOD.** (2 Samuel xix.) Mephibosheth, blessed of the King, willing to suffer the loss of all, if but the now exiled King may return to the Throne in peace. Such is their loyalty to the Saviour, whom sovereign love hath blessed, when He is despised of the many.

**Friday: THE CHRISTIAN DUTY OF CONTENTION.** (I Kings 20.) A clarion call, in "great plainness of speech", to resist error and evil, and dissociate from modernists or even men who temporize with such, because our "common salvation" is involved in our "contending for the faith"—illustrated in Ahab's encounter with Ben-hadad.

**Wednesday afternoon: THE DIVINE PRESCRIPTION FOR REVIVAL.** (I Kings xvii, xviii.) It is remarkable that there are present in this Carmel incident—expounded in the midst of our week—all the elements enumerated throughout. The authoritative Word, the approved Sacrifice, an infidel world, an indifferent church, the rule of the Sovereign Lord, the nation's response and submission, and Contention for the faith against the Prophets of Baal. The fire had descended, rain was desired, but the copious showers did not fall *until Baal was destroyed*.

And if God should be pleased to give to His people a Reviving, these will be the salient features—He will vindicate the authority of the Scripture; and the ability of Christ to save through His sufficient sacrifice; and arouse the enmity of the world; and rebuke the indifference of a luke-warm church; and demonstrate His sovereign power; and draw forth the devotedness of His true people; and give to all such the martyr spirit, so that they will cleave to the Lord and contend against the foe, and like Paul and Luther and Knox and Spurgeon and Shields, "Stand against" and "Withstand", and "having done all, STAND!"

#### ONE WORD MORE

From "The Witness", by Rev. Henry Oakley

The Spurgeon Centenary Mission has passed. Dr. T. T. Shields, the leader of the Mission, spent four weeks in London, often speaking twice and sometimes three times a day.

For still another fortnight he was busy in Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Liverpool.

1. The most remarkable feature of the Mission was the numbers that attended. When it is remembered that the whole weight of denominational influence was against the Mission, how remarkable it was that night after night large churches were practically filled, and on Sundays crowded. The success in numbers was beyond anything I ever imagined. How certain it is that despite the neglect and opposition of all our denominational leaders there are still large numbers who dare rally to a definitely evangelical standard, and who still value those doctrines for which our fathers suffered and bled and died, and for which Mr. Spurgeon contended so heroically. In Ireland, where we had reason to fear there might be apathy just now, there was overwhelming enthusiasm. Several places were crowded out an hour before the time. At Belfast, in the Y.M.C.A. Hall seating 1,700, doors had to be closed at 7.15 for an 8 o'clock meeting. They said no one had moved Belfast like it for many, many years. And from Scotland, one writes that he was perfectly entranced, and that Dr. Shields must be a singularly fitted man to handle the powerful truths of the old Book, bringing forth things new and old never even thought of before. It reminded him of the Moody and Sankey revival in Edinburgh. We greatly thank God for this, for neither the responsible Committee nor Dr. Shields has in any way obscured the fundamental doctrines, a witness to which the Mission was intended to be.

2. For those of us who are a little bit behind the scenes, the one pathetic thing about the Mission was the almost entire absence of Baptist ministers from the meetings. From the first we knew that it would be very unlikely that they would venture to attend. The Baptist Union is now "a trades-union", as closely sealed as any trades-union in the country or out of it. The twelve superintendents are the twelve "pickets" appointed to watch daily at the entrances to the churches. The Union's power is in its sustentation and super-annuation funds. Only here and there a man is found strong enough to resist the authority of these great vested interests, and if he does the favour of the Union is instantly withdrawn from him as a non-union man. A minister said to me recently, "I am wholly with you and you are right. I am ashamed that I cannot be openly with you, but for the sake of my Church and for my own sake I cannot afford to break with the Union. It would surely be known if I were to come on your platform." Any number of good men whose convictions are in perfect harmony with the purpose of the Mission have been absent lest it should be known that they were supporting "the anti-unionism of the Mission", as it has been described. Baptists are no longer free, and our ministers least of all. The old denominational paper was called *The Freeman*. Mr. Shakespeare soon changed the name. Our splendid tradition has been betrayed, and bondage has come as final as any hierarchy can make it. That does not, of course, explain the whole of the absences, but it explains far more than the average Baptist will think. Notwithstanding the people came, and the closing meeting of witness in the Central Hall was a tremendous refutation of the boast that "Modernism holds the field".

3. The sermons, for such all Dr. Shields' utterances were, so far as I heard them, were most masterly expositions of God's Word. Of some to which I listened I can never expect to hear the like again. The magnificent sweep of argument, the perfect mustering of supporting scriptures, the unerring vocabulary and the irresistible applications were all of a supreme "master of assemblies". I, of course, never heard Dr. Chalmers, but I have read much of him and many of his sermons, and I should imagine for grasp of intellect and massive utterance Dr. Shields must stand in his lonely category. The present day dependence upon snaps of epigram and clever little alliterations find no illustration in Dr. Shields. He does not catch his audience; he teaches them. He takes them through the vast territories of Scripture truth, and having led them by the uplands to some magnificent peak, with the whole landscape at their feet, he cries, "This, this is the gospel." The two sermons delivered at our church were not less than wonderful; only those, perhaps, who have been long attempting to preach could realize how remarkable they were. The evening sermon seemed to me to surpass anything I have ever heard or am likely to hear—the exact exposition,

the sustained argument, the scriptural support, the flash-light illumination of whole tracts of doctrine and the swaying eloquence was beyond anything we have in the British pulpit so far as I know it.

Dr. Shields preached the gospel. He did not always appeal in the present-day fashion for its immediate acceptance, and some mistook the absence of the appeal for the absence of the gospel. But it should be remembered that Mr. Spurgeon never asked for people to raise their hands, or stand up, or come to the enquiry room, for he never had one. He relied upon the Holy Spirit for all this, with the results that are known to all the world. Preaching the gospel is one thing; pleading for its acceptance is another. The latter was not absent from the Doctor's work, but it was not in present-day evangelistic style. Personally I was grateful, for I am sure it is the seeking of immediate personal avowal that has made evangelistic missions so unpopular with the people. I, for instance, with my naturally shy disposition, if I were an unbeliever, could never venture to be present at a present-day mission. I do not say the method is wrong—I could not, I dare not—but I say it must be a great hindrance to many people, and indicates a lack of reliance on the Holy Spirit. In our own missions "the appeal time" was always a most tremendous strain on me. I may offend against some of God's children in having written thus, and I pray for their forgiveness, but it is a long-held conviction of mine; and that, against much in me that pleads for the other way.

4. Of Dr. Shields himself! My admiration has deepened into a real and genuine regard. Before the Mission I knew him as one of the world's greatest preachers, and I must say my admiration was unbounded. Now I know him, if I may say it without impertinence, as a friend, and my admiration has become a much warmer thing altogether. He is one of the most approachable, kindly, considerate, lovable men I have met. As Luther was, so is he. At home Luther was a child in overflowing gentleness, winsomeness and love. Let his letters to his little son; Hans, witness to it. Before his foes he was a lion—head, shoulders and tail; all of him, every bit of him, was a lion. Was he not "the solitary monk that shook the world"? Listen how he wrote to Henry VIII: "My leader is Christ, and with one and the same blow I will dash in pieces this church and its defenders who are but one. My doctrines I am convinced are of Heaven. The doctrines will remain and the Pope will fall, notwithstanding all the gates of hell and all the powers of the air, earth and sea. They have challenged me to war—well, they shall have war. God will see which of the two will first have enough of it, the Pope or Luther. Thrice have I appeared before them. I entered Worms well aware that Caesar was urged to violate the public faith in my person. The cowards! do they yet hope for triumph? They thought my flight would enable them to hide their ignominy! It is now known by all the world; it is known they have not the courage to face Luther alone!"

That is Luther's style, and after it is the style of Dr. Shields. Of course, such men make enemies, but they tell in the world's history. They are jealous for God; they are His friends, and the world is ever at enmity with God. How the present day rationalists and their amiable coadjutors hate Dr. Shields, just as Rome hated Luther. I say again it is his grand credential.

At home among his friends he is loving and lovable, and his greatness spreads itself like a sweet fragrance over all the company.

Like Luther, Dr. Shields has no great regard for money. The Pope once wrote of Luther: "This German beast has no respect either for money or honours." It may be so said of Dr. Shields. He came to Britain without charge or fee, only asking for out-of-pocket expenses, and concerning these he seemed rather casual. I am grateful to report that all the charges of the Mission have been freely met by God's believing people, and there will be a balance for the funds of Dr. Shields' Baptist Seminary.

The Mission has not brought what is commonly called Revival, but that is God's prerogative, not man's, and many of us are satisfied with God's time and God's decision. We feel no disappointment. A great witness to the Gospel has been borne. In a day of great darkness and desperate peril the watchman has lifted up his voice!

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

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REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

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### JOB FINISHES HIS SPEECH

Lesson Text: Job, chapters 30 and 31.

Golden Text: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"—Job 38:2.

Bible School Reading: Job 30:1-24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Ps. 69:1-8; Tuesday—Ps. 22:16-24; Wednesday—Prov. 29:1-7; Thursday—Romans 12:9-21; Friday—I Peter 4:8-19; Saturday—Luke 23:32-46.

#### I. JOB DERIDED BY BASE PEOPLE (30:1-14)

After lamenting his former prosperity, as recorded in the previous chapter, Job makes known his present sad condition by describing the contempt in which he was held by the base people of his neighbourhood. He had formerly been held in the highest esteem by all who knew him, but since his affliction no one respected him, and all had despised and forsaken him. Job's case was lamentable, and emphasizes the unreliability of human nature. There are many willing to be friends when everything is going well; but when trouble comes, and it means something either in reputation, time, comfort, or goods, to stand by the afflicted one, they fail in the test. A friend in need is a friend indeed. Note the likeness of Job's condition to that of our Lord, in that He was forsaken by all, even by His disciples (Matt. 26:56). Observe also our Lord as the friend of sinners (Matt. 11:19), that sticketh closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24).

Job gives a graphic description of the condition and actions of those who held him in derision. They were younger than he (v. 1). This meant they observed disrespect for age, as well as for condition—an offence felt keenly by those affected thereby. In these days young people require instruction respecting the proper attitude to manifest toward age (Lev. 19:32). In his description Job makes clear the lowly position of those who derided him. Their fathers he would have disdained to have set with the dogs of his flock (v. 1). Such animals were looked upon as being unclean. The persons who derided him were weak and famishing, and unable to give him profitable service (vs. 2-4). They lived a wild life among the caves and rocks of the earth (vs. 5-7). And they were children of base men (v. 8). They were in great contrast in character and condition with Job. He was the chief; they were the rude dwellers of the earth (vs. 5-7). They were at the opposite end of the social scale, yet they held him in disdain. This brings out clearly the depth of humiliation to which Job had fallen, and the mental suffering to which he was subjected.

The actions of these base people remind us of the treatment accorded our Lord by His enemies. Job was a byword, abhorred, spit upon, accused, and denied succour (vs. 9-14). He was entirely at the mercy of the persons who, because of his condition, despised him. It was the time of his rejection. The period of our Lord's incarnation was also the time of His rejection (John 1:11), when He was mocked by sinners, and spit upon by wicked men (Mark 15:15-20). Such humiliation was suffered voluntarily for us, even to the extent of the cross (Phil. 2:5-13), that salvation might become a blessed possibility for all men (I Pet. 2:21-25). Note the heinous nature of sin which drew our Lord to Calvary (Rom. 3:10-18), and the great love manifested in His sacrificial death (John 3:16).

#### II. JOB'S SAD CONDITION (vs. 15-31)

After describing the derision to which he was subjected, Job gives an account of his physical condition. Terrors pursued him (v. 15), affliction had taken hold upon him (vs. 16-18), and by prostrating himself in the dust he had become the colour of it (v. 19). He cried to God, and not only did he fail to receive a hearing, but God had adopted a stern

attitude toward him (vs. 20, 21). There are times when the heavens seem as brass, and there is no response to our appeal (Deut. 28:23); but God has not forsaken us. He has but withheld the answer for some beneficent purpose. Let us not become discouraged, but trust more implicitly, knowing that our faith, being thus tested, will become stronger, and more precious in the sight of God (I Pet. 1:6-9). Continuing the description, we find Job likening his condition to that of being dissolved by the whirlwind; after which he refers to the certainty of death, and to the hope beyond the grave (vs. 23, 24). The saved persons know that, while the trials of life may be difficult to bear, there is a sure rest beyond the grave. There no trouble shall ever enter, and all in heaven shall enjoy perfect peace (Rev. 21:4). It should also be noted that the unsaved will have their greatest troubles in eternity (Matt. 25:46). Before affliction overtook him Job sympathized with those in trouble (v. 25), then evil came upon him suddenly (vs. 26, 27), and he went about blackened with his disease, a companion of dragons and owls, and with his harp turned into mourning (vs. 28-31). In the light of his condition Job believed he had cause for complaint; and we are given to understand the great contrast in his state.

#### III. JOB'S DECLARATION RESPECTING HIS INTEGRITY (31:1-40)

In this, the closing part of his series of addresses, Job makes strong declaration of his integrity, manifest in his private life. He had made covenant with his eyes not to transgress, and therefore he did not commit the sin of impurity, neither did he walk deceitfully; and, recognizing the fact that God knew his ways, he prayed that he might be weighed in an even balance, that the Lord might know his integrity (vs. 1-6). His example of keeping the eyes from leading him into sin is well worthy of following. Eye-gate is very often the mode of entrance for the evil one into man's soul, and it must be guarded diligently. This part of the body, as well as the other parts, should be given to the Lord as belonging to the "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1, 2). He then mentions other sins, and the punishment attached thereto, if it should be proved that he was guilty of them, such as leaving the path of rectitude, and committing the sin of immorality—a heinous crime, and an iniquity to be punished by the judges (vs. 7-12). Formerly this sin was punished by death (Lev. 20:10). It is looked lightly upon by many in these days, but is condemned unsparingly in the New Testament, as well as in the Old (I Cor. 6:15-20; I Thess. 4:3, 4).

Following the reference to his innocence respecting the sin of immorality, Job makes clear his freedom from guilt concerning unfair treatment of his servants (vs. 13-15). He did not despise them, but believed they came from the same source as himself. All men are on the same level before God (Gal. 3:28). Job realized also that the Lord would hold him responsible for his actions toward his servants. It would be well if all employers would keep this in mind. No government laws would then be necessary to regulate conditions of employment (Col. 4:1). Job then refers to his attitude toward the poor, the fatherless, and the widow (vs. 16-23). Note the scriptural exhortation respecting duty toward these classes (Ga. 3:10; Jas. 1:27).

Continuing the evidence of his integrity, Job testifies to the fact that his conduct was uninfluenced by his wealth (vs. 24-28). There are some who trust in gold, and permit their actions to be governed by its power; and, trusting in its professed security, they forsake God, and live for this world. Note the foolishness of trusting in material things of any description, as they pass away, and cannot under any circumstances satisfy the soul (Matt. 6:19-30). Job's next reference is to his attitude toward his enemies (vs. 29, 30). He did not return hate for hate. Even during the patriarchal period Job acted properly toward his enemies. Note the New Testament attitude of love and prayer respecting them (Matt. 5:44). And if this is the right attitude toward enemies, we ought surely to love sincerely the members of the household of faith (I John 4:4-11). Job further states his attitude toward the wayfarer, whom he aided by feeding and lodging (vs. 31, 32). Job did not hide his transgressions like Adam, else he would have kept silence before the people (vs. 33, 34). He expresses the desire that his adversary would publish the accusation against him, that with a good conscience he might approach him (vs. 35-37). Note the way of a good conscience through Christ (II Cor. 1:12), and the end of Job's words (vs. 38-40).