

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 SHUT DOOR

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 9th, 1934

(Stenographically Reported, and printed without the Editor's revision)

"When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

"Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

"But he shall say, I tell you, I know you, not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."—Luke 13:25-28.

There are few people who are wholly irreligious, very few who would care to say they have no consciousness of God, or of another world. On the other hand, there are all too few who take their religion seriously. When I was a little boy I used to play "going to church", as children play many things. But I was never the preacher: I always had to sit in the pew and listen to someone else preach. We used to think it was a great game, playing church and holding a meeting. There are a great many people who, when they have grown up, still "play church"—play with the whole subject of religion.

The text I have read to you to-night surely suggests that it is not a matter to be played with. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is either the most important matter in the world, or, otherwise, it is not deserving the consideration of thoughtful men. It ought to be the supreme interest in life; or, otherwise, it is not deserving of any interest.

Our Lord Jesus had one business when He came to this earth, He spent His earthly life in the accomplishment of one task: He had received a commandment of His Father, and He spent His whole life in the execution of the divine commission. He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief", but He was a man of joy too; for He said to His disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." And yet we have no record that He ever laughed. There was a deep-seated, an undisturbed, satisfaction and joy of soul in the consciousness that He

was abiding in, and executing, His Father's good pleasure; but His whole earthly career was a tremendously serious undertaking for Him. He lived and died that we might be saved; and the matter of advantaging ourselves of the benefits of His death and resurrection ought to be a subject of serious concern for us.

The teaching of these verses is to the effect that the overtures of grace, of God's purpose in His scheme of salvation, are comparable to transition from one place to another, to a change of relation and position, entering a door, and finding one's self on the inside where formerly he had been on the outside.

What sort of religion have you? You would not be here if you were destitute of religious interest. But what effect has your religion produced in your life? Has it led you to a crisis? Has it constrained you to step from a position in which you found yourself by nature, into another position vastly different, to which we may be brought by grace? Have you entered this door? Have you passed from death unto life? from strangerhood to fellowship? from alienation of heart to a profound spiritual unity with God? from spiritual poverty—yea, destitution—into a place of wealth and abounding luxury? Are you still outside in the cold and the storm, or have you found a refuge within the door of God's provision?

I.

Not to dwell upon that, I remark that THIS DOOR IS A STRAIT DOOR, a strait gate. There are some people who

do not like "strait-laced" folk. They think a minister ought to be "broad-minded". I do not know what they mean by that term—neither do they, for that matter. You cannot afford to be broad-minded with the multiplication table. Two and two are only four: they are neither three nor five. And in the reckoning up of the day's trade, especially if you are in a bank, you need to be pretty "strait". When you see a young fellow toiling away at one or two o'clock in the morning, looking for a cent (he would gladly pay it out of his pocket in order to get home), just knock at the window—because he will not let you in at the door—and say, "Young man, you ought to be 'broad-minded' enough to let that cent go."

What nonsense people talk when they discuss religion! Barnum used to say, "The people love to be humbugged"—and he spent his life giving them what they wanted. But I do not think in anything people are so generally "humbugged" as in the matter of religion—and all under the plea that we must be "broad-minded".

If, when you go out of this building to-night, you stumble into somebody else's car, and are able to set it in motion, and propose to drive off, if someone should stop you, declaring the car to be his, what would you say? "Do not be so fussy, my friend. Be 'broad-minded'. There is another car there: I left mine. You can use that." It makes no difference at all as to the question of proprietorship—or even of propriety! It does not matter! Let us be "broad-minded"!

My friends, the gate that leadeth unto life, whether you like it or not, is a "strait" gate. Remember our Lord said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." I wonder if you know what the eye of a needle is? There is no hyperbole there. I heard a former pastor of this church years ago, in a great Home Mission address, describe certain people. He said, "Their souls are so small, so infinitesimal, that a thousand of them could dance on the point of a needle without touching each other." That was a rhetorical exaggeration, slightly hyperbolic. But when the Lord spoke of the eye of a needle He meant the eye of a needle—not a needle you sew with. When the gates of the city were shut at night, there was a little door in the big gate through which pedestrians might pass with comparative ease, provided for the belated traveller. But sometimes the traveller tried to get his camel through "the eye of the needle", as the door was called. It was a difficult task, and in order to get the camel through he had to unload it, and lay aside all his bundles. Even then the animal had difficulty in squeezing itself through, unharnessed and unloaded. So, said our Lord, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Perhaps you are not rich, but you are cumbered with all sorts of ideas and preconceptions. You want to carry your own will, and your own way of thinking, into the kingdom of God. You are looking for a broad gate because you are very "broad-minded". You are as broad-minded as the Oxford Group! In the Oxford Group you can be a Trinitarian or a Unitarian; a Roman Catholic, an Evangelical, a Revelationist, a Rationalist, a Creationist, or an Evolutionist; you can be a Fundamentalist or a Modernist. Or you can be a little bit of all of them, and still belong to the Oxford Group. That is *broadmindedness*. People who take that attitude have not learned to think.

It is a *strait* gate, but not too strait. It is wide enough to admit the biggest sinner in Toronto, but it is a gate the dimensions of which are divinely prescribed; and it will not be changed for your accommodation. We must accept God's terms, or stay outside.

There are some people who would like a religion made-to-order, just as some apartment owners build apartments to order, with a door big enough to admit some ugly piece of furniture. You would like to have something especially built, so that you could carry yourself, the old man, everything there is of you, without change, into the kingdom. The simple principle here is that the way to God and to glory is divinely ordered—and it is "strait". We take that road, or stay outside. It will not be changed for our pleasure.

II.

We are to STRIVE TO ENTER IN at the strait gate. It is not easy to be a Christian. "But", someone says, "have I not heard you say salvation is all of grace?" "Yes; it is all of grace." "But now you say we must strive to enter in?" "Yes; we must strive." "But will that not be of works?" "No; it will not be of works." "Then what does it mean?" "It means that we must agonize, that we cannot be Christians by giving attention to our soul's salvation at off seasons, when our minds are disengaged from more important matters." It means we must recognize that the *salvation* that is in Christ is for the whole man, for all of a man's time, his talents, his powers—all there is of him—for time, and for eternity; and that if it is worth anything at all, it is *deserving of our concentrated effort* in order to secure passage through the gate.

Oh, the multitudes of people who have no interest in this matter except on Sundays! Their church-going is a kind of diversion. It is not their vocation, but their avocation, which they lightly set aside. I would not waste a moment of time trying to make a mere Sunday Christian. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."

During the Great War I returned from England one year on a great ship, and we stopped at Quebec to unload the mail and freight. There was a man on board who was very important—or he thought he was. He wanted everything ordered so that he could get ashore at once. But when you come into port from an ocean voyage you get some idea of how insignificant you are! I can see that man now, walking up and down the deck, taking out his watch, fuming lest he should miss the train. At last he went up to the chief officer and said, "Are you never going to dock so we can get ashore? I have a very important engagement in Toronto, and I fear I shall miss my train. I have to catch that train without fail." The chief officer said nothing for a moment. He gave an order or two to his men, and then turned his head and said, "There is nothing important, sir!"—and went on unloading. That great ship had more important business than accommodating itself to that little man's specialties.

How many people come to God after that fashion! "I am very important. If ever I am saved I—I—I—". If ever you are saved, you will come through the strait gate, my brother. You will come on God's terms, and you will have to "strive" to get in. It is no easy matter—and you cannot bring all the world with you. There is a vast difference between the inside and the outside of that gate.

So often do I expound the principle with you that I shall not labour it this evening, but content myself merely with saying that *Jesus Christ Himself is the Gate*. "I am the door"; "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." By the way you saw symbolized in the ordinance of Baptism, you must come; by way of the cross, and of the open grave. That is the way to God. And there is no other way. If you do not like it, and are resolved not to accept it, then you will have to remain without. But I conjure you to come to your senses, and recognize that the salvation of your soul is deserving the utmost attention that you can give it. Nobody else can save you,—no church, no priest, no good works. There is only one way to God, and that is through that Door; and when you seek it with your whole heart, earnestly, agonizingly, determined that you will be saved no matter what the terms, you will know what "striving" is.

III.

But it is not to that I call your attention specifically this evening, but rather to this: the teaching of the text is that **THE OVERTURES OF GRACE WILL SOME DAY BE TERMINATED BY A SHUT DOOR**. Said they, Master, are there few that be saved?" In effect our Lord answered, "That is none of your business. There is the strait gate: see to it that you enter; strive to enter there. Many people will want to enter in some day, and shall not be able. While still the door is open," said the Master, "you had better get inside. You can discuss those questions afterward."

There are few people subject to Christian influences who have not, in their subconscious minds, a latent resolution to the effect that some day they will get through that gate. Very few there are who deliberately say: "I will have nothing to do with religion. I will take my chances on a future life. I am willing to eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die; and pass without concern from this life into whatever may await me beyond." Very few people there are as foolish as that. But multitudes there are who say, "Some day I will enter that door. I must confess", say they, "that I love to hear the minister give the invitation to people to accept salvation. I like to think of a wide-open door, and of the Father ever waiting for the prodigal's return. I am glad to know there is a light burning in the window, and that when at last I make up my mind to seek salvation there will be Somebody waiting for me."

Do not be so sure, my friend! Do not be so sure! Our text says that some time—I do not know when or how—some time the Master of the house will rise up and "shut to the door". The teaching of the text is that there will come some time an end to the overtures of grace, that not for ever will the gospel be preached to sinful men. The Spirit of God will not always, to the end of time, or to the end of any man's life, strive with the sinner. Whatever it may mean, surely this is perfectly patent, that in the plan and purpose of God there is a period of probation during which a man may seek the Lord, during which a man may be saved; but that—

"There is a line by us unseen
That crosses every path;
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath."

"To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth;
It does not quench the beaming eye
Nor pale the glow of health."

"How long may we go on to sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and where
Begin the confines of despair?"

"And answer from the sky is sent,
'Ye that from God depart
While it is called, To-day, repent,
And harden not your heart'."

Sooner or later, at some time, the Master of the house will rise up, and "shut to the door". And when He has done so, so far as that sinner is concerned, the last sermon will have been preached, the last invitation will have been given, the last opportunity for time or eternity will have been presented to him, and, failing to take advantage of it, the Master of the house will shut to the door—and that will be the end of it. That is the teaching of God's Word.

I said that salvation, conversion, entrance upon the new life, is a crisis, a definite time when we pass the line and enter through the strait gate. But, on the other hand, definite, prolonged, refusal will reach its termination too. If faith has its crisis, so has unbelief; and there comes a day, an hour—a moment, it may be—when it is a case of now or never; because, if it be not now, the Master of the house will rise up and "shut to the door".

IV.

What does the **SHUTTING OF THE DOOR** mean? It may include many things. The door may be shut while a man is still in perfect health. It may be shut while the mind is still alert. How terribly solemn is the reflection that *it is possible for us to incapacitate ourselves to receive certain sensations!* A simple illustration is your alarm-clock. Refusing to heed its warning too often, it fails to arouse you at all. Or again, even on a cold night like this, while the rest of the your body is covered, your face is exposed, yet does not feel the cold keenly. It has ceased to be sensitive like other parts of your body: it is weather-proof.

You can play with your conscience until it becomes, as the Scripture says, "seared with a hot iron". Did any of you men every try to help your wife wash the dishes? When the water was prepared you said, "I will wash them." You put your hands in the pan, and immediately cried, "That is too hot!" Then your very delicate, sensitive, wife said, "Stand aside; I will do it"! The water was the same temperature—why did she not mind? Her hands had become used to it. They were not as sensitive to heat as yours. You can play with your conscience until by and by nothing registers. You can reject the gospel until by and by nothing moves you.

I have known men to tell me they are familiar with the Bible, that they can quote chapter after chapter. They know the way of life, so far as the letter of it is concerned; but even when others, less instructed, are seeking salvation under the power of the Holy Ghost, it makes no impression upon them. We are admonished to take heed "lest there be in any of (us) an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God". We are admonished further, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

I have heard an expression, a colloquialism, of the business world—I have some dim apprehension of what it means. I have heard a business man say, when he faced some rather unpleasant course, "Oh well, I am hard-boiled." What did he mean? There was a time when it would have hurt him terribly to say to a faithful servant, "I shall not require your services any longer." He would have laid awake many a night before he could say to a certain man, "I must reduce your wages." But after a while he becomes used to the rough-and-tumble world, and he lays down his business principles, and "hews to the line". It is nothing to him that the man goes home to a weeping wife to say, "I am out of a job." It is nothing to him that little children go hungry. He must maintain his business, he must have his profits—and his excuse is that he is "hard-boiled". He has become so hard and ruthless that he is no longer sensitive to suffering. Even his humanitarian instincts are suppressed, smothered. He becomes a business machine.

That attitude is very easily adopted. When I go to London I see scores of women with their little pasteboard boxes of matches, saying, "Buy my matches, please, sir?" If you were to buy a woman's entire stock and trade, it would not pay for a good meal! Here and there are blind men begging, and street artists offering their productions. When I arrive first I want to put my hands in my pocket all the time, but I soon discover I would join their ranks if I did. I should have to get a tin cup myself! Little by little I find myself hardened to the plea of these people, my compassions drying up, and I pass them by.

There is given power to us to incapacitate ourselves for the reception of certain influences. You can harden the heart, and sear the conscience, and still walk about as a healthy man, but with all religious interest dead. What has happened? The Master of the house has risen up and "shut to the door". He may do so some time in the experience of many who hear me to-night.

Sometimes *such a crisis may be gradually reached*, and it may be a *matter of geography*. I have heard of people's saying, when asked if they attend Jarvis Street Church, "Oh no! No, indeed!" "Have you ever been there?" "Yes." "Why do you not go there now?" "If I went long I should have to be converted. If I were there long I should have to take a public stand for Christ." I have seen men go out that door afraid—they went out for fear they would come up the aisle, seeking salvation. Then, for business reasons only, they decided to leave Toronto. Their going had no relation to their religious interest. They went away somewhere where there was no gospel, where there were no religious privileges. The Lord had put the very Bread of heaven before them, and said, "Will you have it? Will you have it?" And the man said, "No! No! No!" "All right. I will not offer it to you again." The man does not know that that is why he is out on the prairie, why the very privileges he rejected are no longer his.

There are churches like that, churches that have become worldly. They did not want the Bread from heaven: they wanted anything but that. After a while the faithful minister died, or he was removed, and they said, "Now we will have a minister to suit us." They get one. They had had many good meals before, and do not feel their hunger immediately. But as the years pass, their souls begin to gnaw with hunger. The Israelites rebelled against the manna of God's provision: "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which

we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick; but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." You remember the result? What a horrible picture! Moses was instructed thus to reply, "Therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why come we forth out of Egypt?" "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

If you ask for sawdust rather than bread, long enough, you will get sawdust. If you ask for something else rather than the gospel, the Lord will let you have your own way after a while. The Master of the house will say, "They are not coming to dinner: shut to the door."

Sometimes the door is shut by him whom we all fear, save as grace delivers us from the bondage of that fear, *Death himself*. Death is still busy. Someone says, "You are not going to be quite so old-fashioned as to tell us we ought to be saved because death may come?" I do not care whether you call it old-fashioned or new, but I dare to tell you that "now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation". I cannot find in the Word of God any promise whatever that salvation will ever be offered to anybody when Death, at the command of the Master of the house, hath shut to the door. Death will come. It may come to some of us to-night, to any of us—or to-morrow. It would not be an unusual thing if someone here this evening should have reached the end of life, and the body laid yonder in the cemetery before this time next Sunday. It may be the preacher—it may be you. Death is just as busy as he ever was. I know science postpones his coming—or thinks it does—for a little while; but he comes at last. And when he comes, the door is shut.

Let me pause here to speak to some of you who perhaps have been carried away by a certain very popular line of teaching in our day, that after the Lord Jesus has come for His people, somewhere, somehow, when the Spirit of God has ceased His ministry, and the church, the salt of the earth, the light of the world, has gone, then thousands of people are going to be saved—saved in the Great Tribulation. I never was more convinced of the falsity of any doctrine in my life than I am of that, although held by many orthodox people. His coming, His epiphany, His revelation, are but three aspects of one event; and when He comes, He will come to be "glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe". He will "come to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel". If death should not come, but the Lord Himself, I give it as my profound conviction of truth, that *when Jesus Christ shall come, He will "shut to the door"*; and there will be no chance for any man or woman born ever to be saved after He has come.

V.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN? Not, What will happen on the inside of the door? That is another story. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." He will raise us up together, and make us "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward

us through Jesus Christ". I would rather talk to you about the inside of the door. It will be a glorious thing to be shut in with God, when once the Master of the house is risen up. But my text speaks of what occurs without, and it says that people will not always be indifferent to their souls' salvation, but that when once the door is shut, they will begin to knock: "Ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence."

I wonder what that means? "We attended the Communion Service. *We were church members.* We were numbered among the children of God. We were included on earth in the household of faith. We were always so regarded. We have taken the bread, and we have drunk the wine." It makes no difference. That never saved anybody yet. It is not the symbol of the blood, but the blood, that saves. It is not the symbol of the bread, but the Bread of Life that came down from heaven, that really saves men and women.

"Thou hast taught in our streets." "I was brought up under gospel influences," someone says, "I have spent my whole life in religious circles. I attended Sunday School; I attended church. I know all about it. There must be some mistake here." But unless you have come into personal contact with Him, He shall say, "*Depart from me; I know you not.*"

My question this evening is this, Are you sure that Jesus Christ knows you? Are you sure that you know Him? Are you sure that you have had direct dealings with Him? Members of Jarvis Street Church, are you sure of that? Is there anybody here trusting in membership in this church, in the fact that you were baptized in this baptistry, in your attendance at the Communion Table? Is that the ground of your hope? Or can you say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"? Do you really *know* Him? Blessed be God, you may know Him. He will not fail you in the crisis-hour.

But He said, "I know you not." And oh, how anxious some will be! There may be some man here to-night who, in the future, will stand without that door and knock. And when the door is closed, will say to his own soul, "I would give all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, all that the world could possibly give me, if I had it, just to turn back the wheels of time, and find myself in a pew in Jarvis Street Church when that last invitation that the Spirit of God ever gave me, came to heart and conscience. How eagerly would I accept it if it were offered now!" But it is too late then!

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." There is a terrible suggestion there. You have it in the sixteenth chapter of Luke too, where the rich man died and was buried, and "in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." It does not say that Abraham saw him—I rather think he did not, but the rich man saw Abraham and Lazarus, and he said, "Have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in

water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." You remember the story; it contains the same principle: there is a "great gulf fixed". The principle upon which I insist is that our Lord seemed to suggest that *part of the awful punishment of the future will be the gnawing remorse which men shall feel when they see what they have missed:* "Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

I have heard people talk about the "riffraff" who go to Jarvis Street Church. We do not object. But let me find the humblest member, and the poorest, who knows Christ, and who has passed within the gate into the glory—and some proud Pharisee would be very glad to change places even with the "riffraff". Who knows but that some man is sitting beside somebody else to-night, and some day he will see that somebody else in the kingdom of God, and say, "We sat together in the same pew, we heard the same sermon, we listened to the same gospel, we were offered the same Saviour. He went in, and up—and I went out, and down. I had all his opportunities, but threw them away"? "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

I do not know when that door will shut. It may be this moment. I dare not promise you that it will be open to-night. During the war I was in London many times. One night I went to a great building to hear a certain famous statesman of the day deliver an address. I knew there would be thousands of people unable to gain admittance, so I went some hours before the lecture-hour, and took my place in the queue, in order to be sure of a seat. People came from all directions, and the queue moved up little by little as the doors were opened. We took a step forward, and a step forward, until I got in a position where there were but three in front of me. I looked back with compassion on the hundreds of people who were going to be shut out. The doors were shut for a few minutes; then they were opened, and it was announced that the ushers had room for one more—and Number One went in. I said to myself, "They will open just twice more, and then it will be my turn. The third time the doors open I shall go in." I waited for a few moments, and then the attendants wheeled before the doors a great sign, "House Full". I said to one of the policemen who were standing there, "There is no use waiting, constable?" "No use, sir; there is not a chance in the world of your getting in."

I had waited for hours, and had gradually come up until there were only two people between me and the door—but I was too late. I shall never forget the feeling I had as I went back to my hotel that night. It was a sinking of the heart. I felt as though I had been rejected. After all my longing, I was shut out.

Are you Number One, Number Two, or Number Three? While the door is open, will you come in? Will you come in? Will you say, even sitting there in the pew, before we sing the hymn, "O Lamb of God, I come! I come! I dare not wait until the close of the service. I must come now, for I do not want to be shut out"? I beg of you to come. If you are not sure of your salvation, come. Even if the way is not clear, come. I heard Dr. Jowett preach a sermon about the woman who had been sick long years, who, hearing of

Jesus Christ, said, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." She elbowed her way through the crowd, and at last managed to touch the hem of His garment, and "felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" Dr. Jowett said, "O my brother, touch Him! Touch Him! Touch Him! Perhaps there is a man down there who says, 'But, sir, I cannot see Him, and I don't know how to touch Him.' Tell Him you do not know how to touch Him—and that will touch Him", said the great preacher. So it will.

If only you desire to touch Him, you will be made whole. The very desire to touch Him, God will interpret as a cry for mercy, which shall never go unanswered.

Let us pray:

O Lord, hast Thou in Thy grace brought some here before Thee to the supreme crisis-hour of all their history, to the place where they are almost persuaded to be Christians? Oh, by Thy gracious Spirit, make this a moment of decision. We beseech Thee to incline men's hearts to repent; bid them to come to Thee. Suffer no one to go from this building to-night without Christ. We would be free from the blood of all men. We would stand before Thy throne at last and say, We have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. Bless the testimony of Thy word. Save us all from presumption, and lead us to a living, active faith, that will take us safely through the strait gate, that we may receive salvation at Thy hand. Hear us now as, for a moment, we silently bow in Thy presence; hear the unspoken, the unuttered cry of contrite hearts . . . Grant Thy assurance, O Lord, to those who have prayed. Let them hear Thee say, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Teach them to know that as they have called, Thou hast answered with Thy great salvation. For Thy name's sake, Amen.

WHOLE BIBLE LESSON COURSE

For the Year 1935

Arranged by Rev. Alex. Thomson, Toronto

Date	Lesson	Golden Text
	Book Chapters	
Jan.		
6	"The Speech of Elihu" Job 32-37	Job 33:27, 28
13	"The Address of God and Job's Reply" Job 38-42	Job 42:10
20	"The Godly and Ungodly in Contrast" Psalm 1, 2	Psalm 1:1
27	"Triumph Over Enemies" Psalm 3-7	Psalm 4:3
Feb.		
3	"The Excellency of the Divine Name" Psalm 8-11	Psalm 8:2
10	"An Appeal for Divine Aid" Psalm 12-18	Psalm 18:2
17	"Magnifying God's Glory" Psalm 19-21	Psalm 19:3
24	"The Forsaken Sufferer" Psalm 22	Psalm 22:23
March		
3	"Confidence in God's Care" Psalm 23-25	Psalm 25:14
10	"Sheltered in God's Pavilion" Psalm 26-28	Psalm 27:1
17	"Rejoicing in God" Psalm 29-34	Psalm 32:1, 2
24	"Prayer Respecting Enemies" Psalm 35, 36	Psalm 36:5
31	"Patience in Suffering" Psalm 37-39	Psalm 37:3, 4

April			
7	"Divine Deliverance" Psalm 40-45	Psalm 43:5	
14	"A Refuge and Strength" Psalm 46-50	Psalm 50:23	
21	"Prayer for Cleansing" Psalm 51-54	Psalm 51:7	
28	"Treacherous Acquaintances" Psalm 55-57	Psalm 56:4	
May			
5	"A Divine Defence" Psalm 58-61	Psalm 61:2	
12	"Waiting Upon God" Psalm 62-67	Psalm 62:8	
19	"The Greatness of God" Psalm 68-70	Psalm 68:19	
26	"The Reign of the King" Psalm 71-73	Psalm 71:1, 2	
June			
2	"The Deserted Sanctuary" Psalm 74-77	Psalm 75:1	
9	"God's Goodness to Israel" Psalm 78-80	Psalm 79:9	
16	"The Blessing of Obedience" Psalm 81-83	Psalm 81:7	
23	"Plentiful in Mercy" Psalm 84-89	Psalm 89:1	
30	"The Secret Place of the Most High" Psalm 90-92	Psalm 91:1	
July			
7	"The Justice of Divine Judgment" Psalm 93-96	Psalm 96:8	
14	"The Lord's Dominion" Psalm 97-102	Psalm 98:1	
21	"Thanksgiving for God's Goodness" Psalm 103, 104	Psalm 104:1	
28	"God's Wondrous Works" Psalm 105-107	Psalm 106:1	
Aug.			
4	"An Exalted Lord" Psalm 108-110	Psalm 110:1	
11	"Trusting in God" Psalm 111-113	Psalm 112:4	
18	"The Law of the Lord" Psalm 119	Psalm 119:9	
25	"The Divine Keeper of Israel" Psalm 120-127	Psalm 125:2	
Sept.			
1	"The Blessedness of Fearing God" Psalm 128-134	Psalm 130:7	
8	"The Enduring Mercy of God" Psalm 135-139	Psalm 138:8	
15	"A Cry for Deliverance" Psalm 140-145	Psalm 143:8	
22	"Universal Praise of God" Psalm 146-150	Psalm 148:13	
29	"The Beginning of Wisdom" Prov. 1-3	Prov. 3:5, 6	
Oct.			
6	"A Father's Instruction to a Son" Prov. 4-7	Prov. 4:7	
13	"The Cry of Wisdom" Prov. 8, 9	Prov. 8:11	
20	"The Righteous and Wicked in Contrast" Prov. 10-13	Prov. 10:3	
27	"The Wise and the Foolish in Contrast" Prov. 14-16	Prov. 15:8	
Nov.			
3	"Wise and Foolish Speech" Prov. 17-19	Prov. 18:24	
10	"Warning and Instruction" Prov. 20-22	Prov. 22:1	
17	"Eating, Drinking and Working" Prov. 23, 24	Prov. 23:31	
24	"Kings, Fools and Sluggards" Prov. 25-27	Prov. 26:20	
Dec.			
1	"Public and Private Government" Prov. 28, 29	Prov. 28:13	
8	"The Confessions of Agur and Lemuel" Prov. 30, 31	Prov. 30:5	
15	"The Vanity of Earthly Things" Eccles. 1-6	Eccles. 3:14	
22	"The Excellence of Wisdom" Eccles. 7-12	Eccles. 11:9	
29	"The Song of Songs" S. of Sol. 1-8	S. of Sol. 8:7	

THIS WEEK'S COPY OF "THE WITNESS"

The Editor was unexpectedly called out-of-town Sunday evening, which accounts for the non-appearance of the Thursday evening lecture in this issue of THE WITNESS. The sermon is printed without revision, and the lecture will appear next week.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 1

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 1 First Quarter January 6th, 1935

THE SPEECH OF ELIHU

Lesson Text: Job, chapters 32 to 37.

Golden Text: Job 33: 27, 28: "If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."

Bible School Reading: Job 33: 1-33.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Psalm 94:1-13; Tuesday—Psalm 42:1-11; Wednesday—Prov. 24:1-12; Thursday—Eccles. 7:1-6; Friday—Matt. 20:20-28; Saturday—I Peter 5:1-9.

I. THE WRATH OF ELIHU (32:1-22)

During the discussion engaged in by Job and his three friends, there had evidently been present a man younger in years, though greater in wisdom, by the name of Elihu. The sense of his immaturity of age had kept him silent thus far; but, aware of the inability of the friends to answer Job in a proper manner, and realizing a weakness in Job's replies, he can hold his peace no longer, and boldly expresses his convictions on the matter, censuring the participants, and defending the ways of God.

Elihu's wrath is kindled against Job "because he justified himself rather than God"; and against the three friends "because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job." This is an instance of righteous anger, without any selfish purpose or personal grievance attached thereto. It should be noted in extenuating Job's attitude that the attacks of his friends compelled him to defend himself; while it is evident from the nature of his replies that he believed in the justice of God. Before launching into his statement, Elihu explains his hesitancy and delay in giving voice to it. He was younger in years than the others, and believed that he should listen to the instruction of his elders (vs. 6, 7). This is the proper attitude for the young to assume before those older in years, unless, conscious that such persons are in error, they feel definitely constrained to point out their error. Elihu claims inspiration in giving his statement (v. 8). Note the fact of inspiration respecting others (I Peter 1:10-12), and the implications respecting the truth of, and obedience to, their messages.

Continuing, Elihu states what most people with experience of the world know, that "great men are not always wise; neither do the aged understand judgment" (v. 9). Solomon is an illustration of this. In youth he was wise (I Kings 3:12), but in old age he was foolish (I Kings 11:4). Realizing therefore the weakness of the friends, Elihu gave answer to Job. Observe his manner of approach (vs. 10-17), his fulness of words, denoting his interest, and thorough grasp of the subject, the constraining spirit which impelled him to speak (vs. 18-20), and the unprejudiced nature of his testimony. He was evidently a messenger of God, with a message for men.

II. THE WAY OF REPENTANCE (33:1-33)

The opening part of Elihu's speech is addressed to Job, whom he calls upon to listen to his words, and not be afraid (vs. 1-7). He then refers to certain statements made by Job, respecting his innocency, and the attitude of God toward him; and corrects him for his wrong action in the matter. We should not strive against God, but submit to Him, whether or not we understand the reason for His attitude toward us (Jas. 4:7). God speaks "once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not". God is wonderfully gracious and patient with man, approaching him repeatedly with the offer of His assistance; yet in many cases he is rebuffed, neglected, and rejected. God speaks in the vision—with a particular application to that early time—and gives warning, for the purpose of saving man from destruction (vs. 15-18). Sometimes

He permits affliction to come upon him that he might be chastened thereby. Disease does its work on his body, and he draws nigh unto the grave (vs. 19-22). It is only when this occurs that some men begin seriously to think upon God; and the experience in such a case is beneficial. Note also the relation of chastening to the saved person (Heb. 12:5-11).

If in the time of affliction there is present a messenger, a daysman (Job 9:33), type of the divine Daysman or Mediator (I Tim. 2: 5, 6), who can clearly interpret the experience, and give God's message, then the person shall be saved, conditional upon his repentance and faith in God (vs. 23-33). Observe the work of Christ our Redeemer (I Peter 2:24), the price paid for our ransom (I Peter 1:18, 19), the condition, present and future, from which the saints have been saved (Matt. 1:21, I Thess. 1:10), and the effects of restoration to God's favour in the new life (II Cor. 5:17), gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17), fellowship with God (I John 1:3), resurrection and eternal blessing (I Cor. 15:21-23; I Thess. 4:13-18), and the privilege of service (Heb. 9:14). Note also the necessity for repentance and faith (Acts 26:20; Heb. 11:6), and the privilege and duty of the work of the soul-winner (Matt. 28:18-20, Mark 1:17).

III. A DEFENCE OF GOD'S JUSTICE (chapters 34-36).

This part of Elihu's message is addressed also to the friends, whom he calls upon to listen to his words. He begins his argument with a reference to Job's statement respecting his integrity, and the attitude of God toward him; and points out the error in Job's attitude, intimating that the latter takes his place thus, with wicked men (vs. 7-9). It is wrong always to doubt either God's words or His actions. Implicit trust is the only attitude which is pleasing to Him (Ps. 31:19, 20). Elihu then proceeds to emphasize the divine justice. God could not act wickedly, as He shall render to every man in accordance with his works (vs. 10-12), here and hereafter (Gal. 6:7, Matt. 16:27). He is the supreme governor of the earth, and as such must be just, or else ruin His creation (vs. 13-17). He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). And He is omniscient, knows all things, and deals justly with men (vs. 21-30; I John 3:20). Under such circumstances He should be approached in repentance (vs. 31, 32). Reproof of Job closes this section (vs. 33-37). Note the impossibility of God's acting unjustly (II Tim. 4:8), and the duty of men, with their limited knowledge, to act humbly before Him (II Peter 5:6).

Proceeding with his speech, Elihu deals with Job's implication that the service of God did not bring profit to him (35: 1-3), and shows that God was of too exalted a character to be afflicted by the actions of His creatures (vs. 4-7); intimating that He acts only from the highest motives. The righteous do suffer and cry out (vs. 8, 9), but they do not adopt the attitude of humility; therefore they are not delivered (vs. 10-16). Pride is the great hindrance to the blessing of men. Elihu seeks to impress Job with this fact. In the fourth division of his speech Elihu shows that God does not despise any of His creatures (36:1-5). He deals most graciously with the righteous, exalting them to the status of the throne (v. 6; Rev. 1:5, 6), blessing them in obedience, and punishing them for disobedience (vs. 7-12). The hypocrites are dealt with, the poor delivered, and Job would also have been delivered had he not adopted the wrong attitude (vs. 13-17). Note the warning (vs. 18-21), the greatness of God (vs. 22-33), and God's wondrous condescension toward men. The Creator loves His creatures, and seeks to help them (Eph. 2: 4-7).

IV. THE WONDROUS WORKS OF GOD (37: 1-24)

The greatness of God cannot be comprehended by men. He is truly the Omnipotent One. We may observe some of the manifestations of that power, however; and to these Elihu directs the attention of Job, mentioning the thunder and lightning, the snow and frost of winter, which to some extent stop man's outdoor activities, and affect also the animals (vs. 6-10); and the rain (vs. 11-13). God controls the forces of nature, and Job is asked to consider His great works, and state whether he understands how God performs His works (vs. 14-24). Man does not understand the greatness of the Infinite, therefore he should be dumb before His Lord, and obedient to the divine will.

The Union Baptist Witness

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WESTBORO

Rev. Lorne Hisey, pastor of the Westboro Regular Baptist Church, writes, "The work here is not spectacular, but is slowly gaining ground, and we feel that substantially. The Sunday-school, Prayer Meetings, and particularly the evening services, are largely increased.

On November the 19th we had the joy of leading three souls through the waters of baptism, and on the 25th four more obeyed the Lord in the same ordinance, and last Sunday, December 2nd, we had the joy of receiving eight new members into our fellowship. We trust that these are only the droppings preceding the showers. We ask an interest in the prayers of all WITNESS readers."

WESTERN CONFERENCE

On Thursday, November 29th, the churches of the Western Ontario area met in conference at Essex. Another delightful day was spent in fellowship and worship. Those in attendance were privileged to listen to messages from two of God's servants which were both instructive and inspiring. In the afternoon, Brother Watt, pastor at Courtright and Wilkesport, spoke to us on the sacrifice of the Saviour, while in the evening Rev. R. D. Guthrie, of London, laid before us the duty of every Christian to make known this Saviour to others. The presence of the Lord was felt at both services, and many departed after the evening service with a song of thanksgiving in their hearts for the grace of God in providing a Saviour for us, and then giving us the opportunity of proclaiming Him upon earth, a privilege angels might covet.

—W. LEMPRIERE.

CALVIN, TORONTO

The Lord has blessed Calvin Baptist Church with the spirit of revival since the Recognition and Ordination service. We are happy to note the hospitality of Waverley Road Baptist Church in affording us all facilities for baptisms.

Sunday afternoon, December 9th, at four fifteen there were four young ladies baptised. Two were sisters who were saved a month or so ago in their home, and the Sunday before they confessed Christ publicly when the invitation was given. The other two young ladies were saved about a year ago. At the baptismal service the mother of two of the girls, who is a believer, requested baptism. This evening five children responded to the invitation to accept Christ as Saviour. A young lady who was saved some time ago came forward seeking to follow Christ in baptism. After the service a grandmother who attends the services regularly expressed her desire for baptism and church membership. We praise the Lord for this manifestation of His power, and ask you to pray with us that this may be the beginning of a real revival. We are meeting in the Greenwood Theatre, 1275 Gerrard Street East, and ask you to pray with us that the Lord may open up the way for us to obtain a lot and building. "With God all things are possible."

BOBCAYGEON

"We are again experiencing a time of real spiritual blessing," writes the pastor, Rev. M. B. Gillion. "Rev. C. J. Loney was with us for one evening a few weeks ago, and was instrumental in leading our people to a closer walk with God. Nearly every one present said it was a wonderful night, being conscious of the presence and power of the Spirit. We felt that the revival for which we had been praying had surely come.

"Rev. A. St. James was with us a few days, and preached at each of our Missions and brought messages that were a real help to young Christians. The last evening he was with us we held a meeting in a new district not many miles from Bobcaygeon. That was the beginning of the services in which we are engaged at present. We have been praying for some time that the door would open so we

could carry the gospel to this district which is called Eden (not the Garden of Eden). The interest that was shown was encouraging from the first, and we have been preaching each night for nearly two weeks. The last three nights over twenty have expressed their desire to be saved. Among the number ten men have been gloriously saved, and are rejoicing in Christ. Nearly every evening the schoolhouse is packed to the doors. Many are under deep conviction, for whom we ask the prayers of God's children. The enemy is working hard, but in spite of his forces—or perhaps because of—God is giving us one of the greatest revivals that we have experienced."

MAPS OF LIBERIA

Every Church and Bible School should have a map of the Union's Foreign Mission Field. Rev. Gordon D. Mellish has done excellent work, and has spent much time in preparing it, that our whole constituency might be appraised of the exact location of the initial Foreign Mission effort of the Union.

It was announced at the Convention that it would be prepared in two colours, but the cost of so doing was found to be prohibitive: It is beautifully done in one colour, however, and will be mailed, postage included, for the sum of one dollar (\$1.00). Buy a Postal Note and send for yours today, as there is only a limited supply. The size of the map is 30½ ins. by 39½ ins. Put it in a suitable frame and hang in a convenient place, where all the members of the church and congregation may have access to it at any time. Address all communications to Rev. W. E. Atkinson, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto. Copies of the Map will be sent by December 20th to all who have already ordered same.

CHURCH ENVELOPES

Have you ordered your supply for 1935? The Union's Office will be glad to receive your order for Single or Duplex Envelopes at the following rates:

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