

# 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 FEARFULNESS OF UNBELIEF

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, April 21st, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

"Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

"Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

"Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

"So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."—Matthew 27:62-66.

"Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

"And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

"Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

"And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

"So they took the money, and did as they were taught."—Matthew 28:11-15.

#### Prayer before the Sermon

We would, O Lord, this evening be numbered among those who render a spiritual service, and whom Thou art seeking to worship Thee: We acknowledge our dependence upon Thy grace. We acknowledge that even in the exercise of prayer we are unable of ourselves to present to Thee a petition which Thou canst grant. We thank Thee for Him Who is our Mediator. We rejoice once again in access to Thee at the mercy-seat. We thank Thee, not only that He was crucified and rose again from the dead, but we bless Thee that He ascended, having led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also.

We come to Thee this evening desiring to receive from the hand of the ascended Saviour, to Whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth, those gifts which are necessary to our salvation, and to our growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Look upon this congregation this evening. We beseech Thee to make us to know experimentally the truth of that which we sing, and of that which we preach. As Thou didst come to Thy disciples in the days of Thy flesh after the resurrection, making Thyself known to them, so come to us, we pray Thee. There are weary hearts here this evening; there are some whose minds are burdened with many cares; some there are whose minds are filled with anxiety about the future—whatever their particular state may be, whatever the

peculiar circumstances which surround them, Thou art able, of the fulness of Thy grace in Christ Jesus, to minister to them, and to satisfy them with Thy grace. We beseech Thee to bring salvation to those who have not known Thee as yet, and inspiration and help to all those of us who know Thy name.

This we pray for all congregations, that the gospel wherever it is preached, may prove the power of God unto salvation to all/who shall believe.

Direct us in every exercise of this hour. We thank Thee for these young lives before Thee, and for these children who sing Thy praises. We pray that their hearts, by Thy grace, may be so attuned that they may be able to make melody unto the Lord. Include us all in Thine evening benediction. Send not one of us empty away. We shall presently leave this place: may we leave it in the consciousness that we have been enriched by our attendance because we have come into personal contact with the Lord of grace and of glory. We ask it in His name, Amen.

In some quarters it seems to be assumed that Christian faith belongs to weak-minded and childishly credulous people. Evangelical faith—the faith of the Bible, and faith in the Bible, and in the truth there revealed and recorded—is very often the object of mockery, or of contempt.

We have often exercised our minds, in this place with various aspects of the philosophy of faith. This evening I propose that we endeavour to examine the psychology of unbelief, in the light of the resurrection.

How few there are who are bold enough to declare their unwavering confidence in the Word of God, and in the Son of God! Very often the gospel, and the principles and doctrines of the gospel, are rejected in the name of reason, and of a superior knowledge. How many have I met, professors, and university men of all ranks, and young people down to high school grade, who seem to think, if they mock at the gospel, and boast that they have outgrown its teachings, attain to a place among the intellectuals.

If once the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, His literal resurrection from the dead, be accepted, nothing in the Bible can be called incredulous. The resurrection is the most stupendous miracle of all. If that be true, the foundation is cut from beneath the feet of unbelief. There is nothing left for anyone to do but to believe.

The seeds of unfaith, unbelief, and unreason, have been sown in the minds of many by so-called Christian teachers. It would appear that a great many churches exploit the Easter season. They make much of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, while their general testimony amounts to a denial of all that that season represents. If it be true that Jesus Christ died and rose again, that fact is a subject worthy of more than annual consideration: it is a subject that demands daily witness, and continuous proclamation by those who have believed, and have been benefited thereby.

Let us look then at this story contained in the verses I have read, that we may learn something of the persistence of unbelief, and discover possibly why men draw down the blinds, and shut out God's sun, bolt and double-bar the door, not only of the heart, but of the intellect as well, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them".

I want you to go back with me to Friday, assuming that Jesus was crucified on Friday. Our text refers to the day of the preparation, between the day of His death, and the morning of His resurrection. We observe how carefully His enemies, who had contrived His death, laid plans to prevent, if possible, either His resurrection, or any report of it, being disseminated in Jerusalem.

### I.

Let me remark that THE NATURE OF UNBELIEF IS EVER DISPLAYED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF DIVINE GOODNESS. It is sometimes taken for granted that if all professing Christians were good people, if their characters and conduct were to manifest the goodness of God, if they were thus to become living epistles, declaring the message of Eternal Goodness, everybody would believe. It is assumed, I say, that a religion of goodness would be acceptable to the human mind; that if everyone who professes the Christian religion could become an exemplification of its precepts and principles, and show by consistent living, the reality of the things they profess, everybody would believe. You remember Tennyson?—

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought;

"Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef."

Anybody can believe that! Can he? Can he? The supreme exemplification of the goodness of God, One Who in His person represented all the qualities of Deity, Who never in an unguarded moment bore false witness to His Father, but Who lived perfectly, and was Himself the embodiment of all divine perfection—even He was hailed before the judges, and ultimately nailed to a cross. There are people who boast of their irreligion, who refuse subscription to any Christian creed, and repudiate even a Christian name, who justify their attitude toward Christ, their unbelief, on the ground of the unfaithfulness of those who believe. I am sure you have met many such.

I received a letter from someone the other day, who had attended this church, telling me of something that someone had said or done—I do not know what it was—which this person considered to be scarcely consistent with a religious profession and because of that, said she, "I have done with Christianity." What nonsense! That is not the reason she is done with Christianity. In view of the fact that Jesus Christ Himself was not believed, good as He was, you must look for a deeper reason for the rejection of the Christian religion than such superficial excuses as these.

I remind you too that the Lord Jesus Himself was brought to trial in a court, not of reason, but of unreason. Think of it a moment. The only time this world had opportunity to study perfection in the absolute, was when it was presented in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He was examined before the religious leaders of His day. What methods did they adopt? What course did they pursue to ascertain the validity or otherwise of the claims which He had made? There was not one witness to the truth called to give evidence. Those who gave evidence were false witnesses, and were suborned. Jesus Christ was condemned—not because there was reasonable justification for it, but because His enemies were destitute of the first principle of reason.

That is always so where the Christian revelation is at stake. There is one case before the Christian public to-day that is conspicuously illustrative of this principle. I refer to the case of Professor J. Gresham Machen, now of Philadelphia, formerly of Princeton. Dr. Machen is a Presbyterian, and a scholar of worldwide repute. His book on the Virgin Birth challenged the attention of the world's scholarship, and no one dared to say that it was intellectually or scholastically weak. But because of the Modernism of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, Professor Machen withdrew from Princeton, and organized another theological seminary known as Westminster Theological Seminary, in Philadelphia. He and the famous Professor Dick Wilson were the most conspicuous members of its Faculty.

Later Dr. Machen challenged the conduct of the Foreign Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church, on the ground that Presbyterians ought not to give their money for the propagation of Modernism, for the dissemination of that which is opposed to the religion of Christ. He and others organized another mission board to send out missionaries under Presbyterian auspices who would preach the old gospel. Immediately Dr. Machen was

charged with a breach of discipline, with insubordination; and, according to the rules of the Presbyterian Church, a prosecuting committee was appointed, and a commission of judges, and defense counsel. The court formally sat. We had a situation in the Baptist Denomination exactly similar in every particular. It is a repetition of the records of the Book. The worst criminal brought before the bar of justice has the right, through his counsel if he is represented, or directly if conducting his own defense, to object to any member of the jury that is to try him. If he knows in advance that there are men on the proposed jury who are prejudiced against him, and therefore incapable of rendering an impartial judgment, without giving a reason he may insist that such juror or jurors step aside—and they must step aside. There is a law in England, not always invoked but which may be invoked, which forbids a butcher to sit on a capital case; the assumption being that he is so familiar with blood that he would not be a reliable judge where a man's life is at stake.

But when Dr. Machen's trial was set, the commission of judges was composed, without a single exception, of men who deny everything that Professor Machen stands for—some of whom in "the Auburn Affirmation", had set their signatures to such denial. Notwithstanding, Dr. Machen was not allowed to challenge one of his judges. The so-called "trial" was the finest piece of mockery imaginable. There was a letter in *The Toronto Globe* from Dr. Machen, Good Friday morning. Read it for yourselves. I have read the full account of this mock trial conducted in the name of scholarship! In the name of liberty!

My dear friends, where men oppose the Incarnate Word, and the record of that Incarnate Word, they have no reason. The philosophy of their unbelief is not founded in reason; for when at last the enemies of Jesus of Nazareth unmasked and revealed their intention, and demanded that He be crucified, Pilate asked for a reason. He said, "Why, what evil hath he done?" What was their answer? "They"—the chief priests and the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day—"cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified." In effect they replied, "We give no reason for our attitude toward Him. We reject Him, and demand that He be crucified without reason."

That is the position of every man and woman here this evening who is not a Christian. You are where you are, if you have rejected the testimony of God's Word, not because of any superior knowledge, much less because of any enlarged capacity of intellect—not that. It is on other grounds men take up that attitude.

## II.

Let us follow them. They had crucified Him. On one occasion our Lord said to His disciples, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." The enemies of Jesus have killed the body: let us see what they do. For hear me, men and women, **THERE IS ALWAYS A HAUNTING FEAR RESIDING IN THE HEART OF UNBELIEF.** Do you mock at those of us who believe, because we say we are certain of some things? We are far more certain than you are. These men, the intellectual as well as the religious leaders of their time, were far from being satisfied with their work when Jesus had bowed His head and had given up the ghost. His body is now lying yonder in Joseph's tomb, and one might have supposed they would say, "We have

done with Him. We need not worry any more." But they did worry! They did worry! Mark you this: while unbelief is never grounded in reason, *it is never wholly impervious to the testimony of reason.* There were some things these men had heard; some things they had seen. There was something about Jesus Christ they had themselves observed, of which they could not wholly rid their minds. All that He was, all they had heard men say that He was outside the court, had had its effect upon them. They were far from being sure they had done the wise thing, and they conceived the possibility of another condition that would be worse than the one they had tried to remove.

Do not conclude that when you have rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ, when you have told people you are too intelligent to believe it—do not suppose that then you have settled the question. You have not settled it! It is very significant that it was said of the disciples that "as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead". He had told them, but "as yet they knew not the scripture". But the very day after His crucifixion—the day between His death and His resurrection—His enemies said to Pilate, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." That testimony of His was ringing like a tolling bell in their memories: "The man we killed said, 'I will rise again'! We do not believe in the possibility of the resurrection! We reject His claim utterly! We have crucified Him—and He shall not rise. But yet!"

Then why worry about it? "We remember"! We remember that He said"! Men cannot forget what Jesus has said. That is what the Scripture means when it says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void." You said you would not have anything to do with Him? But you must have something to do with Him! You have refused to believe His word? But you have heard it, and you cannot efface it from your memory. There was a haunting fear in the hearts of these men lest He should rise from the dead.

The Scripture says the day will come when "every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God". Not only so, but the day must come ultimately when every mind—not only the heart—but every mind, the reason, the judgment, the conscience, the memory, the will—all there is of a man, will vindicate the word of God. "We remember" that He said many things concerning us. He said it—and you can never forget it.

These men said to Pilate, "Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." They really had little fear of the disciples, little fear of the men who had proved so recreant to their trust, and had behaved in such cowardly fashion during His lifetime. It was not likely they would dare the antagonism of "the powers that be" by stealing His body. They did not believe the disciples would ever do any such thing; but they were afraid lest by some means the sepulchre should be opened. The picture is pathetic as well as tragic. It is almost ludicrous, to see these long-robed Pharisees, these doctors of the law, these great men who have accomplished the crucifixion of Jesus, as they hold Him in the grave, trembling lest it should be reported that He had risen

again, lest, therefore, they should have to deal with Him again.

Do not let the devil persuade you that you have got rid of the Lord Jesus Christ when you have refused to believe the gospel. Pilate, who knew why they had crucified Him, who knew that "for envy they had delivered Him up", said somewhat calmly I think, but with biting sarcasm—I think there was vitriol in his speech. If I were an artist I would try to describe him, the expression of his countenance, the glance of his eye as he looked at them—"Afraid, are you! After all you have done! You have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. It is your responsibility, not mine. If you are afraid of Him, seal the stone, and set a watch. Look after it yourselves."

My dear friends, that is ever true. What will you do with this Jesus? Bury Him? He will not stay buried. You must face Him some day: "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

They went their way, and sealed the stone—and set a watch—flattering themselves I suppose that they had done with Jesus. But the morning of the resurrection they met a company of the disciples of the Man of Nazareth. The soldiers had been at the grave, they had witnessed the earthquake, they had seen that supernatural visitor whose countenance was like lightning. They were terrified as they saw it, and him, and ran away as fast as their heels could carry them. What a picture that would have made! The soldiers with all their weapons of war, all of them around a dead Man's grave, keeping watch for fear He would rise again, when suddenly beneath their very feet the earth trembles, a light from heaven shines roundabout them, and there appears before them someone who is more than a man. The stone—notwithstanding the seal—is rolled away from the sepulchre. No human hand touched it. Then these brave soldiers of Rome—I can see them running as fast as they could, to get as far away from that dead Man's grave as possible! Some day all these intellectual gentlemen will be running like that! One of these days all the gowned professors who are so superior, who deny His Deity, and the authority of His word, will be running, if not for their lives, for their reputations.

Then the chief priests heard of it, and the Pharisees; and they said in effect, "We had better call a special board meeting immediately. This will never do! This will upset the denomination!" It is going to upset the Presbyterian Denomination in the United States—and that would never do. Said they, "He is dead—and He must stay dead! We have said it! We have settled that!"

They called the soldiers in. "Now tell us, what did you see?" They told them as well as they could, how they had felt the earthquake, and had seen the man with the countenance like lightning. Then the chief priests said in effect, "Do not tell anyone else. We will give you large money to publish abroad that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while you slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. We have influence with him. Here is the money—we have some for him too. Go and tell that story."

"So they took the money, and did as they were taught." Many men of our day take the money—and do as they

are taught. Do you think that is an exaggeration? I know it is not.

What were the facts of the case? In spite of all the ecclesiastical world could do, and all the scholastic world, in spite of all the civil power could accomplish (Rome had crucified Him, and the soldiers had watched the tomb), in spite of it all, on that first Easter morning the grave was empty—Jesus was not there.

Are you glad? Are you glad He is not there? No power on earth, or in hell, can seal any sepulchre securely enough to immure or confine the truth. The truth will out. The gospel of the grace of God will ultimately triumph. Why do people sing the songs of Easter when they but half believe the Easter truth? The fact is, dear friends, nearly two thousand years have demonstrated the reality of the resurrection. In spite of all the efforts of men to deny it, it remains true that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

You and I need a risen Saviour. How I wish I could tell you—it would be rather beside my subject, but how I wish I could draw the veil and show you something of the spiritual significance of it, the principalities and powers that sought to confine Him. Let it be enough to remind you that Jesus Christ has triumphed over the utmost powers of darkness, and the risen Saviour is as ready to receive sinful men to-night as He has always been. May the Lord help us, that we may know Him, and the power of His resurrection.

## THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

A Bible Lecture by Dr. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, April 18th, 1935

*Thirteenth in the 1934-35 Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on Biblical Theology, which Subject is Included in the Curriculum of Toronto Baptist Seminary*

(Stenographically Reported)

Lesson Text: I. Kings, chapter 8.

We have followed the account of the building of the temple, of Solomon's house in Jerusalem, and of the house of the forest in Lebanon; and we have before us now an account of the dedication of the temple. There is a full account of these matters also in the First Book of Chronicles. We shall not have time to trace the parallels, but you will find a careful study of the record in Chronicles both interesting and profitable.

The temple being built, and all the furnishings of the temple ready for use, Solomon assembled first the elders, and then all the people of Israel, for the dedication of this house of worship.

### I.

The institution of public worship is divinely ordained. In the Old Testament, and the New, the people of God were accustomed to assemble for the worship of God; and surely those of us who are Christians know that it is instinctive to those who know the Lord, to desire fellowship with others who know the Lord: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." Many of the Psalms were written for, and were doubtless used in, public worship. They abound with exhor-

tations to other devout souls to assist in magnifying the Lord.

The same is true of the New Testament. Following the resurrection, the disciples gathered in the upper room to the number of one hundred and twenty. When the Spirit of the Lord was outpoured on the day of Pentecost, the people came together, and thereafter the gospel was propagated by its public proclamation. It was the privilege of believers to assemble in the Lord's name. Furthermore, He gave a special promise to any who thus gathered: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He hears us individually, but He has specially promised to hear us when we pray together.

Again, we are exhorted to meet for public worship: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another." There are professedly evangelical believers who are disposed to make light of the duty of assembling, of coming together in the name of the Lord. Occasionally one meets people who have become so pious that they can find no one good enough to assemble with! They say they can receive as much good at home, reading the Bible. I doubt very much whether they read the Bible: if they did, they would heed the exhortation of Scripture not to stay at home!

Solomon dedicated the house of worship in a public way by assembling all the people of Israel. Let us give attention to the duty of assembling ourselves. Wherever there is a real revival, a deepening of spiritual interest, attendance at public worship always increases. People who have declined in their interest in and attendance upon public worship have almost certainly got out of fellowship with God Himself. Those who are in fellowship with God, are in fellowship with His people, and will come where His people assemble. If you have a distaste for public worship, I counsel you to examine yourself; you may be sure there is something wrong with your own spiritual life.

## II.

The elders and the priests brought the ark of the Lord to the temple. When the tabernacle was set up, having been made according to the pattern, the central feature of that place of public worship was the ark within the holy of holies; and over the ark the mercy seat; and within the ark the tables of stone, and later Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot that contained manna. The ark was ever the centre of public worship. While the Lord dwelt in a tent and in a tabernacle, the ark was carried from place to place. Other parts of the furnishings of the tabernacle were moved on wagons, but the ark was part of the burden of the sons of Kohath, and it was their duty to bear it upon their shoulders. There were staves through golden rings, and these staves were borne on the shoulders of the priests, and thus the ark was carried from place to place. You will recall the disaster that came when the ark was put on a new cart, "and when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God."

Now that the temple is built, and the furnishings are in place, it is still as a house without an inhabitant,

until the ark, which was the symbol of the divine presence, is brought to the new house. Let us remember that unless we have that which the ark typified and represented in all our labours, our labour must be in vain. However excellently the work of the temple is wrought, whatever carved figures of cherubim and open flowers and palm trees, you may produce, however much fine gold you have, unless you have also the presence of God at the heart of things, all your labour of every sort must be in vain.

Solomon recognized that principle. He had erected the temple according to the divine pattern: now he summons the elders and the priests to bring up the ark of the Lord. They brought the ark to the temple, put it in the most holy place, and offered sacrifices upon the altar. The ark was placed beneath the cherubim—the two large cherubim, wing touching wing, stretching from one side of the house to the other. The ark was placed beneath the cherubim that were, not on the ark, but over it; they were there before the ark was brought in. The ark was placed under the cherubim, and the staves partly withdrawn, indicating, I suppose, that now at last the ark of the Lord had found a resting-place, a permanent residence in the house of the Lord.

This principle applies to us individually. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" We must have the abiding presence of the Lord Himself with us as believers if we are to be fruitful in His service.

When the ark found its place in the temple, a cloud came down upon it. Apparently it was a cloud of darkness. The glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord, and the priests were afraid, and could not bear it, and withdrew from before this manifestation of the divine presence. It is rather singular, and is worthy of notice. Solomon said, "The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness." In Leviticus He promised, "I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat." He told Aaron and Moses to be careful how they approached that symbol of the divine presence. Now that Solomon has built the temple, and the ark is put in its place, a cloud of darkness comes upon the place. That was a strange thing, was it not? We generally assume we are in the will of the Lord when we have plenty of light, but sometimes "clouds and darkness are round about him"; "He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies."

I wonder if you have had experience of an horror of thick darkness? Have you, as believers, ever felt that you have altogether lost your way? I recall an occasion some fourteen or fifteen years ago. One Saturday night, with my sermon prepared for the following day, I was looking forward with some degree of joy to Sunday morning. My sermon was carefully written, and I was in readiness so far as it is possible to be ready, for the morning. But late Saturday night the sermon left me—as Alexander Grant would have said, "It would not look at me." I had the clearest indication that I was not to preach that sermon Sunday morning. I sought of the Lord another text, but it would not come. Instead, one of the worst fits of depression I ever had in my life settled upon me. It seemed as though a thick cloud wrapped me about. I prayed. I tried to read—but there was no light. One o'clock came, two o'clock, three o'clock, four o'clock came. It was in the early summer,

and the birds began to sing—it was daylight! But not a word, not a voice, not a text, not a ray of light, could I find anywhere. It was daylight without, but darkness reigned within my soul. I could see nothing.

Then, even as I prayed, this text came into my mind—how it came, I do not know: I did not know then—"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side"—then, like an electric sign that one word flashed out at me—"now may Israel say; if it had not been the Lord who was on our side"—back there we could not understand. Now at last we can see, "Now may Israel say,"—"then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." I got an inkling of its meaning, and I came to church in the morning without having gone to bed, or to sleep.

On reaching the pulpit I looked over the congregation. Down in the centre there sat a man I thought I recognized as Dr. Robertson, who had been Pastor of St. James Square Presbyterian Church, but I was not sure. He was not in clerical attire, but I thought it was he, although I had not seen him for some years. Dr. Robertson had opposed Church Union, and was the first Secretary of the Continuing Presbyterian Church Committee. The elders of his own church had been ardent Unionists, and he had been ground to pieces, until at last he had resigned, and had gone to the United States.

I began my sermon by telling of the cloud of thick darkness through which I had passed, and said I did not know why unless it were that it was God's way of giving me that text. I was conscious of a peculiar sense of the divine presence as I preached, and when the service was over I came down the pulpit steps, and this friend came up the aisle to meet me. When he came close to me I was sure. "Well, Dr. Robertson", I said, "I am glad to see you; it is a long time since I have had the privilege of shaking your hand." There were tears in his eyes as he said, "I am glad to see you, Shields. I thank God I was not the cause of your depression, but I am reasonably sure I was the occasion of it. I have been in the United States, and I have had an awful time. It has been nearly Hades with me. I came back, and this morning I fell on my knees and said, 'O God, tell me where to go to-day. I want some word of comfort.' And even as I prayed it seemed almost as though a voice said, 'Go and hear Shields.' Here I am a Presbyterian having come to hear a Baptist preacher! All His waves and His billows have gone over me. But there is a little patch of blue. Thank God for your message." Then with a smile he added, "I think there is enough blue to make a sailor's suit. We will take courage, and go on."

As we chatted together, I said, "Let us get together during the week for a long talk. Where can I find you? Perhaps we can have lunch together." He gave me his address—but either Monday or Tuesday he was taken seriously ill, was rushed to the hospital for an emergency operation, and died under the anaesthetic. Before the next Sunday his body was in the grave, and his spirit was in heaven. The last message he heard was that message from this pulpit.

I learned the lesson then—I have had similar experi-

ences on other occasions—that when the ark is really with us, sometimes it is very, very dark. He went through the thick darkness for us, and it is permitted us sometimes to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ . . . for his body's sake, which is the church." If we are really to be servants of God, we must often suffer vicariously, in order that we may be fitted for a particular form of service.

What a blessing it is, however, when our minds are sufficiently stored with the word of God to enable us to interpret the darkness! Solomon so interpreted it. He said to the priests, "That is exactly what God said: I will dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built the house. I know I have done what the Lord required in making a settled place that He may dwell there for ever." He was sure he was right—notwithstanding the darkness.

So it may be with us sometimes. After the Lord had given Abraham His promise, He caused him to pass through "an horror of great darkness". I talked with the late John MacNeill about that text one day, and he said, "I do not know what it means—and I do not believe anybody else ever did. But we all know something about the darkness." We are not able to explain why it should be, but it often is so. Learn this, dear friends: in the darkness hold on to what God has said. Do not depend upon your moods, upon the light within you, but upon the light of the Book. If Solomon, with all his wisdom, needed to reassure himself and the priests by referring to that which was written, depend upon it, the only safe guide for any of us in the dark places of life is in the inspired and infallible Word of God. That is always the same, through darkness and light.

"The king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel." Solomon was in a representative capacity there of course. He was king—and I think he was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ as well. And from the darkness he turned to the people, and pronounced a blessing upon them. Blessing often comes out of the thick clouds. We are all familiar with Cowper's hymn:

"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

"Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.

"His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.

"When midnight shades are all withdrawn  
The opening day shall rise,  
Whose ever calm and cloudless morn  
Shall know no low'ring skies."



It was written by Cowper, a man whose mind was sometimes unbalanced, but who was a very devout man. Whether the commonly accepted story of its having been written following an attempt at suicide be true or not, (and I believe there is some reason to doubt the full accuracy of that assumption), there is no doubt of his having had experiences of mental darkness; nor, I think, of the hymn's being expressive of his deliverance therefrom.

In the address which follows, Solomon reminded the people of the steps which had been taken up to that hour in the erection of the temple: how David had willed to build it, and God had commended him for that which was in his heart, but had not permitted him to erect the building. He referred to the fact that God had said to David, "Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? . . . In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?" Solomon lays down the principle that the house as they now see it has been built according to divine specifications. In the account in Chronicles, David states that it was all in writing, all the plans were made, all the specifications were written out. He handed over the complete plans to Solomon, together with the material he had assembled, enjoining him to obey divine direction, and do as he had been told. Now Solomon tells the people that everything had been done exactly as the Lord had prescribed, and that they are now within the compass of the divine will. He knows that he has done that which is well-pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

Is it possible for us so to serve the Lord that we may be sure we are in His will? I think it is, if we do as Solomon did, and abide by that which is written, and by the explicit direction of the Word of God.

### III.

Look now at the twenty-second verse: "Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven." The prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, is full of inspiration, but it is impossible for us to examine it in detail; but it may serve to suggest something of how we ought to pray.

He began by magnifying the Lord. His prayer was addressed to the God of heaven. It is well for us thus to address God Himself. When we do, in what terms shall we address Him? May I venture to say this to you prospective preachers: do not try to pay compliments to Deity. Do not indulge in sugared sayings. I have heard men use many terms of endearment, "Dear loving Jesus", and so on. It always seems to me to be out of place. He is the Well Beloved, and in communion between the soul and the Saviour in private He may draw out our souls to Him, and we may say much that would be out of place in any public petition, particularly when we are leading people in the exercise of prayer, and being used, as I trust we should hope we are, to induce a spirit of worship in those who listen. Remember how Solomon prayed. Note how he began, "Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath." He sets God apart, as One to be worshipped and adored. There is one God, not many. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

Then Solomon reminds himself, as he would remind others, that he is addressing a covenant-keeping God. How suggestive that is! The only reason we have for approaching God is that He has required us to come. The only ground upon which we may expect that He will hear our petition, or accept our praises, is that He has entered into covenant relationship with us, and has pledged Himself so to do. It is well to remind ourselves, as we come to God in prayer, that we are children of the covenant, that God is under solemn bond to us, a bond which He Himself has given. That is the secret of holy boldness. That is why we are to come boldly to the throne of grace, not because we are worthy, but because we rest upon the promises of the covenant. Solomon was sure of his ground because he stood upon the promises of God.

"Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day." All that the mouth of God had promised, the mighty hand of God had performed. Thus should we come to God, with the assurance of His faithfulness. As He had promised David, so Solomon pleads that God will continue His faithfulness to his son, and pleads in this new house for a verification of the word of God. The principle to which I call your attention is this, that there is only one effective apologist for the word of God, there is only One Who can establish the truth of God, that is, God Himself. God can verify His own word, prove it to the hilt by the fulfilment of His promises to His people. That is what Solomon asked.

It was to be a house of prayer for all nations. "Now", said he, "verify Thy word within this place. Prove to all who shall assemble here that Thy word is true." So ought we ever to pray.

Into the details of this great prayer we cannot go, except to suggest, and very briefly, that this prayer covers universal human need. Try to remember, young men, when you lead congregations in prayer, that you are the mouthpiece of a great company of people, some of whom have come with a song of thanksgiving in their hearts: see that there is something in your prayer that will make it possible for them to say, Amen, at your giving of thanks. Some will have come with a heavy burden, almost too heavy to be borne. See that your prayer enters sympathetically into the experiences of needy people—for you are to lead the people in prayer. It is wise for those who pray publicly, not only preachers but others as well, in devotional meetings, to remember the need of the people as well as their own. Let our prayers be of a wide compass, so that they will include the experiences of all the people.

Solomon prays that if any of the people have disagreed, there may be a reconciliation between brethren, that they may be brought to an understanding, that the righteous should be justified, and the wicked condemned. He prays that when God's people are smitten before their enemies in wartime, when heaven is shut up because of the people's sin, that God would hear them then—what a conception of God he had. A year ago last summer when rain was scarce and the land was parched, there was some discussion here and there about praying for rain. A number of preachers were interviewed, and asked as to their opinion of the value of offering petitions for rain. The majority said it was useless to pray

for rain, that God does not interfere with the course of nature. If that is the sort of God we have, it would be useless to pray for anything. I do not wonder that people of that school have no prayer-meetings—why should people go to prayer-meeting?

Elijah prayed for rain—and warned Ahab to get up to his house quickly. If the revelation of the Bible be true, then the God Solomon and Elijah worshipped controls the elements. Do you believe that? We do in this place. Solomon believed. He believed that when the heavens were shut up, God had something to do with it; and that if they prayed God could open the heavens and send showers. That is the biblical teaching,—not the mechanical conception of the world as a cosmic machine with which God has nothing to do. He can make it to rain, or cease to rain, at His pleasure.

"If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar"—I read to-night about the cotton-makers of Boston having a quarrel with the government for, among other things, their efforts to reduce the cotton crop. It was not very long ago that the professors, advising the President of the United States, said the trouble with the United States was due to the fact that they had too much wheat, and too much of everything. That the proper thing to do was to burn some. Destroy the cattle, and reduce the acreage. The way to bring plenty was to reduce the amount they had. Can you imagine anybody's proposing such measures outside a lunatic asylum! But they did! Under their advice the Board of Agriculture took steps to reduce the acreage of production in all the States of the Union. I said at the time, that if they were not careful, God would take a hand in that business, and that they would need no Board. When God is defied, when His abounding blessings are thrown back in His face, men usually hear from Him. Then came the drought—and less than six months from the time that Board was authorized to do that thing, Congress was asked to make an appropriation of one hundred millions of dollars for the relief of the farmers who could not live because of the drought. And now what? Dust storms such as have never been known in the United States in the memory of any living person, and so far as can be ascertained, there is no record of any such. Thousands of acres of arable land has been made non-productive, and it has been estimated it will remain so for a hundred years.

Similarly insane measures were proposed in Canada, but when later the government was asked what steps they were taking to reduce the production of wheat the Premier answered that the grasshoppers had made government action unnecessary!

Pray about famine and pestilence? "Nonsense", says the Modernist. Is it? I do not believe it is. God has a hand in all these things. Solomon rejoiced in that conception of God: "If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar . . . then hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest." I do not know how national sanity will come, nor how soon, but if the Lord God Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, is not teaching this old earth some lessons now, then He never did teach it. Everywhere the hand of God can be seen by anyone who has eyes to see it. It

is no new thing. That is the God Solomon worshipped, and for the worship of Whom the temple was built and dedicated.

And so on throughout the prayer. Read it at your leisure.

"And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant." Following that, sacrifices were offered before the Lord in accordance with the law. When the sacrifices were ended, and God had thus been honoured, and given His first and proper place, Solomon proclaimed, not a fast, but a feast. All Israel rejoiced, and they went home from church as happy as kings, with great gladness in their hearts. Let me read it to you: "On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people."

That ought to be the result of our coming together in the place of prayer.

I have made the vaguest suggestions this evening. The house itself was typical, in its completeness, of One Who was greater than the temple. "In this place is one greater than the temple." All that that house of prayer was to God's people, a visible, tangible, representation of an invisible God, with the ark of the covenant and the priesthood and sacrifices, and assurance that prayer there offered would be heard in heaven—all that house was to them, Jesus Christ is to us. Through Him we can come with our petitions and our praises as did these people to the house in Solomon's day; and pray for relief from famine. And when thus we have prayed, and our prayer is heard in heaven, God's dwelling-place, it is time to go home with gladness in our hearts. May the Lord make this place—and every place where His people assemble for prayer—a centre of joy and gladness, where the burdened will find relief, and where God will always be magnified.

## NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

### Dunbar Heights, Vancouver

In a recent communication from Rev. W. J. Thomson, he gives the following news of Dunbar Heights Baptist Church, of which he is the pastor. "Our work here goes on as usual with a steady and faithful persistency, which we trust will eventuate in a rich fruitage in the days ahead. It is difficult to get young unconverted people to come and hear the gospel, and we are labouring to bring the gospel personally to the homes of the people. In this way we are always having some new people attend our services, even though some do not return after they have come a time or two, yet they have heard the word of the gospel. The Bible School still keeps up. We had 120 yesterday. I visited the senior boys' class for a short time, and was led to appeal to them about a personal decision for Christ, when about ten of them indicated their decision for Christ. The teacher was gladdened to hear them make the open confession in the class, and my heart was strangely melted to see some indications of the goodness and faithfulness of God in our work for Him. We trust that God may perfect that which concerns them, and that the genuineness and reality of their confession will be



such as to receive the seal and witness of the Holy Spirit in each of them.

Our location and building are at present our greatest handicap, looking at it from a human viewpoint. Our desire and prayer is that God may open the way and send the means to get better situated. But God is able to offset all the natural drawbacks by the inflow and manifestation of His saving blessing in the gospel, and it is for this that we specially labour and pray."

#### St. Paul's, Montreal

"Easter Sunday was a great day for our Master", writes Rev. A. St. James, the Pastor of St. Paul's Baptist Church, Montreal. "There was a good congregation, special music, and flowers. One young man was baptized who desires to be a missionary to the French, and wants to go to the Seminary in the Fall. One other came forward, a young lady who with her mother have opened their hearts to the gospel, and have opened their home for meetings in the West part of the city. Several other families are accessible lately."

#### Bobcaygeon

The Bobcaygeon Church has again been experiencing a time of rich blessing. Rev. Leander Roblin of Otterville held two weeks of special services with them recently. During his stay three souls confessed Christ as their Saviour, and the Christians were greatly revived. There was a splendid interest shown in the meetings right to the very end, and it was regretted that they could not have been carried on longer.

On Good Friday, there was a Conference held at Bobcaygeon of friends from the outlying districts where meetings are carried on by the Bobcaygeon pastor, namely, Kinmount, Nogies Creek, Eden, Silver Lake, and Galway. Friends from Fenelon Falls, Scotch Line, and Norland, also joined in the day of fellowship. Rev. Alex. Thomson, President of the Union, gave stirring messages in the afternoon and evening. Mr. Groat of Kinmount, and Rev. W. W. Fleischer of Fenelon Falls also spoke, as well as Rev. W. E. Atkinson, Secretary of the Union. Mr. John Cunningham of Scotch Line sang, and Miss Mary Jeffery of Toronto, favoured the gathering with several violin selections. This was a day which will long be remembered by all who were in attendance, when they were very conscious of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Over four hundred sat down to a bountiful supper provided by the ladies of the Church.

Easter Sunday was another day of rejoicing. At Sunday school there was a record attendance, some of the boys and girls walking seven miles in order to be there. There was also a record attendance at the afternoon service in Galway. In the evening seven followed the Lord in baptism, including one household of six members who were saved some time ago at Nogies Creek. The young people of the family had been fast drifting into sin, but now they are rejoicing in Christ as their Saviour. The stand which they have taken has created a profound impression upon the community in which they live, and many of them witnessed their confession in the ordinance of baptism on Sunday evening. Altogether eleven were added to the church at Bobcaygeon upon this occasion.

#### Buildings for Missionaries

Since the fire which occurred on the New Cess Station of our Mission in Liberia, West Africa, the matter of new buildings to replace those burned has been in the mind of our people, and has been considered by the Executive Committee of our Board. The subject of buildings for foreign Missionaries is one which has often been neglected by Christian people at home. Possibly they have come to think that the missionary in a tropical country does not need to worry about having a roof over his head, but they have little idea of the torrential rains which in Liberia last practically eleven months of the year, nor of the direct rays of the sun which beat down every day so that the missionary must wear a sun helmet every time he steps outside the door. Buildings are necessary for the missionary, or else he will be hindered if not stopped from the preaching of the gospel which is his main work in that land. Missionaries do not ask for luxuries but only for necessities, which means a house of plain, substantial construction, which will require little repair for twenty-five years at least.

We print below an article written on the subject of building by Mr. Harold K. Dancy of Nigeria. Our Board has received a great deal of advice and help from Mr. Dancy with regard to the type and construction of buildings most suited for the missionary in Africa.

Five hundred dollars has been received for the type of building mentioned in both these articles. Another five hundred is urgently needed to promise the completion of one such Missionary home in Liberia. Something will have to be done in the next dry season, or the work will be seriously handicapped, and eventually suffer loss if proper buildings are not furnished for the Missionaries' use. After years of investigation other Missionary Societies have discovered the necessity of providing a more permanent type of building to eliminate the necessity of making constant, but very necessary, repairs. Through no fault of their own, our Missionaries have suffered the loss of their personal effects, and their whole missionary equipment. The devastating fire which wiped out the two large homes at New Cess confirms the need of doing something immediately about this matter. After reading these articles, will you not ask God what He would have you do about it?

#### Our Missionary—Builder's Appeal

H. K. Dancy

I sometimes ask myself the question. Is it worth while going to all the trouble and expense of putting cement floors, iron roofs and ceilings, substantial doors and windows, etc. into missionaries' homes? Why should we aim to have sun, rain and storm proof, light, heat, and thief, lightning and beast proof buildings?

One vitally important answer is, Health. West Africa is the premature grave of a small army of Europeans, and, for those who remain to labour there, the climate is still a subtle, mysterious and deadly enemy which a few, very few, can ignore.

Another answer to the question is, Efficiency. *No Christian business man at home has a right to a single dollar's worth more of efficient equipment for his daily toil than has the foreign missionary.* If economy and stewardship at home require protection from destructive social and natural elements, then economy and stewardship on the foreign field demand just as much.

We find the task full sized, and yet reasonably within reach. The hard, costly experience of the past now helps us to get very close to that adequate plant so necessary to the best work of him who preaches the gospel to every creature. Does it surprise you to learn that in most missionaries' homes, the duration of a rain storm is a period of stress and anxiety, and that there is of necessity a suspension of nearly all work? Why? Because there are no up-to-date windows and doors, but instead, ill-fitting barn shutters and doors past which the hurricane-driven rain streams, and the wind steals, often preventing the lighting of a lamp which would at least relieve the darkness.

On an ordinary station the number of building repair jobs is legion, and besides taking much valuable time and energy are frequently an expense as well as a problem. Imagine a Christian business man attending to daily work, interrupted in the middle of a busy forenoon by the report from his wife that the storeroom door had come loose, hinges and all, due to the destructive white ant. And picture the man having to leave his regular duties and spend an hour and a half making shift with the remains of a packing case or hewing out a rough door jamb from some crude timber. He cannot wait until evening for there are other tasks then; the light is not good, and besides, in the meantime there is danger of theft, rodents, etc. And please do not forget, there are no carpenters or lumber mills for over one hundred miles. Doors, locks, windows, screens, cupboards, stoves, foundations, books, furniture, linen and clothing suffer from inadequate housing or improper work when installed, due invariably to the scarcity of funds. I hold that the missionary's work, being as important as any on earth, has a claim to the most efficient plant obtainable, and to that end we labour. Pray for and work with us to give the missionary a home where he can attend to his work in a way benefiting a follower of Him Who said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

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### A DIVINE DEFENCE

Lesson Text: Psalms 58 to 61.

Golden Text: "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."—Psalm 61:2.

Bible School Reading: Psalms 60 and 61.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—I. Chron. 18:9-15; Tuesday—I. Samuel 26:17-25; Wednesday—Prov. 1:24-32; Thursday—Job 34:10-15; Friday—Rev. 18:19-24; Saturday—Rom. 2:5-13.

#### PSALM FIFTY-EIGHT

In this psalm David rebukes the wicked, and consoles the righteous. The circumstances back of the psalm relate to the period of the psalmist's early life when he was suffering unjustly at the hands of Saul. There is a reference first of all to unjust judges. They judged others while they themselves were wicked. Such conduct deserves condemnation, and receives it from God. Note the evil consequences ensuing from the actions of such persons, in disrespect for law, and in increased wickedness. Also, observe the necessity for carefulness in personal judgment, lest through lack of knowledge it prove to be unjust. Let judgment be given calmly, cautiously, and considerately, remembering that with what judgment we judge, we shall thereafter be judged (Matt. 7:1, 2).

A statement respecting wicked persons in general then follows, wherein an explanation is given of their sinful state. They go astray in the early years of life, sin grievously, and become deaf to the appeal of God (vs. 3-5). Such persons were heedless, stubborn, and ungodly, like many in the present day. Note the depravity of men in general (Rom. 3:10-18). A prayer is then offered respecting them. God is petitioned to deal with them as with wild animals, and to let them pass away quickly; as waters running continually, and before the pot can feel the heat of the thorns blazing under it (vs. 6-9). Such action of God would imply judgment, and David had reason to believe that the Lord would act in such a manner, if it was in accordance with His purpose (Ex. 12:29). Note the dangerous condition of the wicked, in view of the divine wrath resting on sin (John 3:36). The closing verses declare the rejoicing of the righteous at the overthrow of the wicked. God's justice is vindicated, and it is already shown that there is a reward for the righteous. God has not resigned His position of supremacy in the government of the world, and though dealing with men in mercy, the principle is not absent. Why do men act wickedly? What is the remedy for the wickedness of men observed in all realms of human activity?

#### PSALM FIFTY-NINE

In this psalm, as in a previous one (Ps. 57), there is a prayer for deliverance from enemies, and an expression of praise in anticipation of that deliverance. It opens with the petition for deliverance, and then gives a description of the actions of the enemies (vs. 1-7). They rise up against David; they lie in wait; they gather themselves together against him; they run, and prepare themselves; they return at evening; they go round the city like famished dogs, and belch out with their mouth. Note the wickedness of these enemies, manifest in word and deed; and the suffering of David at their hands. They evidently spoke against him, and sought also to injure him physically. He was guiltless of wrongdoing; and helpless, from the human standpoint, in combatting and overcoming their attacks. He had a sure source of strength in his God. To Him he prayed, and through Him he gained the victory. Prayer is the privilege of the Lord's people at all times, and their special resource in times of trouble. The Old Testament saints prayed (Ex. 32:31, 32; Neh. 1:4). Our Lord prayed (Mark 1:35); the apostles prayed (Acts 3:1; 4:24, 31; 9:11); and the direction is given to us to do likewise (I. Thess. 5:17).

In his prayer David intimates the contempt of God at the wicked actions of his enemies (v. 8). They are his ravenous

foes, and cause him great trouble; but they are insignificant in God's sight. Such a God was David's defence, and by His power he would see his enemies overthrown. He prays not for their sudden death, but for a prolongation of their punishment, as a lesson to others, and that they might know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth (vs. 11-15). Some men need affliction of one kind or another to make them think of God; and to remind them that the Lord has not vacated the throne of the universe. He is the King of kings (Rev. 1:5), ruling His kingdom of the whole earth, and taking note of the actions of its people (Eccles. 5:8). The psalm ends with praise for the deliverance of God. Power and mercy are mentioned therein; both manifest in the divine defence accorded the psalmist. Note answered prayer, also the characteristics of this defence,—as strong, impregnable, sure, near, accessible, ready, and eternal. How may we keep peaceful in the midst of raging enemies? How may we experience the blessing of the divine defence?

#### PSALM SIXTY

In this psalm there is reference to some disaster which had overtaken Israel, a prayer in the light of this, and an expression of confidence in ultimate victory through the power of God. The psalmist in his opening reference to the national disaster (vs. 1-3) intimates that it was due to the action of God in casting off His people. They had been scattered, broken, and made to drink the wine of astonishment. The psalmist realized that God could have prevented the defeat of His people at the hands of the enemy. We are not certain concerning the circumstances of the disaster, but it must have been due to some disobedience on Israel's part: defeat in their history was due to disobedience to God's law (Josh. 7:11, 12); and the same is true in the present time in the experience of the Lord's people. Though permitting them to suffer chastisement at the hands of their enemies, God had not forsaken them. He had given them a banner round which they could rally, and be delivered (vs. 4, 5). We are reminded by this of the ensign round which both Jew and Gentile would rally (Is. 11:10). Jesus is the rallying-point these days, and when gathered unto Him victory is assured (Matt. 18:20).

The second section of the psalm gives a divine declaration respecting victory (vs. 6-8). This is spoken of as having already taken place, and is in accordance with the Lord's assurance that if we accept by faith we shall receive (Matt. 21:22). God is described as having possession of the land, and dividing it. Gilead and Manasseh are His; Ephraim is the strength of His head; the helmet, with a possible reference to military power. "Judah is my lawgiver"; the civil power. In these statements a close relationship between God and His people is implied, and a divine possession of people and property. Recognition of this relationship is necessary now (I. Cor. 6:20; I. Pet. 1:18, 19). United thus with God Israel was certain of victory over her enemies. Moab was a washpot, or basin for washing the feet; over Edom, as a slave, He casts His shoe, and over Philistia He triumphs. The last section of the psalm gives an ascription of praise for anticipated victory, a prayer for help, and an expression of confidence respecting deliverance. How may we keep in constant fellowship with God? What should we do when we get out of touch with Him?

#### PSALM SIXTY-ONE

In this psalm there is recorded the cry of David from a sorely-burdened heart. He prays to be led to the rock higher than himself, that he may find shelter therein (vs. 1-3). He was sorely beset by enemies, and desired safety, and rest. Spiritually, we find these in our Lord Who is the Rock of Ages (Is. 26:4). If he was in exile, as some think, we can understand his longing to abide in the tabernacle of God, and trust in the covert of His wings. There he would find peace and security, and also sweet fellowship. His faith is undimmed, though he is made to suffer. He believes God has heard his prayers, and given him his heritage in Israel. He also has the assurance that the Lord will prolong his life, and unto Him he gives praise. Note the psalmist's faith in God's promise, confidence in His purpose, and expectancy of divine accomplishment; and his great desire for God's presence. He longed to be near to the Lord, and to enjoy communion with Him. This is the great privilege of those who know God. What are some of the possibilities of trusting implicitly in the promises of God? How may we receive divine help in time of trouble?

### GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

If we do not burden our readers with reports of work in Jarvis Street, we beg to assure them that it is not because we have nothing to report. THE GOSPEL WITNESS travels far, and we feel disinclined to occupy space with a recital of things the interest in which is likely to be chiefly local. But sometimes local affairs may illustrate principles of all but universal application. Recently we came upon a quotation from one of our week-end notes in a magazine from China, indicating that in that distant land even the affairs of our Sunday School command interest. We may be excused therefore if this week we take a little space to describe a very happy week-end in Jarvis Street.

And there is something to be said for a happy week-end. The value of a religious service cannot always accurately be appraised by the number who profess conversion. When a family sit down to a good dinner, and enjoy it to the full, that fact is scarcely an item of news for a newspaper. But should there be no dinner to sit down to, while one such lack may not be anything "to write home about", it would be an incident of sufficient seriousness to occasion a few remarks within the household!

Some years ago we were privileged in Jarvis Street Church to enjoy the fellowship of a certain brother from Ireland for a number of months. When someone remarked about a certain service—that it had been a good service, or something of the sort—this brother replied, "Indeed, it was. I was blessed!" He laid a great deal of emphasis upon that fact: "I was blessed"; and we have never forgotten the impression his remark made. It is something when the Lord comes into the midst of His assembled people, and so breaks the bread of life in either sermon or song, or both, that the family are really "blessed".

Jarvis Street's experience Good Friday evening, and at both services on Sunday was, we are sure, that all the family were blessed; for which we devoutly thank God.

But it is of the special character of the service we write on this occasion. The church for a number of years has been blessed by the joint ministry of two musicians who love the Lord, His house, and His people; and whose musical abilities are always directed toward spiritual ends. Longer in the membership of the church is Mr. C. L. Penney, our organist, who plays at both services on Sunday, and on Thursday evening. This Editor has been nearly twenty-five years in Jarvis Street. Mr. Penney came to the church as a chorister possibly twenty-three years ago. He is a musical genius. We can hardly believe our eyes—or our ears—when we see and hear his children about us; one playing the piano, one in the regular choir, and a third in the Junior choir, while father plays the organ, and Mrs. Penney sings in the regular choir. Then there is Mr. Penney's brother, Mr. Christopher Penney, who is also a chorister, and two of his children, one in the regular, and one in the Intermediate choir. These constitute the best eight pennies' worth we know anywhere! All are musicians, and all Christians.

The other musician, who is junior to Mr. Penney only in the length of his membership in Jarvis Street, is the incomparable W. J. Hutchinson. He is Superintendent of the Sunday School, presides Monday night at the Conference, always plays Saturday evenings at the prayer

service, and occasionally at other times, and leads the services of praise on Sunday. These two men have the sense of absolute pitch. It seems to us they know every tune that ever was written, and can play it from memory. At the prayer services, no matter in what key a tune is "pitched", by the time the third note is sung, the piano or organ, as the case may be, is accompanying the singing in exactly the same key.

But we write on this occasion particularly about the work of Mr. W. J. Hutchinson. We have had a fairly wide opportunity for observation. We have come into touch with a great many men who are supposed to be "experts" in the religious training of children; but never anywhere, at any time, have we met anyone who even approximated the ability of Mr. Hutchinson. He could manage a couple of thousand children single-handed, instruct them and entertain them, turning them from laughter to tears at will. His week-night junior service, which we have seen attended by six or seven hundred young children, has ever been to us a marvel. Mr. Hutchinson, at our great Sunday School picnic is usually the whole programme. The children gather around him like bees about honey, and when the day is over that is the one day of the year when Brother Hutchinson is "all in".

But it is not of these exploits that we write either, for Mr. Hutchinson is a composer both of hymns and of tunes, and a choral leader of a unique order. Jarvis Street for many years was the home of "classical" music. There was a time when practically every chorister was a Conservatory graduate. The choir was not an aggregation of voices, but a musical instrument under a master's hand. The great Mendelssohn Choir, for many years now a civic institution, originated in Jarvis Street. It is now about fourteen years since the Jarvis Street choir attempted any such artistic performance as characterized their productions of former days; but never at any time did Jarvis Street hear more soul-stirring music than it hears to-day. Our ordinary congregational singing can scarcely be surpassed, we believe, anywhere on the Continent.

But at the Christmas and Easter seasons for some years now Mr. Hutchinson has assembled a choir of about one hundred and fifty voices. This is made up of the regular choir, somewhat enlarged by the addition of other Jarvis Street members whose duties ordinarily prevent their serving in the choir. In addition to that, two choirs are organized from the Sunday School, an Intermediate and a Junior choir. Then Mr. Hutchinson arranges a service of praise. It always includes some great hymns of the church; usually he resurrects one or two almost forgotten favourites. There are choruses for the children, part-songs for the ladies, and all the numbers are logically arranged with a view to the presentation of the whole gospel message. People who crowd the auditorium at the services, and enjoy the inspiration of the evening, little know the labour that is involved. But for at least two months before the season we can hear in the office these children practising at a distance; and when at last the great hour comes, everything is presented with perfect order.

The children are thoroughly trained, not only musically, but in other ways. Their eyes are never for a moment off their leader. They respond to his slightest nod—all of which shows what a master of children's assemblies Mr. Hutchinson is. But not of children only:

the Senior choir is just as responsive. But they will not be offended when we say that on these occasions the interest of the multitude is chiefly in the little ones. The Senior choir is like the pedal organ: it supplies the foundation. The volume of tone the choir produces, but the boys and girls are the conspicuous figures.

We cannot describe the Good Friday service in detail. Of course the auditorium was crowded in every part—it always is on such occasions. And while these services of praise have always been good, we have a feeling that Friday's was the best of all. We listened much of the time with the proverbial lump in our throat, and moisture in our eyes; and were thrilled through and through with the simple gospel story sung by children's voices. Of course in these services of praise the whole congregation join for a large part. Everybody in the great audience is made to feel that he or she is in the choir. How we wish the service could have been heard by ten thousand people!

One of the features of Friday evening was a sudden inspiration of Mr. Hutchinson's, when he stepped forward to one of the youngest in the Junior choir, a little girl not more than five years of age, and asked her for a solo. She stood upon a chair and sang it while the great congregation listened. There was no warning, no special preparation. She was merely one of the Junior choir; but it showed how thoroughly they had been trained. Another much appreciated number was the familiar hymn, "There is a green hill far away", which was sung beautifully as a soprano solo by Master Percy McKee. How much churches miss who do not make use of boys' voices!

On Sunday, the same large choir led the services of praise. Certain numbers given Friday evening were repeated, and after the benediction on each occasion, as the choir sang another number, most of the congregation were arrested in their movement toward departure, and remained until the last word had been sung.

Not often do we blow our own trumpet in Jarvis Street, but we feel justified in doing so in this connection—and literally so, for in addition to the choir, Mr. Penney at the organ and his daughter at the piano, there was the large Jarvis Street orchestra. There were no importations: they were all our own folk. And how they played! And how they sang! And how we all worshipped! It cannot but be believed that the Spirit of God carried the gospel message to many a heart, to the blessing of God's people, and, we trust, the conversion of sinners.

On Good Friday evening, and again on Sunday evening, we were privileged to have the presence of another of our own men, Mr. Fred Syme, who sang twice Friday, and once Sunday evening. And what a singer he is! What a glorious voice he has!

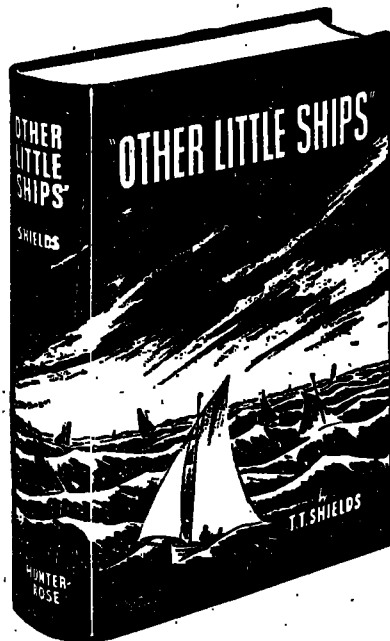
The preacher's part at these services was rather a subordinate one, and he greatly rejoiced that it was so. The morning sermon was on the appearance of the Lord, first to Mary Magdelene, out of whom He had cast seven devils; and the evening sermon appears in this issue.

These three services, Friday evening, Sunday morning, and Sunday evening, were, to us at least, experiences of the heavenly places, for which, with all our hearts, we thank God.

### "GO THOU, AND DO LIKEWISE"

Among other letters received recently, one contained the sum of \$10.00, to cover the cost of sending a copy of "Other Little Ships" to each of six ministers. Three of the ministers were known to the generous donor, and the books forwarded in her name, and with Easter cards bearing her good wishes. The other three ministers named were known to the donor by name, but she believed she was a stranger to them.

There are many ministers to-day who have little money with which to buy books, and who labour in difficult and isolated places. Perhaps some of our readers will be disposed to follow the example of the lady referred to.



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