

The Gospel Witness

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

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THE REAL HEART OF THE MATTER

Long ago a wise man, divinely inspired, admonished, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

That, everyone will instantly recognize, is true of the physical organ. One may break a leg or an arm, and if it is properly set, the bones will knit at the point of fracture, and become as strong as ever; or, if such a member be so badly fractured or diseased as to make repair impossible, it may be amputated, and the man may live with one or more members missing. The same is true of an eye. Delicate and useful as that organ is, one may pluck it out and cast it from him, and, having only one eye, still live.

These are organs of the body which have well-defined and unmistakable functions which may be similarly treated; and if one be removed, the remaining organ will take up the slack and do extra duty.

But nobody has more than one heart. Why it throbs, why it continues to send the blood coursing through our veins, science has never discovered. The original motive power which set it going in the beginning, and which keeps it going, we vaguely call life; but nobody really knows what "life" is. But we do know that "out of it are the issues of life". A man may be as expert a marksman as Nimrod, as strong as Samson, as courageous as David, as fleet of foot as Asahel; but if his heart is impaired in any way, the whole body feels it, and the man's special physical expertness ceases. Therefore one must needs keep the heart with all diligence. One can strain a muscle, weary the back, and even do violence to the stomach, and recover from it; but only a foolish man will trifle with his heart.

But how manifestly true this is of our moral and spiritual natures. It is of the moral centre of our being particularly the wise man speaks—the seat of the conscience, the intelligence, the affections, the will. If "with the heart" we believe unto righteousness, and if thereafter Christ shall dwell in our hearts by faith, the issues of life will inevitably bear a characteristic Christian quality. But where the reverse is true, the issues of life will ultimately reveal the character of the impure fountain from which they spring.

That is true of that body which is composed collectively of regenerated people, and which the New Testament

calls the church. The heart of the church is its distinctively spiritual nature, within which the Lord of glory, in His fulness, dwells. That is the seat of the affections, of the intelligence, of the conscience, and of the will. If thus a church has a vigorous heart, its life will issue in Christian service. It will be beneficial to men, and glorifying to God. But when the spiritual quality of a church declines, its serviceableness is, to that extent, impaired; and its capacity for blessing men and glorifying God is diminished.

Our next proposal would perhaps, by many, be denied; but we are sure we are right. Our Lord said, "Ye are the salt of the earth"; "Ye are the light of the world." The church may be a little member, it may be but a little flock; but as a little leaven leavens the whole lump, so a little salt may preserve a great mass; and as a single candle set on a candle-stick may give light to all in the house, so the church's spiritualized standards of intelligence will shine as a light in the world; and a really vital church will make the issues of a nation's life, from which it springs, to partake of the qualities of that righteousness "which exalteth a nation". But if the church be without moral and spiritual authority, if the Word of God be displaced, and the power of the Holy Ghost be withdrawn, that which is called a church becomes but as salt which has lost its savour, and which is "thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men".

Only this week a gentleman told us of a conversation he had had with a certain minister who reported that on a recent Sunday he had taken as a subject of discussion, "What does the church stand for?" He enunciated many things which ought to be characteristic of any truly Christian church, with which he said the modern church had nothing to do. He concluded his address by telling his people that if any of them knew what the church really did stand for, he would be obliged to them if they would inform him; that as for himself, it appeared to him to stand for nothing.

That, of course, must be true when Christ and His Word are no longer at the heart of it. So in our day the modern church, in so many instances, has ceased to exercise even a moral influence, to say nothing of its having ceased to be a spiritual power. It makes no contribu-

tion to the public conscience. It permits iniquity to abound without opposition. It suffers the Word of God to be rejected, and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to be repudiated—and offers no word of protest.

That being true of the nation, it applies to international relationships. The dissemination of doubt in respect to the Word of God, and therefore of God Himself, removes the fear of God from men's eyes; and, having destroyed all confidence in Him, men soon lose confidence in each other, and like individuals and small communities, nations become suspicious of each other—and the fear of man supplants the fear of God, and produces the snare of the present world paralysis.

CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

It is a common complaint in churches of all sizes and in all places that the work is generally left to a few. Beyond question the complaint is justified by the facts. No business concern in the world could long survive the treatment meted out to the church. Imagine a great manufacturing concern, a great railroad corporation, or some commercial establishment, with only five per cent. of those who are on the pay-roll doing any work. Such a condition would rapidly result in bankruptcy. But how is this condition of affairs to be remedied? How are we to get everybody in the church doing something? Is it pertinent in this connection to enquire what is God's plan? What has the Word of the Lord to say on this subject?

In the twelfth chapter of I. Corinthians we are taught that the church is not an organization but an organism, a body in which there are no superfluous members. The figure itself is most instructive. A body is so knit together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, that it is impossible to dispense with any member without a loss to the body as a whole. So we believe there is a providential completeness about every local assembly of believers, within which are all the gifts necessary to the effective accomplishment of the work of the Lord in that particular place.

We learn, also, that every member has a particular function. They are different from each other, but not independent of each other. So we should remember that every converted man and woman has a special place in the Church of Christ, and a peculiar service to perform. These, we know, are mere commonplaces. The question still remains, How are we to find work for all the members of the church?

If we hold that figure of the body in mind, we shall instantly see that it is not possible for any man or company of men to find spiritual employment for the members of Christ's body. The teaching of the chapter referred to is, that the Holy Spirit is the Administrator; He bestows upon each some peculiar gift, and leads each in His own way to the exercise of the gift He has bestowed. It is obvious, therefore, that we shall not meet the Church's need by devising organizations into which the membership of the church may be built. The truth is, the only really working church is a vital church—a church that is throbbing with spiritual life. Life organizes itself according to its nature; it finds its own natural expression. Thus, too, a vital church composed of vital members will be a working church in the sense

of a fruit-bearing church. Every member will come naturally to understand his particular function. The Spirit of God will teach him even to the minutest detail of his service exactly what he ought to do. Nothing is more interesting than to observe the Spirit's discovery of the gifted members of Christ's body. In the most unexpected quarters, men and women are found who were manifestly ordained from the beginning for a peculiar and a particular service. Thus, therefore, our most urgent need is, that the spiritual health of the church should be built up; and we shall be wise if we turn aside from all attempts to effect God's purposes by other means than through a vitally fruitful church.

The Spirit of God is the breath of the church. She lives only as He dwells in His fullness in her midst. We, therefore, say once again to all pastors and others who will read these words, that if our churches are to prosper, all their members must be set to work; and if they are thus to be set to work, only the Spirit of God can do it. He "divideth to every man severally as he will." And this condition will obtain only where there is unceasing prayer. The prosperous church is the working church; the working church is the vital church; and the spiritually vital church is the praying church. What sort of a church is yours?

THE WILL AS A PERCEPTIVE FACULTY

We are all slow to recognize the principle that our conduct is seldom dictated by our judgment. With most of us the knowledge of good exceeds the doing of it. Our Lord Himself laid down the principle—and no one understands the constitution of the human mind as He understood it—when He said: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." The same principle is involved in the proverb—

"Convince a man against his will,
"He's of the same opinion still."

The recognition of this principle would save us from many difficulties. It would, for instance, save us from the folly of substituting education for evangelism. It is quite possible for men to inform the judgment. It is much more difficult to direct the will. Only the Spirit of God can make our carnal wills willing to do God's will. It would assist us often, also, in the interpretation of Scripture. Many portions of Scripture are not understood, not because men cannot understand, but because they will not. We remember a lady who said to a certain gentleman, "I want you to expound to me the doctrine of baptism as you understand it." To this the gentleman replied, "If I prove to you from the Scripture that you ought to be immersed on a profession of your faith, will you be immersed?" "Certainly not." "Then," said the gentleman, wisely, we believe, "that being the case, it will be only a waste of time for us to discuss the question."

Thus the various problems, as we like to call them, of conduct, which concern our relations to others and our duty to God; our understanding of the Scriptures; our experience of divine guidance,—all these things, in the last analysis, depend upon a will that is entirely surrendered to God. When we are willing to do His will, it is never difficult for us to understand what His will is.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ELIJAH UNDER THE JUNIPER TREE

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, August 18th, 1929

(Stenographically Reported)

"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

"Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.

"And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

"And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

"And he looked, and, behold there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

"And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

"And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God."—I. Kings 19:1-8.

Prayer before the Sermon

O Lord, we rejoice in Thee this morning, for though Thou wast angry with us Thine anger is turned away, and now Thou dost comfort us. Thou hast smiled upon us in the person of Jesus Christ, and we have seen the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in His face. We thank Thee for Thy holy Word, for this perfect law of liberty into which we may look and behold ourselves as we really are.

We pray that Thou wouldest have regard to the need of this congregation this morning, and minister to us out of the treasures of Thy Word. Each one of us is different from all others. We each need Thy special care, Thy peculiar attention. We thank Thee that it is written in Thy Word of the Good Shepherd that He calleth His own sheep by name. We thank Thee that Thou knowest us as individuals, that we are not lost in the mass, but that Thou dost know us each for himself or herself. And we pray that Thou wilt come near to us this morning, and minister to us according to our souls' requirements.

We believe there are some here to-day who are in special need of a divine visitation. It may be there are some who have almost reached the end of human endurance; there may be some greatly troubled souls here this morning who need divine comfort, some who have been tempted and tried so severely that they anticipate the future with fear and almost with terror. It may be there are some who carry in their hearts a deep and inexpressible sorrow. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy. We thank Thee that Thou art no stranger to us. So we pray that Thou wilt draw near and speak in such a way this morning that everyone of us may know that God is in this place. There may be some stranger here from a great distance, someone whose name nobody here knows but himself. Yet he may need some special visitation from Thyself. We pray that the Spirit of God may find him and minister to him. When we go from this place this morning may we go with the conviction that the Lord God has been in the midst of His people! We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

It is now a long time since I have attempted to "preach a sermon." A true minister ought to be a messenger of God, to present to God's people a message from the Skies; and I have found again and again when the Lord has laid some special message upon my heart that there was someone in the congregation for whom it was especially designed. I desire that everyone here this morning should feel that God cares for him, that He takes account of all your experiences, that He does "not

suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Ours is a very gracious God, infinitely tender: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I shall talk to you for a little while this morning about a man who had a strange experience, and who, in his dejection, sat down under a juniper tree. You have been there yourself! The grass is pretty well worn under that tree! It is a favorite resort for many people, even many of the Lord's people. The finest text book on psychology that ever was written is the Bible, because it is the word of God; and He knows the constitution of our human nature: "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." He knows what "stuff" we are made of; and He knows that the bravest of us are not made of steel or of iron, that we are just flesh and blood, full of weakness, subject to many limitations.

Strangely enough, this story has to do with one of the most heroic characters of history. There never was a braver man than Elijah the Tishbite. There is no record, I think, apart from that of our Lord Himself, of any character in history who learned more perfectly how to stand alone for God. You remember how it was said of him by the prophet Elisha, his successor, after he saw him go home to glory, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Elijah was so great in his eyes that he was more than all the chariots of Israel and their horsemen. Yet he comes before us this morning as a crying child, bitterly complaining to God, and, if one might credit what he says, almost on the verge of suicide, a man who has lost all his joy, and prays that God would take away his life. What is the explanation of it? Let us look into the story a little, for it is full of inspiration for everyone of us.

I.

Elijah had lived a victorious life, and yet I would remind you that NO VICTORY IS ABSOLUTE; there is always something left undone. The prophets of Baal may be slain, and Ahab may be moved to repentance;

but there is still some Jezebel to reckon with somewhere. You remember that significant passage in the Book of Judges to this effect: "Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof." Another generation had arisen who knew nothing of the cost in blood and treasure which had been paid for possession of the promised land; and some nations were left in order that succeeding generations might learn war, and know that life is perfected through conflict and struggle.

When Elijah has accomplished that marvellous victory on Carmel, Jezebel sends him a message threatening his life. If you have had your Carmel victory I congratulate you, for I believe it is the privilege of believers to live victoriously. But the war in which we are engaged consists of more than one battle; and no matter what victories you have to your credit, there still remains something to be done. There are other battles to fight, there are other enemies to face; and though you rejoiced in conquest yesterday, you may get a letter from Jezebel to-day!

That is true in all departments of life. *It is true of our individual conflicts, of the inner struggle.* Do not flatter yourself that the "old man" is dead, for there is a bit of the "old man" in everyone of us—or if not, then of the old woman, and that is just as bad! If Ahab is not there, Jezebel is; and you may have your choice; but the old nature will reassert itself, and you will have to fight another battle yet.

It is true of *the work of the church collectively.* It has never had a complete victory: it never will until the Lord Himself shall come down the skies. Even Jezebel will be out of the way when the millennium comes, but until then there will always be something or somebody to trouble us.

Even the Apostle Paul, with the abundance of the revelations that were given him, had a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure. You had a hard time in your business last week? Toward the end of the week you said, "I am thankful that is straightened out, that that tangle is unravelled; I shall have clear sailing now." I do not want to be a gloomy prophet, but I warn you, you will have another knot to untie next week.

It comes into *the domestic sphere.* "The children were sick," someone says, "but they are better." Then let us be thankful. May they continue well! But do not be surprised if there should be something out of joint again next week. That is the rule of life whether you like it or not. In this life there is always someone to trouble a prophet, to trouble every servant of God. If it is not Jezebel, it will be someone else. "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." And he will never want for appropriate instruments to accomplish his purpose of harrying the saints of God.

Someone may say, "That is a gloomy prospect, is it not? Is that what you call a ministry of comfort, to tell us that we are going to have more trouble tomorrow?" No, I am only warning you—and you know it is true.

Look at the condition of Elijah. Try to understand it. Elijah runs away, apparently, from the face of Jezebel;

he leaves his servant and goes a day's journey into the wilderness, and happens upon the juniper tree. He casts himself down and tells the Lord that it is all over: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. Let me die."

Did you ever feel like that? I know there are some people who will set themselves up in a doctrinaire fashion and say, "I never did." Well, I am sorry for you if you have not—and I greatly suspect that you are not perfectly frank when you boast of your unacquaintance with the juniper tree, for most of us at some time or another have had Elijah's experience. I have to confess that I know the path to the juniper tree all too well! I should not be honest if I did not admit that I am perfectly familiar with Elijah's experience, and have prayed his prayer many, many times. You say I ought not to have done so? Perhaps some of you would be very happy this morning in reading discouraged saints a lecture. You would talk down to them and say, "Elijah, I am ashamed of you. Do you not know that you are dishonouring God? You have no right to say that." On the contrary, if you knew yourself better and human nature better you would not talk such nonsense.

II.

Let us examine THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THIS STORY this morning. When you meet a man on Saturday, before you are competent to judge him, you must know the life he has lived during the week, and very probably for years before. Let us find out a little about Elijah. Where has he been? What has he been doing? He steps out from some unknown place of converse with Jehovah; he appears on the scene, a stern, unbending, almost merciless character, and thunders in the ears of apostate Israel: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." And they laugh at him!—until they find that every cloud is driven from the sky. Week succeeds week, month after month passes by, and there is no dew, there is no rain, and the brooks dry up at last. They live on the surplus they accumulated last year—but the second year comes, and still there is neither rain nor dew. Elijah is fed by the ravens, and afterward by a poor widow. Every brook is dry; every growing thing has withered; the parched earth gapes and gasps, and cries to heaven for drink; granaries are empty; birds are dead by the side of the road; cattle are dead in the fields; and people are dying of famine—and one man for three and a half years stands alone for God.

Perhaps during that time he often said, "Has not the time come, O Lord, for the termination of this dreadful chastisement? May I not now pray that rain and dew may come?" But he is forbidden so to pray until the nation is reduced to the last extremity of need, until gaunt famine stalks through the land. Thus Elijah with no one to help him, no one to comfort him, no one to stand at his side, stands alone for God three and a half years. Could you do it? He took no vacation. His spirit was tense, his mind alert; he was a kind of bridge of communication between earth and heaven.

He stands alone until one day he is told to go and show himself to Ahab. He finds Obadiah and says, "Go and tell your lord, Behold, Elijah is here." "Oh", said Obadiah, "what have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? As the

Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophet's by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me." But Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to-day."

And you know how, when Elijah met Ahab, Ahab said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" And Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel. The dry brooks and gaping earth and empty granaries are not caused by me. They are on account of your sin,—thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken."

When the prophets of Baal had called from morning to evening, and there was no answer, Elijah "built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water."

Then he prayed. He did not need to pray from morning until evening. He told the Lord about it in a few sentences, and said, "Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

Then fire from heaven came down, and consumed the sacrifice upon the altar, and when the people saw it they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord; he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

After that Elijah gave his terrible order, and the prophets of Baal were slain. Then he went alone with his servant and prayed, and the heavens were as brass before him—you remember the story. He said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times." At last the servant said, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." "All right," said Elijah, "go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not." There was a sound of abundance of rain, the clouds rolled up until the heavens were black with storm, and there was a great rain.

The three and a half years are ended! Elijah, relaxing, collapses and goes all to pieces; he is almost staggering. I can see him now. He gets the letter from Jezebel and says to his servant, "Come, let us get away." Then he goes a step further and tells the Lord all about it. Do not judge Elijah until you have spent three and a half years as he did, and then you will be competent to judge him.

Let me make application of the principle. There is a mother with the children. It is not quite Elijah's experience perhaps—she is not Elijah; she could not stand what he has stood. But she has her three and a half years of trial, day after day, day after day, the burdens of family life—you mothers know what they are. The end of the day comes, and that poor mother's nerves are on the outside of her skin. She is overwrought, she has reached the limit of human endurance. Do not dare pass judgment upon what that woman says when she is in that condition. Or, it may be a man in business. God only knows what the poor fellow has had to endure, how he has staggered under the load. It may be a professional man. A doctor told me of his experience after a weary winter and spring. He said he had been driven almost to death, day and night, day and night, going all the time. He said, "When the springtime came I was ready to explode at the slightest touch, and my wife was in the same condition." I know that you can lecture people in a condition like that and say they ought not to be petulant, they ought not to be short-tempered, and all the rest of it; but when you have passed through their experience you will be just as difficult to get on with as they are.

And this man was a preacher! We frequently have preachers here, and after a while what I say this morning will go into print and be read by two or three thousand ministers. I will take a minute therefore to talk to preachers. My brother, Sunday night is a pretty difficult night with you, is it not? It is with me, and has been for many, many, years. A man needs to be very careful what he does—but more about that presently—in these periods of reaction, when the three and a half years, or it may be the twelve hours, are ended, for he is only flesh and blood.

I remember hearing a great preacher once talk to preachers, and he told this story. He said, "I once heard one of the world's most famous preachers preach. I knew him personally, intimately. He always carried his hearers into the seventh heaven, but that day he seemed to break all altitude records and we got up to the throne itself. It was on a week-day, on a conference occasion, and the preacher had preached to several thousand people. As soon as the sermon was over the great company of

people flocked to the platform to shake hands with the preacher. I myself was on the platform and tried to talk with him, but he said, 'No, not here. Let us get away from here! If you want to talk to me, come with me,' and he walked quickly away. We walked until we got out into the country. Turning to me he said, 'Now, Mr. So-and-So, excuse my abruptness. What was it you wanted to say?' 'I wanted to tell you that I have never heard anybody preach like you can preach, and I never heard you preach as you did this morning.' 'I know it,' he said, 'that was why I was afraid.' Very tenderly he put his hand on my knee and said, 'The greatest gift that God ever gave a preacher is an understanding friend before whom he may safely make a fool of himself. We cannot go into heaven without coming back again, and I wanted to get away from the people.'

Before you pass judgment upon anybody's hasty word, find out the experience through which that man or woman has been passing. He may be like Elijah, at the end of his three and a half years.

Let us see what Elijah did. "When he saw that, he arose, and went for his life"—that is what he thought he was doing—"and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there"—do not forget that—"but he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness." Elijah instinctively knew that there was no one on earth who could safely be trusted to keep him company just then. "I have got to be alone; you stay there," and away he went into the wilderness. We make the mistake, when in our periods of depression, of calling in our friends to talk to them. That is the very time you ought not to talk to anybody. Get away, be by yourself, be alone with God. If Jezebel could only have heard what Elijah said under the juniper tree, how she would have rejoiced! Elijah was divinely guided so that he might offer that prayer at a place where there was nobody but God to hear it. We ought to talk to God, but do not tell your neighbours about it; do not confer with your most intimate friend when those difficult hours come.

It is the most natural thing for a preacher, when the day's work is done, to say to some member of his congregation, "Come home with me." If he is a wise man he will do nothing of the kind. I knew a man once, a man of very tense disposition, a great preacher. I have heard him preach in such a way that I did not know whether I was in heaven or on earth. When it was over I have heard him, in the privacy of his own home, as playful as a kitten. His reaction was not one of depression, but of mirth. He was full of fun and jesting. Sometimes a man in that condition allows someone to hear him, and some long-faced brother says, "Can it be possible that the man who is now so irresistibly funny is the same preacher that I heard preach so solemnly an hour ago? Shocking! Shocking!" And the poor preacher neutralized his influence by allowing somebody who did not understand to be present when the reaction came. The one to whom I refer was perfectly innocent, for he was one of the godliest men I ever knew, but he made the mistake of taking somebody with him. We might far better go into the wilderness and have it out with God.

Look at poor Elijah. You cannot understand Elijah when he is standing alone, can you? Nor can I. What a splendid figure! What a moral and spiritual giant he is! But I can get nearer to him when he is prone on

the ground under the juniper tree! He and I are comrades at last! He sat under the juniper tree and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." We have all prayed like that. If you have had any definite experience of the grace of God, you have prayed that prayer after being used of Him. I repeat, I have offered Elijah's prayer scores and scores of times—and usually on a Sunday night when I had no reason so far as I know. Possibly many had had a blessing. But in all probability some Jezebel had happened along. It does not happen here! Jezebel does not come here, nor Ahab either—or, if they do, they do not come more than once!

III.

WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR A MAN LIKE THAT? What will God do with a man who prays after that fashion? What did God do with him? He did what any mother does with a tired child. Have you not seen a mother with a little babe in her arms, just comforting him? He is crying, and someone asks, "Is he ill?" "No," she replies, "he is just tired." She holds him for a little while, and presently the eyes are closed; while the tears are still on his cheeks he smiles in his sleep, and mother lays him quietly on the bed. She knows that all the little fellow needed was a good sleep. And we are only God's little children.

I have no doubt that some of you, had you been near enough to do so, would have read Elijah a lecture, or you would have said to somebody else, "I think you had better go and visit Elijah. He is very depressed in spirit. Go and talk with him. Try to cheer him up." Even God did not do that. He said in effect, "Go to bed! Go to bed and sleep!" There are a great many people who need a good sleep more than they need a good sermon. That is why, if I see people sleep in church Sunday morning—as people will do sometimes—I never try to waken them, as I think the sleep will do them more good than my sermon! Do not try to spiritualize that: take it as it stands. When Elijah had prayed that prayer—he did not mean it, although he thought he did—when he had prayed that prayer he went to sleep. He was tired out, flesh and blood had reached the limit of endurance; and in the reaction in the wilderness he went to sleep.

Mr. Spurgeon preached in Crystal Palace to twenty-three thousand people, many years ago, back in the sixties somewhere, on a Thursday morning. He went home, went to bed, and went to sleep. He slept all Thursday afternoon and Thursday night. Friday morning he was still soundly sleeping. His wife watched him carefully, but recognized that nature was restoring the depleted stores. He slept all Friday forenoon, all Friday afternoon, all Friday night, and all Saturday forenoon; and wakened Saturday afternoon. He always spoke of that Friday as his "lost day". Why did he sleep so long? He had poured out his soul to twenty-three thousand people. When he had completed his sermon a reaction set in, and God put him to bed and gave him a good sleep.

There are many people who need a vacation more than anything else. If I were a doctor I would send some people to bed—and would send some other people away. I do not know which you need most. But literally a good sleep is often better than a sermon. So when your wife

has had a hard time, wait until to-morrow to talk that thing over, wait until she has had a good sleep—and until you have had a good sleep! The difficulty of the night will have vanished in the morning.

Then somebody touched him, and Elijah opened his eyes, and behold, an angel! God could not trust a man to minister to Elijah, so He sent an angel to look after him, to cook him a meal: "He looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head." And the angel said, "Arise and eat. Breakfast is ready. Get up, man."

Elijah got up—and the angel did not lecture him. You could not have been trusted to do that. You would have given him the breakfast, but you would have added a little wisdom to it, and spoiled the flavour! The angel simply said, "Arise and eat." He did not lecture him; he did not scold him; he did not exhort him. When Elijah had had a good meal he rubbed his eyes and said, "I do not feel as if I had had my sleep out yet"—and went back to sleep. We read of a city where there is no night, but I should not like to be where there is no night now, would you? What a blessing it is to us all, when all is quiet and we drop off into unconsciousness and go to sleep. Mrs. Browning describes it most beautifully in her poem:

"Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift of grace, surpassing this—
'He giveth His beloved, sleep?'

"What would we give to our beloved?—
The hero's heart, to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep,
The patriot's voice, to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown, to light the brows.—
'He giveth His beloved, sleep.'

"What do we give to our beloved?—
A little faith, all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories, to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake.—
'He giveth His beloved, sleep.'

"'Sleep soft, beloved!' we sometimes say,
But have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber, when
'He giveth His beloved, sleep.'

"O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delved gold, the wallers heap!
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God makes a silence through you all,
And 'giveth His beloved, sleep.'

"His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap,
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
'He giveth His beloved, sleep.'

"Yea, men may wonder while they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man,
Confirmed; in such a rest to keep;
But angels say—and through the word
I think their happy smile is heard—
'He giveth His beloved, sleep.'

"For me, my heart that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the jugglers leap,—
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would childlike on His love repose,
Who 'giveth His beloved, sleep!'

"And, friends, dear friends,—when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say, 'Not a tear must o'er her fall—
He giveth His beloved, sleep.'"

Oh, how our gracious God understands us! I love that word, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him"—listen—"for he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

Then Elijah was wakened a second time. The angel said, "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." I think he had a good meal that day. I think the angel helped him the second time! I think the angel said, "Elijah, you have not had enough. This may be the last meal you will get for a while." I do not know what you will get to-morrow, but God sometimes gives enough one day to last for many days. God may send you forty days on what you get to-day.

Someone may enquire, "Do you then justify Elijah in his complaining?" No, I do not. It is all wrong, but it is natural; and God pities all of us when we do wrong, or it would go ill with us. God chose a time to speak to Elijah. He went forty days unto a cave, and the Lord said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

And the Lord answered in effect, "Nonsense, Elijah! You think you are the only one, but I will show you. I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." But He did not tell Elijah that under the juniper tree! He did not scold him there! He gave him two good meals and two good sleeps; and when he was rested and refreshed God spoke out of heaven. He said, "Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shamphat of Abel-mejolah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." God could do without even Elijah!

And this man who is reported to have prayed, "Take away my life," did not die at all. Is not that wonderful? "Oh, let me die," says Elijah. And I can almost fancy

I see the Heavenly Father smile as He says, "Poor child, you are the one I have selected to be the type and symbol of the multitudes whom no man can number, the multitude of the redeemed, living and dead, that will be raptured when the Lord comes down the skies." Then there came the day when the skies opened and the chariot appeared, and Elijah went up to heaven in the whirlwind—and he did not die at all! "Let me die," said Elijah. "No," said the Father, "I will send a chariot to bring you home." That is how God answers our foolish prayers. There is no reason why you should not complain to God if you must, but do not complain to anybody else. Go into the Divine Presence, go into the wilderness and pour out your heart, and He will forgive you. Is there anyone here who has not this God?

How different with Jezebel! She was thrown down by the walls, and the dogs licked her blood. I would rather be Elijah under the juniper tree than Jezebel upon a throne.

Let us ask God for His blessing:

O Lord, many of Thy children, we are sure, have been very tired. We pray Thee to bless this simple meditation this morning, and help us to think of God as One Who understands us. Let Thy blessing be upon any who know not Christ, and bring them to Thyself. Bless us everyone, for Thy name's sake, Amen.

VOLUME FOURTEEN, NUMBER ONE

By the blessing of the Lord we have been able to complete the thirteenth volume of THE GOSPEL WITNESS. This issue is Number One of Volume Fourteen. While many of our readers know something of the history of this paper, as each anniversary comes round, we are happy to know that we have a number of new subscribers who have made the acquaintance of THE GOSPEL WITNESS within the year. For their information, and that of the occasional reader, we state once more that the first issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS was printed with fear and trembling, May twentieth, nineteen hundred and twenty-two. Since that time, THE GOSPEL WITNESS has issued weekly. By one esteemed friend we were then exhorted not to presume to publish sermons, because no one would read them. Two of the first four issues of THE WITNESS contained summaries of sermons. In the fifth issue we published a sermon complete, and no subsequent issue has appeared without a full sermon. Issue number fifteen dated August 26th, nineteen hundred and twenty-two contained the first stenographically reported sermon; and from then until now, every morning and evening sermon, and most of the Thursday night lectures, have been reported verbatim; and from that time one such sermon has appeared in each issue of the paper.

We have never had money enough to advertise THE WITNESS, and it has spread itself, where it has gone, by its own advertising. Several years ago *The Christian Herald*, of London, England, asked permission to reprint sermons from THE GOSPEL WITNESS, a request which was very gladly granted. By this means the sermons of THE GOSPEL WITNESS have been spread all over the earth; for that paper, always true to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, has the largest circulation of any religious paper in the world, somewhat exceeding two hundred and fifty thousand copies a week.

In the thirteen years of its ministry THE GOSPEL WITNESS has carried no advertisements—not because we have any special prejudice against them, but because such vigilance is necessary in order to avoid giving place to any advertisement that might be, or might seem to be, at variance with the testimony of the paper.

The subscription price of the paper could not possibly pay for its publication; but God has graciously raised us up friends all over the world who voluntarily contribute to the maintenance of the paper, so that, while many other religious papers have ceased to issue during these days of depression,

THE GOSPEL WITNESS can say: "Having obtained help of God we continue unto this day".

We ask our readers to keep THE WITNESS in mind; to pray that its ministry may be energized by the power of the Holy Spirit; and that the Lord will continue to give us friends who will support the paper financially. We could tell many interesting stories about the paper—how its sermons have been translated into other languages; how its illustrations have proved helpful to hundreds of ministers; how its messages are sometimes read over other radio stations; how it has been used to comfort and edify great multitudes of shut-ins; and, above all, how it has been blessed to the salvation of very many souls.

In years past THE GOSPEL WITNESS was a sword as well as a trowel, and dealt many a hard blow in fighting the battles of the Lord; and though THE WITNESS now endeavours to use the trowel more than the sword while building the walls of Zion, it still has its sword girded by its side.

We need not write more, but give all praise to God for everything that has been accomplished, while we thank God and take courage.

It would be a fine thing if our readers everywhere who are able to do so, would send THE WITNESS a birthday present. Give THE WITNESS fourteen quarters, or fourteen half-dollars, or fourteen dollars, as so many birthday love-taps, and THE WITNESS will not complain if you double the taps.



24th OF MAY RALLY

Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto.

Dr. J. Frank Norris
Fort Worth

Dr. Palmer Muntz
Buffalo

Services 10.30 — 2.30 — 7.30

SEMINARY SIDELIGHTS

"The Greatest Good by the Simplest Means"

Last week we said it, we repeat it again. "Read, mark, and inwardly digest" these words of the great pioneer missionary educationalist of India, Dr. Alexander Duff:

To be "a teacher of teachers, a trainer of preachers" is to effect "the greatest good by the simplest means" and "the most permanent good in the shortest time."

For more than eight years now Toronto Baptist Seminary has proved this principle in the work of Evangelical Baptists. It is bound to be so.

The devil sees it. What were the centres of the Deism of the eighteenth century but the colleges? How hath Evolution, Modernism and Humanism propagated themselves in this day but through educational institutions? Given time, the teachings of the universities hold sway, not only among their graduates, but also with the man in the streets. A high official of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism said that "atheists themselves could not hope to accomplish the conversion of millions by direct methods, but they would have to work through others". The "others" are the schools and churches of the Modernist attitude, for, as said the atheist, "Modernism eventually leads to atheism."

Christian workers of experience realize the importance of sound schools. Dr. Alexander Duff did. When Dr. T. I. Stockley, now retired, became Dean of our Seminary, he declared that he did so because he saw that the minister is the key man; if the pulpits are right, the churches will be.

Friends of our work—an increasing host—are seeing this truth, that to invest money in the training of teachers and preachers of the Word is to help on "the greatest good by the simplest means" and "the most permanent good in the shortest time." Even the few years of the Seminary's existence, we repeat, have given ample proof of this contention.

Sermons, Lessons, Conversions.

During the school year just closed, our men and women have been learning to do Christian work by doing it—the only effective way. The following figures, compiled by Dr. Olive L. Clark, of our staff, present the record of their "practical work" in tabular form:

(Report of 44 students enrolled)

Student Pastors	4
Regular Sunday School Teachers	32
Sermons Preached	395
Addresses Given	564
S.S. Lessons Taught	1,186
Musical Numbers Rendered	828
Visits Made (Approximately)	3,140
Bibles Distributed	34
Gospels and Testaments Given	194
Tracts Distributed	2,720
Professions of Faith	45
Baptisms	11

Graduations

Three years ago last Fall, the Seminary began a fourth year's work for its regular (full) course. Up to that time those who registered came for three years, but those entering then came to stay four years. So naturally, one year's graduation must be omitted, or largely so. This is the year for the omission. The few diplomas and prizes to be presented will be given at the Fall Convocation next September. The fact that we are not having graduation this school year does not mean that the Seminary is worse off, but better. Its standard is higher, its work will be more efficient.

Sacrifices

We were talking recently to one of God's gentlewomen about the great personal sacrifices which our men and women were making in order to obtain their training for the work. We told her some of the "inside" secrets which we were so bold as to relate on this page two weeks ago. Now this friend once had a considerable portion of this world's goods, but she has it no longer. To be exact, her total income

is twenty dollars per month! She wanted to buy a toy train for a four-year-old grandson, whose home she was going to visit, because the little fellow, when shown a fine one by a playmate, declared confidently, "My gran'ma'll bring me one from T'ronto"; instead, she bought him a fire engine for Fifteen Cents. His Easter present was a bubble pipe and soap,—that made wonderful bubbles!—costing Five Cents! Yet "gran'ma" was so touched with the story of student privations that she rather startled us by asking, "What is the least you will take?" that is, to help the general funds of the School. "One Cent," we answered in fun. "I'll give you two," she said. (She is a bit hard of hearing.) "We'll use that for a stamp to write to a friend who will send us a Thousand Dollars!" "No, Two Dollars" in the next few weeks! Two Dollars! It staggered us, but we dared not refuse. Two Dollars! Had others that spirit there would be no deficit on the Seminary, the Master's work would have enough and to spare. Two Dollars!—B.

24th May, Young People's Rally

It is with pleasure we announce that a Young People's Rally will be held on May 24th, 1935, in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto. Everybody is welcome to attend and enjoy a day of spiritual fellowship and Christian instruction.



DR. J. FRANK NORRIS,
of Fort Worth, Texas, and
DR. PALMER MUNTZ,
of Buffalo, will be the special inspirational speakers. Dr. Norris needs no words of commendation to such a gathering. It will be a great one, and you should plan to be present. Mr. Fred. Syme, and the well-known Kinsman Quartette will sing, and a more earnest and consecrated group of singers would be difficult to find. Please announce in all your Church services, and prepare the way for a day of good things. Watch for further particulars through these pages.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 21

Second Quarter

May 26th, 1935

THE REIGN OF THE KING

Lesson Text: Psalms 71 to 73.

Golden Text: "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me."—Psalm 71: 1, 2.

Bible School Reading: Psalm 72:1-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Is. 5:20-25; Tuesday—Jer. 17:9-14; Wednesday—Prov. 24:13-22; Thursday—Hab. 3:14-19; Friday—Jude 16-25; Saturday—II. Cor. 5:1-10.

PSALM SEVENTY-ONE

In this psalm there is a prayer for deliverance from enemies, and a note of praise to God for His goodness. It opens with a statement of trust, and a request for deliverance from the hand of the wicked. Note the claim of the psalmist respecting God as his rock and fortress, and the significance of the same in relation to shelter and safety for the child of God. Following this, the Lord is given praise for taking care of His servant from his infancy (vs. 6-8), and a petition is offered, pleading against being forsaken in old age. God never leaves or forsakes His own (Heb. 13:5); He is with them always, even unto the end of life. (Is. 41:10; Matt. 28:18-20), and they need fear no one when He is nigh (Heb. 13:6). Continuing, the psalmist prays God to make haste to help him, and also to confound his adversaries, and promises to praise the Lord more and more, and make mention of His righteousness (vs. 12-18). Observe the duty and privilege of bearing testimony to the Lord (Acts 1:8); also note the pathos in the request of the psalmist relative to his old age, and the loftiness of his purpose in seeking to spread the knowledge of God throughout his day and generation.

The closing verses of the psalm contain praise to God, and determination of purpose on the part of the psalmist. Note the statement respecting God's righteousness, which is "very high" (v. 19). It is absolute righteousness, being perfect in every particular (Deut. 32:4). God knows no sin, can never compromise with sin; and yet through Christ can justify the sinner (Rom. 3:26). Observe also the psalmist's hope of quickening from low condition, and his purpose of praise (vs. 20-24). His intention was to praise God with musical instrument, and with his voice. We see in his statement the three Christian graces of faith, hope, and love (I. Cor. 13:13); and these three bring forth works in the interest of the One toward Whom they are exercised (Jas. 2:26). What is the condition of those who do not trust the Lord? Why do some of the Lord's people think He has forsaken them? How may we always be conscious of His presence near us?

PSALM SEVENTY-TWO

This psalm records the beneficent reign of a great king. It opens with a prayer, which is tantamount to a prediction. Solomon was given special gifts by God (I. Kings 3:12-14), and Christ possessed heavenly qualifications for His office (Is. 11:1-5). The character of this reign is then described. The people would be judged with righteousness, and the poor with judgment, and the oppressor would be broken in pieces (vs. 2-5). No one can sway God in His judgment. He is always governed by the standard of righteousness. This is true in the present day, and will be manifest in His future judgment (Rev. 20:12). Peace shall characterize His kingdom of the future (Is. 9:7), and the same indwells the members of that kingdom in this present age (Phil. 4:7). Note also the judgment awaiting the oppressor (Jas. 5:1-8), the divine consideration of the poor (Luke 4:18), and the result of this righteous government on the people.

The beneficent effect of this peaceful righteous reign is likened to "rain upon the mown grass", and "as showers that water the earth". Rain freshens the earth, and produces fruit; even so does this heavenly government sustain and aid the children of men, bringing blessing to the righteous, and abundance of peace. The future aspect of our Lord's kingdom is intimated in this reference to the righteous, and also in the further reference to His dominion, His triumph over enemies, and the submission of all kings to His sway (vs. 8-11). Every knee shall yet bow unto Him, and every tongue shall confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11); and as King of kings He shall reign in triumph over all (Rev. 19:16). Note the necessity for submitting to Him in this day of grace (II. Cor. 6:2). Many are at present serving Him, and it is our duty to lead others to do this, that He may be glorified in them (II. Thess. 1:10).

There is another reference to the poor and needy, wherein deliverance and salvation and redemption were mentioned respecting them (vs. 12-14). Our Lord is pre-eminently the Redeemer of men (Ga. 3:13), delivering them from the power, penalty, and practice, of sin (Gal. 1:14; Rom. 7:24, 25; II. Cor. 1:10). Such redemption was necessary: owing to man's condition in the bondage of sin (Eph. 2:2, 3); and the blessing of that deliverance is offered to whosoever will (John 3:16; 5:24). Prolonged life shall be the experience of this king, and to Him shall be given presents; and prayer and praise shall be His daily. Prosperity shall also be associated with Him, predicted in the waving grain and increasing population: "His name shall endure for ever"; "Men shall be blessed in him"; and "All nations shall call him blessed." And the psalm ends with an ascription of praise to the Lord God, "who only doeth wondrous things" (vs. 16-20). Solomon's reign was brilliant, though marred by sin toward the end (I. Kings 11:4); but our Lord's kingdom will far outshine it. What are some of the blessings of salvation now? How may we enjoy these? When will every knee bow to our Lord, and the kingdoms of the earth become His?

PSALM SEVENTY-THREE

In this psalm the psalmist describes how, becoming envious at the prosperity of the wicked, his feet had well nigh slipped, until he went into the sanctuary, and understood their end. He gives testimony first to the goodness of God to Israel "even to such as are of a clean heart". God is good to all, but those who are in right relations with Him receive greater blessing. Confession follows the testimony: the steps of the psalmist had well nigh slipped due to envy at the prosperity of the wicked. When the eye is taken off the Lord, danger is near, no matter what the object may be that it is afterward fixed upon. Beware of the tendency to look at others, and to govern one's conduct in accordance with that which is observed in them. Note also the foolishness of being envious of anyone, or anything.

The reason for the envy of the psalmist is found in the description of the wicked. They were prosperous; there were no bands in their death; they were not in trouble as other men; their eyes stood out with fatness; yet, with all this, they were proud and corrupt, and set their mouth against the heavens (vs. 3-9). The effect on the Lord's people is then stated. They are perplexed respecting the knowledge of God of these things, and of His care for His own (vs. 10-13). The psalmist shares their perplexity, and is disturbed about his own case, in that, although he lived a holy life, he suffered chastisement continually; and he remained thus until he entered into the sanctuary, and saw things from the standpoint of eternity (vs. 14-17). Observe the necessity of judging the things of the world from the basis of God's revealed Word. It is remarkable how changed they seem when we see them from God's viewpoint. The things of time fade, and the things of eternity become real (II. Cor. 4:18). In the sanctuary the psalmist saw the end of the wicked as one of destruction (vs. 18-20), and he realized how foolish he had been in his attitude toward the matter. He then expresses his confidence in God, claiming Him as his portion for ever. Note the certainty of judgment for wickedness (Matt. 23:33), and of reward for righteousness (I. Cor. 3:14); also the fact of chastisement for the Lord's people (Heb. 12:6). How may we guard against envy, and keep peaceful in mind in the midst of wickedness?

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 22

Second Quarter

June 2nd, 1935

THE DESERTED SANCTUARY

Lesson Text: Psalms 74 to 77.

Golden Text: "Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare."—Psalm 75:1.

Bible School Reading: Psalm 74:1-23.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Is. 37:21-32; Tuesday—Is. 37:33-38; Wednesday—Ezek. 34:1-10; Thursday—Ezek. 39:1-10; Friday—Matthew 8:5-13; Saturday—Rom. 6:15-23.

PSALM SEVENTY-FOUR

In this psalm there is an appeal unto God as the divine Shepherd to arise in defence of His sheep. Enemies had overwhelmed them, but the psalmist still believed the Lord was able to deliver them from their power. The psalm opens with a cry unto God to remember His people; wherein we note the conviction of the psalmist that the divine anger was being vented upon them. Observe also the close relationship existing between the Lord and His people. They were His purchased possession, and the city of their abode, the place where He had dwelt. This reminds us of our Lord's redemptive work (I. Pet. 1:18-20), and of the fact that we are His purchased possession (Eph. 1:14; I. Pet. 2:9). Our duty, in consequence, is to glorify Him in body and in spirit, which are His (I. Cor. 6:19, 20).

A description of the destructive work of the enemies follows. They roar in the midst of the people. They destroy the sanctuary of God, and burn up His synagogues in the land. This depicts a conquered people, and a ravished land; and implies extreme humiliation at the hands of the enemy. We know not the time at which this occurred. Several possible occasions present themselves, when Israel, due to his sin, was brought as low as herein intimated; but the evidence is not clear respecting the exact time. Note the folly of sinning against God. To make matters more difficult, there was no prophet among the people (v. 9). There was no one to give a direct message from God, in explanation of events, or in promise of better things. Note the privilege of listening to the word of God, and the fearful condition of those deprived of this. A famine respecting the truth of God is worse in its consequences than a similar catastrophe in the natural realm (Amos 8:11-14). Observe the duty on the part of the Lord's people of giving His message to a needy world.

Continuing his prayer, the psalmist enquires how long the enemy shall be permitted to continue his reproach, and calls upon God to take action concerning him (vs. 10, 11). He then magnifies the power of the Lord, citing historical instances of the same; and again calls upon Him for deliverance, pleading the sinful attitude of the enemy, and the covenant with His own people as reasons for taking action in the matter. Note the presence of reasoning in prayer, found here and in the prayers of other saints of God (Ex. 33:11-17; Num. 14:11-25); also the nature and significance of the covenants (Gen. 12:1-4, Heb. 9:1-28). Why should we pray? How should we pray? When should we pray?

PSALM SEVENTY-FIVE

This psalm relates to the righteous judgment of God, and opens with thanksgiving in anticipation thereof. God's wondrous works declare His nearness, and give evidence that He is not far from anyone of us (Acts 17: 24-28). The purpose of God respecting judgment is then declared. He sustains His people in times of trouble, and judges uprightly. Note His judgment of the nations (Deut. 7:1-11), and the nature of His future judgment (Rev. 19:11). Words of admonition are then given to the wicked. They are enjoined not to deal foolishly, nor to act proudly; for promotion or lifting up cometh from the Lord. He is the Judge,

and "putteth down one, and setteth up another" (vs. 4-7). He is the proper judge of merit, and with Him is the reward of the same. Note the striving of the world for promotion, and the conditions necessary for divine recognition of effort (I. Cor. 3:11-15). The certainty of judgment for the wicked is thereafter stated. They will be made to drink to the dregs the wrath of God. Observe the terrible nature of the divine wrath, and the fear of man in consequence thereof (Rev. 6:15-17). It is one thing to scoff at the things of God in the days of grace: it is quite another thing to be brought face to face with an angry God (Ps. 7:11; Heb. 10:31). In contrast with that of the wicked, is the condition of the righteous. They will be exalted by God, and will sing His praises. Note the contrast between heaven and hell, between eternal life and eternal damnation, between blessed reward and fearful punishment. How may we be sure of escaping divine punishment and of reaping eternal reward?

PSALM SEVENTY-SIX

This psalm commemorates the divine deliverance of the Israelites from their enemies; the latter possibly being the Assyrians under Sannacherib (2 Kings 19:35-37). It opens with expressions denoting the close relationship of God with His people. He was known in Judah, His name was great in Israel, His tabernacle was in Jerusalem, and His dwelling place in Zion (vs. 12). Note the blessedness of such intimacy, and the duties pertaining to it, respecting obedience, worship, and service. The location of the deliverance, and the complete nature of the victory gained thereat are then intimated. From the historical account of the same we know the Assyrians were totally routed by the manipulation of the almighty power of God. And we are assured of the fact that in no age can anyone stand before the Lord. He is the Omnipotent One. Note the wisdom of being at peace with Him (Job 22:21); and of being in the position of enjoying His favour. After a word of praise the psalmist further magnifies the power of God in his description of its manifestation respecting the enemy (vs. 4-10), and then invites all to do homage to the Lord, Who holds the breath of kings and princes in His power. Note the futility of man's wrath in the presence of the Almighty God; also the duty of paying to the Lord that which we owe Him (Eccles. 5:4; Mal. 3:8-12). How may we secure victory in Christ? What are some of the things which hinder spiritual victory?

PSALM SEVENTY-SEVEN

This psalm relates an experience of the psalmist, when in great trouble and almost in despair, he calls to mind former manifestations of the divine power, and is comforted. He realized that inasmuch as God had on former occasions delivered His people, He would do so again. And the same conviction aids us in these days. The psalm opens with particulars relating to the psalmist's trouble, whereby we are made aware of its intense nature. His sore ran in the night, or his hand was stretched out in the night. His spirit was overwhelmed, sleep departed from him, and he wondered if God had cast him off, and had ceased to be gracious unto him (vs. 1-9). There is evidently great searching of heart on his part. He cries unto God, and is conscious of being heard. He remembers the Lord, and calls to mind his own former experiences; yet he is greatly exercised by the continuance of his trouble. Note like experiences in the present day in the midst of the many troubles of life, when questionings arise due to the severity of testings, and the seeming hopelessness of relief. At such times let us call to mind God's past gracious acts. He deals with us in grace in this age (Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:9), and never forsakes us (Heb. 11:5; Deut. 31:6-8).

Very wisely the psalmist meditates on the past works and wonders of the Lord, and is encouraged thereby (vs. 10-12). He remembers Him in the manifestation of His power in the redemption of His people, the use of nature's forces, and the care of His own. Observe the divine helpfulness through our Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16), and the manifestations of omnipotent power over nature (Mark 4:39), over the spirit realm (Luke 4:33-41), and in the sphere of grace (Acts 9:1-6). Note also the tenderness of God in dealing with His own, together with His wisdom, purpose, and plan. Why is there trouble in the world? How may troubles be a blessing to us? How should we act when troubles assail us? How may we gain strength to bear troubles?

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Waverley Road, Toronto

A delightful evening was spent on Wednesday, May 1st, when about one hundred and twenty-five persons gathered to bid good-bye to the Pastor, Rev. David Alexander. Large congregations were also present on Sunday, May 5th, when he concluded his ministry of almost eight years with the church.

Rev. W. E. Atkinson has been invited by the church as acting pastor, and there is every evidence of the continuation of good times for this people. Brother Alexander had the great joy of baptizing nineteen persons during the last few Sundays of his ministry and a real work of grace is being carried on among the younger people at this time. Twenty-five are in regular attendance at the new converts' class on Friday, and the signs of growth in these young Christians is remarkable.

At the close of the Prayer service on Wednesday, May 8th, a social time was held so that the members of the congregation would have the opportunity of meeting Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson. After a time of real joyous fellowship the meeting was brought to a close. Last Sunday Mr. Atkinson spoke in the morning on "The Many Infallible Proofs", and in the evening on "The Only Way to God". The nearness of God's presence and the power of His Spirit was most manifest in both services. Pray for this Church and people

that the Lord may undertake for them in a new way, and that the heavy financial burdens which they bear may be lightened.

Calvin, Toronto

Rev. Frank Roblin, the pastor, baptized two more happy believers in the Waverley Road Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon, May 12th. Two more have made application for baptism, and on Sunday evening in the Greenwood Theatre, Gerrard Street at Greenwood Avenue, two others confessed Christ as Saviour.

Jarvis Street, Toronto

Will be celebrating on May 19th, 1935, the 25th Anniversary, the Silver Jubilee of Dr. T. T. Shields' ministry in their midst. Members and friends of the Union join with the members of the Mother of all Baptist Churches in Ontario in extending their best wishes for many more years of service together.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON

Last Sunday's sermons in Jarvis St. related to the Toronto Temperance Campaign, and on account of their local colour, neither is published this week, but instead a message of comfort preached about six years ago.

What Others Say of "Other Little Ships"

THE WATCHMAN-EXAMINER

New York

"Other Little Ships". By T. T. Shields. The Hunter-Rose Company, Limited. \$1.50.

Preaching is still the most fascinating art in the world. Millions listen to sermonic themes every week. The rich discoveries of the study and the still richer treasures of personality and attestations of divine power make the sermon the center of Protestant worship. Thus books of sermons are interesting to vast numbers of people. When the writer of sermons in such a dramatic and interesting personality as the popular Toronto pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields, there is an added incentive to get the book. Dr. Shields does not disappoint his readers. He is not the power as a writer that he is as a preacher. However, the silent, written word reveals the richness of mind and great spiritual purpose of the author. These sermons were spoken to uncountable multitudes in churches and over the radio. While lacking the vibrant personality which thrilled the hearers as

they were preached, they hold to the truth of the Gospel, are stimulating to thought, and the heart is frequently moved by the simple appeal and the common form of illustration which Dr. Shields uses. We hope many

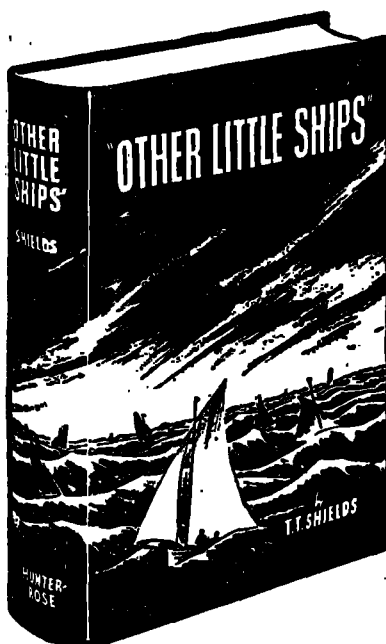
readers will profit by the thoughtful earnestness of these sermons. They are refreshingly human and deeply spiritual.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES

Philadelphia

"Other Little Ships". By T. T. Shields. (The Gospel Witness, 130 Gerrard St., Toronto, Can., \$1.50.)

It is not, at all difficult to credit the announcement regarding this book,—that three of its sermon-talks were each published four times in a noted religious journal, the supply of copies in each case becoming immediately exhausted. A great variety of subjects is herein presented; sometimes those particularly suited to young people, again, that which makes the theologian prick up his ears; here, a ready dart is thrust at the "philosophical simpleton" who decries our "slaughter-house religion"; there, parents are shown the result of using such modernized commandments as, "Children, obey your parents—I'll give you a penny if you do." But most often the weary and disheartened are addressed, the Mr. Fearings and Ready-to-halts in church and home life,—those too seasick to crawl on deck and see that "other little ships" are likewise buffeted by storm of wind and wave. The book abounds in seed-thoughts: "There is a tendency to welcome all the inhabitants of Shundem and yet to have no place for the prophet of God." "Never has God asked anyone to work for him, but with him." These sermons are sound in exposition, inimitable in illustration, and brimful of well-mixed admonition and comfort.



ORDER FORM FOR DR. SHIELDS' NEW BOOK

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East

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Please find enclosed \$1.50 for which send me, postpaid, one copy of "Other Little Ships". (If remitting by cheque, add 15 cents for exchange.)

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