

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.
\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c Per Single Copy.

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

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Vol. 14, No. 14

TORONTO, AUGUST 15, 1935

Whole Number 691

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"THIS GRACE ALSO"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, August 11th, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

"Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."—II. Cor. 8:7.

Prayer by Rev. W. Gordon Brown:

We thank Thee, O God, for Him Who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes made Himself poor. We bless Thee for the heights from which He came; we thank Thee for the depths to which He descended. We rejoice in Him, what He was, is, and ever shall be; because He has lived with Thee eternally, He does live, and by Him we shall live also. We thank Thee for the life He showed us; for the death He died for us; for the resurrection by which He ascended to Thy right hand to make intercession for us. Therefore, we bless Thee that by His poverty we are enriched. Help us to-day to lay hold, in a new, special, way, of those riches that are ours in Christ Jesus.

Lord, we have need of Thee because of what we are, and where we are. The world is ever near us, about us, and within; we see the sights that dazzle; our hearts would be drawn away by the temptations of this world. Satan presses us here. Sin is on every hand. O Lord, have mercy upon us! Help us really to learn that the victory that overcometh the world is faith in Thee; that Thou art the One Who gives us the victory, who wills we should have it, and dost give it to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So meet with us in Thy strength and Thy grace. Help us by faith to take these things in that we may live to Thy glory.

Bless all in Thy presence, the old with Thy sustaining grace, the tired with renewed energy, the children with guidance for the footsteps of youth which Thou alone canst give. Open the eyes of those who have not seen Thee; unstop deaf ears. Give us all hearts to receive and ears to hear, for we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

Obviously these words were not addressed to Christian people who were living meagre, impoverished, lives: they were addressed, rather, to people whose life was exuberant, whose lives were characterized by fruitful evidences of the reality of their faith. They are described as abounding "in every thing". We are not to live at a poor dying rate, "fond of our earthly toys", where our souls can neither fly nor go "to reach immortal joys". Our Lord Jesus came, not only that we might have life—

He, Himself, said that He came that we might have it "more abundantly". We are never straitened in Him, but always in ourselves. Grace admits us to a large place, to a realm where wealth of every sort abounds. The true Christian is permitted to wear his best robe, the best robe that grace provides, not only on special and formal occasions, but about the common tasks of life every day. I have been in the Tower of London on several occasions, and have there seen the crown jewels on display. They are not worn by their majesties every day, but only on state occasions. I have read that people of great wealth, possessed of jewels of priceless value, usually have two sets, the real and the imitation, and that they frequently wear the imitation jewels because it is rather hazardous to wear those that are real and precious. But the children of our King may wear their jewels every day, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, with absolute assurance that there will be no lack of attending angels to secure them against all possibility of loss.

It is interesting to mark the footsteps of our Lord, and to see how abundant were the supplies, the power and the grace which proceeded from Him. The first miracle that He wrought was in Cana of Galilee on a marriage occasion; and He wrought that because the supply of wine was inadequate. They came to Him and said: "They have no wine." There were six waterpots there "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews". Our Lord did not say: "Put a little water in each pot"; He said: "Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast." That wine of His provision was not only superior in quality: it was abundant in supply. And it is always so where

the Lord Jesus is really made Lord. That day the feast knew no lack because the attendants obeyed the word of Mary when she said concerning her divine Son: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Because they did as they were told, because they recognized Him as Lord, they had plenty. When Jesus Christ is given the Presidency of the life, when He is made Master and Lord, and when our lives are lived in obedience to His principles, we shall always have abundance. With Him there is grace to enable a lame man to walk, and a surplus to enable him to leap as well.

You have seen people, I suppose, walking along the street, perhaps a man of your acquaintance, perhaps someone who was a stranger. But you did not need to meet that person with the ordinary salutation; you did not need to ask, "How are you?" You saw that the man was in ill health. Perhaps he leaned heavily upon a stick, or he shuffled along as though it were difficult for him to put one foot before the other. You have met someone else walking with firm tread, with resilient step. Everything about the man was vital, his countenance, his speech, everything he said and did. And you have said, "Well, good morning! I do not need to ask how you are." You could see at a glance that the man was abounding in health.

So we ought not to be shuffling Christians, living at a poor dying rate: but rather revelling in an abundance of life because we walk in fellowship with God.

Once, for a brief period of a few weeks, on and off for about three months in the Old Land I travelled at government expense. All my expenses, though not heavy, were charged up to the national exchequer. I had not to worry about the limitations of my little purse: I could enjoy a meal without having to worry about the bill; I could go to a hotel and enjoy some luxurious apartment without having to worry about having to pay for it. I confess I enjoyed it, to live for a few weeks in a large way, with no crimping and cramping, or feeling of limitation anywhere.

Well, my dear friends, it is the privilege of every believer to travel to heaven at Government expense; all heaven's Exchequer is at the command of faith: He "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

So then, I say, it is the privilege of believers to be freed from all bands: not to live in a strait jacket, not to live in a little sphere of life: but to live largely, luxuriously, abundantly; as princes of the Royal House it is ours to abound in everything.

I.

There are certain graces enumerated here in which these particular believers were said to abound; and I would call your attention to the fact that these qualities, "faith", "utterance", "knowledge", "diligence", are defined as graces, as something which belong to the inner life, something that is an outward expression of an inner quality, for that is what a grace is: it is not an external adornment, not something that is put on: it is something that shines out from within. It is the inherency of the lily's beauty, the fact that it belongs to its essential life, that it is an inevitable expression of what it is in itself, which makes the lily, according to our Lord's estimation, superior to the external glory with which Solomon was "arrayed". All his splendid robes, and the

glory of the material accompaniments of his royal estate, were as nothing compared with the essential beauty of the lily, because it is an expression of its life. Our Lord does not dress up Christmas trees; He does not tie artificial fruit to imitation evergreens. He said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; He deals always with reality. Nothing is veneered. You never saw a veneered oak tree, did you? nor a veneered walnut. You never saw a piece of gold plate in nature's mine. Whatever He does belongs to the inner nature of things. Our Lord does not paint anything. It is not necessary. When He makes a rose He puts the colour in the root and lets it express itself through the flower. That is the way He always does. That is the very essence of the Christian religion. It is a life, an inner grace.

Here *faith is described as a grace* in which these Corinthians abounded. They did not believe reluctantly, or stingily; they did not believe a little: they believed with all there was of them, and their faith grew out of their life, for the life was given by Him Who is the Lord of life. Their faith was the natural response of their renewed nature to its divine Affinity. It was a grace. They and the Lord Whom they believed were inseparably united. Faith is always the outcome of what we are: not of what we do. It is never exclusively an act of the will. It is that in part, but it is the will in conjunction with the intelligence, with the judgment, with the conscience, with the heart. It is the whole man leaning upon God, reposing on Him.

And "*utterance*" is here described as a grace. You know the difference, do you not, between voluble speech, and spiritual utterance. I have heard people chatter like magpies, religiously: talk—talk—talk—talk all the time, in quite an orthodox fashion, too. There was nothing to complain of in the letter of what they said; it was perfectly sound, wholly biblical. And yet it was like "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal". You know the difference between that and spiritual utterance, do you not? There is nothing more objectionable, I think, than a superficial, mechanical, "Hallelujah!", "Amen!" I used to have a deacon years ago, with whom that was just a habit. He would say, "Amen!" or "Praise the Lord!" to everything, and sometimes when he was half asleep. One evening at the prayer meeting I rose to announce the last hymn, and said, "Well, brethren, the time has come for closing". "Praise the Lord!" said the deacon. It really meant nothing from him.

Now that was not "utterance". I had dinner with someone the other day who was the guest of a friend. This person had been a man in a prominent position. He had in his pocket at this time only fifteen cents, and he said that was all he had in the world. My friend and I had known him years before, and he was my friend's guest as we sat at dinner. When the meal was served, he said, with moist eyes: "Thank God for something to eat when one is hungry." Then he looked around and said, "Brethren, that is my grace." Oh, that was utterance. He was a Christian man with utterance. It was the soul of the man expressing his thankfulness to God.

Ah, yes! "utterance", which is the testimony of a full heart, is a grace. I heard of a woman, a very retiring, shy, reticent woman—there are not many of them, but there are a few, and she was one!—who came before the pastor and deacons of a church to give her testimony. She wanted to join the church. They asked her to tell her story; and she sat there with nothing to say, she could not say a word. They one after another asked her

questions, most of them leading questions, to which she answered "yes", or "no". The interview was so unsatisfactory—she could not speak—that at last the pastor said kindly, "Well, sister, perhaps you had better wait a little while, until you have received further instruction before you come into the church." She rose, accepting it as her dismissal, and as she was about to leave she stopped a moment, and with tears running down her cheeks she said, "Well, I know I cannot speak for Christ, but I could die for Him." Every man there felt, "That is utterance. That is the best of all testimonies." The Pastor said, "Stay; we do not want you to remain outside the church."

You know what I mean. You can recognize the testimony, the witness, that comes from a full heart. That was what Paul was speaking of, and in this these believers abounded.

And "knowledge" is here said to be a grace. I used to think that was a thing of the intellect, not spiritual only. The fact is, a man may be intellectually keen; he may have a massive mind, the mind of a philosopher; he may understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, as Paul said, in the ordinary realms of life, and yet he may have no spiritual knowledge at all. No, no! we know spiritually only as we have a spiritual capacity: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." Many a man or woman with very meagre mental equipment, indeed with very meagre natural mental capacity, may know far more of God and the things of God than the greatest of all scholars. Knowledge of spiritual things is a grace. It is ours because the Spirit of God opened our understanding, and has come in and taken possession of our hearts; has taught us to set our affections on things above; has energized our volitional powers, enabling us to yield to God and sit at the feet of Jesus. Knowledge of spiritual things is a grace; hence we are to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We can never grow in knowledge unless we grow in grace.

And "diligence", or earnestness, if you will, is a grace. There is a great difference, my friends, between spiritual earnestness, and mere emotional excitement. I have known people who thought they were earnest if they made a great noise. That is—I would not say it offensively at all—the root-error of that strange cult that is called Pentecostalism. It substitutes emotional excitement for the operation of the Spirit of God. If people excite themselves, and exhort themselves, and shout themselves into a frenzy, they become earnest, then they imagine they have got the Spirit. But there is nothing of the Holy Spirit about it. It is the most carnal, fleshly, performance imaginable, and is akin to the dance of the Der-vishes. No; emphasis upon fleshly emotions, upon non-spiritual emotions, is not of God: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The Spirit is often more really present in the still small voice than in the great wind, the earthquake, or the thunder. Spiritual earnestness, that diligence that springs from a heart attuned to God, that is the expression of a will resigned to a sovereign Saviour, that kind of diligence is wrought of the Spirit: it is an inward grace. And in this these Christians abounded.

"And in your love to us". *Brotherly love!* Ah, yes; that is a grace, too. There are some people who are not hard to love, and some people who are very difficult to

love. There are some people who are naturally amiable, rather agreeable, loveable folk; there are other people who are about as ugly as nature could make them in their dispositions, and in every way. You cannot love people by talking of love. I remember in our controversy—you used to have it, Brother Brown, in McMaster—somebody would get up and with set teeth, and thin lips, and clenched fist, they would read at chapel-service: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." I heard a man once say, with clenched fist: "What we need is more love." But you cannot love that way, my friends. There are some people I frankly confess I never could love of myself. I suppose they might say: "Amen, brother; that is quite mutual!" And you do not love people by saying: "We love you". Let us not love in word. No, no! Paul said of these Corinthians that they abounded in love toward him. That was a great thing for this apostolic preacher to say. In fact, he said: "My brethren, I know you love me. It does not make any difference what you say; I know you love me." You can tell where there is real Christian love for others. You can tell when the love of God is shed abroad in a man's heart, when he really loves people for Christ's sake. There is only one way by which that can be accomplished, and that is by the indwelling power of the Spirit of God. Christian love, brotherly love, is a grace, "Every one that loveth is born of God". That is the evidence. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. We may have to reprove them sometimes, and they may have to reprove us. But that does not mean that we spend our lives talking sugar-ed nothings. No; it means that in our hearts a real love for one another is born. Very well, then, that is a grace, and an expression of a consecrated life.

II.

Now, all that that I may make this application: "See that ye abound in this grace also". What is Paul talking about? The giving of money. He is talking about the gifts of these Corinthian people to the poor saints, the giving of money. And Paul says that Christian giving is not an act of the hand primarily, but a grace, something that springs out of the heart, from within. That is why I think there is little profit in exhorting people to give. You might as well ask a lame man to dance. You must give him a new leg before he can dance; or a dumb man to speak—you must unloose his tongue. I know you may with some kind of a corkscrew get five dollars out of someone. But that is not giving. God never gives a man credit for a penny given in that way. Giving, to the true Christian, is a grace, as much a grace as faith.

It is an expression of faith, for just as by faith my soul reposes upon God, because of the estimate faith enables me to form of Jesus Christ under the inspiration of His example, I must give all that I have to give—everything; not a tenth. That is a useful minimum, a place to begin. But you have no right to nine-tenths to spend as you like. We have no right to spend a dollar except under His administration; all that we have is His. As faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence and love are graces, so is giving a grace. You say: "I give". So did these Christians. Paul said to them, "Your liberality needs a little cultivation. Your faith is evident, and your utterance, your knowledge, your earnestness and your love for us, but as I walk through your garden I

see a little plant there. There is some life, it is growing; but it is living at an impoverished rate. Cultivate this grace; see that ye abound in this grace also. Learn to give, not only liberally, willingly, but hilariously, as though it were an inevitable expression of your life, as though you would choke if you had not a chance to give." That is the way to give: not reluctantly.

What is money? A medium of exchange. Yes; but to the Christian I will tell you what it is. All my mental powers, if I am a Christian, belong to the Lord; all my physical powers are His. And if that be so, then everything that this mind can produce, everything that my physical energy can produce, is equally the Lord's; I am altogether His. It is He Who gives us power to get wealth. I do not care whether it is five cents or five million dollars, it is God Who makes it possible for you to get it. And how dare we withhold from Him that which He gives to us!

As we believe in the Lord and in His gospel, we shall want to give, for instance, to missions. Here is a man who has not much money, and he surprises everyone with a large gift. You say to him: "Why did you give so much?" "Oh, do you not know, sir? I was a great sinner, and I thought I was lost. But I found a great Saviour. My heart responded to Him and I gave myself to Him, and He gave me such a great salvation, and then He filled my heart so that I could not help speaking about it. I confessed Him to everyone, and I know from the promise of His Word that the gospel is for everyone. I have a little knowledge about things like that, and then, really I feel sometimes as though there is something within me that would burn me up and send me out to tell others. I wish I could preach myself, but I cannot; but I can tell that I am a Christian. And when I think of people who have not the gospel, I find my heart warmed toward them, and I love them." "And is that why you gave?" "Yes." Faith, utterance, knowledge, earnestness, love, all found expression in the utmost gift of which the man was capable, because he wanted to give the gospel to others.

You see, my dear friends, we ought to recognize that seven days of every week, and twenty-four hours of every day, we belong to God. We are not our own; we are bought with a price. Therefore the entire product of our lives, be it much or little, belongs to God. And just as trees express their nature in the fruit they bear, so liberality is a natural fruit of a life that is hid with Christ in God. Our text implies that this grace may be cultivated. May it not be related to the other graces here named? May there not be a complementary fruitfulness in the Christian life? That is to say, may not every grace minister to all the others? Trees need something more than roots to live by. Their very leaves have a function to fulfil, and are not without relation to the fruit upon the branches. So I believe all Christian graces are related, even as all the members of the body; so that no one can say to the other, I have no need of thee.

For example, a great believer will inevitably become a generous giver. He who believes profoundly, and unwaveringly, will give generously and constantly. A man's faith will enable him to feel the force and authority of the Word of God. One who believes with all his heart and intellect in the Lord Jesus, and in the gospel of which He is the Alpha and Omega, will almost certainly proportion his giving to his faith: the more he believes, the more he will give.

Furthermore, as utterance is related to faith, so they are both related to giving. The Word of God teaches that faith should be expressed. A man who believes with his heart, should confess with his mouth. True faith will cast out the dumb devil, and compel a man to speak. And almost certainly the man whose confession is the utterance of the faith of his heart, will be compelled to justify the profession of his faith by his works. His utterance of words will make him liberal with his wealth. And as faith and utterance react upon each other, so will the grace of liberality upon both.

The same may be said of knowledge. Knowing what God has done, what He has promised to do, what the gospel prescribes as the only remedy for the world's ills, will make a man generous. The careful investor will obtain the fullest possible knowledge of that in which he proposes to invest. If success follows, it is regarded as a fruit of his business acumen, of his instinctive knowledge of the situation. Thus a genuine spiritual knowledge will inevitably make a man liberal. He will lay up for himself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

And so of spiritual earnestness, or diligence. If the zeal of the Lord consumes us, if faith and utterance and knowledge become as fagots kindled by the Heavenly Flame, and set us on fire with diligence, or earnestness for God, what can we do but give of that with which God has entrusted us?

So, too, will brotherly love, Christian affection, react upon the grace of giving. And, loving others—all men, for Christ's sake, but particularly such as belong to the household of faith—we shall be constrained to do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Thus the graces of Christian character are related one to the other; for the Lord would have us grow up into Christ in "all" things, not some things, in order that we may be symmetrical Christians, made in the image of Him Who created us.

The exhortation of the text is that we should "abound" in this grace also. And surely it follows that the several graces enumerated, with all others, must needs be cultivated together; and as we abound in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and diligence, and love to the brethren—and in everything—we shall "abound in this grace also". Then shall we understand more profoundly than ever the significance of that great confession:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

THE GIST OF FAITH

Faith is Obedience, so Abraham knew!
At the command of God he took his son
And journeyed, where the slaying should be done;
The father and the lad, only the two,
Went by themselves alone.
But Abraham's hand and sacrificial knife
Were stayed by interference from Above;
Obedient Faith rewarded by God's love;
And the young consecrated life
Left, Faith's reward to prove.
Therefore, dear Faith! lead the believing soul
In full surrender to the Will Divine;
Thus, as Obedience and Faith combine,
The Grace of God being in full control,
Christ's life shall in us shine.

—William Olney.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 35 Third Quarter September 1st, 1935

THE BLESSEDNESS OF FEARING GOD

Lesson Text: Psalms 128-134.

Golden Text: "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption."—Psalm 130:7.

Bible School Reading: Psalm 132:1-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Ex. 34:1-9; Tuesday—Deut. 28:1-10; Wednesday—II. Sam. 7:8-17; Thursday—II. Chron. 6:12-21; Friday—Matt. 18:23-35; Saturday—I. Cor. 9:18-27.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT

The blessedness of the one who fears God is recorded in this psalm. He shall eat the labour of his own hands; it shall be well with him; he shall be blessed of the Lord out of Zion, and see the good of Jerusalem all the days of his life. Note the nature of this fear; in its submission to the will of God, and its seeking to please Him, and avoid displeasing Him. God is first in the life of the one who fears Him, and every action is regulated by His will. The result is evident in the blessing received. God rewards those who diligently seek, and serve, Him. Observe the importance of fear, with its reverential attitude, in relation to one's actions and service (I. Peter 2:17). Do we fear God?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE

In this psalm praise is given to God for deliverance in times of affliction, and a petition is offered respecting enemies. The background of the psalm is national, but with the troubles of Hezekiah particularly in mind; and the history of Israel furnishes many examples of affliction and divine deliverances therefrom. Note the keen suffering depicted in the language used, and the almighty power of God manifested on behalf of His people. In the petition, the psalmist prays that the enemy might get a taste of that which he had made the Israelites to endure. He had destroyed their habitations, and made the people like dried roof-grass (II. Kings 19:26), and now God is asked to visit him in like manner. In its application to the individual, we can testify to the truth of the teaching of the psalm respecting the deliverances of God. He has prevented the wicked from triumphing over us; and our enemies have suffered in consequence of their sinfulness. All reap what they sow (Gal. 6:7). Are we at present living a life of victory over enemies?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY

This is a psalm in praise of the divine mercy, probably arising from the experience of Hezekiah (II. Kings 19:11), but found in the experience of all children of God. The psalmist in great distress calls upon God, experiences the blessing of God's mercy, and gives wholehearted testimony thereto. Note the psalmist's condition, his cry, his supplication, his confidence in God, his waiting on God, his hope in the word of God, and his exhortation to others to hope in God. The Lord hears and answers prayer, forgives the penitent, and redeems men. The greatness of the divine mercy may be pointed out. God forgives the worst sinner (I. Tim. 1:12-16), and promises to save all who come unto Him (Heb. 7:25). The bestowment of His mercy is conditioned on repentance, and faith in Christ (Acts, 2:38; Eph. 2:8), but it is free and full to whosoever will (John 3:10). Note the blessings of this mercy in time and eternity; and the gratitude which we ought to manifest on account of the same. How much do we owe to the mercy of God?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ONE

This psalm records a confession of humility before God, expressive probably of David's feelings on his assumption of the royal office; but repeated in the experience of Hezekiah (II. Chron. 32:26). It ought also to be true of our general

attitude respecting the things of the Lord. It is the humble person who receives divine blessing (Luke 18:9-14). Pride hinders blessing, and brings upon itself punishment (Prov. 16:18). Humility remembers what man is in the sight of God, and takes the sinner's rightful place (Is. 6:5). Pride forgets this, and presumes on its ignorance (Ex. 5:2). Humility manifests penitence, submission, and respect; and consequently is in a position to receive blessing. Note the nature of the psalmist's confession respecting his heart, his walk, his behaviour, and his general attitude. Are we truly humble in the sight of God?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO

In this psalm the psalmist pleads for the fulfilment of the covenant of David respecting the continuation of his house. We can understand Hezekiah's anxious care respecting this, if tradition is correct concerning his lack of a successor prior to his sickness. Here he brings to the remembrance of God, David and his afflictions, and mentions the intense desire of that king to find a place "for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob" (vs. 1-5). We are reminded of the Lord's own use of the name of His servant David in relation to the defence of Jerusalem, and the prolongation of Hezekiah's life (II. Kings 18:34; 20:5). The psalmist was therefore but following divine example in using the name of his forbear, and pleading it before God. David, despite his failures, was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), a specially chosen vessel for the carrying out of the divine purpose (I. Kings 11:34), a highly favoured person respecting the covenant (II. Sam. 7:8-17), and an ancestor and type of Jesus Christ (Acts 13:23).

Continuing his prayer, the psalmist refers to further words and acts of David, relating to the worship of the Lord in the tabernacle (vs. 6-9), wherein we note the devotion of that king to his God. He worshipped at His footstool. There is a reference also to the ark, a vital part of the sacred furniture (vs. 6-8; Ex. 40:3). A plea is then made for the continuance of the royal line for David's sake, and the divine covenant made to him is brought in remembrance (vs. 11, 12; II. Sam. 7:4-17). An additional plea based on God's choice of Zion, or Jerusalem, closes the psalm. God chose Israel for the accomplishment of His own purpose (Deut. 7:6-8). It was a choice of grace, a bestowment of divine favour, which meant much to the nation concerned, and to the whole world. God carried out His part faithfully, but man lamentably failed in his duty. Note the various parts of the divine promises, intimating permanency of reign, and of the divine presence, plentiful provision, continued joyful worship, and victory over enemies. The goodness of God is manifest throughout. Observe the important place, historically and spiritually, held by David. What divine promises should we plead in our prayers?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE

This psalm eulogizes unity among brethren. This obtained at one time in Israel, but the disruption under Rehoboam caused it to cease (I. Kings 12:19). In the observance of the passover in the first year of Hezekiah's reign there was a modified form of unity which caused great joy in Israel (II. Chron. 30). The teaching of the psalm is that unity among brethren is both good and pleasant. It is also fragrant as the precious ointment, and abundantly refreshing as the dew of Hermon which proceeded from God. We are enjoined to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). Hearts right with God remain in unity. Sin disrupts unity. Note our Lord's prayer respecting oneness in Him (John 17:21); also the necessity for unity, based on obedience to the Word of God, if Christian work is to be carried on satisfactorily. The destroyer of such unity receives divine condemnation (Rom. 16:17, 18). Are we in unity with God, and working together in unity with those who love Him?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR

This psalm forms a fit conclusion to the series of songs of degrees. The psalmist loved the Lord, and all pertaining to Him; and in these few verses he calls upon the servants of God to bless their Lord. They, in return, pronounce the Mosaic blessing upon the people. Note Paul's direction respecting the lifting up of the hands in prayer (I. Tim. 2:8); also the duty and privilege of praising God in His sanctuary. Do we praise God as much as we should?

A MODERNIST'S VIEW OF "SPURGEONISM"

The New Outlook, published in Toronto, is the official organ of the United Church of Canada. No doubt within the United Church there are thousands of people who still love the Word of God, and the gospel of salvation. Very probably there are large numbers of ministers who personally believe and preach salvation through the blood of Christ. Thus charitably, we hope, we are estimating the United Church. Personally, we have no knowledge of such ministers. But the United Church, officially, and practically all the ministers of whom we ever hear, are decided and unmistakable Modernists.

The United Church on more than one occasion has officially expressed its sympathy with Socialistic movements, and on one or two occasions has aligned, if not allied, itself with the notorious C.C.F. (Canadian Commonwealth Federation), which is a new political party that but thinly veils its Communism.

The New Outlook is always on the side of those who seek to discredit the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God. We refer to it now because of a letter which appears in *The New Outlook* of May 29th, 1935. It appears on page 545, and is entitled, "A Letter From London, by Ernest H. Jeffs".

We do not know who Mr. Jeffs is. We never heard of the gentleman before—perhaps that is a mark of ignorance on our part. But there are two paragraphs which are interesting. One reads as follows:

"We are awakening to a chief source of the weakening of the power of the pulpit in these days. Our ministers are better trained than ever before, better—or certainly as good—in native gifts and character; but they are almost invariably oppressed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern preacher ought to preach about. Is he to preach political and economic reform? Is he to be primarily an evangelist—or an apologist of Christian faith as against humanism or Communism or mechanistic psychology? He would do well at his job if only he were sure of what his job really is."

In this paragraph Mr. Jeffs tells us that ministers are "better trained than ever before"; that they are "better—or certainly as good—in native gifts and character, but they are almost invariably oppressed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern preacher ought to preach about." What an indictment of the ministry! A telegraph office with no wires through which to receive, or over which to transmit, messages! A postman making his rounds, with no letters to deliver! A baker going from street to street, ringing doorbells, and crying, "Baker"—only to confess when the poor housewife comes for bread that he does not quite know why he called, that as a matter of fact he has no bread to sell! A milkman going the rounds, calling himself a milkman, but no milk even for the babies!

At the conclusion of the paragraph Mr. Jeffs says,

"He (the preacher) would do well at his job if only he were sure of what his job really is."

And so the modern minister does not know what his job really is! We have long believed that to be true. We have met hundreds of ministers who seemed not to have the remotest idea whither they were going,—north, south, east, or west. Remarkably able men, of course! Educated? Certainly! Scholarly? So we may charitably assume. Able for almost any job, presumably; but, poor fellow, he does not know what his job really is! Was there ever a more damning indictment of the pulpit of our day?

But wonder of wonders! Let us hear the second para-

graph which we quote from Mr. Jeffs' letter:

"Rev. H. Tydeman Chilvers has rather suddenly and unexpectedly resigned his pastorate of Spurgeon's Tabernacle. The third minister of that famous church since C. H. Spurgeon's death—the others were 'Son Tom' Spurgeon and the American Dr. A. C. Dixon—Mr. Chilvers has done very good work, and has kept together a good congregation on the basis of a sturdy adherence to the Spurgeonic tradition in theology. But it cannot be said that the tabernacle stands for much more than the romantic loyalty of a Fundamentalist remnant. The Baptist denomination has moved on from Spurgeonism. Many are hoping that the great tabernacle may now be linked up with the main body of the Baptist churches, and may become once more the central preaching place of a denomination whose real glory is not its theological conservatism but its unbroken history of evangelistic zeal and love of liberty, both in Church and State."

The writer damns Mr. Chilvers with faint praise, but unwittingly pays him a great compliment:

"Mr. Chilvers has done very good work, and has kept together a good congregation on the basis of a sturdy adherence to the Spurgeonic tradition in theology. But it cannot be said that the tabernacle stands for much more than the romantic loyalty of a Fundamentalist remnant."

Evidently Mr. Chilvers knew what his job was, and the writer admits that Mr. Chilvers has done "very good work". Surely that is more than can be said of any preacher "oppressed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern preacher ought to preach about"! We are told Mr. Chilvers "kept together a good congregation on the basis of a sturdy adherence to the Spurgeonic tradition in theology." It is an unintended compliment, however, to admit that there was a "sturdy adherence" to something. That surely is better than the "general vagueness" which Mr. Jeffs complains belongs to most ministers.

But it is to the rest of the paragraph we specially direct attention:

"The Baptist denomination has moved on from Spurgeonism. Many are hoping that the great tabernacle may now be linked up with the main body of the Baptist churches, and may become once more the central preaching place of a denomination whose real glory is not its theological conservatism but its unbroken history of evangelistic zeal and love of liberty, both in Church and State."

There can be no doubt that "the Baptist denomination has moved on from Spurgeonism." The Baptist Union of Great Britain, officially, has little in common with the gospel which Mr. Spurgeon preached with such marvellous effectiveness. Mr. Spurgeon died in 1892, forty-three years ago. Yet we doubt not there are still thousands of people living who were converted through Mr. Spurgeon's ministry. It might be said of the hundreds of thousands who, through the Word preached by Mr. Spurgeon, and published throughout the world, were made new creatures in Christ, as it is written of the church generally:

"One army of the living God,
To His command they bow;
Part of His host hath crossed the flood,
And part is crossing now."

The vast multitude who were saved through Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, the thousands who, directly and indirectly, were set preaching the gospel by his inspiration, the hundreds of churches that came into being all over the world—perhaps thousands—through the influence of his preaching—these results did not flow from one "oppress-

ed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern preacher ought to preach about". But Mr. Jeffs says, "The Baptist denomination has moved on from Spurgeonism." If it has, it has been to its own spiritual loss and undoing.

He further says,

"Many are hoping that the great tabernacle may now be linked up with the main body of the Baptist churches, and may become once more the central preaching place of a denomination whose real glory is not its theological conservatism but its unbroken history of evangelistic zeal and love of liberty, both in Church and State."

What humbug! What utter nonsense! Presumably the Baptist denomination has kept up with the others, and Baptist preachers are included among those whom Mr. Jeffs describes as "almost invariably oppressed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern preacher ought to preach about"!

Many are hoping, then, according to this, that this will soon become characteristic of the Metropolitan Tabernacle; that it will be occupied by a man who is "better trained" than Spurgeon was, or any other minister of his day; a man who will be "better in native gifts and character," but who will be "oppressed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern preacher ought to preach about"! What else can this letter mean? The Metropolitan Tabernacle, then "many" hope, is to become the centre of a "general vagueness"!

But Mr. Jeffs intends to be complimentary to the Baptist denomination in England by speaking of it as a denomination that has had some "real glory". Now what is that "real glory"? He tells us first what it was not: it was not "its theological conservatism"; but rather, "its unbroken history of evangelistic zeal and love of liberty, both in Church and State". How in the name of common sense can anybody be evangelistically zealous if he has no evangel to preach? The only evangel we know anything about is that of which the New Testament is full—and that was the evangel which made "the great Tabernacle" necessary. That was the evangel which kept the Tabernacle full to the end of Mr. Spurgeon's life. And

we rejoice to believe that that is the evangel that has been preached in the Metropolitan Tabernacle—Mr. Jeffs himself being witness—right up to the conclusion of Mr. Chilvers' ministry.

All honour to Mr. Chilvers that his ministry was characterized by a "sturdy adherence to the Spurgeonic tradition in theology"; which can mean nothing less than a ministry that was loyal to the Word of God.

How can the "real glory" of a denomination be "its unbroken history of evangelistic zeal and love of liberty, both in Church and State", when many of its ministers are now "oppressed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern preacher ought to preach"? If "love of liberty" be an element in a denomination's "real glory", why are its ministers "almost invariably oppressed and hampered"? Can it be said that men who are "almost invariably oppressed and hampered" exemplify any sort of "liberty"? And if part of a denomination's "real glory" be its "unbroken history of evangelistic zeal", while its ministers are "almost invariably oppressed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern minister ought to preach", we can only conclude that the Baptist denomination's "real glory" is that it enjoys liberty to be zealous over an evangel of "general vagueness".

Lovers of the gospel the world around will not be included in the "many" who are hoping—for that is the logic of Mr. Jeffs' position—that those who attend the Metropolitan Tabernacle will soon be privileged to listen to a minister "better trained than ever before, better—or certainly as good—in native gifts and character; but almost invariably oppressed and hampered by a general vagueness as to what a modern preacher ought to preach about". On the contrary, they will pray that that church whose name from the beginning until now has been synonymous with loyalty to the Bible as the Word of God, and to the gospel of salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, may, in the providence of God, so continue that from the Metropolitan Tabernacle, as always, there may sound out the word of the Lord.

WHAT STILL OTHERS SAY ABOUT "OTHER LITTLE SHIPS"

We received to-day two more reviews of, "Other Little Ships". One is by our good friend, Rev. Henry Oakley, of Trinity Road Baptist Church, London, England; and appears in *The Witness*, the monthly magazine of the Trinity Road Church, for August, 1935. Brother Oakley is very generous in his appraisal of our poor efforts. We apologize to our readers, for we are almost afraid to publish so eulogistic a review in THE GOSPEL WITNESS. But we really want people to read the book. Not long since we received very definite information of one to whom a friend had lent the book, being converted through the reading of it. If what Brother Oakley has written should induce anyone to buy it, we shall feel justified in having printed it. But in printing it we are reminded of a certain minister who, when someone expressed appreciation of his sermon, playfully said to his friend who had given him the compliment, "I don't believe a word of it; but will you please say it over again"! In view, however, of the somewhat contemptuous reference quoted elsewhere in these pages in respect to "the Spurgeonic tradition", it may not be amiss to let it be known that there are still some Baptists who value the gospel Spurgeon preached.

The second review is from *The Canadian Bookman*, and speaks for itself.

From *THE WITNESS*, Rev. Henry Oakley, Editor
Dr. Shields' Latest Book

While we were away Dr. Shields kindly sent us a copy of his new book, with a very honouring inscription in his own

handwriting. There are fourteen sermons in the volume; seven are from the Old Testament and seven are from the New Testament, a proportion that discloses at once something of the preacher's mind. "All Scripture" is not a meaningless or out-worn phrase to him. The first sermon, "Other Little Ships", gives the title to the book.

I have read the sermons with the attention and experience of a preacher. I once wrote "The homiletics of Dr. Shields are miles apart from Mr. Spurgeon's". A minister soon after said to me: "I think you are wrong in that," and I straightway said, "I think myself it was a mistake which I discovered almost before the words were in print." Now after reading these sermons right through almost at a sitting, I am sure I was wrong. Dr. Shields handles a text in his own way, but it is certainly in a way that was Mr. Spurgeon's.

These sermons are the sermons of a great preacher. Interesting, clever, instructive, pleasing preachers we have in abundance, but the truly great preacher is terribly scarce to-day. Possibly the first figure would give the number of such in Great Britain. Great preachers differ, of course, in their greatness. There was the greatness of Mr. Spurgeon, and the greatness of Dr. MacLaren, and the greatness of Canon Liddon and Dr. Parker. "One star differeth from another star in glory". Dr. Shields has a greatness after his own order, but greatness it surely is. Select any one of these sermons. Take the one at which the book falls open, "The Swelling of Jordan"—a subject at which most preach-

ers stagger a little. But here Dr. Shields is in full stride. He seizes the principle of the text and applies it in the most masterly way—the philosopher, the theologian, the evangelist, the orator, all appear in him in this sermon. There is no other word in our language that can describe this sermon except the word “great”.

The *scripturalness* of the sermons is one of their marked features. It is remarkable how scriptural they are without being exegetical in the way Bishop Westcott and Dr. MacLaren were exegetical. Some of these sermons Dr. MacLaren could never have preached, and yet even Dr. MacLaren was not more scriptural. It is one of the charms of the sermons that they offer you the finest of the wheat without dissecting the kernels. Sermon number eight, “How to be hospitable to the Truth”, is an example of this. Scriptural it is in every part, but in no way exegetical in the way of the exegete.

The *spontaneousness* of the discourses is a rare delight. When you read the work of a preacher like Dr. J. H. Jowett, for example, however much you take pleasure in the perfection of his phrasing, you cannot rid yourself of the smell of the midnight oil. There is somehow the reminder of the old hand pump and not of the easy rush and flow of the spring on the hillside. It is perfect ease and naturalness that is characteristic of Dr. Shields’ work. The sermons are like the flow of a mountain river that has reached the valley, in which there is no suggestion of toil, or the faintest hint of exertion, or of exhaustion. It just flows and gives you the impression that it could flow for ever and know no weariness. The greatest matters of life are presented and discussed with perfect ease. Take the sermon on “The Culture of the Soul”, on page 209. It is a profound philosophical discourse, but its sunny ease has a charm like the singing of birds.

Another of the delights of the volume for me is the *illustrations*. They are culled from everywhere, but chiefly from the preacher’s own experience, and for me these are illustrations that tell as well as illustrate. You may read through the whole thirty-two volumes of Dr. MacLaren’s sermons and never know that he was a man among men and so it is in the sermons of Dean Church. They kept an unchanging severity of impersonality. In the biography of Dr. MacLaren there is a passage in which he defends this, but I believe his great sermons lost much of “the human touch” just because they were so severely impersonal. I do not think there need be any sacrifice of literary grace and ideal in wisely and carefully using our experience in illustration of truth. Dr. Alexander Whyte was a prince among preachers who had given tireless attention to style and he achieved great perfection as a stylist; yet he never excluded illustrations from his life and doings. Personally I think some of the most telling passages in these sermons and passages that will longest linger in the memory and life of the readers are the stories from the Doctor’s rich and varied experience. Here is one from the first sermon, “Other Little Ships”:

“I heard Professor George Jackson deliver an address before the Toronto Ministerial Association. The subject was, I think, ‘John Morley, the Priest of the Outer Court’. He

extolled John Morley, the biographer of Gladstone, he described his blameless character, his wonderfully serviceable life, his amiable disposition and held him up as a kind of superman; being careful to point out that in the production of this character religion had no part; for John Morley was an agnostic. I happened to walk up the street with Dr. Jackson after the meeting and I said, ‘Doctor, has it ever occurred to you that Morleyism never yet produced a John Morley, that you cannot find a John Morley where Christ is not preached and His principles unknown? All the influences that made him what he was had their origin in the very religion which he refused to acknowledge.’ ‘There were also with him other little ships’; and everything that is good in what we call our civilization is there because Jesus sails the seas.”

You cannot turn many pages in this attractive book without reaching some *aptly quoted verse* of a hymn—not a strained passage from a modern poet the meaning of which is difficult to catch, but a verse where the meaning stands at the front door. Again I let the book fall open and within three pages is this verse.

His honour is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep;
All that His Heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep.

The general preaching of to-day refuses such quotations, but the general preaching of to-day is without power and I rather think Dr. Shields can teach us how to get the power back again. But natural and easy quotation needs great ability. How much I have coveted and do covet it, but it seems not for me, admire it and covet it as I do.

I must stop although I would have liked to write upon the originality, the boldness and the splendid evangelicalness of these sermons.

From *THE CANADIAN BOOKMAN*

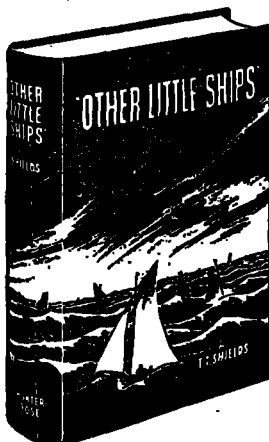
A Dauntless Fighter Before the Lord

“OTHER LITTLE SHIPS” by Rev. T. T. Shields, Toronto, Hunter-Rose Company, \$1.50.

The uncompromising champion of fundamental evangelism provides another quota of sermons in this new book of “treasures new and old” from Biblical sources. Dr. Shields is a master of poetical imagery and euphony and the power of the oral delivery from his pulpit at Jarvis Street Baptist Church in Toronto is inherent, losing little if anything of their force, in the form of the printed page.

In the dauntless battles which Dr. Shields has for years been fighting are continued with no abatement and with no compromise. It is no exaggeration to say that his influence is felt around the world. The successive volumes of his sermons form a little library in themselves that will long continue to preserve the tenets of the gospel faith as Dr. Shields so eloquently presents it.

A feature of this book is the set of prayers, one at the commencement of each sermon, touching the needs of humanity at many angles.



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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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