

# The Gospel Witness

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"IN THE TENT DOOR IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY"

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, August 18th, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

"And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day."—Gen. 18:1.

### Prayer Before the Sermon:

We thank Thee, O Lord, for a place of refuge to which tired pilgrims may turn when on the road heavenward. We thank Thee for Him Who is as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Once more we praise Thee for the precious blood, for the cleansing which Thy grace has provided. We thank Thee for the best robe, even the robe of righteousness, for the tokens of Thy special and peculiar love which Thou hast given us: for the ring on our hand, and for the preparation of the gospel of peace—the shoes with which our feet are shod that we may walk before Thee in the way of Thy commandments. We thank Thee that Thou dost never change. We live in a world of change, of disillusionment and disappointment. The things we value crumble to dust in our hands. The persons, very often, in whom we trusted prove to be as frail as we are, and as unstable. Oh, we thank Thee for One Who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever; of whom it is written: Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.

We bless Thee, O Lord, that Thou didst choose us as we have read this morning, that we were chosen before the foundation of the world, and Thou didst choose us with the full knowledge of our inherent sinfulness, of our fickle dispositions, of all the things which cause us to mourn in Thy presence. Thou didst see us ruined by the fall, yet Thou didst love us notwithstanding all. Thou dost save us from our lost estate. Thy lovingkindness, O how great!

We come to Thee this morning with hearts full of gratitude, with praise and thanksgiving upon our lips, because Thou hast disclosed Thyself to us in Him Who has sealed Thy covenant with His own blood as a covenant-keeping God, as One upon Whose promises we may depend. We bless Thee this morning for this solid Rock upon which our feet are placed, for this ground of assurance which we have in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Look, we pray Thee, upon this company of people. Most of us here doubtless have professed faith in Thee. We profess and call ourselves Christians, yet, Lord, we are conscious of shortcomings,—yes; of wrong doings,—yes; of limitations in every direction. We cease not to wonder that Thy

love should have been given to us. And we find comfort this morning in a sense of Thy favour.

If any in this company are in peculiar circumstances this morning, and in special difficulty, or in situations which, perhaps, have tried them to the limit of endurance, and of their capacity for finding a way out, we pray that such may receive a special visitation from the Spirit of God. May some word of comfort find them, that they, too, may go from this place with new hope, with new courage, strengthened with all might in the inner man.

Give us, we pray Thee, a deeper desire to know Thy will, a firmer courage in the face of the enemy, a more settled and unwavering determination to go on with Thee. Instruct us out of Thy word. Help us that we may recognize that it is Thy word.

We commend to Thee those who are absent from us, those who are seeking rest and refreshment, some whose duties prevent their attendance, some who are sick, or indisposed. May the Father's blessing rest upon them all.

And now especially if there are any here this morning who know not the Lord, who cannot read their title clear to mansions in the sky, we pray that Thou wilt be gracious to them. Speak some peace-bringing word to their souls, so that this service may close with every one of us rejoicing in Thee as God and Saviour. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

I have not travelled over the desert on a camel, but I have travelled not a few times through the desert by train, and I know of nothing more trying than a journey through parts of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, or California, in the heat of the summer. When travelling thus I have observed on the menu cards in the dining car a special menu sometimes headed: "Hot weather suggestions". It is rather an irksome business to go into a dining car in the desert. One feels as though he would rather go without a meal than face it. But if you are going on a journey of several days, it becomes a necessity, and sometimes one is rather grateful for simple suggestions as to how to order a meal on a hot day.

I want to give you a summer menu this morning, a simple sermon for a hot summer's day. We have done very well so far at least in that we have a good text: "The Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day." That is exactly what you would have done. You would have gone where you could still enjoy the shade and yet take advantage of any movement of air there might be.

## I.

Now that is characteristic of the Bible. The Bible understands us, and it is written so that we may understand God. THE BIBLE ALWAYS RECOGNIZES HUMAN FRAILTY. Of Him Who is its Author, it is said: "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." The Lord never treats His children as though they were machines, as though they were a piece of iron mechanism that could not be broken, or could not be wearied. He knows of what we are made, for He made us. He knows the limitations of these physical natures. He, Himself, "took not on him the nature of angels", who excel in strength, who unweariedly do His commandments, who are as a flaming fire, hearkening to the voice of His word—nay, rather: "He took on him the seed of Abraham." It is written of Him that He was made in the likeness of men. He, Himself, knew what it was to need sleep; that is to say, His own physical nature reached the end of its resources, and so we read of His sleeping even in the midst of a storm. It is said of Him that He was weary with His journey.

I suppose some of us are rather ashamed to acknowledge that we are ever weary. It is refreshing, I admit, to meet people who seem to be perennially strong, whose resources of vigour seem almost inexhaustible. And yet the strongest of us has to admit that there are times when we are glad the day's work is done, that we are glad of an opportunity to rest awhile. We are often, all of us, weary with our journey, as was the Lord Himself. And even as I have spoken another text has come to your mind. I am sure that you have been saying, "He will surely not neglect to quote that!" No, I shall not neglect it: When in that hour of crisis, the hour for which all other hours were made, when He was approaching the time and the place where He would finish the work God had given Him to do, and when those pregnant hours were so crowded with interest, and His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, when one might have supposed that His disciples would have exerted themselves to obey His exhortation to watch with Him—yet when they were so tired and so sorrowful that they fell asleep, and He found them sleeping, and He knew why they slept—that they were "sleeping for sorrow"—you remember how He excused them so tenderly, saying: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak!"

So I would remind you that God, Himself, and the Word of God, are always vitally solicitous for our welfare, never unduly accusing, always remembering that there are limitations beyond which flesh and blood cannot go. I think that is rather a striking and suggestive line that the Spirit of God should have moved the writer of Genesis to record, that this old man, for such he was, on a very hot day, did exactly what any frail human creature would have been likely to do: he sat in the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

The Lord does not blame us for being tired, nor does He censure us for taking a rest. He recognizes that the

supply of energy runs down, and that quiet nature's sweet restorer must sometimes do her work.

It is comfortable, is it not, to come into the presence of one who understands? I like to see people take things comfortably. I tell the students in the Seminary that they never will be able to make a congregation feel comfortable in the pew so long as they are uncomfortable in the pulpit. I have sometimes laboured with the preacher, and have been relieved for his sake when he reached the end of his discourse, because it seemed such a laborious undertaking from beginning to end. There are people who rest you by their own restfulness. Somehow or another they have learned to take life as they find it, and not to make a fuss about it. They have learned to find the coolest place on a hot day, to sit in the tent door,—to receive their visitors, if you like, on the verandah, or anywhere, informally, and to be comfortable with them.

I would have you think of God in such terms, for you will remember the Lord Jesus met people while they were about their work; when they had not on their best clothes; when they were not formally arrayed for state occasions, when they were in negligée, when they were just ordinary common folks—just like you and me, for that is what we are! We have a God Who understands common people, and this story tells us how He deals with them, with the man who sits in the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

## II.

You need to be very careful, then, my dear friends. GREAT DANGERS LURK IN HOURS OF IDLENESS, and sometimes in periods of relaxation, when people seek refreshment and recuperation. I have been a Pastor for some years, and I have observed that people sometimes come back from their holidays, perhaps refreshed physically, but manifestly having deteriorated to some extent in their spiritual life. I venture to say that it takes even an evangelical, biblical, congregation sometimes months to recover from the spiritual dissipation of the summer time. Sometimes it is well on toward Christmas before people seem to get back to the bearing of their burden.

Be careful what you do when you sit in the tent door in the heat of the day. *Be careful of the occupation of your mind.* Do not let it wander too far. Have regard to your thoughts, to the subject of meditation, while you sit in the tent door.

Please observe that *while Abraham was thus employed, the Lord appeared to him*, as though He would say: "Abraham, it is a hot day, and you are very tired, but I cannot allow Myself to be excluded from your meditation. I have come to talk to you for a little while, even on a hot day."

There are people you do not want to see on a hot day. Is not that true? I have no doubt but that some of you ladies when you have been busy about your necessary household duties, though perhaps you have not exactly put it into words, have said to yourselves: "I hope nobody will call to-day." And you were wise in that attitude. I called on somebody on Friday, down by the lakeside. And I said, "Do not worry, we are not going to stay. We just looked in." "Oh", they said, "but you must stay." Their hospitality was boundless. They said to us, "How many visitors do you suppose we had last Sunday? Sixteen!" I did not say it to them, but I said to myself: "Your visitors ought to have been thrashed." What an imposition upon people who are try-

ing to find a little rest. Our hospitable friends did not complain: they seemed to have been glad to have visitors. But it is not always so. In some circumstances you don't want to receive strangers. I hazard the opinion that there are some of you who, under certain circumstances, would rather see almost anyone else than the Pastor, unless he sent word in advance that he was coming. You know there are people you do not want to see. I was going on a vacation years ago and someone playfully said to me: "Goodbye, Pastor! Go away and be wicked." I said, "What!" "Well", he said, "do not be too good." I suppose that inadvertently, unconsciously, he expressed a principle there that we need to guard against. In periods of relaxation, when sitting in the tent door, let us be careful.

But for the Christian there should be one Visitor Who is always welcome. You do not leave the Lord at home when you go on vacation, do you? You have heard the story of the little girl who at the end of a day's packing, before going to the seaside, when she had finished her evening prayers added a little one of her own: "Good-bye, Lord, till September!"

There are some professing Christians who almost say, "Good-bye" to their religion in the summer time. But observe, Abraham's God would not allow Himself to be thus dismissed, even in the heat of the day, for He appeared to Abraham at just such a time. I think it is very likely that Abraham was thinking of Him then. We have a saying—it is almost proverbial, that if you speak of angels you are likely to hear the rustling of their wings. You have heard some friend playfully remark upon that when you suddenly, unexpectedly, appeared: "Why, how remarkable! I was just speaking about you." What telepathic influences may play one upon another to make that so generally true I am not prepared to say. But let me tell you this, that whenever we think of the Lord, He is not far away. It was while the disciples talked about Jesus that He, Himself, drew near. If our hours of quiet and rest are spent in profitable meditation, it is very probable we shall have a Visitor.

The Lord appeared to Abraham, and I would remind you that *He came anonymously*. Abraham did not know who He was. This is the case to which the New Testament refers when it speaks of people's entertaining angels unawares.

Now Abraham was, first of all, unaware of the identity of his Visitor. The Lord often comes to His people anonymously. When He drew near to the two disciples on the Emmaus road and talked with them, they actually said to Him: "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" The Stranger said: "What things?" They said, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." The Lord does not come with a blast of trumpets. He does not send a herald before Him to announce His approach: often He quietly steals upon us as we sit in the tent door in the heat of the day. He comes to us in all situations, and it is important that we, who are Christians, should always be in such a frame of mind that we shall welcome His approach, that we shall be able to respond to His appeal.

Now let me give you a very homely picture. I know it is commonplace, but it is exactly like what might happen with you or me, if we were similarly conditioned. There came these strangers, three men, who stood by. Three of them. Abraham was unable to distinguish be-

tween them. They were all alike to him; but they were not all alike. There was One accompanied by two servants from another world. Abraham did not know it; but he saw them, and in a very ordinary, commonplace way, offered them such hospitality as he was able to show. "When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground." There were three, but there was One Who was different. Abraham did not know Him by name, but as a matter of courtesy only he bowed before Him, and called him, "My Lord". Rather an extraordinary thing that he should have addressed one, and not three! But instinctively he knew that One differed from the other two. And he said: "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said."

Then Abraham ran to tell his wife that they had visitors. "He hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth." I suppose he said to Sarah: "You make the cakes while I run and get a calf dressed, and we shall have it all ready shortly." Very soon all the attendants were busy making ready for the entertainment of these guests on a hot day in the summer time.

The New Testament enjoins us to exercise the grace of hospitality, using this incident to illustrate its profitability. We do well to exercise hospitality when we can, and I remind you that very often if we show our religion in the common things, in doing the ordinary tasks of life as they ought to be done, as Christians, we shall find a very special and peculiar blessing.

I am glad we have not to be in church all the time to learn. Some of the best lessons of life are to be learned by the wayside, some of them in the kitchen. It is not recorded that Sarah raised any objection. It would not have been surprising, as the burden of it rested upon her, if she had said, "Oh, Abraham! Three visitors on a hot day like this! Did you ask them to stay? Why did you not just nod and let them pass on. Whatever do you mean by asking three people to dinner on a hot day?" I knew a man Who once said to me, "I do not know how you do it. You seem somehow to be always ready at your house. I have heard you ask people to go home with you, and I knew that your wife did not know they were coming. Now, I have the finest home in the world, and the finest wife in the world, but I always have to give notice before I invite anyone. She is so particular that she will not have anyone until she can get out her best china and silver, and all the rest of it, and all must be polished up for the occasion. I would not dare say to anyone, without notice to my wife, 'Come home with me to dinner.'" Well, I knew his wife. She was a fine lady, I am sure. But he would have heard something from his Sarah if he had invited three people home to luncheon without notice.

Sarah is noted for her faith as well as Abraham. There was a beautiful co-operation between these two. What Abraham wanted Sarah wanted, and what Sarah wanted Abraham wanted, most of the time. They may have had differing tastes occasionally, or a little stronger faith at sometimes than others. But in the main, they were agreed. Now it is a great blessing to have a bit of gen-

uine religion at home, and to let it manifest itself in these prosy, commonplaces, of life.

### III.

Let us now see what came of it. Let us see WHAT ISSUED FROM ABRAHAM'S BEHAVIOUR, AND THAT OF SARAH, ON A HOT DAY. This was the Angel of the Covenant, an Old Testament appearance of the Lord of glory. The Jews said to Jesus: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" And Jesus said: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." "Hast Thou seen Abraham?" He could have answered, "Oh, yes; I have seen him many times, and one never-to-be-forgotten day I called on him on a hot day, and I found him sitting at the tent door, and he received Me, and there were two angels with Me."

Somehow Abraham divined Who He was. And do you know what He said? In effect He said: "Abraham, you remember the promise I gave you a good while ago. That promise has not been fulfilled yet, but I have called in to tell you that I have not forgotten it." Did anyone ever make a promise to you to do certain things, the fulfilment of which was delayed? But one day that person called and said, "I have called to explain. I promised to do a certain thing, and I have not done it as yet, but I want you to know I have not forgotten it. It is still before me."

And so this Stranger from another world said: "Abraham is your wife here?" "Yes." "Well, I want to talk to both of you. I want to tell you that that promise I made to you a good while ago is going to be fulfilled." When Sarah heard it she laughed. He said: "What are you laughing at?" "Oh", she said, "I did not laugh." "But you did. Do not laugh at My promises. I am not slack concerning My promise, as some men count slackness. Do not suppose that I have forgotten, because I have kept you waiting for a while. I have been trying you both, but it will be done."

My dear friends, *it is a good thing to hear the promise over again on a hot day, is it not?* Is there a promise upon which you have been leaning? Perhaps it is the promise of salvation. I met someone the other day, not doubting, certainly not unbelieving, and yet sometimes asking a question. She asked me about the believer's security. In effect she said, "I wish you would tell me over again. Of course, I believe it, but won't you please repeat the promise over again?"

Do you not need that sometimes when you feel yourself to be so wretchedly undeserving of any kind of divine favour; and you are inclined to ask: "Can it be possible?" If so, sit still and meditate until the Lord comes and visits you, and He will repeat His promises to you. We need to hear the old texts repeated again and again. And do not laugh at what God says. May we be saved from the folly of ever supposing that God could fail at any point to fulfil His promises.

### IV.

Observe now A VERY IMPORTANT POINT. Lot was not there. He was away, separated from Abraham. Then this Stranger said in effect: "Abraham, about Lot! Where is he?" "He is yonder toward Sodom." "And that is where I am going now. The cry of that city has come up to heaven. It is a stench in the divine nostrils. I am going down to make a personal investigation, to see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not, I will know, so that every mouth

may be stopped. There shall not anyone be able to say that they were not given a chance to repent. I am going to Sodom to see for Myself."

The two angels went on, and the Lord Himself remained, and Abraham stood before Him. Observe therefore that the greatest prayer of his life Abraham learned to pray as he sat in the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He never would have prayed then for Lot if God had not come to him. He never would have found it in his heart to ask the great thing he asked if God had not revealed His plan to him. God said: "Abraham do you see that black cloud overhanging Sodom? The judgment of God is in that, and at My word it will fall. Lightnings will flash, and Sodom and all the cities of the plain will be destroyed." "But that is where Lot lives!" cried Abraham. "He has not been very good to me. He has not been very loyal to me, but I did the best I could for him. He saw to it that he looked after his own interests, and he left me. After we built the altar Lot did not agree with me, and he left me. But still I love him."

Can you pray for people who have not been very good to you? Can you pray for people who seem to deserve chastisement and even judgment? You remember Abraham's prayer that Sodom might be spared for the sake of the righteous that might be therein. But there was not enough vicarious righteousness there to save Sodom. At last Abraham left off speaking: he presented his final petition, and then said, "I will leave it there."

Then the terrible story follows of how all that had come up before God was proved to be true, and the angels came to Lot and hurried him out of the City, saying: "The Lord has sent us to destroy the city." When they were clear of the city the fire fell, and the cities of the plain became a burning fiery furnace. But the scripture says that "God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt."

Thus because Abraham was thinking of God on a hot day, he was inspired to pray, to pray for somebody's salvation, and Lot was saved because Abraham prayed.

The danger to-day is as great as it was then. The devil is just as active. Sodom with all its perils is quite as real. What are we doing in the summer time? Do we still pray? Remember, will you, we still meet for prayer Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings. Let us, as individuals, and as a church, throughout the summer, be ready always to receive a Visitor, and the promise will be found to be just as true in August as in December: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Thank God, He does not need a vacation. He is never away from home: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Is there an unsaved man or woman here this morning? I remind you that Lot was saved in the summer time, and that judgment fell upon Sodom in the summer time. Let us all escape to the mountain,—there is but one—even to the place called Calvary where there is a fountain filled with blood.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that Thine ear is ever attentive to our cry. Help us to profit by our simple meditation this morning. May our hearts be so attuned to Thee, and to Thy will that we may recognize Thine approach, and welcome Thee at Thy coming. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 36 Third Quarter September 8th, 1935

### THE ENDURING MERCY OF GOD

Lesson Text: Psalms 135 to 139.

Golden Text: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands."—Psalm 138:8.

Bible School Reading: Psalm 135:1-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Gen. 1:14-23; Tuesday—Ex. 12:29-36; Wednesday—Deut. 8:11-20; Thursday—Is. 14:1-11; Friday—Acts 7:51-60; Saturday—John 14:1-7.

#### PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE

In this psalm we are exhorted to praise the Lord, certain reasons being mentioned for doing so. Servants of the Lord are specially urged to offer praise. They are the divine representatives, have the more intimate knowledge of God, and should therefore be leaders in blessing His holy name. We are enjoined to praise Him because He is good. His holiness is beyond doubt (I. Pet. 1:10), and His goodness is manifest in the history of His people, in His attitude toward men in general, and in His kindness to His own in these days. We praise His name, further, because "it is pleasant" (v. 3). The name of the Lord is pleasant to all those who love Him, and they delight to hear it uttered. Another reason for praising God relates to His choice of Israel for Himself. This nation was His peculiar treasure (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6-8), as the church is His people of great price (Matt. 13:45, 46). Note the love of God manifest in this choice, and the privilege of those thus chosen. God's greatness, manifest in heaven and earth, is a further reason for praising Him. He is Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Note the scientific aspect of these statements. Examples of His power over men, and on behalf of His people, are then given (vs. 8-12); after which the enduring nature of the Lord's name is mentioned, together with His favour toward His people, and the futility of idolatry in contrast with His worship. And the psalm closes with another exhortation to praise the Lord (vs. 19-21). Note the nature and blessedness of true worship, also the many individual reasons we have for praising God. Do we realize in a practical manner the greatness and goodness of God?

#### PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIX

This is another psalm exhorting praise to God for His works in nature, and on behalf of His people. It opens with a call to give thanks unto Him, "for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever". As in the former psalm, His goodness is manifest in His works. The latter part of the verse, repeated in each subsequent verse, may have been used as a response by the people. It emphasizes a great truth. The mercy of God is of an enduring nature, and may be depended on. His supreme greatness is emphasized in the titles given Him: "God of gods", "Lord of lords"; and by the works which He has performed. He alone "doeth great wonders". He required no help from anyone. He made the heavens, the earth, and the heavenly lights (vs. 5-9). The more we know of nature, the greater is our appreciation of the wisdom which made and guides it. Everything works in accordance with a preconceived divine plan, and is designed for the carrying out of God's eternal purpose. The Lord's works on behalf of His people are then mentioned, beginning with their deliverance from Egypt (vs. 10-15), and thence through the wilderness journeys to their settlement in the promised land (vs. 16-26). Israel had much for which to thank God, and so has each person, but particularly each child of God. Note the manifestations of God, as Creator, Provider, Protector, Deliverer, Leader, and Judge. Do we realize our utter dependence on God for temporal and spiritual things?

#### PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN

This psalm records the mourning of the captive Israelites in Babylon, together with a petition and prediction respect-

ing enemies. The sad condition of the captives is set forth in their weeping at the remembrance of Zion, and the hanging of their harps upon the willows (vs. 1, 2). They were exiles from the land of their fathers, and we can understand their sorrow at being wrenched away from it, even though such was due to disobedience unto God (II. Kings 23:26, 27). They were suffering the chastisement of God, and no chastisement is pleasant, although afterwards it yields fruit (Heb. 12:11). So it proved in Israel's case, for while it did not make them perfect, it yet cured them of idolatry, and brought them back to the worship of the one true God. To aggravate their sufferings, their captors urged them to sing "one of the songs of Zion," but they were not able to do so in the land of the stranger. Nor can the backslider sing with spirit the songs of spiritual Zion. He is out of touch with the city of his new birth, and can find no happiness in his exile. The Israelite could not forget Jerusalem. He loved it, thought about it, and longed to be in it. It would be well if the Lord's people of the present day loved Him, and all pertaining to Him, with equal warmth and devotion. A twofold petition, including a prediction, concludes the psalm. The Edomites, although related by blood to the Israelites (Gen. 36:9), were among their most bitter enemies, and receive condemnation for their attitude (Obad 10:16), which was subsequently carried out. The Babylonians also received punishment for their iniquities, being overthrown by the Persians (Dan. 5:30, 31). No one can do evil and expect good to follow. We receive what we give. Note the danger of spiritual exile, of being set aside by God (I. Cor. 9:27). Are we living in touch with God, and in the full enjoyment of His salvation?

#### PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHT

In this psalm the psalmist David praises God for His lovingkindness and His truth. He intimates that his praise will be wholehearted. This is the only form worthy of offering to the Lord. His sincerity is manifest in his purpose to put God first, and worship toward His holy temple. He refers then to the reason for his praise, to the fact of answered prayer, to the result of his testimony, to the Lord's respect for the lowly, and His disapproval of the proud, and closes with a note of confidence respecting future actions of God respecting himself (vs. 1-8). Note the greatness, lovingkindness, justice, faithfulness, and condescension of God; also the confidence and devotion of the psalmist. Do we truly represent the Lord with our praiseful spirit?

#### PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINE

In this, David magnifies the omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, of God; and professes devotion to Him. In relation to His omniscience, the psalmist confesses that the Lord knows all about him, and is acquainted with every word and action of his (vs. 1-6). Such knowledge was too wonderful for him, and entirely beyond his attainment. Note the consequence of this, in His exact knowledge of the inner, as well as, outer life of each one, with the future judgment relating to it (Matt. 12:36, 37); and the warning and incentive to careful and holy living contained therein. The divine omnipotence is next emphasized in the fact that man cannot get away from God, mention being made of the extremes of place, space, and time (vs. 7-12). We cannot get away from God. Note how some have tried, like Jonah (Jon. 1:3). The Lord is present everywhere. Observe the necessity for care in living, when we are alone, as when we are with others. Encouragement may also be derived therefrom in that God is everywhere to help us.

The Lord's omnipotence, combined with His omniscience, is then mentioned in relation to man, the highest of God's creatures (vs. 13-16). He has been fearfully and wonderfully made. We take our bodies for granted, but we need only think for a moment, to become convinced of the power and wisdom of God evident in the making of these pieces of clay. Think of the many parts within each one, and the manner in which they function, so smoothly, so efficiently, and so clearly, in accordance with design. Only our omnipotent God is a sufficient cause for these things, and we lift up our hearts in thanksgiving to Him for them. A testimony to God's goodness, and an expression of devotion, close the psalm. Note the zeal of the psalmist for his God, and his union with Him in outlook; also his deep experience of the presence and blessing of the Lord. Do we see God in all the affairs of life, and act in accordance therewith?

## The Significance of Professor L. H. Marshall's Return to McMaster University

The third page of *The Canadian Baptist* for August the eighth carried the following announcement:

### Professor of Theology Appointed

"The Senate and Board of Governors of McMaster University are pleased to announce the acceptance by Rev. L. H. Marshall, B.A., B.D., of Leicester, England, of the appointment to the chair of Christian Theology, recently tendered to him by the Senate, and which was made vacant in April last by the death of Prof. A. L. McCrimmon, M.A., LL.D. Mr. Marshall is admirably equipped for the task to which he comes. During his former connection with the Faculty of Theology (1925-1930), first in the Chair of Practical Theology and latterly as Professor of New Testament Interpretation, he gave ample proof of his rare gifts as a teacher and his effectiveness as a preacher. Coming as a pastor of long practical experience, a thorough scholar, a warm evangelical, he will maintain the high traditions associated with the chair of Christian Theology in McMaster University. The governing bodies of the University desire to express their satisfaction that such a distinguished Christian scholar and devout expositor of the Gospel returns to the Faculty of Theology.

"Prof. Marshall will assume his duties in January, 1936, at the opening of the second term of the coming session.

(Signed) ALBERT MATTHEWS, Chairman.  
HOWARD P. WHIDDEN, Chancellor.  
JOHN MACNEILL, Principal."

We shall not discuss this matter at length in this issue, but some time in September we shall issue a large edition of this paper which will discuss this question in all its bearings. In the meantime we have this to say: We have known now for years that there was in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, a group of men who, to use the mildest term possible, were out-and-out Modernists. The leader of this group seldom appears in public but is a vicious and venomous enemy of the gospel of the grace of God. We shall have much to say of the poisonous influence of this man upon the life of the Baptist Denomination.

We never doubted that Professor Marshall was brought here with a full knowledge of what he believed, and would teach. He was brought to McMaster University because it was known he was a pronounced Modernist. We do not mean to say that all who approved his coming could be put in that category. Among them, there were many who were uninformed, and who had such confidence in the denominational leaders that they supposed they could do no wrong. But the sinister manipulator of the whole matter knew, and so did those who were closest to him.

We called attention to Mr. Marshall's theological position before his arrival, only to be denounced in the most vigorous terms as a trouble-maker. After Professor Marshall's arrival in McMaster nearly all ranks endeavoured to justify his appointment, and to prove that he was in harmony with the doctrines set out in the Trust Deed of McMaster University. The controversy lasted for four or five years. During that time the Denomination was afforded opportunity to learn just what Mr. Marshall believed; and it was proved up to the hilt that there is scarcely one principle of the Trust Deed of McMaster that is not violated by his teaching.

Then Professor Marshall left suddenly, returning to Leicester, in England. We never doubted that the group that had used him for their purpose, so far as their own

personal views were concerned, would gladly have retained him. But Professor Marshall had become unacceptable to a very large number of the churches of the Convention of Ontario and Quebec. McMaster University had just moved, or was just moving, to Hamilton; and they had not yet had opportunity of demonstrating their independence of the Convention. Professor Marshall therefore was allowed to retire. Of course, we know the McMaster "authorities" will deny this, but we know also that they will deny almost anything if it will further their purpose, and if there is hope of persuading the people to accept their denial.

What are the facts? The thing has happened which we predicted long ago. McMaster University has almost choked the Baptist Denomination—or perhaps it would be a better figure to say it has starved it. It has bled it white; by its intensive campaign for funds to put up the buildings in Hamilton, and to establish its going, it preempted the monetary resources of the Convention, and left the various Mission interests starving. The new location has attracted to McMaster, naturally, great numbers of students from Hamilton and surrounding places, who find it cheaper to attend McMaster than to come to Toronto University. In this way, McMaster University has been made a paying concern. But Home Missions and Foreign Missions, and the other interests of the Convention of Ontario and Quebec, have had to suffer correspondingly.

The vote of the Ottawa Convention in 1919, and again of the London Convention in 1924, constitute convincing proof that there was at least up to 1924 a great body of people in the Ontario Convention that still believed in the Book. We have little doubt that there are thousands of Baptist church members in the Old Convention still, who, having been born again of the Spirit of God, and led to put their trust in the atoning Sacrifice, who having put the Bible to the proof in hundreds of instances as the inspired and infallible Word of God, can have no sympathy with Professor Marshall's theological position.

We are aware that the students of Professor I. G. Matthews, and other classes that came under the influence of Professor Marshall, as well as those who have been influenced by Professor Roy Benson and Professor Harry MacNeill, and others, are the enemies of, or are contemptuous of, Evangelical Christianity—and, of course, will be in full sympathy with the announced policy of McMaster University. It is our purpose to put in the hands of the thousands of Baptists who do not know what Professor Marshall believes, statements taken from his own lips of which there can be no doubt whatever.

But we must not allow ourselves to be led into a further discussion of the matter at this point. The purpose of this article is twofold. First, to announce that we intend to publish during the month of September—we do not say what particular week, but of that due notice will be given—the strongest, the most irrefutable, proof of McMaster's apostasy that we have ever yet published. All issues of THE GOSPEL WITNESS which have gone before will be mild in comparison with it. "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." We are resolved to dis-



play it. We propose to leave the members of the churches which comprise the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec without any excuse before the judgment-seat of Christ, if they longer support that Convention and McMaster University.

It would pay the Convention a hundred times over to expel McMaster University, and to throw overboard the McMaster endowment that goes with it. We intend to leave no stone unturned to advise all members of the churches of the Ontario and Quebec Convention of the true facts of the case.

The second purpose we have in view in publishing this announcement is this: If it be admitted, for the sake of argument, that many who supported the McMaster authorities after Professor Marshall had been appointed, and still others who, after his settlement in McMaster, acquiesced in his continuance, did so because of the difficulty of effecting his removal, perhaps some allowance might be made for all such on the ground of expediency. It might be said that they took that attitude toward Professor Marshall's appointment as the wisest way of making the best of a bad job; and further, that perhaps they were, in the beginning at least, but imperfectly informed respecting Mr. Marshall's views. But surely every Baptist knew where Professor Marshall stood before he left McMaster? We know positively that when he left great numbers of Baptists throughout the Convention heaved a sigh of relief, and hoped that the letting out of Professor Marshall indicated that the Governors intended, without acknowledgment of error, gradually to bring the institution back into closer relation to the position occupied by the churches.

Of course, we knew better than that. We never for a moment believed there was any change of heart on the part of the McMaster Governors. The continuance of Professor Roy Benson, and the appointment of Professor Harry MacNeill, taken together, were proof positive that McMaster had no intention of turning back from its Modernistic course. For these two professors named are more pronounced than Professor Marshall ever was. But their position was not generally known, and is not generally known now. Therefore great numbers of Evangelical Baptists, we repeat, to our certain personal knowledge, were delighted at Professor Marshall's departure to England.

What now is the situation? With the most perfect understanding of Professor Marshall's anti-evangelical position, (his designation in the announcement of his acceptance as "a warm evangelical" is utterly untrue); knowing that, implicitly or explicitly, he denies nearly every doctrinal principle set out in the Trust Deed of McMaster University, he has been recalled to McMaster. He has accepted the appointment; and the announcement of his return is made in the official Baptist organ over the signatures of Albert Matthews, Chairman of the Board of Governors; H. P. Whidden, Chancellor of the University; and John MacNeill, Principal of the Theological Department. Thus the Denomination is informed that McMaster University will have none of the old-fashioned theology; but unblushingly announces, by implication, its determination to continue along the Modernistic road which, if there by any logic left in them, must lead them to Unitarianism, which is only the half-way house to agnosticism—and worse.

But tell your friends about the issue of THE GOSPEL WITNESS that is coming in September: Tell them it will be more interesting than any issue they ever read. Tell

them a large edition will be published, so that there will be enough copies to supply every member of the churches of the Ontario and Quebec Convention with a copy if they want one. We shall do our full duty in this matter. We shall take no one by surprise. We shall announce one, or perhaps two weeks, in advance the date of the special issue.

#### A WORD TO ALL OUR SEMINARY FRIENDS

Toronto Baptist Seminary will open for the next season's work, Friday, September 13th. This will be registration day for new students. Lectures will begin Tuesday morning, September 17th. It is expected that all first-year students will enroll September 13th; they will probably need the Saturday and Monday to find quarters, and get themselves generally oriented, and ready for work. We are anticipating a great year.

#### To All Contributors to the Jubilee Seminary Fund

At this writing the Jubilee Fund amounts to \$7,960.00. Included in this amount are some unpaid pledges—some from churches, and some from individuals. We are exceedingly anxious to be able to begin our Seminary Year without any deficit. Therefore, if possible, will all those who have promised money to the Seminary, please send it at once, so that we may be able to announce at our Convocation, September 19th, that we begin the Seminary Year without debt. In order to do this we shall need more than \$1,500.00 in new money—that is, money of which we know nothing just now; and which has not been pledged. Will not all our friends who read this, send us some contribution? Even if you have already given, perhaps you can send an additional \$5.00, or \$10.00, or \$25.00, or even \$50.00. If you cannot possibly send any of these amounts, send \$2.00, or even \$1.00. If every friend of the Seminary will do his or her best, we are sure we shall be able to announce a clean sheet September 19th.

#### SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

Sunday seemed—whatever the actual temperature was—to be one of the hottest days of an unusually hot summer. In many years we have not known so many of our Jarvis Street people to be out-of-town. Reading of the tens of thousands at the beaches, and of other tens of thousands out-of-town in their motor-cars, and still others away at summer resorts, it seemed surprising to find anybody in church. And with the hundreds of children away at camps and elsewhere, it seemed still more surprising to find children at Sunday School. Of course, we know we ought not to assume the subordination of the spiritual to the physical, but alas! alas! what even apparently earnest Christians will do when the thermometer gets above the nineties!

Our Sunday School was terribly down. Notwithstanding such a temperature, there were exactly seven hundred in the morning school. There was a splendid morning congregation, when the Pastor preached the sermon appearing in this issue. Making our way along the blistering streets Sunday evening, we could not help asking, after the manner of men, Shall we have anybody in church at all? But again there was a magnificent congregation, when the Pastor spoke for the third time—the morning Bible class, the morning sermon, and the sermon at the evening service. At nine o'clock we began our open air service on the church grounds, and the Pastor preached again to a great throng. The presence of the Lord was with us at all the services, and we are sure abiding good was accomplished. The outdoor service was concluded about quarter past ten.

We love the summertime, with the opportunities it brings, but because we are "weak through the flesh", we confess we are eagerly anticipating a little cooler weather—weather that will permit one at least to think without being plunged in a Turkish bath. O lady of the snows! Where was your snow during July and August?

To Jarvis Street Members Away From Home: We Send This Message: Hurry home as quickly as you can. Those of us who have remained at home all summer, holding the fort, may be found just a trifle thinner—we are not even sure of that. But at all events, the flag has been kept flying, and through the summer thousands have heard the word of God. We hope those who have been away from home, will return refreshed in soul, as well as in body and mind, and ready for a most strenuous Fall and Winter's work.

# WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT "OTHER LITTLE SHIPS"

From *THE WITNESS*, London, England,

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 preachers 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 mid-night 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":—

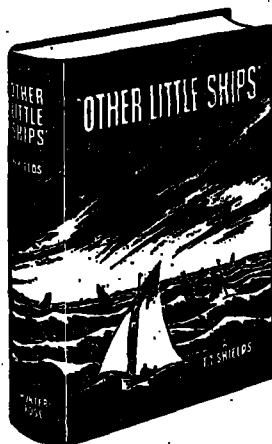
"I heard Professor George Jackson deliver an address before the Toronto Ministerial Association. The subject was, I think, 'John Morley, the Priest of the Outer Court'. He extolled John Morley, the biographer of Gladstone, he described his blameless character, his wonderfully serviceable life, his amiable 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 when 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.



### ORDER FORM FOR DR. SHIELDS' NEW BOOK

THE GOSPEL WITNESS

130 Gerrard Street East

Toronto, Ont.

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.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_