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Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editor: ALEXANDER THOMSON

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

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto 2, Canada.

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WILL AHAB-MUSSOLINI FALL AT RAMOTH-GILEAD?

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, August 25th, 1935
(Stenographically Reported)

"And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.

"And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

"And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

"And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

"And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him.

"And the Lord said unto Him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

"Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee."—I. Kings 22:17-23.

In our study of Thursday evening last, those of you who were with us will remember, I called your attention to some of the promises of God's Word, setting forth the believer's privilege to view the events of life in a divine light, and from a divine standpoint. Christian people, so far from being fools, ought to possess a superior intelligence; because they are in the counsel of Him Who is the Fountain of all wisdom. The Word of God has been given us to make us wise unto salvation. And the word, salvation, has a much larger and richer content than many suppose.

We are in the world, but not of it, if we are Christians. Yet I am sure that the Word of God is designed to direct us how to relate ourselves to the events of our time, and how to interpret current history in the light which shines from the sacred page. The Bible is not a book of rules. It does not so much concern itself with saying, "Thou shalt", and, "Thou shalt not", as with setting forth for our understanding, our appreciation and appropriation, great principles which, in their operation, constitute the very warp and woof of human life and experience.

The Bible differs from all other books. It stands alone, the critics to the contrary notwithstanding. There is a

marvellous continuity of thought observable in the Bible. Whether you turn to the pages of Genesis, or Exodus, to the Judges, or the Kings, one is always impressed with a sense of the presence of an Eyewitness of the events recorded. The Bible tells us of things as they appear "in the sight of the Lord". How often one comes upon the phrase in the Word, "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord", or, "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord"! In the sight of men, it may have been the reverse. Men may have put good for evil, and evil for good; but the Bible represents things as they appear "in the sight of the Lord". "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is, indeed, indisputably "the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever".

A large part of the Bible is historical, and much of it is occupied with the biographies of conspicuous personalities. The history of the Bible—I mean the historical portions of it—differs from any other history that ever was written. That is why so many people may read secular history, and think they understand it; who, reading the Bible, imagine it to be self-contradictory. For

instance, I can well imagine that some of the critics would have a merry time with the verses I have read as a text this evening; and in all their scorn they would but display their own ignorance.

The Bible, I say, is a Book of principles, and when it concerns itself with history, be assured it is always historically accurate. But it is not a mere record of events, not a mere chronicle of human activities. Bear in mind what I have said: it is written from the standpoint of God Himself; and the actions of men are described, the operation of the principles which radiate from their personalities—all these are described as they appear "in the sight of God".

In ordinary history the writer is dependent for his historical information upon records prepared by his predecessors, which may or may not be true. If at any point they are untrue, then he must be wrong in his premises, and inevitably he must be wrong in his conclusion. But here you have a record written by the inspiration of One Who is the Contemporary of all the ages, and is not dependent upon what anybody said five hundred years before. He is an Eyewitness, and He records the outworking of certain principles, and traces those principles to their source.

The first book of the Bible is called Genesis, the book of beginnings, the book of origins; and I think it would be possible to trace everything to Genesis. But the Bible as a whole deals—and it is significant that its first book should be so named—with the genesis of things. It goes always to the root of the matter. It explains to those who are ready to receive it, the why of things, why some things come to pass.

In the preceding chapter a prophet, by inspiration, links Ahab with Jeroboam the son of Nebat; and thus directs our attention to a most interesting and instructive chapter of history. Let me refer to it for illustrative purposes, that you may understand the principle I am endeavouring to expound, and then endeavour to follow me in my argument. Jeroboam was the first of Israel's kings, the first king of the ten tribes which were formed into a kingdom during the days of Rehoboam. Jeroboam was afraid that if the tribes which now had rallied to his banner followed the law and went up to Jerusalem annually—we had it in our lesson this morning, "Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord"—to Jerusalem that was so full of holy and happy memories, their affections would be alienated from him, and they would be weaned away from their new allegiance. As a political expedient, a bit of political and religious compromise, he set up two calves, one in Dan, and one in Bethel, and said to the tribes, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin." That idolatrous worship reacted upon the morality and upon the morale of the nation. It ate into the very heart of it until the nation steadily deteriorated, and had no power to resist its foes. The prophet Hosea, prophetically seeing the full fruit of Jeroboam's compromise, the inevitable result of his political expedient, looking upon the ruined nation—for such it became—upon the desolate wastes of a once prosperous kingdom, prophetically declared, "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off." They reaped exactly what they had sowed.

It is not without reason that so many chapters are given in this holy Book to a description of Ahab, of whom it is said, "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." Ahab is a type. You can find through history many Ahabs; for just as truly as Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, and the principles which found their incarnation in Abraham's family of Isaac and Ishmael repeated themselves in Isaac's family in the persons of Jacob and Esau, so you have the Cains and Abels, the Isaacs and Ishmaels, the Jacobs and the Esaus, through all human history.

We shall examine this history, because I believe there is a distinct parallel between the history of this man and that of another undoubtedly great, and certainly tremendously influential, person who is a large factor in world-affairs to-day.

Some of my brethren may be expert in the identification of specific prophecies, and some of them read the newspapers to identify the fulfilment of particular prophecies. Personally, I am convinced that the prophecies of Scripture, like the works and words of God, are often manifold. A prophecy may be fulfilled again and again in principle, although, of course, it must find an ultimate fulfilment. I am not dealing with a specific prophecy this evening, but with abiding principles which regulate the conduct of men, and determine, because of what those principles are, their ultimate destiny.

I.

Look at Ahab. We shall know him better as we proceed, but here is THE PICTURE OF A SELF-WILLED MAN, a man who gloried in his resolution, in the strength of his purpose, in his ability to effect whatever he planned; and who justified to himself his every course of action. It is quite possible for a self-willed person to persuade himself or herself that he or she is always right. You can cultivate your will, and determine to have your own way to such an extent that at last you will believe that whatever you want to do ought to be done, and must be done. That was true of Ahab.

Whatever he wanted he set about accomplishing, *irrespective of the rights of others.*

For example, the well-known and familiar incident of his covetous desire to possess Naboth's vineyard. He set his eyes upon it, and said, "I will have it." He asked Naboth to sell it to him, but Naboth declined to surrender that part of his inheritance. When Ahab could not have his own way, he did what a great many self-willed people do: he became petulant. He went to bed, and turned his face to the wall—and sulked like a naughty boy. Then Jezebel came to him, and learning the cause of his low spirits, said, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." And when a woman wills, she will, you may depend upon it! Jezebel reinforced Ahab's wilfulness, and at a cost of blood obtained the vineyard of Naboth. It was a terrible cost.

When Ahab went down to possess himself of the vineyard, he found a prophet there, a gaunt, stern, figure; and Ahab all but shrieked at him, "Has thou found me, O mine enemy?" And Elijah gave him the word he had received from the Lord, "Thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood,

even thine." God is still upon the throne. We live in a moral universe, and we are to judge of history over long periods of time. There are principles which are long in maturing—but they mature. There is seed that is long in appearing—but it appears, and brings forth "after its kind". Ahab would permit no one to interfere with his programme. He was determined to have his way irrespective of the rights of others. Having taken Naboth's vineyard, he refused to learn from experience; and now sets his heart upon Ramoth-gilead, saying "I will have that too." He was determined to have his own way.

That is characteristic of Mussolini. If you are at all familiar with his history, you must know that. He is a man of great deliberation, a man who never acts impulsively, a man of both foresight and farsight; and who lays his plans for the accomplishment of certain purposes, then resolutely sets his will and says, "It shall be done." Thus far he has bent a whole kingdom to his will. Do you ever hear anything about the king of Italy? I wonder whether he is still living? He does not appear in the news at all. Some years ago Mussolini brought a document to the king of Italy for his signature—for it still requires the royal signature to give it effect. As the king was setting his signature, signing on the dotted line according to command, he dropped his handkerchief. Mussolini picked it up and said, "I hope Your Majesty will permit me to retain this as a souvenir of the occasion?" "I fear not," said the king, "for that, sire, is absolutely the only thing you have left me into which I still have the right to put my nose." Whether the story be authentic or apocryphal, this deponent sayeth not, but the principle is there at all events; and that attitude has been characteristic of the man.

Henry Ford has said that history is "bunk". No wise man will so talk, because history is a laboratory in which the divine Chemist has worked out—for the sake of my argument, let me say, His experiments. No; not His experiments, but rather His formulae, saying, "There they are. That is how certain principles work." If you are familiar with inspired history—and, indeed at this point with what we are accustomed to call profane history—you will not be greatly alarmed about Russia, or Hitler, or Mussolini. I am not at all sure that present developments are not a blessing in disguise. There is a poison in Europe's blood, and there never can be rest for the world until it is let out. The worst enemies of the world's peace are those who cry, "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace. The fruit of righteousness is peace, and you cannot have peace from any other seed than righteousness. It will not grow. Where there is unrighteousness, whether in the individual life, in the nation's life, or in the sphere of international relationships, it is impossible that there should be an abiding peace.

II.

I call your attention to this further principle. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO DEVELOP HIS OWN WILL, HIS OWN RESOLUTION, TO HAVE HIS OWN WAY, TO THE POINT OF EXCLUDING HIMSELF FROM ALL WISDOM BUT HIS OWN. Self-will ultimately excludes a man from the benefits of any wisdom, and of all wisdom, other than his own. Will you think of that a moment? You can be stubborn—you may call it resoluteness, determination, you may glory in your will—but it is not strength, any more than that quality is strength in a pig that makes it go in the wrong direction. Any fool can be stubborn. Any fool can say, "I will have my own way." That is not a

sign of wisdom. A man can knock his head against a stone wall if he will. He can set himself in opposition to principles which are as irresistible as gravitation, and say, "I will have my own way." But if he does, there can be only one result.

Ahab had no one to counsel him, for the simple reason that no counsellors could live where Ahab was. He did not need the advice of others. How many portfolios does Mussolini hold and administer? He does not need counsel. He does not need anybody's advice. I am inclined to think that anybody who presumes to advise him cannot live very long where he is. The man who develops that attitude of intolerance will by and by be left to himself, inevitably. Nobody will offer him wisdom. He will be shut up to the counsels of his own mind, and will have his own way at last. I care not whether it be in a little sphere, or in a large way, the man who has his own way, goes to the precipice ultimately.

On this particular occasion Ahab was not going to ask anybody's advice. He asked Jehoshaphat's co-operation, but not his advice. But Jehoshaphat said, "Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day." And Ahab sent for his prophets. Someone says, "Then he did seek counsel?" Yes; he had counsellors—he had four hundred of them. Four hundred advisers! But there was never any difference of opinion among them: they were always unanimous in their recommendations to Ahab—as are Mussolini's counsellors always unanimous. They always told Ahab to do just what he wanted to do.

If you would earn a reputation for superior wisdom, advise people to do what they want to do. That is how some preachers get the reputation of being great men. They deal in platitudes, parrotlike repeating what others have said. They never say anything that has not been said ten thousand times already—and perhaps, better said. They echo what the man who lives on the surface of things says. That is the way to get votes. Do not bother people with thinking. Say the most commonplace things in the world, travel in a canoe, not with a deep keel—for then you can paddle in the channel of anybody's thought. Deal in little things, and people will say, "He is a great man. He thinks just exactly as I think"! That is what makes him great! People do not like to be advised to turn right-about-face.

Ahab had four hundred prophets. They knew what Ahab wanted to do, and they advised him to do it. Mark you this: any person who develops such intolerance of other people's opinions, and is determined at all costs to have his own way, will by and by be surrounded by the prophets of Baal. What is it they call them? I do not like the term, but I have heard it, "Yes-men". Ahab had four hundred "yes-men".

These four hundred prophets said, Amen, to everything Ahab said. That is Italy to-day. Italy says, Amen, to everything Mussolini says—the press, and every organ of expression, because human nature is what it is, we may be sure that they say, Amen, because they must.

What about the League of Nations? It may be a very useful corrective, but Mussolini has already announced, in effect, With the League, or without the League, or in spite of the League, we will have Ethiopia. Who can give advice under those circumstances? That was Ahab. That is Mussolini—determined to have his own way. I have always believed that the League of Nations might serve a useful purpose, like the House of Lords in England. I have read a story of John Bright, the great Commoner, who was on his way one afternoon to the House

of Commons, and stopped at some lady's home for a cup of tea, with some friends. It was a time when the perennial question of the abolition of the House of Lords was before the people. In those days saucers were made for use, not for ornament. It is considered very ill-mannered to-day to pour your tea into the saucer, but that is what saucers were for originally, to cool the tea so that it could be readily drunk. Mr. Bright was standing in this lady's drawing-room, holding a cup of tea in his hand, when his hostess turned to him and said, "Mr. Bright, of what use is the House of Lords? What purpose does it serve?" He took the saucer in one hand and the cup in the other, and, touching the saucer with the cup, said, "This, your Ladyship, is the House of Lords." He meant it is a place where ill-considered actions, hasty judgments, may cool. Had there been a saucer to Premier Hepburn's cup, Ontario might have been spared, in part at least, the humiliation inflicted by his legislative Yes-men. Perhaps someone will give him a saucer, or perhaps a bowl would be better. The League of Nations may fulfil some such function as that, and in minor matters, it may be possible for representatives of the nations to come together and discuss their differences, and perhaps come to a cooler, calmer, saner, frame of mind, and so avoid conflict. Thus far, I am for the League of Nations. But I never have believed it could prevent war when a major issue should be involved. It was impotent in Japan's case. As soon as it sought in any way even to advise her she said, "Good afternoon; I do not belong to the League any more." That is exactly what Italy will do. There is no more chance of Italy's accepting the advice of the League of Nations than there was of Ahab's accepting the advice of Micaiah. Mussolini cannot, and let me tell you why.

And, incidentally, I will give you some advice. If the acceptance of your advice on any matter necessitates the reversal of judgment, and incidentally requires someone to humble himself, try to advise him before he has gone too far. Let him be a Jack Horner, with this difference, that he be allowed to eat his *humble pie* in a corner. Do not ask him to eat the whole pie in public. He may, like Little Jack Horner, go in a corner and be glad of a way out of his dilemma. Mussolini has gone too far to retreat. Were he now to withdraw, his influence in Italy would be absolutely destroyed. This attempt at a sermon will be printed, as usual. You may have a copy, and then see whether these principles actually work out in the next few months. Mussolini will not withdraw. He will pay no more heed to the League of Nations than Ahab did to Micaiah.

Why, then, is Britain so insistent upon referring the matter at issue to the League? I am glad she is, and for the same reason that God provided Himself a witness before Ahab went to his doom. That is God's way always. He always puts barriers in the way of men who want to do wrong. In His infinite mercy, He always makes it difficult for a man to have his own way. Micaiah came and told Ahab the truth. He said in effect, Ahab, you have not the remotest chance of success. You are bound to fail. Perhaps, someone will say, "But Mussolini cannot fail in this instance, with all his modern implements of war?" Yes, he can—and will. I do not know when; but the principles which Mussolini represents, and the principles represented in Hitler, and the principles represented in Stalin, have been tried—perhaps not on so large a scale, but they have been tried again and again, and they are death-stricken, they are mortal. All these men

are bound to fail. There is no chance of ultimate success for any one of them.

When at last Britain draws the sword—as draw the sword she will, for there is not the remotest possibility of Mussolini's receding, and it will be equally impossible for Britain to be a spectator of the act of plunder, of national banditry, Italy plans—when Britain with what might she may have, endeavours to bar Mussolini's path to the accomplishment of his purpose, she will be supported by the moral sense, by the conscience of the world. And as surely as Micaiah said it, it will be said of this man, that he shall not return at all in peace.

III.

Look at THE PHILOSOPHY OF THIS CHAPTER OF HISTORY. It is a most interesting and instructive study. How shall we explain it? In this way. The self-willed man, not only excludes himself from the benefits of others' wisdom, but he develops in himself a capacity and an affinity for untruth, together with an incapacity for receiving the truth. When I read that passage this evening you said, "That is a terrible scripture. How can a lying spirit go forth from the Lord?" In the beginning God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle; and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." God put a crown upon man's brow; He put a sceptre in his hand; He gave him the power of volition; He made him a king, subject to the King of kings, and said to him, "Have dominion." And may I reverently say that God so respects the human will, that He sometimes allows a man to have his own way.

My unsaved friend, is not that what you want? "I do not like these preachers, and particularly that man at Jarvis Street. I saw in the paper that he would speak about Mussolini, and I thought I would go down for once—but do not think I will come again. I am not interested in you, or your preaching." Jehoshaphat said, "But is there not another preacher who could advise you? Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him?" "There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." But Micaiah was sent for, and delivered his sermon: "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace." And Ahab said, "I told you that would be the sort of sermon he would preach. I told you he would prophesy evil concerning me—but I will not take his advice." Turning to the guards he said, "Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison; and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." Ahab had spent all his life endeavouring to silence every voice that dared to tell him the truth. He had taken off the heads of many prophets, while others had hidden from him; and now this one man that was left who dared to tell him the truth is cast into prison, with the promise that he would be dealt with when the king returned in triumph from battle. But Micaiah said, "If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me," and he called the people to witness, "Hearken, O people, every one of you."

When people will not have the truth, when they silence every voice that dares to tell them the truth, at last the Lord lets them have their own way. How many times had there gone forth from the Lord a spirit of truth, of prophecy, warning Ahab, rising up early and sending them? God in His mercy had given him "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little."

Not only so, but Ahab had had the advantage of the testimony of a man like Elijah. That ought to have been enough. But he resisted every one of them. He said in effect, "I will not hear the truth." "Very well", said the Lord, "I will let you have your own way, Ahab." "Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so."

You remember the story in the New Testament of the man who had companied with the Lord Jesus for three years? How kindly, how tenderly, He had spoken to him! And then at last, when He had predicted that one of His disciples would betray Him, and they said, "Is it I? Is it I?" He said, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." Judas went out, and the Scripture says a terrible thing. The Lord of glory had been standing at his door, knocking, saying, "Judas, let me come in." But he had kept the door locked; he had excluded God. And when he went out the Scripture says, "Satan entered into him."

These hearts of ours must be occupied by someone, if not by the Spirit of truth, then by the spirit of untruth; if not by God the Holy Ghost, it will be by Satan. That is what happened to Ahab. And there is a terrible prediction in the New Testament. It is said of the lawless one, and it is true of all who open their hearts to the spirit of Antichrist "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Do you know what is happening to-day? Half the pulpits of the land are teaching people that the Bible is not the word of God. Half of them? That is a very conservative estimate. The overwhelming majority of them are teaching the people that Genesis is not true. Man was not made in the image of God, but evolved from some lower form of life. With what result? Men have fallen in love with a lie, and God is going to let them have their own way. *The penalty a liar pays for his lying is not that nobody will believe him, but that he at last develops an incapacity for believing anybody else.* All you have to do to deceive a liar is to tell him the truth. That is the one thing he cannot believe.

That was the one thing Ahab could not believe: it is the one thing Mussolini cannot believe. With what result? When the League of Nations had adjourned—in this case the League being Micaiah—this ancient Mus-

solini set the battle in array, and reviewed his troops. How many pictures we have had of Mussolini reviewing his troops! Ahab cared not what Jehovah said, he reviewed his troops. Ahab said, "I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the Lord which he spake."

My brethren, when the sun goes down, God always has His way. Not your way, but God's way, will prevail at last.

But what followed? Just what will follow in Italy. With our form of government, even great men may die, and still the King's government will be carried on. In the Great War we heard that Lord Kitchener was dead—but the war went on. The *Lusitania* was sunk—but the war went on. It will not go on in Italy. A dictatorship has some advantages. One mind, one will; but when that mind ceases to think, and that will to act, Micaiah's prophecy is fulfilled, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace." When Ahab died it is said, "There went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country." There was a rout, confusion, ruin, everywhere.

That will be Mussolini's fate inevitably. He may succeed for a while, but not for long. When he fails, there will be a new Italy. Perhaps Hitler will take advantage of it, and will meet his ruin on the same rock. But do not be alarmed: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice."

How is it to be done? It is difficult to overturn a constitutional government, but an easy task to overthrow a dictatorship. *To overthrow a constitutional government you have to subjugate a whole people: to destroy a dictatorship you have to destroy the dictator, and the thing crumbles at once.* How is it to be done? I do not know. Micaiah did not know. But God, in His providence, Who sits upon His throne, knows. Do not forget that Micaiah said, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him." Hallelujah! He sits upon His throne. And He sits on no precarious throne,

nor borrows leave to be. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice."

How is it to be done? God has a man somewhere—I do not know where. But in the divine economy *there is always a sharp arrow waiting for the heart of a tyrant, and God will not be wanting a man to draw his bow at a venture, whatever the arrow be.* No man is invincible, no man is invulnerable. The Cæsars tried it, Alexander tried it, Napoleon tried it, the Kaiser tried it—Mussolini is going to try it. But "about the going down of the sun" the principles of this Book will be found to be true. God will still be upon His throne.

My dear friend, are you a Christian? It would be much more to my liking to preach from this text respecting the personal matter of your soul's salvation. I had not thought of doing so, but I will speak from the same text out-of-doors at the conclusion of this service, to individuals, appealing to people to repent and turn to God.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we pray Thee to help us to view things calmly,

and in the light of Thy Holy Word. We pray Thee, O Lord, that our faith may stabilize us at such a time as this, that our hearts may be fixed, trusting in the Lord. Bless our meditation this evening. Help us each, that we may be wise respecting the events of our day, to study the Word of the Lord, Who is the Lord of every day, Who is never surprised. Save us all with Thy great salvation.

We especially pray that Thou wilt pour upon Thy people everywhere the spirit of grace and of supplication, that they may call upon Thee in the day of trouble. We pray Thy blessing upon all in authority over us. We pray for His Majesty the King, that the Lord may give him health and resolution, as He has done hitherto. Be gracious to all his counsellors, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Minister of the Air—all who have charge of the affairs of the Empire. Bless the Prime Ministers of all the self-governing Dominions. Let Thy hand be upon them. We do not deserve Thy goodness, but out of a world of chaos, Thou hast brought us thus far to a larger measure of peace, perhaps, than any other nation. We thank Thee for it, and pray that we may be ready for Thy will, giving thanks to the Father Who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Grant us Thy presence in the after-service, and glorify Thyself still in this service, for Thy name's sake, Amen.

THE McMASTER-MARSHALL ISSUE

Tell your friends that some time during September THE GOSPEL WITNESS will publish a special edition in which it will set out statements from Professor Marshall's own lips, and taken from stenographic reports made by Hansard reporters, which will prove that Professor Marshall's theological position involves a repudiation of every doctrinal principle set out in the Trust Deed of McMaster University. We will prove that the governing body of McMaster University, by electing to its Faculty a man whose teaching repudiates every principle of the Trust Deed which represents the body of evangelical truth to the conservation and propagation of which the late Senator McMaster specifically dedicated his fortune, have deliberately and of set purpose violated their trust; and have rendered themselves legally liable to the forfeiture of the McMaster estate. We will prove this, not by uncertain reports of the Professor's teaching, but by the testimony of reports the accuracy of which cannot be disputed.

Tell your friends about the McMaster-Marshall special edition. Already the Convention of Ontario and Quebec is, to some extent, aroused. New subscriptions are being received at THE GOSPEL WITNESS office, with request that they date from the McMaster-Marshall issue. Tell your friends about it. Get them to subscribe so that they will not miss a copy. We propose to do our utmost to advise the Baptist Convention of the facts of the case. The war must be fought over again. Our readers may depend upon it, we will "cry aloud, and spare not".

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Missionaries Arrive in Liberia

A cable has been received from Liberia containing one word: "Addov", which being interpreted means, "Arrived here, all well, pleasant passage". This is, of course, from Mr. and Mrs. Mellish and Miss Lane, who are now beginning their second term in Liberia.

Western Tour

It is expected that Rev. E. Hancox, on furlough from Liberia, will make a tour of the West, and the proposed itinerary is as follows: Timmins, September 8th and 9th; Fort William, the 11th to 15th; Kenora, the 16th; Winnipeg, the 17th; Vancouver, the 22nd to 27th; Edmonton, the 29th and 30th; Calgary and district, October 1st to 18th. The friends in the West have long been desirous of hearing more of our Missionary work in Liberia, and this tour has been arranged with that end in view. We trust that all who are interested will keep these dates in mind.

News from Nigeria

Many of our readers will remember Rev. Arthur Lee, who was for some time pastor of the Mount Albert Baptist Church. He is out in Africa now, and we quote in part a letter from him dated June 17, 1935.

"I was very glad to receive to-day the Missionary Bulletin, and to read the news of the work in Liberia and at home. It is now two months almost since we arrived in Niamey, and we have had a busy time getting the mission premises in a state of good repair before the rains set in. We have about another week's work, and then we shall be able to rest for a while, that is, busy ourselves with other less fatiguing things. It is hard to get the natives to do repair work once they have planted the grain and the weeds begin to grow.

"Conditions are very different here from Liberia. Here the rains begin about the middle of June and end the end of September. The rest of the year no rain falls at all. As we passed Liberia on the boat we could not help but note the difference in vegetation. We thought of those working there, but there was no way of communicating with the shore, that is, to do it quickly. May the Lord richly bless the labours of His servants there.

"The mission premises are about four hundred yards from the Niger river. We can see up and down the river for several miles; it is a very beautiful and refreshing sight to see the water at all times. As soon as we have the lumber we are going to build a boat to use in our visitation work. The language here is both Hausa and Jerma, the latter being the one more generally used. The people here differ from the Hausas in that they are very proud and very independent.

(Continued on page 8)

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 37

Third Quarter

September 15th, 1935

A CRY FOR DELIVERANCE

Lesson Text: Psalms 140-145.

Golden Text: "Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee."—143:8.

Bible School Reading: Psalm 145:1-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—II. Sam. 22:31-43; Tuesday—Esther 7:1-10; Wednesday—Job 5:12-21; Thursday—Lam. 3:55-66; Friday—Matt. 23:1-12; Saturday—John 13:31-38.

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY

This psalm contains an appeal for deliverance from enemies, a request for their punishment, and a confident prediction respecting answered prayer. The identity of the psalmist's enemies we know not, but their character was wicked. They imagined mischief in their hearts, they gathered together for war, and sharpened their tongues like a serpent. They purpose to overthrow the psalmist's goings, and sought to ensnare him (vs. 1-5). They were violent men, proud of spirit, and manifested their antagonism in threats and deceitful plots. Their hatred meant danger for David, and the consciousness of this, together with the felt need for wisdom and strength, drove him to God. Note the blessing of trouble when it compels us to draw near to God (Rom. 8:28), and the fact that God welcomes those who in sincerity thus come to Him (John 6:37). Observe the continued supplication of the psalmist relating to the frustration of the devices of the wicked, the request for their punishment, and the confident assertion respecting God's favourable attitude toward his cause (vs. 6-13). The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, and a deliverer of the needy. His favour is shown toward the righteous, while the wicked are under His condemnation (John 3:36). The justice and kindness of God are evident here; also the need and faith of the psalmist. What should be our attitude under the attack of enemies?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-ONE

In this psalm the cry of a soul in trouble is recorded. In it the psalmist desires divine protection from the temptation of the wicked. His earnestness and deep feeling are evident in the nature of his cry. He requests God to make haste unto him, and give ear unto his voice. He also petitions Him to look upon his prayer as the equivalent of incense, and of the evening sacrifice. He is bold, yet reverent, and desperate in his need. He had a true realization of his danger in the presence of the wicked near him, and came to the only One Who could give him protection from their corrupting ways. He prays to be protected in word and deed, and desires separation from their association. Note the beneficial effect of a wholesome dread of sin (Heb. 12:3, 4), and the necessity for a separated life in order to live well-pleasing unto God (II. Cor. 6:14 to 7:1). The psalmist professes preference for the companionship of the righteous, even though they reprove him (v. 5), affirms his trust in the Lord (vs. 6-8), and closes with a request for protection from physical danger (vs. 9, 10). Note the presence of moral dangers these days, and the necessity for divine protection therefrom. We need to keep close to God at all times in order to live victoriously over sin. Observe the psalmist's faith in God, and his wisdom in turning to Him in his trouble. What should be our attitude toward the moral dangers of the present day?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-TWO

This psalm contains the cry of a soul forsaken by men, and in great trouble. It is of an earnest, sincere, definite, nature. The psalmist pours out his complaint before God, from a spirit overwhelmed within him, and in the presence of a snare privily laid for him by his enemies. He was in great danger, weighed down with his trouble, in need of help;

but there was no one to aid him. No man cared for his soul. He was neglected and forsaken by all. But, turning to God, he found in Him a refuge and help, and confidently he claims deliverance from his trouble (vs. 5-7). Sometimes we go to the Lord as a last resort, but he does not cast us off: He welcomes us with our cares and troubles (Matt. 11:28-30). He comforts the lonely, heals the brokenhearted, and gives shelter to the persecuted (John 16:33). The divine refuge is always open, ready, free, sufficient, and accessible. Men forsake us, as they did our Lord (Matt. 26:56), but He will never do so (Heb. 13:5). Do we manifest care for the souls of others? Are we seeking to win them for God?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-THREE

In this psalm there is another appeal for deliverance from enemies. There is first the complaint, then the petition (vs. 1-12). In the first, the basis of the plea is stated—the faithfulness and righteousness of God. The psalmist was sure of the justice of his cause, and could appeal for action for the Lord's sake. This is the basis in the present day (John 14:13, 14). God is faithful and righteous, and may be depended on to act in accordance with His character (I. Thess. 5:24). This does not imply that man by his own righteousness can demand an answer, for man has no righteousness of his own (Is. 64:6), and before God he cannot be justified. It is only in Christ that he can be justified (Rom. 3:26), and that because of the redemptive work of our Lord (Rom. 3:24; 4:25). Note the complete nature of such justification (Rom. 3:24), and the way in which its blessing may be experienced (Rom. 5:1). After his introductory words, the psalmist makes complaint of his enemies who had persecuted him, to the overwhelming of his spirit, and caused him to stretch forth his hands unto God for help (vs. 3-6). Note the phrases used, as "remember", "meditate", "muse", "stretch forth", "thrusteth", and their significance. In the petition observe the desire for a speedy hearing (v. 7), implying great need; also for the various requests, as "Cause me to hear", "Cause me to know", "Deliver me", "Teach me", "Lead me", "Quicken me", and "Cut off mine enemies". These all denote a real desire, and set purpose, to do God's will, and live well-pleasing unto Him. If we expect things from God, we should remember that He expects things from us. There should be due recognition of His legitimate claim (I. Cor. 6:20). Are we honest with God in our attitude toward Him, and in our requests for His aid?

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR

In this psalm praise is given to God for instruction in warfare; His mighty power is magnified; and the prosperity which follows conquest is described. It opens with praise wherein God is given the glory for victory over enemies (Sam. 22:35). The Lord taught David how to fight, and gave him the necessary wisdom and courage to do so. Following this acknowledgment, we note certain terms ascribed to God, denoting His relationship to His people, together with a statement respecting man's weakness (vs. 3, 4), and a request for the manifestation of God's power, that prosperity might come to the people (vs. 5-8). Observe the blessing which comes to the nation that obeys God, and the need for recognition of this at the present time. Are we good soldiers of Jesus Christ? (Eph. 6:10-18; II. Tim. 2:3, 4).

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIVE

This is a psalm of praise relating first to the greatness of God. This is unsearchable, praised by one generation to another, and borne witness to by the psalmist. God's works are mighty, wondrous, and terrible. Note scriptural examples of these. The divine goodness is then mentioned (vs. 7-10), and its greatness emphasized. It is great because God is great. He is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger, of great mercy, and good to all. We can add our personal testimony to the truth of this; and point to examples in our own experience of the manifestation of His grace. The divine kingdom is then referred to, mention being made of its glory, power, majesty, and everlasting nature (vs. 11-13). Observe present and future aspects of the kingdom (Matt. 13; Rom. 14:17; Luke 22:30); and, last, the general beneficence of God toward all men is indicated (vs. 14-21). He upholds, raises up, gives food to all; fulfils the desire of all who fear Him; and preserves all who love Him. Observe man's dependence on God, and the Lord's abundant supply of man's needs, temporal and spiritual. Do we truly acknowledge God as the Giver of all good things?

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

(Continued from page 6)

They don't like work, but they are not the only ones that way.

"There are great opportunities here for workers who desire French territory, and already we have our eyes on other sites as soon as the workers and funds are forthcoming. Two new workers are joining us at the end of the year, they being in France studying the French language. As soon as the rains are over we plan on building a new house for ourselves. We believe that the missionaries should have their own living quarters whenever possible. Here the houses are built of mud bricks with the flat mud roofs; they are cool in the hot season, and fireproof, and there is no danger from the tornadoes that blow at the beginning of the rains. Just last night we had a very bad one, but we were cosy inside.

"Mrs. Lee joins in sending our united Christian greetings to all the friends in the Union."

"The Best Year Yet"

Word has come from many of our Churches that this year has been "the best year yet". We rejoice that this is so with few exceptions. We are happy to state that financially we have had a good year, too. We have to date received from the Churches and other sources, about two thousand dollars more than we raised last year as a Union. But—(Why must there so often be a "but"?)—we need about six thousand dollars more to reach the objective set last Convention and

to close the year on the right side of the account. The time is short, but we are sure that with God's help we can do it. Let us all do our very best!

SOULS OF THE INDIANS

We have all mourned the loss of Missionaries Lorne D. MacAsh and his wife, who have laboured for over a year among the Indians on the Bear Island Reserve, Timagami, Northern Ontario. They are called to higher service; they were serving faithfully, sacrificially here.

A letter from Mr. MacAsh's mother tells the following story of their recent work: "They were doing a splendid work, and the Indians were trusting and coming to them. Lillian (Mrs. MacAsh) told me in her last letter, which I got a few days before they passed away, of two Indian men who came to Lorne and said they wanted to be saved, and knew he was preaching the true gospel. Lorne took them into the house, got his Bible, explained salvation to them, and prayed with them. Then they both said they would take Christ as their Saviour, and live for Him, and come to the services.

"I could tell you of several instances lately of conversations he had with different ones, and how they asked him to explain the Bible to them. And Lillian was just as zealous as Lorne; the women and girls will never forget her. They were just started, and had a hard place, but the people were being awakened."

What Others Say of "Other Little Ships"

THE WATCHMAN-EXAMINER
New York

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

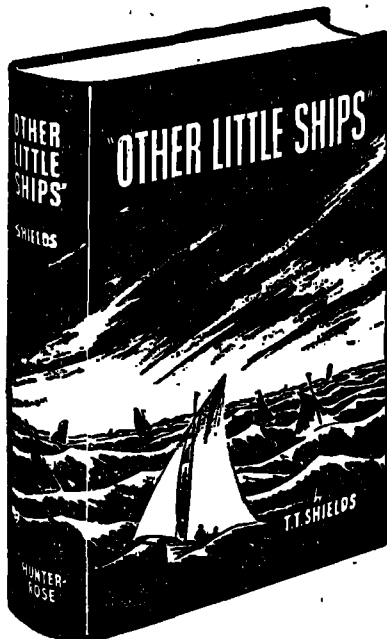
Preaching is still the most fascinating art in the world. Millions listen to sermonic themes every week. The rich discoveries of the study and the still richer treasures of personality and attestations of divine power make the sermon the center of Protestant worship. Thus books of sermons are interesting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

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

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES
Philadelphia

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

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



ORDER FORM FOR DR. SHIELDS' NEW BOOK

THE GOSPEL WITNESS
130 Gerrard Street East
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.)

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