

# The Gospel Witness

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

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

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Vol. 14, No. 18

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 12, 1935

Whole Number 695

## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

### THE SCRIPTURAL PORTRAIT OF ANTICHRIST

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, September 8th, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time.

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

"I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."—I. John 2:18-22.

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."—I. John 4:3.

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."—II. John 7.

"Now, we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

"And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

"Even him, 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 believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."—II. Thess. 2:1-12.

During recent years, we have heard a great deal about the antichrist. Many books have been written upon the subject, and many have indulged in speculative theories, by which they have sought to identify this wicked personage. That has been characteristic of the people of God for many ages, particularly in times of trouble. Even as late as the days of Napoleon the marvellous power which he wielded, and the phenomenal success which attended his military campaigns, led a great many people to ask whether indeed the lawless one had now come. When the Great War burst upon us, speculations were rife at that time. Then when Mussolini rose to power,

in some quarters he was nominated; as Stalin, Hitler, and others, have been looked upon either as the antichrist or the immediate precursor of the antichrist.

It is very easy, dear friends, to exercise one's imagination in these matters, and to conjure up a religious bogey that will fill people with apprehension, and perhaps with terror. But surely in such solemn matters it is imperative that we should seek to know the mind of God, not handling the Word of God deceitfully, but diligently studying the Word to see whether it has any special message for us respecting the extraordinary times in which we live.

I think it is fair to assume that if it is important that we should understand, and be able to recognize the antichrist when he comes, God would surely have given us in plain terms, such instruction as would enable us to shape our course as Christians ought to do in the premises. It is well to be suspicious of any interpretation of Scripture that requires some special ingenuity to discover; and equally suspicious of any interpretation which can be understood and thoroughly appreciated only by men of unusual intellectual capacity, augmented by some special scholastic distinction. I have a conviction that the Word of God is designed for the edification of the humblest believer. Our Lord Jesus Himself said, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

One of our young men recently went to the Old Country, and I gave him some letters of introduction to certain people of my acquaintance, among them one to a gentleman in Belfast, a man of some prominence in the public life of the city. My young friend told me that he met him, received great kindness at his hand, and that he drove him to the station when he was coming away. As they parted my Belfast friend offered this counsel, "Young man, I hope you will succeed, I hope you will become prosperous; but whatever your future may be, be careful of one thing: never allow yourself to become big." "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." If we come as little children, with open minds, sincerely desiring to know what God the Lord will say to us, I believe that we shall be enlightened, that "if any man will to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

One thing it is necessary to say over again in dealing with such matters as are to engage our attention this evening, and that is to lay down this principle for our guidance in the interpretation of Scripture. There are portions of Scripture which must, of necessity, be regarded as of a symbolic character. I believe the Scripture means exactly what it says, and should be literally interpreted, unless manifestly we are dealing with a symbol which cannot bear any literal interpretation and application. Daniel's prophecies are given to us in figurative, symbolic, form.

I believe as profoundly as any of you in the divine inspiration of every word of the Bible. I am quite confident that portions of Scripture which I cannot understand are the word of God, and I am only more deeply convinced that they are the word of the Infinite, because they are beyond the measure and capacity of my finite mind. I at least have learned to say of some portions of Scripture, when people demand to know the exact interpretation of them, that I do not know. And I believe every other man, if he would be honest, would have to give the same answer. It does not mean that we are specially ignorant, nor that we have not examined the

Scripture, nor that we have not read what other men have said about these matters; but rather that these truths are so great, so profound, there are so many difficulties in the way of certain interpretations, that one must maintain an open mind, awaiting further light. The books of Daniel and Revelation are both the word of God; and in due time we shall understand them; but the prophetic portions of Daniel, and practically all of Revelation, abound in symbols. I submit that the proper way to interpret Scripture is to take the plain statements of Scripture first, and then bring the symbolic scriptures into the light of the plain statements of Scripture about which there can be no mistake, and interpret their symbolism in their clear light.

In our day there are many who exercise their rather active imagination in respect to the books of Daniel and of Revelation, and their interpretations depend largely upon their flexibility, upon how far they can let their imaginations run. I talked with a professor some time ago about the chapter I read this evening, the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. Immediately he said, "Daniel"—"Wait a minute," I said. "But the Book of Revelation"—But I said, "Let us examine the plain statements of Scripture first." Daniel is mentioned in Matthew twenty-four. We are admonished to read something in Daniel, and when we see it unmistakably come to pass, "whoso readeth, let him understand". But in the meantime, do not let your imagination sketch a picture which may or may not be true.

Certainly in the matter of the antichrist we should heed that warning. You remember how once when our Lord Jesus began to speak plainly, and to tell the disciples that He was going to the Father, they said, "Now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

There are only five passages in the entire New Testament in which antichrist is mentioned by name. There are other passages which undoubtedly describe him, or refer to him; but there are but five where he is actually called the antichrist. They are all in the first and second Epistles of John, and I want you to look at them for a few minutes, in their order. I did not order this wet night, but perhaps it may be a convenient and appropriate setting for a little quiet thought and teaching.

## I.

First John two: eighteen: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time." That scripture tells us that a person named antichrist shall come. That is the announcement: "Ye have heard that antichrist shall come." Then it further says that "even now are there many antichrists" in the world, lesser persons, lesser principles, lesser systems, but which are akin to the ultimate disclosure of lawlessness in the person of the antichrist.

"Even now are there many antichrists." That was written a good while ago, and surely it meant what it said to those to whom it was primarily written. Even in their day there were many antichrists; by which, said John, we may know it is the last time. What is meant by the "last time"? Does it mean the last year, the last decade, the last century of the Christian era?

Not necessarily so. You will remember the Apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days." Peter identified the last days with this whole Christian dispensation, for a prophecy relating to the last days, according to an inspired apostle, found its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, at the time of the inauguration of the New Testament church. There are still many antichrists, and there will be others, and we may know by that fact that it is the "last time".

What do we mean by antichrist? The antichrist undoubtedly is an opponent of Christ, one who is against Christ. But the word does not bear that meaning exclusively. It may mean: *instead of, a vice-Christ, a vice-gerent, a substitute for Christ.* Against Him, of course, but against Him in the sense that he simulates Him, and represents himself as taking Christ's place, as being in His room and stead, as a substitute for Christ.

Let us look at another passage—the twenty-second verse: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." By "the Christ" we mean the Messiah, the Anointed One of the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus said to some who did not believe in Him, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" By which He did not mean primarily, "What think ye of Me?" But rather, "What think ye of the Christ described in the Scripture, Whose coming is there predicted?" They said, "He is the son of David." Then said He, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" Of His disciples He enquired, "But whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." To which the Lord replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Antichrist, it is said, denies the Father and the Son; and he is a liar who denieth that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. The man who denies the prophecies of the Old Testament which predict the coming of the Desire of all nations, the Sun of righteousness, the One Whose name should be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"—the man who denies that these prophecies find their fulfilment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and that He is the very Person of Whom God, by the Holy Ghost, spake in the Old Testament, though he be a Doctor of Divinity, a Baptist minister, a minister of the United Church, or of the Presbyterian or Anglican Church, whoever he may be, or what his academic distinction, if he denies that the Old Testament prophecies relating to the Messiah were fulfilled in the person of Jesus, that man, according to the teaching of Scripture, "is a liar".

That is rather hard for some modern preachers to receive, but that is what the Bible says. To deny that, is to deal in untruth.

Further, "he is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." It is a little more explicit in later passages, but at this point John, by the Holy Ghost, says whoever differentiates between Jesus and God, whoever denies the essential oneness of the Father and the Son, the eternal Godhead of Jesus, is an antichrist—substituting some-

thing else for the Saviour Whom God has sent into the world.

In the fourth chapter, and third verse, we read: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." Here he deals with the fact of the Incarnation, the manifestation of God in the flesh. John says the denial that Deity wrapped Himself with our humanity, that He "took not on Him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham", the denial of the fact of the Incarnation, is of the spirit of antichrist.

He implies, moreover, that there are many such spirits, and insists that every spirit that refuses to acknowledge that Jesus was a corporeal representation of God, that the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth", is an antichrist, not of God. That being so, we should have no difficulty in identifying, for example, the teaching of men like Harry Emerson Fosdick, who deny the record of the Virgin Birth and the essential Deity of Jesus Christ. They fall, under the light of these scriptures, into their natural place. They are not of God. They are of the spirit of antichrist.

"Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." My dear friends, from these scriptures, even a child ought to be able to see that the central truth of the Christian revelation is that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself"; that that is the irreducible minimum of Christian truth, the foundation of Christian faith, the *sine qua non* of Christianity; and that where that is denied, there is no Christianity. Said Peter—I quote again—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said, "Upon this rock will I build my church." That is the central, fundamental, indispensable, cardinal, truth of Christianity.

If we then bring our modern cults into the light of these scriptures, it ought forever to settle our attitude toward them. You do not need to be versed in the writings of Mrs. Eddy: all you need to discover is that Christian Science denies the reality of the Incarnation and the essential Deity of Jesus Christ. Knowing that, it cannot be Christian: it is anti-Christian. It must be so. If you will test Rutherfordism or Russellism by the same standard, you will discover that that system is not a diluted Christianity, not a modified Christianity: it is anti-Christian. It is opposed to that which is revealed in Christ. Therefore we can have nothing to do with it.

If you apply this principle to the various forms of Modernism, to Unitarianism for instance, the system that denies the Deity of Christ, you will refuse to admit that Unitarianism is in any sense Christian. It is anti-Christian. It is bound to be so because it denies that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Many theological colleges teach under Baptist, United Church, Anglican, Presbyterian, and other auspices, that there is some doubt about the trustworthiness of the scriptures which teach that Jesus Christ had a human mother, but no human father; that He was the only begotten Son of God. And wherever the truth of the Virgin birth of Jesus is denied, we must refuse absolutely to recognize the man, or the system, thus denying, as being Christian.

They are without the pale. They are anti-Christian. The fundamental and central principle of our Christian revelation is that Jesus Christ is God. For that, assuredly, is the plain and unmistakable teaching of these scriptures in John's epistles, than which nothing could be simpler.

## II.

Let us now turn to the scripture I read as a text, the second chapter of second Thessalonians. Here is A PORTRAIT OF THE LAWLESS ONE,—surely a picture of the antichrist. He is not called antichrist, in this scripture, but he is the culmination, the climax, of human and satanic opposition to Christ. He is described here, and we shall note simply one or two of his characteristics.

The first is that he is essentially a *religious person*, or a religious system with some great person at its head. He "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." He takes God's place. He claims to be God's representative. He claims to be God's vice-gerent, His vice, His substitute, His earthly representative. Therefore it is not probable that antichrist will be identified with a wholly secularized system, however opposed to Christianity that may be; because the ultimate antichrist will bear a religious form, and make certain religious claims: he will "shew himself that he is God." That, I think, is perfectly plain in this plain statement in Thessalonians. He is described here as a "lawless one". He is not subject to law. Whoever rebels against God is lawless. We speak of a man who disobeys the laws of the land as "an outlaw". The one who refuses to recognize the supreme authority of the Ruler of all is himself an antichrist, a lawless one, a law unto himself. And surely we see a great deal of the spirit of lawlessness to-day. The spirit of antichrist, we should be well able to understand and recognize; because it enters into all spheres of human life. Men refuse longer to be regulated by any authority external to themselves.

The antichrist is identified in this chapter with some "mystery of iniquity that doth already work." Does it not suggest that he is the outcropping, the ultimate product, of a system that is long at work, and not someone who springs from nothing, and suddenly takes to himself great authority. This "mystery of iniquity" already works in the world. The spirit of antichrist is already here—and has always been with us since Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea.

*His coming is apparently open to everybody.* Some of my friends are adepts at distinguishing between the coming, and the appearing, and the revelation. They are really three aspects of the same thing. The same word is used to describe the coming of antichrist as is used to describe the coming of Christ. His coming is said to be "after the working of Satan with"—what does it say?—"with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." While he may not be identified immediately as antichrist, he will not come secretly. His coming is "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness".

And he will be *possessed by satanic power*. I know it is rather old-fashioned to believe in the existence of Satan. I wish it were not so easy, that there were not so many evidences of his work in the world. How would

you account for Hepburnism, for our beer-parlours, if there were no devil? How would you account for Mussolini if there were no devil, or Hitler, or Stalin, or any of the evils apparent in the life roundabout us? There is a "mystery of iniquity". Have you not felt that behind the smallest evil there is a superhuman power? Try to correct it. Try it in your own life. Certain habits of speech, or of thought, that seemed almost trivial, and yet not quite what they ought to be, of which you have said, "I will correct it. I can do anything." Try it! At last you admit that you have been prostrated again and again, that an apparently little thing had behind it the force of hell itself. "The mystery of iniquity" always works, and the power of Satan is behind everything that is anti-Christian.

But in due course, when God shall withdraw His withholding power, whatever it is, then this wicked one will be revealed as a great religious personage. His coming will be sudden only as to its manifestation. His revelation is said to be the culmination of a falling away, for thereafter that wicked one shall be revealed. Surely there has been a "falling away". Surely there has been an almost universal defection from the Word of God, and from the things of God. There are men present this evening who are not old, who yet can remember when religion was held in some measure of respect—as it is not to-day. I am not able to say how antichrist will come, but merely to call your attention to this principle that it would be contrary to all analogy to expect antichrist to be the culmination of anything but a universal religious system. Some expositors of old used to identify antichrist with the Church of Rome—not secular Rome, but the Roman Catholic Church. It is quite true that the Pope calls himself the vicar of Christ, vicariously representing Him in the earth. He claims to be the substitute for Christ, His vice-gerent. He does sit in the temple of God, and demand, as the representative of God, a certain form of worship. But, to be perfectly candid, we must admit that the Roman Catholic Church has never denied that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. The Roman Catholic Church, with all its faults, has never denied the virgin birth of Christ. It is a cardinal doctrine of hers that Jesus Christ was virgin-born. So much so that, mistakenly, they actually speak of the virgin mother as "the mother of God". The Roman Catholic Church does not deny the identification of the Father and the Son.

I do not know who the antichrist is. I am just as sure that nobody else does. Observe the portrait that is in the Word of God. Mussolini does not fit it. I think, indeed, that Mussolini is going to his doom before long. I am not at all alarmed at the present situation. I have no interest in a prize fight. I think it is a brutal procedure. But a friend of mine wrote me the other day, and said a significant thing. He said that when Carnero allowed himself to be defeated by a negro he suffered great indignities at the hands of his compatriots; they felt such a defeat was no compliment to Italy. Then my friend went on to say that it taxed the might of the British Empire for several years to conquer the Boers, with a population of about a million. Ethiopia has about eleven millions, in a country inaccessible except through difficult mountain passes, through fever-infested swamps and morasses which would put half the army on the sick list permanently. The problem of supplying water to two or three hundred thousand troops is alone a staggering thing, particularly in a hostile country

where the carriers would probably be ambushed all the way.

There may be a terrible collapse—collapse in Italy. Bad for the world; you say? No! It would give Hitler pause, and Stalin; and dictatorships would fall. I am inclined to think that God is answering our prayer, and that there are better days ahead. I can see few of the marks of antichrist in Mussolini, although his course may be opposed to everything that is essentially Christian.

But antichrist's revelation synchronizes with the Great Tribulation. Someone asks, "But are we not in it now?" Did you ever read Fox' "Book of Martyrs"? Did you ever go through the Tower of London? Did you ever read of the horrors of the middle ages, and of the dark ages? Great Tribulation! Life is as a summer picnic for us compared with what men have had to endure in times past. People who jump to conclusions do so because they have lost sight of the past. If our oracular interpreters would familiarize themselves with history, they would not be so dogmatic in their interpretations of prophecy. It is a good thing to know something of the past. It is a good thing not to forget our Joseph.

When that Great Tribulation comes, it will be a hard time for those who believe, but "for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened". The promise which applies now, will apply to the Great Tribulation: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God will have respect to the capacity for endurance of those who must pass through it, and for their sake it will be shortened. (If you tell me the "elect" of the twenty-fourth of Matthew are the Jews, I must insist that you cite a single passage in Scripture that even remotely suggests that the "elect" in that chapter are the Jews.)

How will the Tribulation be terminated? By the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. "What about antichrist?", you ask. I do not know where he will come from. I do not think you know. You may have your opinion, and I, mine; but do let us learn the wisdom of not being dogmatic about that of which no one can be positively sure. One thing is certain, and that is that before Jesus Christ comes, antichrist will be in full flower and flood; and by that we shall know that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. And when He comes He "shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming". His coming will be so bright that the very blaze of His presence will destroy the antichrist. We shall have a great time some day, we really shall, even though such conditions should develop in our day, even though we should have to pass through the Tribulation. It will be relatively short, and will terminate with the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. There will be no doubt about it then. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." In the meantime, the important thing for us is that we should be on the side of Christ, and not on the side of antichrist.

How can we be on the side of Christ? Receive Him for what He is, the Son of God, the Saviour of the

world. Bow at His feet, with Thomas, saying, My Lord and my God. Yield yourself to Him, heart and intellect. Let Him be your Saviour now and forever. Although there are some things about the programme of the millennium, or of the Lord's coming, that you do not understand, or about which you are in doubt, if you do but receive Christ, and long for Him, and look for Him, and are ready to welcome Him, all will be well if you are among those who love His appearing.

Are you trusting Christ? Do you believe in Him as the Incarnate God by Whose atoning death your sins were forever put away? If you do, there is a glorious prospect before you. We can anticipate whatever the morrow may bring us with gladness and joy because we are in Christ.

### THE SEMINARY OPENS, FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH

The Toronto Baptist Seminary will commence its tenth academic year on Friday the thirteenth of September, at 10 o'clock in the morning with a meeting for the registration of new students: On the following Monday, September 16th, at 2 o'clock registration for former students will take place, and lectures will begin Tuesday morning at half past eight.

Friends in and near Toronto are especially invited to attend the Fall Convocation which will be held in the Jarvis Street, Church auditorium on Thursday, September 19th, at eight o'clock in the evening. This meeting will be addressed by the President, Dr. Shields, and by a member of the Faculty, and several students who have been on summer fields will also deliver brief messages.

If the Seminary has any superstitious friends, they will bemoan our choice of opening date, Friday the thirteenth, but those who have followed the work since its beginning will find in this occasion cause for thanksgiving for past blessings, and prayer for the future. "Surely the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad". In a time when many schools and colleges are being forced to close their doors, and when even our Provincial University is being forced to raise its tuition fees twenty-five per cent, our doors are still open to the young men and women that the churches send us, and that free of charge except for a nominal registration fee. We have reason for thanksgiving in the men and women who have gone out from these halls to preach the Gospel at home and abroad; we have reason to give God thanks for the present student body, and for the splendid men and women who have already applied for entrance this year. We beseech the brethren to strive together with us in their prayers to God for us that this tenth year of our history may be one when the school motto, "*kata Christon*" according to Christ, may be written with the Spirit of the living God in the fleshly tables of the heart. We would also ask our friends to remember the financial need of the school, for although the Jubilee Fund succeeded in greatly reducing our past indebtedness, we are still under heavy obligation in meeting current expenses. The troubled condition of the world to-day makes more apparent than ever the need there is for the preaching of the Gospel, and ought not to be taken by the Lord's people as an excuse for evading their responsibilities, but rather as a challenge to do even greater things, for Christ's sake, and we urge upon those who love the Gospel the pressing need of this worthy cause.—W. S. W.

### AN EARNEST WORD OF EXHORTATION

The past summer has been a very trying one with its high temperatures. For this reason church attendance has probably suffered more than usual, with the result that it will take the churches longer to recover from the summer recession. That means, of course, that we have no time to lose.

First, let us exhort our readers to resolve that they will reconsecrate themselves to the Lord and His service immediately, and be more in prayer than ever for themselves and the churches to which they belong. Never did the world need a sound evangelical testimony more than it does to-day. Who dares to predict what will shortly come upon the earth? They only need have no fear of evil tidings whose hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord.

Then let us each resolve that we will be loyal to our own church. Let your own church be your special sphere of labour. Don't be a gypsy. We live in a day when religious centres which provide a continual round of emotional excitement are multiplying. They build nothing. They are essentially parasitic. They are ultra spiritual in their profession, but it is a spirituality of word rather than of life. These places have no membership, the frequenters of such tabernacles have no responsibilities. Such places make every effort to entice Christian people away from their own churches by their emotional orgies.

Let us resolve to stay at home. Be in your own place, in your own church, in prayer meeting, in Sunday School, at both services on Sunday.

Resolve not to be a "oncer". In the long-run you will accomplish far more by staying at home and doing your best in your own church, than by running around to other places. These other places will invite you to "help" in some way, will flatter you by suggesting that your help is

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more needed there than in your own church. Refuse to believe it. Your pastor needs you, the deacons need you, the whole church needs you, and you are missed when you are absent.

Church gypsies set a bad example to the church members. They pay no compliment to their own church when spending half their time elsewhere. Let your own church be to you the best in the world. If it is not, find the church that is the best and stay there.

What to do? There are thousands of children attending no Sunday School—go and get them, bring them to school, build up your own school, and seek to bring the scholars to Christ. Then build up your public services. There are vast numbers of people who never attend a place of worship. Visit them; visit them again and again; give them no rest until they go with you to church. You will do more to "help" people in this way than by all your gadding about.

Let us begin at once, and resolve that in all our Union

Churches there shall be such spiritual activity as we have never known before.

It is true that true revivals are Heaven-sent, but they come through the people of God; and they come when God's people work as well as pray, and when all their work is energized by the power of the Holy Ghost in answer to prayer. Let us thus pray and work, and we shall see multitudes saved.

## NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Briscoe St., London.

Briscoe Street Baptist Church, London, was privileged to have two visits from Rev. Morley Hall during his sojourn in the East. At the prayer meeting on Wednesday, July 24th, a good company assembled to hear Mr. Hall tell of the triumphs of the gospel in the Province of Alberta. For over an hour he received rapt attention as he told of the work in city, town, village and hamlet. Also of the great radio ministry from the Westbourne Baptist Church. A liberal offering was taken for Brother Hall's work in the West.

During the pastor's vacation Mr. Hall taught the Bible Class, and preached at both services Sunday, August 18th, to splendid congregations.

Again his ministry was greatly appreciated. So much so that he will always be a welcome visitor at Briscoe Street.

On Sunday, August 25th, Rev. H. H. Chipchase of Guelph, was the supply, visiting Briscoe Street for the first time. He brought two splendid messages from the Word of God.

While the pastor was on vacation, the church, under the leadership of the Deacons' Board, took advantage of his absence to grant him a substantial increase in his stipend.

With the Fall and Winter approaching, a spirit of expectancy is in evidence on the part of the church membership. The Pastor will resume his regular monthly broadcast on September 15th at 11 a.m. The entire morning service will be broadcast the third Sunday of each month.

The Pastors' and People's Conference of the Hamilton, Brantford and London districts will be held in Briscoe Street, on Tuesday, September 17th. There will be two sessions, 2 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. standard time. Afternoon speakers will be Pastor A. Burnham, Galt, and Rev. G. Searle, Orangeville. The evening speaker will be Rev. A. J. Lewis of Kitchener. A great day is expected. Pastors and members of the Churches are cordially invited to attend.

Harry Watson,  
Chairman, Deacons' Board.

St. Paul's, Montreal

Because of some special interest, meetings (D.V.) will begin on the 29th of September. A brother now worshipping with us will be the helper for a few weeks. Kindly remember this extra effort in prayer. Pastor St. James has taken no summer vacation, but would like to stay West for a few weeks after the Convention, to speak for one or more nights in different Churches. If you wish to hear a seventy-five year Missionary, write Rev. A. St. James, 5368 Azilda Street, Montreal, Que.

### REMEMBER

Annual Convention, Union of Regular Baptist  
Churches of Ontario and Quebec  
JARVIS STREET CHURCH, TORONTO

on  
OCTOBER 22nd to 24th, 1935

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 3

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 39

Third Quarter

September 29th, 1935

Lesson Text: Proverbs 1 to 3.

**Golden Text:** "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."—Prov. 3:5, 6.

Bible School Reading: Prov. 3:1-20.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS:** Monday—I. Kings 4:29-34; Tuesday—Deut. 8:1-6; Wednesday—Neh. 10:34-39; Thursday—Job 28:12-28; Friday—John 6:41-51; Saturday—Phil. 4:8-14.

### INTRODUCTION

The book of Proverbs contains ethical teaching arranged in short pithy sentences. In it there is contained warning against evil, and encouragement in the performance of good. Its instruction relates to the practical affairs of life, and its emphasis is laid on conduct governed by the true understanding and wisdom which alone are found in God. Its superscription informs us that the contents are the "proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel"; and undoubtedly all but the last two chapters are his, these being ascribed to Agur the son of Jakeh, and king Lemuel. We are informed that Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs (I. Kings 4:32), less than one-third of these being found in this book. An ancient Jewish writer affirms that Solomon wrote the Song which bears his name, in his youth, the Proverbs in his riper years, and Ecclesiastes in his old age. The canonical authority of the book is well attested by many quotations in the New Testament.

### RESISTING TEMPTATION (1:1-9)

After the superscription (v. 1), the book opens with a brief explanation of the use of proverbs (vs. 2-6), followed by a word relative to the significance of the fear of the Lord (vs. 7-9). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning", or principal part, "of knowledge". True piety consists in reverencing God, putting Him first in all things, and seeking to please Him. And inasmuch as He is the Creator of the world, with all that it contains, and the source of all knowledge, a right relation to Him is essential to a proper understanding of both earthly and heavenly things. Fools despise such wisdom, but they that be wise pay heed thereto, and are blessed. After this, in a paternal manner, Solomon gives warning concerning temptation: "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." This is sage advice, and one who fears God will follow it. We must be able to say, No. Observe the appeal of sinners for companionship in evil, "Come with us"; "Cast in thy lot among us" (vs. 11-14). It is an appeal to the covetous spirit, not unknown at the present time in business, politics, and other spheres of human activity, and resting under the condemnation of Scripture (Col. 3:5). The love of money is the root of all evil (I. Tim. 6:10). The only right way is that of separation from the wicked (vs. 15-19; II. Cor. 6:14 to 7:1). A definite stand for God and righteousness is the safest course (Dan. 1:8; Acts 4:31).

### COMPLAINT OF WISDOM (1:20-33)

Wisdom personified is here described as crying in the streets, and its cry is the message of God. Our Lord is made unto us wisdom (I. Cor. 1:30), and it is His voice we hear in the words before us. Divine wisdom, so much needed in the counsels of men, is in the street neglected. The cry is public, persistent, significant. It is one of appeal, and of warning. It relates to the foolishness of man in continuing in his sinful ways. It calls upon him to listen to reproof, and turn from his evil ways; and it warns him of the consequences of refusal to do so (20-33). These consequences are most serious, affecting the eternal destiny of the individual, and bringing upon him distress and anguish (Matt. 25:40). This will be but the reaping of that which he has sown (v. 31; Gal. 6:7). Note the attitude of wisdom, now: calling, stretching out the hand, offering counsel; then, laughing, mocking, refusing to answer, and declining to be

found. It is difficult to understand the refusal of men to listen to divine counsel, except on the basis of their enmity against God (Rom. 8:7). Their attitude is foolish, sinful, unthankful, inexcusable, and ruinous—and their destiny is fearful, just, eternal, and irrevocable. Are we acting daily in accordance with the divine counsel? Do we put God before friends and loved ones?

### PROMISES OF WISDOM (2:1-22)

After the words of warning concerning the consequences of neglecting the counsel of wisdom, the reward of seeking the same is set forth, certain promises being given relative thereto. The sincerity of purpose in seeking wisdom is indicated in the conditions stated: "Incline thine ear"; "Apply thine heart"; "Cries after knowledge"; "Liftest up thy voice for understanding"; "Seekest her as silver"; "Searchest for her as for hidden treasure". Seeking in this whole-hearted, persistent, and determined way, brings results. First, relative to the fear and knowledge of God (v. 5). "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." God is the source of wisdom, and He honours with increased knowledge and understanding those who seek Him (I. Sam. 2:30). Submission, and obedience unto Him lead to greater insight into the matters pertaining to Him (vs. 6-9). Spiritual blessing, like material blessing, follows certain recognized laws in its increase. A second result of the securing of wisdom is manifest in the outward life (vs. 10-22). "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." Wisdom will govern every action, regulate every relationship, and protect from every moral danger. Deliverance will be given from the way of the evil man, and from the strange woman, that "thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. The need for such guidance and protection is evident. By experience we learn the insufficiency of man's wisdom, and realize the necessity for that of a higher order. The promises of divine wisdom are great, sure, necessary, free, and precious; and obtainable by all on specified conditions. Are we earnestly seeking divine wisdom and understanding?

### OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE COMMANDMENTS (3:1-35)

Several exhortations are found in this chapter inculcating obedience to the will of God, and promising blessing for obedience thereto. First, in relation to remembrance of the law; long life and peace being promised for observance thereof. Second, respecting mercy and truth, which we are urged to bind upon the neck, and write on the heart; or make part of the being, and exhibit in the daily life. The result of doing this will be favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Men will recognize uprightness of character, and give testimony thereto. Trust in the Lord is the next subject referred to (vs. 5, 6). Note the extent of the trust—"All thine heart"; the negative aspect, "Lean not unto thine own understanding"; the practical outcome of truth, "In all thy ways acknowledge him"; and the result, "He shall direct thy paths". Fear of the Lord is then enjoined, with its concomitant departure from evil (vs. 7, 8). Such an attitude is like medicine and moisture to the system, stimulating, and providing the essential to the enjoyment of life. Honouring God with gifts is a natural outcome of fearing Him. And these should come from the first-fruits of our increase, not from what is left after we have made use of it. The Israelite was commanded thus to give, and blessing was promised for obedience thereto (vs. 9, 10; Mal. 3:10). Chastisement is the next subject referred to, encouragement being given to sustain it (vs. 11, 12; Heb. 12:5-11).

Several things are mentioned in relation to wisdom: the happiness of the man who finds it, its precious nature, the blessing bestowed by it, the divine manifestation of it in the realm of nature, and the exhortation to give heed thereto (vs. 13-26). The wisest men are those who are in closest touch with God. Several brief exhortations conclude the chapter, relating to duty unto one's neighbour (vs. 27-29) causeless strive, envy, and a statement in reference to the general attitude of God toward the just and the unjust. Observe the necessity for a knowledge of God's will, the wisdom of acknowledging Him in all things, and receiving His direction, and the blessedness of obedience to His will. God knows best the way we should tread, understands its pitfalls, has the power to overcome its enemies, and is willing to guide us safely to our destination. In order to succeed in this, our wills must be submissive to His. Are we practical in our Christian life toward God and men?

# 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":—

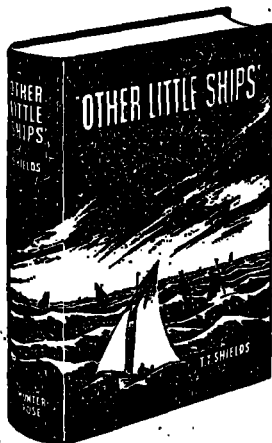
"I heard Professor George Jackson deliver an address before the Toronto Ministerial Association. The subject was, I think, 'John Morley, the Priest of the Outer Court'. He extolled John Morley, the biographer of Gladstone, he described his blameless character, his wonderfully serviceable life, his amiable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