

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. 20

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 26, 1935

Whole Number 697

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

THE RELATION OF THE RAPTURE TO CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, September 22nd, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—I. Thess. 4:13-18.

Prayer Before the Sermon

We thank Thee, O Lord our God, for a salvation that is all of grace, for a revelation which discloses to us something of the workings of a God Who is ever seeking and saving that which was lost. We thank Thee that Thou dost seek men and women to worship Thee, and, finding them in all their unfitness, Thou dost by Thy grace make it possible for them to come even into the holiest of all through the blood of Christ. Thus do we come this evening, to the mercy-seat concerning which Thou hast said, There will I meet with thee.

We have no other hope, O Lord, but that which is grounded upon the meritorious sacrifice of our glorious Lord. This evening we come with rejoicing because we know He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Let Thy grace be given to every member of this congregation, that by Thy Holy Spirit we may be made to know that we have no right to approach a holy God save through the Sacrifice of the cross. As we pray, as we offer to Thee the praises of our hearts, we beseech Thee to help us that we may put our confidence in the blood, that it may purge away even the iniquity of our holy things. Make our prayers and our praises acceptable to Thyself, because they come up through Christ as a sacrifice of sweet smell, fragrant with His merit.

Instruct us in Thy word to-night. We thank Thee that it is able to make us wise unto salvation, and that it is given to us for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. We desire to know that which Thou hast meant we should read therefrom, the thoughts of God. Help us to come with teachable spirits, that our minds may receive the truth in the love of it. How varied are our needs, our dispositions, the records

of our past. We should despair of finding help for everybody here had we not a holy God to Whom to come. We come to Thee, the Infinite; look upon us, search our hearts, give to us out of Thy Word this evening, that special instruction which our peculiar situation may require. Make this service, O Lord, to minister to the growth in grace of all Thy needy people.

Doubtless there are some here who as yet have not a full assurance of faith. They cannot say unwaveringly, I know whom I have believed. May the light of Thy gospel shine in their hearts this evening, so that they may see in Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners. Make this service profitable to saved and unsaved alike, and glorifying to Thy great name.

We think too of the larger interests of the kingdom of God, and seek Thy blessing upon all who name Thy name, upon the whole household of faith. Bless every minister and missionary, every witness who publicly or privately shall make known the Lord Jesus as the Saviour of men.

We pray for this Dominion, for the Empire to which we belong, and for all nations of the earth at this time of crisis. We are not skilled to understand all Thou art doing, but we are sure that Thou art unsurprised at the day's news, and that Thy hand is upon the rulers of the earth, that Thou art bringing to pass in Thine own way Thine eternal counsels of grace. Make Thou the people responsive to Thy touch, that the hearts of all believers may be fixed, that they may not be afraid of evil tidings, because they trust in God. Give special guidance to the rulers of our own Empire, both in England and in all the Dominions. May our duty be clearly seen, and may counsels of patience and of wisdom prevail, and of courage in the face of danger, and resolution where righteousness must be maintained.

The Lord bless us all this evening; we beseech Thee, and hasten the time when the Lord Himself shall come, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The Word of God is given to us to be our guide, to direct our footsteps into the way of righteousness and peace. It is a very practical Book; but in order to be of value to us it must be understood. There is but one way properly to recognize and acknowledge its authority, and that is to bow to its unmistakable teaching.

There is a disposition sometimes to suppose that the true meaning of Scripture must lie somewhere beneath the surface, and that the Bible cannot possibly mean exactly what it says. I grant you that the words of God, like the works of God, are manifold; and very often there will be found a meaning within a meaning. Some of the prophecies of Scripture are manifold, and are fulfilled in principle again and again. For example: who would ever have supposed, without New Testament teaching, that the scripture which says, "Out of Egypt have I called my son", had special relation to the return of the infant Jesus from Egypt whither He had been taken by divine direction to escape the wrath of Herod the king? But to say that the Scripture is manifold does not mean that its hidden meaning can ever contradict that which is plainly taught on the surface. We must first seek the primary meaning of any scripture, and yield to its authority.

There are people—and I do not say it unkindly—who seem to regard the Word of God as a kind of cross-word puzzle, or as something to be handled as a conjurer's trick. The Bible is the word of truth, and is designed to lead us into the way of truth; and in using the Word of God we must be careful not to handle it deceitfully. We must seek to ascertain its real significance, and abide by its teaching. In order to do this it is necessary that we should come always to the Word of God without preconceptions. You remember the trouble which Naaman experienced when he said, "Behold, I thought!" It was because he had already arranged in his own mind exactly what Elijah should do that he stumbled at the significance of the prophetic command. It is for us to come to the Word of God enquiring, as did Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

The truth of the Lord's return is a very precious doctrine of the Word of God. It is given for the inspiration and comfort of all the children of faith. To me, the truth of the second personal return of the Lord is just as truly a fundamental of the faith as the truth that He came the first time. His work of redemption will find its completion in His second advent, and it is indispensable to the completion of the divine programme that He Who came once to die shall come "a second time without a sin offering unto salvation".

It is a great pity that the doctrines of the Bible should so often be made the subject of imaginative speculation, and reduced often to subjects for debate and argumentation. There is a place for debate, there is a place for argument; but argument for argument's sake is never profitable. "Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." A mere argumentative use of the Word of God is never commended in the Scripture itself.

The doctrine of the Lord's return is one of the "exceeding great and precious promises"; and, I believe, kept

in its proper place, viewed in relation to the whole system of truth as revealed in the Word of God, is ever a means of sanctification to the believer, purifying his mind, and helping him to be prepared to receive the Lord with joy, and not with grief.

One of the truths associated with the doctrine of the coming of the Lord is that of the resurrection and rapture of God's believing people. The relation of that great event to the Lord's return has been a subject of much controversy. Upon a proper understanding of that relation I think there hinges truth, of vast importance.

The verses that form our text constitute the great rapture passage. I do not say that the doctrine is not in other scriptures implied. Indeed, it may be inferred, I believe, from several scriptures; but we must not base our doctrines upon mere implications and inferences: we must first of all ascertain the plain teaching of Scripture. On that principle, this chapter affords us—dare I say—the standard, the yardstick, by which the doctrine of the rapture of the saints, and its relation to the coming of the Lord, must be determined.

I may say some things again to-night with which some of you may not agree, and I again express the hope that you will not therefore be angry; for surely I am right in saying that I have just as much justification for being displeased by your views as you have in being offended by mine. If I say some things this evening that run counter to your conceptions of this matter which we shall discuss together, I ask you only to bring it into the light of Scripture, and, like the Berean Christians, search the scriptures to see whether these things be so. I think you will bear me witness that ever in my teaching I counsel my hearers to go to the Word of God, and to test everything they hear from any teacher, from any pulpit—and especially from this one—by the Word of God itself. Unless you find that which is taught in this place unmistakably supported by the teaching of Scripture, then I beg of you, for your own soul's sake, reject it. No teacher is infallible: all teachers make mistakes. The responsibility rests upon every believer to study the Word of God for himself, and to understand for himself, and to believe those things which, in his view, are unmistakably taught by this infallible Word.

In our former studies I hope it became clear to you that the coming of the Lord—the revelation, let me rather say, of Jesus Christ from heaven—will not take place until the lawless one has been revealed. Preceded by a great apostasy, which will find its culmination in the revelation of that wicked one, his rule will continue until the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven. The antichrist, whoever or whatever he or it is, will be "consumed with the spirit of his mouth", and destroyed "with the brightness"—do not forget that—"destroyed with the brightness of his coming".

What relation has that doctrine of the rapture of the saints to the truth of the return of the Lord?

I.

Obviously, according to the teaching of this scripture, **THE RAPTURE WILL SYNCHRONIZE WITH THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM HEAVEN**, the coming of Christ from heaven: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven." Surely this passage relates specifically, unmistakably, to the second advent. That is what the apostle is speaking of here, the second coming of our Lord. What will characterize that second coming? I need not take time this evening to recite the scriptures which un-

mistakably promise that Jesus Christ will come again. Nothing is more plainly taught in the Word of God than that as He came once, He will—and must—come again: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." "I", said Jesus, "will come again." He did not mean the coming of death. And He certainly did not mean any revival movement. He did not mean any sort of reform when He said, "I will come again." He meant that He would come personally, and receive us, as He said, "unto Myself". That is the teaching of Scripture. "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." So He spoke even to His judges, as He had predicted His advent to His own disciples. That, I assume, is a settled conviction with all who believe the Bible, that Jesus will come again. Whenever you find a man denying the second personal coming of Christ, the return of the Lord, you may be sure he does not believe the Bible—and it is but a step from the denial of His second advent to the denial of His first advent; for even that may yet be called in question if men bearing the name Christian proceed as they are now proceeding.

But I shall assume that, at that point, we are already thoroughly convinced, that Jesus will come again.

Other scriptures tell us that the coming of Christ will be visible. I know there are some who endeavour to distinguish between the coming, the *parousia*; and the *epiphany*, the *brightness* of His coming; and the *apocalypse*, His *revelation*. But I hope to show you that these three are but three aspects of one event. His coming will be attended by brightness, and indeed the Scripture says that antichrist will be destroyed "with the brightness of his coming", and in that coming He will be revealed from heaven.

But there are other scriptures confirming the same truth. The Lord Jesus said to Nathanael, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." We are told in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew that the coming of Christ will be "as the lightning coming out of the east, and shineth even unto the west"; and it is said that when certain things take place, "then shall appear the sign of the Son of man". You will recall the opening chapter of John's Revelation, "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." His coming is associated with great brightness, and it is called a revelation, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The second coming of Christ, then, will be visible.

But our text goes farther and says *it will be audible too*: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Three times we are told in that verse of the audibility of the coming of the Lord—visible and audible. If you can make that scripture to support the theory of a secret coming of Christ, language has ceased to have any significance, and we may as well give up the case at once and say that Reason has surrendered in this matter.

The apostle here says, "This we say unto you *by the*

word of the Lord." As though he desired to clothe with peculiar and special authority this particular revelation of the will of God. He says that when the Lord shall descend from heaven He will come "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God".

I anticipate my further argument for a moment to say that the rapture follows immediately upon the resurrection. The resurrection of the just must precede their rapture: "The dead in Christ shall rise first." In the chapter which Mr. Whitcombe read the apostle said, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump"—mark that. We shall be changed not at a trump but "at the last trump"—"for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

There is nothing in Scripture to suggest that the dead will rise from the dead amid a great silence. I have referred to it on former occasions when discussing this subject, but I know of nothing more misleading than that little tract called, "Missing"—a picture of a scene when in the business and domestic worlds there is panic because all the Christians are missing, and no one knows where they have gone. It is based on the assumption that the Lord will come quietly and catch away all the living believers, and no one will know their whereabouts.

But they can not be caught away until the dead are raised. And how shall the dead be raised? "At the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised."

Surely you will not say that the trumpet, by any stretch of the imagination, can be intended to signify some secret procedure? The very idea of the "shout", "the voice of the archangel", and "the trump of God" proclaims an audible, public, event. And that is what the Bible says about the coming of Christ.

I cannot find, then, in this specific scripture any authority for the doctrine of the secret rapture of the saints. I am myself persuaded—do not be offended—that there is not one shred of scripture anywhere to support that theory. I am sure that it is a figment of the human imagination.

Do not accept what I say on that point, but look to the Bible; and bring all your inferences into the light of this scripture, and I feel confident that in the end you will see that this plain and unmistakable word of the Lord will forever destroy the doctrine of a secret rapture, or even of a pretribulation rapture, as having any origin in the Word of God. It was born of the imaginations of men.

II.

In the second place, let us consider THE RELATION OF THE RAPTURE TO THE RESURRECTION.

We are told here that the resurrection of the just will take place when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, the trumpet that shall herald the coming of Christ: "The dead in Christ shall rise first." It is beyond my province this evening to discuss the doctrine of the resurrection, except as it is related to this doctrine of the rapture, and of the coming of the Lord. Let us turn to Corinthians again, and there *the resurrection of the just is specifically and unmistakably said to take place when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound*: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Could language be plainer than that? Could

language be more explicit than that, that when the dead shall be raised incorruptible, they shall rise in response to the trumpet of the Lord?

Then too our text says that the trumpet shall sound when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven". So then the dead in Christ shall not rise until the trumpet shall sound; and when the trumpet sounds, the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven. The coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the saints take place at one and the same time, for the scripture says it will be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." If I may so say, the resurrection of the believing dead will be the first item on the divine programme. When the voice of the archangel shall sound it shall be to call from their graves the bodies of sleeping believers. Surely that is plain. You will acknowledge that I have not twisted and perverted the Scripture to say that. That is exactly the surface meaning of the Word of God.

This is the fulfilment of a further word in the first of *Corinthians* where the apostle, by inspiration, says, "Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." There must be some relation between the Firstfruits and the general harvest. I apprehend that it means that Jesus Christ, in His resurrection, was a representative Man. He came "as a quickening Spirit"; He lived for us; He died for us; He rose again for us; He ascended into heaven; He intercedes for us—He returns to receive us unto Himself. And when He comes He will come as "this same Jesus". We are told in Revelation that He shall be seen especially of those who pierced Him. It is implied, surely, that the marks of the piercing will still be there. John, in a later chapter, says, "I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." The marks of the crucifixion were there upon Him.

Following His resurrection "he shewed them his hands and his feet"—"Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." There was no doubt as to His identification. Whatever change may have taken place in His body, whatever it means to be sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body, the disciples who had known Him on one side of the grave, identified Him on the other side of the grave. He is called the Firstfruits, and it is said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." To my mind it is clear that by the resurrection of Jesus Christ there was taken into the heavens a part of this material world. He had a physical body. "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Indeed, it is said that He ate a piece of broiled fish, and an honeycomb.

I do not pretend to explain these things: they are a matter of record in the Word of the living God. But Jesus in His resurrection body, was the same Jesus the disciples knew before He was crucified. They identified Him. And how sweet to remember that Mary recognized Him by His voice. When He said, "Mary", instantly she fell at His feet and cried, "Rabboni; which is to say, Master."

I remember a very touching incident my dear friend the late Dr. Keirstead told me. He had a daughter living in Vancouver who had been married many years, and away from home. One morning about two o'clock his telephone rang, and he wondered who could be calling him at such an hour. He answered the telephone him-

self, and the operator said, "Vancouver is calling you." He said, "Hello", and a voice said, "Is that you, Daddy?" All the intervening years dropped away, Dr. Keirstead said, and he recognized the voice. It was the voice of his little girl whom he had held on his knee hundreds of times. There was something about it that brought back all the loveliness and sweetness of her childhood days. Then said Dr. Keirstead, "It will be something like that in the resurrection, for do you not remember that Mary recognized the physical voice of Jesus, and fell at His feet and worshipped Him."

"Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." There is some analogy between the resurrection of the believer and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And I verily believe that we shall know each other even as we shall know Him in that great and glorious day of the future.

I point out to you that *these verses are especially written to explain the relation of the living saints at the time of the Lord's return, to those who sleep in Jesus; because the apostle says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep. That is what I am writing about. I want to tell you about the friends you have loved and lost, those who sleep in Jesus—and this I tell you by the word of the Lord. I have a special revelation from heaven in this matter: I am telling you that which the Lord has told me."*

He begins by saying that those who are alive at the coming of the Lord "shall not prevent"—that is an old word, archaic; its meaning has changed by the passage of time. We have it in another connection: "Thou preventest him with the blessing of goodness", Thou goest before him, precedest him—"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." He will not go away and leave the saints sleeping in the dust. When the trumpet shall sound "the dead in Christ shall rise first". All the dead in Christ! Not only the New Testament saints, but the Old Testament saints as well. All who have put their trust in the sinner's Saviour shall rise *first* at the coming of Christ; "then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

What about those who are alive, who have never fallen asleep? Paul says to the Corinthians, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." But all the saints, of all ages, shall rise; and those who are alive and remain shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Each will have the same kind of body as those who have slept. We shall be all on one common level, and shall be caught up "to meet the Lord in the air". That is the destiny of God's people as promised in the Word of God.

III.

But I must now lead you a step further, and point out that THE RESURRECTION WILL TAKE PLACE WHEN THE LAST TRUMP SHALL ANNOUNCE THE LORD'S RETURN, not

before the great tribulation. The Scripture is explicit that that day "shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition". His reign will be terminated by the coming of Christ; and the coming of Christ will synchronize with the resurrection of the believing dead. That is plain enough.

"But what about coming *with* His saints?" someone says, "for the Lord will come *with* His saints before He comes *for* His saints." Let us see what the Scripture says. "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"—not as to their bodies, for their bodies are even now in the ground; but these are "the spirits of just men made perfect", "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven". I do not know what it means except that they are "with Christ, which is far better"; and that when Jesus Christ comes He will come with ten thousand of His saints—not in the body first of all, but those who sleep in Jesus will God "bring with him". What can this mean but their spirits? for they could not come in the body when as yet the resurrection has not taken place. But as they come, as the bodies of the living saints shall be changed, these redeemed spirits shall repossess the bodies that have slept in the dust; and then together we shall be caught up with them in the clouds, "to meet the Lord in the air".

How would you receive a friend, if one should call upon you? Would you not go forward to meet him? "The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout"; the archangel's voice shall be heard, and the sound of the trumpet—and "the dead in Christ shall rise first", and together they shall "meet the Lord in the air"; and the union shall be effected which shall never be dissolved: "So shall we ever be with the Lord."

Ah yes; that is the programme for the believer when "he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe".

As to the divine judgments, there are other passages which tell us of them; but we are admonished to "comfort one another with these words". Is it a comfort, dear friends? I can find no scriptural warrant for belittling the body. These bodies were given to us of God, and they are called the temples of the Holy Ghost. We are so to regard them. This earthly house of our tabernacle will some day be dissolved, but in the meantime "we that are in this tabernacle do groan". We have all kinds of aches and pains. Is there anything more distressing than to see one we love gradually wasting away? If it please the Lord so to order it—we must submit to His will—I should welcome a sudden passage rather than a long, lingering, wasting, illness. But many are not so privileged, and the body declines, and it is laid away after a while; and we say, "I hope some time to see my loved one again."

In the same body? I do not want to see my friends in bodies subject to the limitations they knew before. It is sown a natural body, but are you not glad that it is to be raised a spiritual body? Are you not glad that this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality? There will be nothing in our resurrection bodies that can corrupt: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." But when the work of redemption has been completed, and the redeemed spirit is made the tenant of the redeemed body from which all sin and all disposition to sin shall

for ever have been taken away, there will remain nothing corruptible even in our flesh. And that will itself be heaven to have bodies incorruptible, that never grow old, that never grow weary, that are strangers to pain.

Are we justified in thus believing? Hear what the Scripture saith: "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body (the body of our humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Some day we shall have perfect bodies: they will be perfected "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", when the Lord shall come.

What wonder that the apostle said to all mourning hearts, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words"? There is a better day coming. Little do we know what is involved in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. These bodies are of the earth, earthy; as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall by and by bear the image of the heavenly; and we shall be like Him.

And "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"—but that is another subject. God will not be defeated in this world. "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Our sovereign Lord will purge away all iniquity even from this planet on which we live. But first of all He will begin with us: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." So then, dear friends, there is a bright prospect before us, notwithstanding the threat of war.

In the meantime, keep to the main highway of truth. Do not surrender your belief in the teaching of God's Word; nor allow yourselves to be carried away by the vagaries of the day.

You who are not Christians, remember I have been speaking of "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ". And what a happy day that will be for all His redeemed people! All our troubles shall be ended, and we shall rest with Him "at the revelation of Jesus Christ". But what about you who are not Christians? What about you? Is there somebody in the gallery to-night who is not a Christian? The day of the Lord will be darkness and not light for you. When once—do not forget it—when once the Master of the house hath risen up and hath shut to the door, the day of grace shall be ended. Then will men begin to say, "Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are."

As I said to you last Sunday evening, I can find in the New Testament no promise of grace for the impenitent subsequent to the coming of Jesus Christ. Personally, I believe that the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven will for ever end the dispensation of grace. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." We are exhorted to heed His call "while it is called to-day". To-morrow may be too late. Happy are they whose trust is in the Lord Jesus Christ. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It makes no difference what happens to us who are in Christ. All is well; and we are marching forward toward the morning, toward the morning land. But how

terrible will be the outer darkness for those who know not Christ! Will you come to Him now? Will you trust Him now? Will you seek the cleansing of His blood now?

You say you do not understand it? Nor do I. But I know what the Bible says: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Some stains, even when you send your garments to the cleaners, are impossible to remove. We get back a courteous note: "We are sorry that we cannot remove this stain." What stained sinners we are! How terribly stained! But let me quote it again, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." When the blood has passed over us, we are washed, and in His sight are made whiter than snow, and ready to receive Him, and to rejoice in His coming. May the Lord help us to trust Him now.

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Ordination of Mr. Bernard Jeffery

In response to the call of the Long Branch Baptist Church, twenty-seven members acting as representatives of sixteen Regular Baptist Churches sat as a council on Friday afternoon, September 20th, to wait upon Mr. Bernard Jeffery, the candidate for ordination.

The meeting was opened by singing a hymn, after which Rev. P. B. Loney was appointed temporary moderator, and Rev. G. W. Searle, temporary clerk. The moderator called the roll of the churches, and the following were found to be represented: Runnymede Road, Jarvis Street, Mount Pleasant Road, and Calvin, all of Toronto. Those from a distance included, Stouffville, First Markham, Willowdale, St. Catharines, Maple Hill, Baker Hill, Mount Albert, Stanley Ave., and Immanuel, Hamilton, and Belleville. Hymn 66 was sung as the council took its place.

The Secretary of the Union, Rev. W. E. Atkinson, gave a brief but enlightening account of the splendid efforts put forth by the candidate in his private life, throughout student days, and in the course of his activities as a pastor, following which it was moved that the council hear the full statement before questioning the candidate.

Mr. Jeffery then proceeded to give his statement, telling of his conversion at twelve years of age; of the temporary set back because of coldness and worldliness in the church of which he was a member; of his subsequent blessing under the ministry of Dr. Shields and baptism at his hands. In his remarks respecting call to the ministry, our brother told us that the great need of perishing men and women had gripped his soul and that their personal salvation had appealed to him rather than preaching as a vocation. The candidate then set forth his statement of faith in a very

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

OF THE

UNION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES

OF ONTARIO, AND QUEBEC

JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Toronto, Ont.

October 22nd to 24th inclusive.

Watch for detailed programme later in these pages.

Dr. W. H. Houghton, President of Moody Bible Institute, will be the special Guest Speaker. Dr. Houghton was called



Dr. W. H. Houghton

about a year ago to succeed Dr. James M. Gray, as the President of the great Missionary and Educational Institution founded by the late Dwight L. Moody. The following is an excerpt from the "Moody Bible Institute Monthly":

"Dr. Houghton was born and educated in Boston, receiving his honorary degree from Wheaton College in 1931. He first commanded attention as a successor of Dr. Len G. Broughton in the pastorate of the Baptist Tabernacle at Atlanta, Ga., where in a period of four years he added 2,000 members to the church. His ministry in New York during a similar period has been correspondingly

blessed, 900 members having been added to the church, while an average of 400 attend the midweek prayer meeting."

clear and convincing manner. In listening to the discourse we were pleased to hear the strong biblical convictions that our brother entertains. This was further noted as he answered unhesitatingly and comprehensively the many and varied questions that were asked by the council. On conclusion of the examination the candidate was accepted.

At the evening service Pastor John Armstrong led the song service, and the regular meeting was opened by sing-

(Continued on page 8)

THE McMASTER-MARSHALL ISSUE, OCTOBER 3rd

Tell your friends that next week 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 conversation 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".

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 41 Fourth Quarter October 13th, 1935

THE CRY OF WISDOM

Lesson Text: Proverbs 8 and 9.

Golden Text: "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."—Proverbs 8:11.

Bible School Reading: Proverbs 8:1-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—Job 35:1-8; Tuesday—Ps. 49:1-10; Wednesday—Eccles. 7:11-19; Thursday—Song of Solomon 2:1-7; Friday—John 17:20-26; Saturday—Col. 1:1-12.

WISDOM'S VALUE (8:1-21)

In contrast with the sensuality condemned in the previous chapters, wisdom is depicted here in its blessedness, appealing unto man for the acceptance of its instruction. The public nature of that appeal is emphasized, together with the simplicity, necessity, and urgency of it; leaving no excuse for those who fail to respond thereto. Divine wisdom does not court the darkness, or dwell in secrecy; nor is it meant merely for the favoured few. It is offered freely to all who seek it (James 1:5-7). God loves the world (John 3:16); and blesses with all spiritual blessings those who come unto Him through Christ (Eph. 1:3). Therefore, any lacking such blessing have themselves to blame for the defect. Our Lord has been made unto us wisdom (I Cor. 1:30). Observe His appeal unto men in the language of the text. There will be no excuse for those who neglect the divine call (Heb. 2:3).

After the record of the appeal, wisdom's message is related, wherein the value, age, and teaching, of wisdom are set forth. Wisdom speaks of excellent, right, truthful, things; wickedness is an abomination to it. Its teaching is apprehended by those who are submissive thereto. This implies that wisdom is always on the side of righteousness, and against wickedness. It also means that its help may be gained by all who sincerely seek it. Teaching relative to the value of wisdom follows. This is said to be greater than silver, gold, or rubies; and nothing that could be desired is comparable to it (vs. 10, 11). This is setting a very high value upon it, yet not too high when we contrast its spiritual nature with the material objects of the world. Even the most precious things of this earth may lead men to ruin, but divine wisdom will always guide to a higher life, and abundantly blesses those who are exercised thereby. Note the necessity for emphasizing the spiritual as the highest plane of life. Some live on the physical plane, others on the intellectual, but God would have these subservient to the spiritual.

Continuing the description of wisdom's value, we are informed of its beneficent effect in general conduct, and public government. Prudence is a fruit of its application (v. 12). It also manifests itself in opposition to evil (v. 13), gives counsel to rulers (vs. 14-16), and richly repays those who love it (vs. 17-21). Note the precious nature of divine wisdom, its great fruitfulness, its necessity for private and public life, and the fulfilment of all through Christ. God honours those who honour Him (I Sam. 2:30); is found of those who seek Him (Is. 55:6, 7); and supplies the necessary gifts to enable men to live to please Him (I Cor. 12:11). Why is wisdom more precious than all material possessions?

WISDOM'S AGE (8:22-36)

Divine wisdom is not a recent discoverer, or accomplishment, of God; but being an attribute of Deity it has been, and still is, coexistent with the Lord. It was in existence before creation (vs. 22-26); and it was present at creation (vs. 27-31). The world was made in accordance with wisdom; and man from the beginning has had the benefit of its counsel. Note the wonders of nature for testimony to the wisdom of God in material things. We are reminded by this description of our Lord's presence with the Father. He was

with Him before the world was (John 17:5). He was with Him at the beginning (John 1:1). And He was the well-beloved of the Father (Matt. 3:17; Col. 1:13). Observe the attitude of God toward men, "Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." The record of the Lord's dealings with men furnishes testimony respecting this statement. Man is the highest form of creation, and receives the greatest attention from the Creator. An appeal from wisdom closes the chapter; wherein men are urged to hear instruction, and are informed of the consequences following both obedience and disobedience to its teaching (vs. 32-36). Note the blessedness here and hereafter experienced by those who serve God, and carry out His will (Matt. 6:33; 25:34; Eph. 1:10-14). And the punishment received by those who decline to submit to Him (Matt. 25:36). How may we receive wisdom from God, and live in accordance with it?

WISDOM'S INVITATION (9:1-18)

The commendation of wisdom continues in this chapter under the figure of a hostess making provision for her guests, and inviting them to come and partake thereof. A description of such action opens the chapter; wherein wisdom's house, provision, and invitation, are brought to our attention (vs. 1-6). Note the consideration for men manifested therein; also the greatness of the preparation, and the beneficent purpose of the whole. God only seeks the highest good of men, and it is foolish indeed not to obey Him. The freeness, heartiness, goodness, and publicity, of the invitation are also worthy of attention. Salvation, with all its accompanying blessings, is offered freely unto men (Romans 3:24). The Lord Jesus Christ is the divine, unspeakable, Gift unto men (2 Cor. 9:15); and God urges men to come to Him for salvation (Acts 17: 30, 31), and commissions His servants to make known His attitude, and give His invitation to those who know Him not (Matt. 28: 18-20). It is therefore clear that He can do no more to rescue sinners from the power and consequences of their sin. Note further the feast to which the Lord invites us, and the foretaste of that which we are at present privileged to partake of (Rev. 19:9; John 6:35). The goodness of God is clear to all who have eyes to see, ears to hear, and minds to think.

A contrast in character is evident in the remaining part of the chapter, manifest in the nature of the response to reproof. A wicked person rejects reproof, while a wise person accepts it. Note illustrations of this in the cases of Cain (Gen. 4:9); Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:10), and David (2 Sam. 24:10-14). The wise person desires both to be, and to do, right; and is willing to be corrected when wrong; but the wicked person is actuated only by selfish purposes, and consequently resents interference with his actions. Instruction given to a wise man increases his wisdom and learning; and the beginning of such wisdom is the fear of the Lord (vs. 9, 10). The true wisdom is divine in its source, and with submission to it, its power increases in the individual. A wise person is willing to learn from any source, and this is constantly increasing in wisdom and learning. It may also be noted that obedience to the will of God means increase in the knowledge of God, and of the things pertaining to Him, and growth in grace. Emphasis may be laid on the privilege and necessity of seeking to increase one's knowledge of God more intimately (Phil. 3:7-11); and blessed indeed is the experience of the one whose attitude is the same. Wisdom's blessing is both temporal and spiritual, increasing the years of life, as well as revealing God more clearly (vs. 11, 12). Holiness of life tends to length of days, as the same is in conformity with the Creator's purpose; while sin shortens the duration of life, being contrary to the divine plan, and inimical to the health of body and mind. It pays therefore to live for God, even from the physical standpoint. The concluding verses of the chapter portray the appeal of the foolish woman in contrast with that of wisdom (vs. 13-18). Her character is manifest, together with her attitude; her action, her call, and the consequences of yielding to her entreaty. She is typical, not only of wicked women, but of all sinful appeals. We move in the midst of two great contending forces; the one emanating from God, which would lead us to do His will; the other having the devil as its source, which would lead us downward. To the one or the other, men submit; and reap the consequences of their actions (Eph. 2:1:7). How may we resist temptation, and live for God? How may we aid others in living victoriously over sin?

ORDINATION OF MR. BERNARD JEFFERY

(Continued from page 6)

ing "All hail the power of Jesus' Name". The reading of the minutes was followed by the Scripture lesson read by Rev. W. S. Whitcombe, and Rev. E. E. Hooper led in prayer.



JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, TORONTO, ONT.
Where the Convention Will Meet.

The congregation sang, "On Christ the solid Rock I stand", after which the ordained pastors came forward and gathered around the candidate as Rev. W. E. Smalley offered

the ordination prayer. The charge to the pastor was given by Rev. Alex. Thomson, in which he exhorted the candidate to take to himself physically, mentally, and spiritually, basing his remarks upon I. Tim. 4:16. The charge to the church was given by Rev. W. E. Atkinson, in the course of which he wisely counselled the church to look after their pastor. The right hand of fellowship was extended by Rev. Frank Roblin, after which the sister of the newly ordained pastor, Miss Mary Jeffery, played a violin solo which was much appreciated.

The congregation sang "The Church's one foundation", and then listened intently to the timely ordination sermon preached by Rev. C. J. Loney. The subject was "The church that Jesus built". We suggest a convention-wide assembling of our deacons with a repeat sermon by the Hamilton bishop. The singing of the hymn, "I am Thine, O Lord", and the pronouncing of the benediction by Rev. Bernard Jeffery, brought to a close one of the best ordination sessions that it has been our pleasure to attend. May the Lord bless the pastor and his congregation!

G. W. Searle, Clerk.

THE McMASTER-MARSHALL ISSUE

In *The Canadian Baptist* of September 19th, 1935, on page nine, the following paragraph occurs:

"Word has been received this week from Professor Marshall indicating that his plans for closing his pastorate in Leicester, England, are proceeding and he is arranging to arrive in Hamilton early in January."

We may safely assume, in view of this announcement, that Professor Marshall will return to McMaster, notwithstanding what was said in *The Baptist Times*, of London, as printed in our last week's issue. Evidently *The Canadian Baptist* of August 8th, *THE GOSPEL WITNESS* of August 22nd, and *The Baptist Times*, in an earlier issue, were all correct in announcing Professor Marshall's return. That being so, we shall proceed with our plan, and publish the McMaster-Marshall issue, of which notice is given elsewhere, October 3rd.

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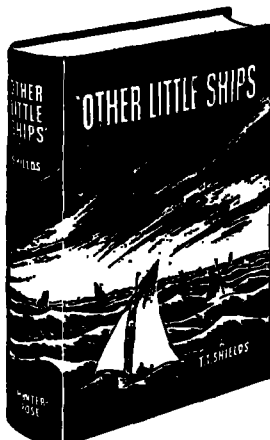
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