

# The Gospel Witness

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

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

SOVEREIGNTY UNDER RESTRAINT

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, October 27th, 1935  
(Stenographically Reported)

"I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."—II. Samuel 8:39.

I dare say it would be possible for many here this evening to recall occasions in which they have listened to another's speech with only a partial understanding of what was said. There seemed in the statement to be a hidden meaning but dimly revealed. Later, in the light of certain circumstances, you have said to that person, "Now I understand what you meant the other day. Now it is quite clear to me what was in your mind at the time."

We are to remember that when God made His earliest communication of Himself to His creatures, His whole plan of redemption, later to be unfolded, was already completely formed in His own mind; but in the Old Testament the principle obtained, even as later it was expressed by our Lord Himself when He said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." If we believe in the divine sovereignty, and that history has been run into the mould of the divine purpose, that God has really never laid His sceptre by, we must reasonably expect that in the history of God's people there will be principles operating which are the foreshadowings of that which He designed later to bring to pass.

I believe that is the explanation of the fact that the gospel is really hidden even in the historical portions of Scripture. You will recall that it is specifically said, with reference to Israel's journeyings through the wilderness that the events of their lives "happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the age are come". But I believe that was equally true in respect to all the events of inspired history, and if we do but read it in the light of the New Testament we shall find the principles of the gospel foreshadowed on every page of Scripture. It deepens my conviction of the divine inspiration of Scripture, and helps

me to rest upon the divine revelation of grace, to discover that the whole scheme of redemption was conceived in the mind of the Eternal before the worlds were made; and that so perfect was God's plan it never became necessary for Him to change it. But He has wrought out His purposes of grace until at last it shines in full-orbed splendour in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Very often have we turned to the record of David's life to find therein illustrative material wherewith to make simple the gospel of sovereign grace. I refer you this evening to another chapter of his history.

You will remember that he was anointed of God long before he was recognized by men to be the king of Israel, and that "there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David". Even after Saul and Jonathan had died, and David had become king of Israel, the captain of Saul's host, Abner the son of Ner, "made himself strong for the house of Saul". His loyalty, though a mistaken loyalty, was a quality as rare as it was beautiful. He had given himself with whole-hearted devotion to the service of Saul, and he found it difficult to transfer his affections to another. We should be wise never to disparage that principle of loyalty even though it should be misdirected; for people who have learned to be loyal to one interest, given instruction and proper illumination, will be equally loyal in the right direction.

"Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul" when Ishbosheth, Saul's son, set himself up in opposition to David, the Lord's anointed. But when, by Ishbosheth, he was falsely accused, and when at last it dawned upon him that he had been mistaken in devoting himself to the interests of Saul, there flashed into his mind, as by a revelation, what God had said respecting the son of

Jesse, and the erstwhile rebel said, "So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him, to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba." Thereupon he immediately entered into communication with David, and told him that it was in his mind to become his servant, saying, "Make thy league with me, and, behold my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee."

David agreed to receive Abner upon certain conditions. When Abner had summoned all Israel to follow him, he came to David with twenty men with him. David welcomed him who had been his enemy, who had fought so valiantly against him—welcomed him into his presence, forgave him all; made a great feast for his entertainment.

Then Abner said, "I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth." This happened in the absence of Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruiah. When Joab returned he learned that Abner, the captain of Saul's hosts, had actually been received by the king, and had been sent away in peace. He made enquiry as to the way Abner had gone, and sent messengers after him which brought him again from the well of Sirah to Hebron; "but David knew it not." Abner, unskilled in deceit, accepted Joab's overture at its face value, and met Joab in Hebron. Joab took him aside quietly to talk with him, and even as he did so, he unsheathed a dagger and drove it into his body, and the splendid Abner fell dead at Joab's feet.

When David heard it he lamented over him, saying, "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner." The king said to all the people, "Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And King David himself followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. And the king lamented over Abner and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou." To the people he said, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."

And all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner."

If I were to send you away now, surely you could see the gospel in that story; notwithstanding I must point out a few principles.

#### I.

Here is A SOVEREIGNTY THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE RESTRAINTS OF GRACE. David said, "I am king; I have the right to command; my power is absolute; and yet, though anointed king, I am this day tender, I am subject to certain restraints. I cannot visit with judgment at the moment those who so richly deserve it. My sovereignty must be exercised in another direction".

Will you observe that *David was tender though anointed king*. He did not use his power to visit vengeance

upon his enemy. Rather, it pleased him to show mercy to the transgressor, and to be patient with those who had lifted up their hands against him. Abner had been among his chief opponents. He was a great soldier. Abner was a match for Joab on the field of battle any day. He was every inch a general, upon whom Saul had leaned, and who had been feared by all whom he opposed. But now that the light had come to him, he had laid his sword at David's feet and said, "As the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him." David had blotted out the record. He said, "So be it, Abner; I will forgive you for all you have done against me. I am glad you have come, and I am glad that you have decided to cast in your lot with the Lord's anointed." He cordially welcomed him.

That is the attitude of our Anointed King. Though it be true that all authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth, that authority over all flesh has been given Him, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him, how He delights to welcome even His most vigorous enemies, those who have fought most fiercely against him. The very chief of sinners may be sure of finding mercy at His hand.

But that was not all. The Lord does not forgive reluctantly, He does not meet out His grace to us sparingly. We read of the "exceeding riches of His grace". Bunyan spoke of "grace abounding" because the Scripture so speaks. David did not say to Abner, "I will put you on probation. I will watch you for a while, and if you turn out satisfactorily I will receive you into full confidence." No! No! He made a great feast for him. He not only blotted out his sin, but he loaded him with benefits, and set him at his own table, and royally entertained him.

That is the story of the prodigal son, is it not? It is the same great truth,—Abner coming back saying, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son"—and his protestations are smothered and silenced in grace as his father breaks in on his carefully prepared speech by saying, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." The rebel's repentance and return led the king to celebrate his conversion by a great feast.

I wish I could show you—may I reverently say it—how happy it would make my Lord Jesus if only you would come to Him. It would minister joy to the heart of God, to the heart of "great David's greater Son", if Abner would only lay down his sword and swear allegiance to the King.

I saw a group-picture only yesterday of the King's generals during the Great War. I recognized most of the faces, two of which interested me particularly, those of General Smuts and General Botha. They fought against the King in the South African war, but were subdued, and they surrendered. They became two of His Majesty's most loyal servants, and his most trusted advisers; and the picture showed them in the King's uniform, as having commanded his armies in the Great War. As I looked at it I said, That is a little like the gospel. I have read of one who was commander of the forces of darkness, who persecuted the church of Christ, who consented to the death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. But he who had been the chief of sinners became the chiefest of all the apostles.

There is no barrier to the progress of a forgiven sinner in the service of the King. To what unimagined heights of usefulness and honour may one attain who will only surrender to the royal sceptre! We may be envied even of angels for the rank we may hold.

Yet I remind you *there is a grave danger lurking in the distance*. Joab is at large, and there remains the possibility that Joab may interfere with the King's programme of mercy. Though the King is ready to forgive Abner, Joab will not allow him to be forgiven, if he can prevent it. The spiritual Joab has determined upon the destruction of every one of us. It was a sad day for Abner when he left the presence of David: he never came back again. Joab stepped between. The spirit of Joab is still abroad. There is one who, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. There is one who is spoken of as "the god of this world", "the prince of the power of the air", the "spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." What terrible destruction he accomplishes! Oh, the Abners who welter in their blood because of his murderous hatred, who might otherwise have been saved! Look abroad upon the world to-day, the countless men and women whose lives are ruined, blighted, and blasted, because of Joab. "I am this day weak", said David, "though anointed king: and these men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me."

Observe also that *David disclaimed all responsibility for the death of Abner*. Abner died. There he is, crimsoned with his own blood, murdered in the way. David summoned all the people and said, "I did not do it. I call you to witness that his blood is not upon my head. I forgave him. I was willing to save him, and to promote him to high honour." He bowed his head, and followed the bier; and it is said, "All the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner."

Notwithstanding the clemency of the King, notwithstanding His gracious disposition, men do die in their sin. Yet the Word of God says that He willet not the death of the wicked. If men will be damned when they die, it is not God's fault. David lifted up his eyes to heaven, tears streamed down the royal cheeks as he mourned and lamented, and said, "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou."

So careful was he to let all Israel know that he had no complicity with this crime that he summoned all the people, and wept before them.

You remember Another Who wept when He beheld the city, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as

a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." But He gave even better evidence than that of His love and grace: He went to the cross. He took our sins upon Him; He died in our room and stead. The witness of the cross at the place called Calvary is to this effect, that it is not of the King that any Abner should die. Slain by their own sin, men die, if die they will, only as fools die.

## II.

Here was A RAMPANT WICKEDNESS: "These men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me." David was a king, but strangely, he was subject to restraint; and as yet he could not visit his enemies with judgment. He said, "They are too much for me." Ah, there are times, dear friends, when it looks as though Joab were too much for our Jesus. There are times when it looks as though the forces of darkness and of evil were superior to the forces of light and of good. Look upon the world to-day, and you can almost imagine our Lord crying, "These men, the sons of Zeruah, are too hard for Me." It is a world that lieth in the wicked one, where wickedness is rampant, and where the devil seems to be having all his own way. That is the picture.

*It was historically true that at least three had fallen by the hand of Joab, whom David would have forgiven.* Abner was one. But there was another. You remember this same David crying out of the bitterness of his soul, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" When they went out to battle, to subdue the rebel, David called his commanders before him and said, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom." But it was this same Joab who took that deadly dart and drove it to Absalom's heart even as he was suspended by his beautiful hair from the branches of the oak.

And there was yet another, Amasa. He too was a valiant man, but his blood—the blood of war—was shed in peace; and the blood of all three whom David would have forgiven was upon Joab. He stood in the way, and frustrated the king's mercy.

Alas! alas! it is true to-day, that men, in spite of the cross, in spite of all the provisions of grace, die in their sin. The Abners, and Absaloms, and Amasas, are wickedly slain, notwithstanding the King's grace. Therefore we do well to remember that it is dangerous to leave the presence of the King, for Joab is abroad, and that spiritual Joab has been a murderer from the beginning.

I call your attention to the fact that *Joab had considerable influence even with David's loyal subjects*. Sometimes it may be rather difficult for David, not only because of the Absaloms and the Abners: even those who were loyal at heart to David were subject, in some measure, to the influence of Joab. It was to Peter the Lord Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan". It was to Peter He said, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." You are not immune to his influence, even as you are not ignorant of his devices. He will trouble you, as he troubles me. I never come into this pulpit that he does not assail me. I never seek to prepare to come, that he does not annoy me—I never leave it, that he does not harry me. There is a Joab with whom we all have to deal. He is mightier than you or I. There are those who speak evil of dignitaries: they do not fear so to do. This Joab is one of great power.

Joab exercised a tremendous influence over thousands who followed him, and David said, "I am this day tender, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah be too hard for me." The power of evil is too much for you, and too much for me. I read of the devil contending with an archangel over the body of Moses, and it is written, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Even an archangel—may I say it without irreverence—was afraid of the devil. But the devil was not half as anxious to secure the body of Moses as he is to secure the soul of the humblest person in this congregation. Whenever the gospel is preached, and whenever the King's message of amnesty is proclaimed, there is always a Joab ready to prevent the consummation of His purpose of grace, so far as it is possible. If you and I could know the powers of evil that wrestle for the possession of human souls whenever the gospel is preached, we should fear to speak the word without wearing the divine panoply, and being clothed with divine power.

### III.

But there is A JUSTICE THAT IS AT ONCE REGNANT AND INEXORABLE. David said, "I cannot curb Joab's wrath now, but the day shall come when the Lord will reward him for his iniquity."

*Justice in this world is often silent.* The earth is full of injustice. You can see it on every hand. Some people profess to believe in the "brotherhood of man". I must sadly confess that I have not discovered it. There was a day when men ate each other. There is another kind of cannibalism abroad to-day. The earth is full of cruelty. You do not need to go to Abyssinia to find it. You do not need to wait until the war-drums beat. I could never understand the mentality of those who believed the League of Nations could prevent war. I predicted its failure at the time of its appointment. Nor do I think much discernment was necessary to enable one to foresee its failure. You cannot tame bloody, blood-thirsty human nature. Human nature is as cruel as the grave.

I say, the earth is full of inequalities, full of injustices, full of wrongs that need to be righted, and it seems sometimes as though God had ceased to be, it really does. I do not wonder that the Psalmist cried long ago, "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" Or again, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?" Thus we wonder, will He never rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might flow down at His presence? Oh, yes! Saith He, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." In this confidence David rested, saying, "I cannot do anything now. The sons of Zeruah be too hard for me. But the day of judgment is coming. Joab will reap the reward of his deeds."

The day did come when at last Joab threw off the mask and revealed what he was; and when he heard that judgment was on his track he went into the temple and laid hold upon the altar and said, "They cannot kill me here; I shall be safe here." But he came to the altar too late;

King Solomon commanded that he be slain. The man who had been so cruel and merciless, at last, in the temple of the Lord, holding on to the altar, unrepentant, but terrified at the prospect of judgment, received the due reward of his deeds.

The wicked do not go unpunished. Judgment falls at last. Sometimes it seems as though judgment were long delayed, but it will come. Mockers, walking after their own lusts have arisen saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But it is because of His tenderness and grace that He delays: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." As though he would say, "I will be tender but a little longer. I will withhold the thunderbolts a little while, to give everyone space to repent."

Because that is so, mockers have come. The Lord Jesus said, "I will come again." There are many who say He will not come. But He will! "But He is a long time coming." Ah, but when He comes it will be the end of grace. I have said to you again and again, I do not believe in the modern teaching, even of some who believe God's Word, that subsequent to the second personal coming of Christ, there will be a period of grace when millions will be saved. If that were so, I should think He would hasten His coming. What saith the Scripture of His delay? "He is longsuffering", and knows that when He does come it will be the end of all opportunity to repent. We are admonished to "account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation". It is my profound conviction that the period of grace, the dispensation of grace, the time when a man may repent and receive forgiveness of his sin, will be absolutely, forever, ended, with the coming of Christ. Otherwise, why as the Holy Ghost, saith, by Peter, would He delay His coming and give men space to repent?

Do not forget: He will come to judgment, "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Do not trust to any chance, nor cherish a hope of being saved after Jesus Christ comes. The reason of delay is because He knows His coming will forever terminate all opportunity for salvation. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

When a young boy embarks upon a career of crime, it is a great pity if he is not discovered at once. Some have begun, and have learned very early that the way of the transgressor is hard. Some, like Abner, have succeeded once, or twice, or perhaps three times—and in some cases many years of evil-doing have gone undiscovered. They have thought it to be profitable, and "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." But judgment comes at last! Justice is inexorable. It will come at last. Some day God will open His books.

I read some years ago something I do not understand, and cannot explain. It was in a radio magazine. I cannot vouch for its accuracy. Someone turned the dial of his radio one evening, and listened to a programme with which he was impressed. He listened carefully, and discovered that the programme was two years out of date. It had been broadcast two years before, a freak recep-

tion. Do you know what space is? Do you know how far the radio waves reach? Do you know where the programmes to which you listen, end? Who knows but that they never end! Somehow that programme came back again after drifting around through space, nobody knows where, two years. For "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Nothing is lost, my dear friend. The record is perfectly kept, and sooner or later we shall have to face that which we have written.

There is only one way by which we may escape the consequences of our sins, and that is through the cross. There "he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him". What a blessing it is that the King is yet tender! How thankful we ought to be that we still live in a day of grace! Will those of you who are Christians rejoice in that fact? Let your hearts go up in praise and thanksgiving to God that grace still much more abounds where sin abounds.

As for you who have not received Christ, will you receive Him to-night? Will you come, like Abner, and lay your sword at His feet? And then, unlike Abner, will you say to the King, "I am afraid to leave Thy presence. Joab waits outside. May I remain?" If we abide in Him, and He in us, the Stronger than the strong man armed shall take from our enemy his armour, and spoil his goods. There is no hope for any one of us but in Christ. May we find this evening salvation in Him.

Let us pray:

O Lord, we thank Thee that the door of mercy is still open, and that Thou art calling us, bidding us come. If there should be any here this evening who have not yet received Christ, make them afraid to go out of this building without Him; for this spiritual Joab is lurking in the darkness outside. O Lord, shut us in with Thyself to-night. Let not an unsaved man or woman go out of this house of Thine without that salvation which is Thy free gift, even the gift of God which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. We ask it in His name, Amen.

## THE DANGERS OF DISARMAMENT

An Address by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered before the Eighth Annual Convention of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Afternoon, October 24th, 1935.

(Stenographically Reported)

Mr. Chairman and Christian Friends:

It is a mere commonplace to remark that history repeats itself. But, like all other sayings which are proverbial, that saying has become proverbial because, at its heart, it has an unchanging truth. The externals of life, as Dr. Houghton suggested last night indirectly, may change; but the underlying principles are abiding. The old-fashioned buggy with two young people in it, to which he referred, and the motor-car that has taken its place, will be recognized by all as having at least one thing common to both: that is, the passengers! That one thing that is common to both inheres in human nature.

The fact is, human nature, notwithstanding all that our evolutionary friends contend, does not change. I have often said if there be anything of truth in the evolutionary hypothesis—and it may be well to mention

it on Thanksgiving Day—one thing for which we ought all to be profoundly thankful is that we did not arrive here any earlier! It is bad enough now—I do not know what it must have been like before if evolution be true.

Because that is true of human nature, I shall refer you to two historical passages this afternoon. There are in these historical portions of the Word of God, not merely chronicles of historical events; there is a philosophy of history. I venture the assertion that the historical portions of the Old Testament, properly understood, and interpreted in the light of the New Testament, are as full of the gospel as the historical portions of the New Testament.

I shall read as the basis for my remarks this afternoon two passages: First of Samuel, chapter thirteen, verses nineteen to twenty-two:

"Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan"—a process of disarmament had been carried on—"but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found."

I shall read again in the First of Kings, chapter twenty-four, verses thirteen to sixteen:

"And he (Nebuchadnezzar) carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon."

### I.

Those two historical chapters show us HOW THE ENEMIES OF GOD DISARM AND DISQUALIFY GOD'S PEOPLE. When the raiding Philistines invaded the land of Israel they found there certain craftsmen, artificers in brass and iron, men qualified to make implements of husbandry and weapons of war. Israel had her smithies where these implements were made, but the Philistines destroyed them all, and carried away the craftsmen into their own land; for they said, "If we do not, they will use these places to make swords and spears. We will not only disarm them, but we will so order things that it shall be impossible for them to rearm." So it came to pass that "there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel."

Some time ago I met an Israelite by the name of Smith—but this is a different kind of smith. When the day of battle came, the people of Israel were like the Ethiopians are just now: they were wholly unarmed, and unfit for the battle. Years later, when Israel had long been an established kingdom, after indeed the disruption and the division of the kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem, and what was his method of despoilment? He despoiled the house of the Lord; he took away all the vessels of gold, in order

that he might destroy the worship of Jehovah. Then he selected the princes and the mighty men, and bound them with chains, and carried them away. He especially searched out the craftsmen, and the smiths who were skilled in all kinds of artistry—and carried them away.

Whom did he leave? "None remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land." They were unskilled, untrained; and there was no one to train them, no one to teach them, no one to defend them.

In that story there is a principle. That is how our adversary has always proceeded in the work of disarming and disqualifying God's people for the tasks before them. It is not always a gracious thing to say, "I told you so." But sometimes it may lend authority to one's message to show that the quality of certain principles have been discerned in advance of their full and complete development. I was interested recently in receiving from London an extended quotation from one of my sermons, appearing in a letter in *The Morning Post*, one of the big London dailies. The Editor, in his article, had taken Sir Norman Angel to task, telling him and other pacifists of his ilk, that they were responsible for Britain's present position. The letter containing the quotation was sent and published because we had before said the very things contained in *The Morning Post's* editorial. In this place we have ventured to say for many years that pacifism, whether it be in religion or politics, spells, philosophically, sheer anarchy. Pacifists like Sir Norman Angel, and even a man like Lord Cecil, the great advocate of peace—and we are all advocates of peace, I trust—men of that sort ought really to be confined in some sort of asylum, for the good of their country. The principles of pacifism, applied anywhere, are utterly impracticable. While human nature remains what it is, to the end of the chapter, until we have a regenerated society—which can be only when we have a society of regenerated individuals—until that time, war will always be possible; and, in certain circumstances, ultimately inevitable.

Look at the position of Britain to-day. How amazing it is that the men who have prated about peace should be themselves now clamouring for war, and demanding that Britain do the impossible—that which is impossible because they themselves have created a public opinion which has compelled a measure of disarmament. If they had had all their own way, Britain would now be at the mercy of the wolves. Frankly, I find it hard to be even tolerant of men like Ramsay Macdonald, and other men of that sort, time-serving politicians who have stripped the Empire of its defense; and who, if they had been permitted to have their own way wholly, would have left us in this critical hour at the mercy of all the predatory powers of earth. I am glad to see that Mr. Stanley Baldwin, the present Prime Minister, has admitted that the British Government, actuated by the noblest of motives, no doubt, have yet pursued for ten years or more an utterly suicidal policy. That policy of disarmament has been, I believe, against the better judgment of many of Britain's statesmen, but has been compelled by a public opinion which is but a people's hopeful acquiescence in the fallacious doctrines of pacifism, which have found hospitality in the minds of some people only because of their mental and emotional reaction from the horrors and personal bereavements of

an unprecedentedly devastating war. Mr. Baldwin has dissolved Parliament, and is now appealing to Britain, saying, "You will authorize me to rearm as rapidly as possible, or otherwise I will not accept the responsibility of government." The only one of the great powers who has the will to accept the responsibilities of its position, and at the cost of blood and treasure to maintain the world's peace, has been disarmed to the point of danger, rendering it hazardous to exercise such restraint upon predatory powers as her moral judgment dictates.

We have the same situation in the church of Christ to-day. What has the enemy done? Do you not know that you Evangelicals—I do not like the term, Fundamentalist. I am coming almost to avoid it; because it has in some quarters become identified with every form of religious extravagance. All the cranks, and the *ultras* of every sort that have divorced the emotions from the intelligence, call themselves Fundamentalists. Have the name if you like, I am not a Fundamentalist of that order. I am happy to be called a Fundamentalist when the name is defined as identical with Evangelical sanity. The religion of Christ is for the whole man. Notwithstanding, do you Evangelicals who are left know who you are? Let me tell you: "None remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land." The enemy has taken the princes. Oh, yes! Most of the people who have money are in the enemy's camp. "All the princes, and all the mighty men of valour", have been taken captive. Someone said to me the other day—do not be offended; I suppose he meant it for a compliment—"How do you content yourself, preaching to people of the mental calibre of your church now?" I replied, "My dear fellow, I have more biblical intelligence in one pew to-day than I used to have in the whole church."

What did the enemy do? They carried away "the craftsmen and smiths". Do you realize that Modernism is primarily an educational movement? Long before it appeared in the pulpit, it was busy in the classroom. The devil said, "I will get the high-schools, the colleges, and the universities—all the institutions that exist for the training of the minds of men—in my clutches. I will inject my poison there. I will strip these people, these evangelical organizations, of educated people." It is a fact that the enemy has taken our smithies: practically all the colleges and universities belong to the Philistines. That is no exaggeration.

What did he do in our Canadian Baptist denomination? If there are representatives of the press here, put this in the headlines to-morrow. The Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec is just now meeting in Windsor. A man who was an honoured member of this church, and by whose munificence this building was erected sixty years ago, left the product of his life's energies for the formation of a university which was to be a "Christian" school of learning, first, Toronto Baptist College—not Seminary—later merged into McMaster University. The foundation of the whole institution was the Bible. The same Articles of Faith that were written into the Trust Deed of this church, were written into the Trust Deed of McMaster University. What have we to-day? This modern Nebuchadnezzar—I mean the old devil in the form of flesh and blood—has taken McMaster University captive. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the educational authorities of the Baptist Convention

of Ontario and Quebec are just as guilty of theft, of robbery with violence, as any convict in Kingston penitentiary, confined there for robbing a bank. They are deliberately prostituting the McMaster Estate of more than a million dollars to the work of training men under the influence of teachers who say the Bible is not true, and that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He did not die to expiate our sins.

In Nova Scotia they have recently had a case in the courts. Into that case professors from Acadia University were brought to give evidence. I shall not go into that, but refer to it in order to say this: there is found no smith, no blacksmith shop, in our Israel to-day. There is no place where weapons of war and Evangelical implements of husbandry for the carrying on of God's work can be made. There is not a school in the Dominion of Canada, under Baptist auspices or under the auspices of any denomination, except the Baptist Training School in Calgary, and our own Seminary, that does not teach the doctrines of Philistia and Babylon. That is strong language perhaps, but it is true. Our universities are centres of Paganism, and hotbeds of Communism and of every kind of antichristian movement that has been set in operation by religious leaders.

Dr. Houghton told us last night of a denominational leader, an expert in religious education, whose own daughter was compelled to recognize that her father did not know God. That is the situation we have to face everywhere.

## II.

WHAT WAS THE RESULT IN ISRAEL? In the day of battle there was no one who had arms, except Saul and Jonathan—and they had their arms made before the smiths were taken out of the land. Here and there you will find a few Sauls and Jonathans, a few trained men in the camp of Israel, and here and there a file, some institution that attempts superficially to sharpen the coulters, the forks, the axes, and the goads. But the best they can do is to sharpen something that has been made somewhere else. There is no real smith in Israel.

That was the complaint in Deborah's day. When Deborah, the mother in Israel, rose, she asked the question in that matchless song of hers, "They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?" They were wholly disarmed, unprepared for the fray. Miss Stacey gave you some indication in her address of what our missionaries meet on the foreign field, even in Liberia. The people there are not trained to a very high degree intellectually, but our missionaries meet all the *isms* that we are familiar with here. We are endeavouring to fortify our students for work at home and abroad, not by the study of comparative religions in the sense in which that term is understood in many theological institutions to-day, which means the study of all religions with a view to selecting the best of each, of which to make a composite as a substitute for Christianity. Our students are taught wherein these cults that bear the Christian name differ from Evangelical Christianity. They are taught to recognize a Philistine when they see him, even though he wear an Israelitish dress. That word from Miss Stacey suggests the importance, even in the most benighted districts, of having workers who are thoroughly trained and disciplined.

Have you considered why these *isms* have spread so rapidly? I was laid aside last Sunday, not seriously—I came downstairs too quickly. Out of curiosity to-day I counted the steps, and found there are thirteen—and I wondered if there could be anything after all in that number! But it gave me the opportunity of listening to the radio, and I felt more and more the necessity for a trained ministry.

I am thankful to say that when the Oxford Group Movement came our way it did not "take". It went over the Regular Baptists without "taking" at all. Why? Instantly they recognized the unscripturalness of it. What people need is to be inoculated with what Spurgeon used to call, *Bibline*; they need to be so saturated with Scripture that these heresies will not take. But if our people are so to be trained, we must have disciplined minds in the pulpit. I do not mean, merely, people who can quote Scripture. "But is not that a good thing?" someone asks. Yes; it is. I once voted in a council that refused to ordain a certain man, yet I never heard so much scripture quoted by any candidate for ordination in my life as that candidate quoted. But he did not know what it meant. If he were asked a question he would throw back a verse of Scripture. But it was only a trick of the memory. Obviously he did not understand the Scriptures he quoted. Such an one can be a Pentecostalist, a Christian Scientist, an Oxford Groupist, a Russellite, a Modernist, and a Fundamentalist, all at the same time—and not know it!

We have to-day forms of religion that are divorced from intellect altogether; there is no logic whatever in their makeup. A man will thunder with the authority of an oracle, and within five or ten minutes make a dozen statements, each of which contradicts the other eleven,—and all this while the simple people shout "Amen". I am weary of it all. Between absolute ignorance and oracular infallibility, among certain classes of Fundamentalists, all that is needed is three months with a Scofield Bible. Thinking they know everything, they know nothing. We need a corrective for the crass religious ignorance of the day.

If Toronto Baptist Seminary stands for anything, it stands for the making of weapons of war and implements of husbandry. It exists to teach ministers and missionaries how to defend themselves against error, how to defend their people against the encroachments of the enemy, how to teach their people to distinguish between things that differ, how to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good". To-day we are very much like they were in Saul's day: they had to go down to Philistia to sharpen their weapons. They could not make a spear or sword in all Israel, for there were no craftsmen. They were dependent upon the grace of their enemies if they would arm themselves against their enemies!

Do you suppose Ethiopia would trust Italy to make her arms? What sort of shells would she get? If we send our young men to institutions in the hands of religious Philistia and Babylon, what sort of ministers and missionaries will they produce? Better an Israelitish file than a Babylonian smith. If you cannot do better, use the file. A student trained by a godly minister, even though he has little learning but who knows Christ and His gospel, will be likely to be vastly more effective as a minister, than one trained in the colleges of Philistia or Babylon.

Someone may say, "I do not agree with you." An ignorant woman went out of this church some years ago

in high dudgeon when she found there was a Seminary attached to it. She said, "What we need is the Holy Ghost." We do. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." We need the power of the Holy Spirit to use any weapon. Study your Bible, and you will find the Word of God places no premium upon ignorance: it never did. When the Lord would give to the world the New Testament, the greater part of it was written by a man of great natural powers intellectually, but whose powers were trained and disciplined to the highest degree; so much so that even his enemies said, "Much learning doth make thee mad." I know they said that Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men": nobody ever said that of Paul. I know that David slew Goliath with sling and stone once, but search the Scripture, and though he was a man of war "from his youth up", you will find he never used that sling and stone again. It is true that God, in sovereign grace, can and does use men who know very little, if that little be consecrated to His service. But when that little is consecrated, that man will immediately endeavour to develop all his powers, so that he may be a more fitting instrument for the Lord to use.

Christmas Evans once spoke in Pontypool College. He was a great preacher in Welsh, but decidedly Welshy. On this occasion he had but a few minutes, and he told the students a story to this effect: One day I went into a shop (they do not call them stores in Wales), and I bought a razor. The salesman said, "It is a good razor: see how nice it looks." Oh, it did shine! It did shine! I took it home, and by and by tried to shave. It did shine—but it would not cut. Now students, said he, see to it that you shine, get all the polish and culture possible; but do not lose your edge.

You cannot sharpen a razor with a file. It is well that people should be thoroughly trained. That is what we are endeavouring to do in the Seminary. We are trying to prepare men so that they will know the Book, and know how to use the Book.

Let me read just this word of Agur the son of Jakeh, which I think represents the attitude of the Faculty, and of Toronto Baptist Seminary in general: "Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal and take the name of my God in vain." That is the ideal for an educational institution, neither poverty nor riches. If you give an educational institution riches, it will be likely to follow the example of the young man of whom we read in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, who said to his father, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living"—he *endowed* the boy—"and not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country." There is not an endowed institution in America that has not taken its journey into the far country.

That young man did not come home until he had lost his endowment. What a blessing it would be to many an educational institution if it could but have a fire—something that would bring it back on its knees before God. When they become rich they deny the Lord, saying, "Who is the Lord?" When they become poor, there is a tendency to do things that are, well, not very wise. The Seminary prays for the happy medium, "Neither poverty nor riches."

Will you remember the Seminary? Will you remember the Seminary in your will? In your will! I said, in your *will!* In *your* will! Have you made one? I hope you will live a long time, but make your will anyhow; and when you do, remember the Seminary. And to place identification beyond all possibility of doubt, specify, "For Toronto Baptist Seminary, associated with Jarvis Street Baptist Church." We are sufficiently famous—or notorious—thus to establish its identity. Remember the Seminary in your will—but remember it now as well. Do not wait until you die—if you do, the Seminary may die first.

I am grateful to the friends who conceived and carried through the plan for caring for the Seminary deficit in connection with the celebration of my Silver Jubilee as Pastor of this church last Spring. But that fund, while it has almost reached its objective, was to take care of a deficit, and made no provision for current expenses. The expenses of the Seminary are like your electric light bill: before you pay one, another is accumulating. It will do no good to go to the company and say, "I got this bill this morning. What does it mean? I paid you last month." "Perhaps you did, but you have gone right on using current, have you not?"

So far as I know, there is only one institution of this sort in the Dominion of Canada to-day. There is an advantage in a denominational institution. Other institutions are sound theologically, but in the very nature of the case only a denominational institution can teach the principles that are distinctively held by that denomination. I believe that one of the great heresies of the day is not in the theological, but in the ecclesiastical realm. There are people who are sound enough in respect to the great principles of the gospel, who know nothing about the local church, its polity, its ministry, its offices. It is all in the New Testament, but it is passed over because there are Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans—all denominations—in training; and therefore little or nothing is said about these things. Toronto Baptist Seminary is a Baptist Institution. We make no apology for it: we are here to propagate the principles for which Baptists have historically stood. I am a Baptist, and unashamed. I am not a new-fashioned Baptist, but the sort of Baptist Andrew Fuller and Spurgeon were. We do not want anything new; but rather, to revive the old, and to restore the things for which our fathers bled and died. We desire the re-establishment of Baptist churches that will stand for the great verities of the faith, and toward this end we are training young men. Those who spoke this afternoon were good samples—and not bad to look at! But do not tell them I said so! Thank God! there are a few princes left, and some of the mighty. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever." The Lord will give us some princes—He has done so already.

And by the way—REMEMBER TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY IN YOUR WILL!

A REPORT  
of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Union of  
Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec  
will be published  
NEXT WEEK



## SANCTIONS

## The Valley of Decision

By the REV. JOHN KENNEDY, B.D., Ph.D.

(From *The British Weekly*, London, October 17, 1935)

The question of the hour for Christian men and women in this Italo-Abyssinian dispute is what attitude they are to take up to the application of sanctions by the League of Nations. There are some who believe that sanctions involving the use of force are anti-Christian. There are others who believe that the application of sanctions, even to the extent of using force, is the only way in which we can secure competent international authority over the anti-social actions of individual nations. National force must be controlled by international force if wars such as the world has known in the past are to be eliminated from the earth. The kind of war in which they would fight is a war in which the League of Nations vindicates its authority by the use of force. The alternative to such a controlling authority, they believe, is international anarchy.

The Pacifists, as we may call them, believe also in this controlling authority, but they believe it should be exercised through moral suasion only. They do not believe in the use of force to make this authority effective. Force is anti-Christian and its logical outcome in the hands of nations to-day is the indiscriminate bombing of men, women and children and all the other horrors of modern warfare. These deeds are so horrible that they cannot be thought of as acts of Christian policy, and the only Christian attitude to them is to suffer them to be done to us rather than suffer ourselves to do them to others.

## I.

Here, then, is the great Christian dilemma, surely one of the most piercing and heart-rending ever presented to the soul of man. No wonder we are turning to Christ as never before to see if by precept or example He can give us guidance in this great hour of need.

It seems to me that this guidance is to be sought more in Gethsemane than anywhere else. Here Jesus, in strong agony and tears, debated the Father's will for Him and sought for light in almost unfathomable darkness. If He, with all His moral insight and spiritual intuition, found the problem of God's Will almost beyond His apprehension, it must not be wondered at that we sinful men find ourselves in great darkness and very liable to err. We are entering Gethsemane to-day, and it is in Gethsemane that the light must come if it is to come at all. I think that decisions that have not come out of the crucible of prayer and of utter surrender to God are not likely to be of much use to us in this hour. The step we are taking must be a step taken in great darkness, the fruitful result of agony. Such step, whatever it be, is a Christian step. We may not be sure of where we are going when we take it, but if we take it in the wrong direction, God will surely have compassion and mercy on us if we are sure of where we want to go.

I think it is Christ Himself who compels us to enter Gethsemane, and the passage in the Scriptures where He so compels us I should like to quote in full:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him

have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have been heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: That you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans do the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

## II.

I have quoted this long passage to bring out what seems to me to be the salient feature of it. It refers to the actions which individuals are to adopt in their personal relationships. In individual circumstances the individual has the sole power of action or reaction, and he himself bears the consequences of it. He is acting as an individual and not as a citizen. He would rather suffer personal injustice than adopt the violence of his enemy, believing that such violence is the outcome of a rapacious spirit at variance with the Spirit of God.

At the same time, there does not seem to be in this passage any denial of the necessity of having just institutions for the maintenance of social law and order. The authoritative right of the law-court to deliver judgment is recognized, and the presumption is that the law has the right to use force to make its judgments effective. It is extremely doubtful if Jesus asserted that the use of force for the maintenance of law and order or to enforce just decisions was immoral, or that a citizen, in his capacity as citizen, should not lend countenance to the forceful sanctions of the law. If a man appealed to the law and lost his case, let him curb the spirit of vindictiveness against his triumphant and rapacious enemy, and even lay such a constraint upon his spirit of spite and injury as to give him more than he asked for.

This curbing of the spirit of personal vindictiveness is no denial of the necessity of law and order, but the question emerges for us: Must this spirit of non-aggression and forgiveness in our personal affairs be carried over into a spirit of complete non-aggression in our capacity as citizens against those who would disrupt and destroy the social or international order? Would Jesus sanction the curbing of such an aggressor, be he a criminal person or a criminal nation, by the use of force?

## III.

Here is our Gethsemane. Is force used to secure and maintain an authoritative international order immoral and must the Christian refuse to take part in international sanctions because force is used? "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Does that mean that those who use force for any purpose shall find it wielded for their self-destruction, or does it mean that they that take the sword for their own selfish purposes shall find it wielded for their self-destruction? I would venture to suggest my own answer. I believe that Jesus is here saying that might is not right, and that the use of force as force defeats itself in God's world. I do not believe that He meant that force in itself is immoral. I think He would have distinguished between the sword of the magistrate used for the defence of law and order

and the sword of the oppressor used to hack its way to power by brute force alone. When He disdained the use of Peter's sword for His personal salvation, He did so because the way of personal sacrifice to the Will of God had already been chosen by Him. He was not the leader of a bloody revolution. May we say that He recognized the law and order maintained by the sword of Cæsar and bowed to its authority in His own case, even though He knew that its inevitable outcome, when called in by the perfidious priests and scribes, meant His crucifixion? The crucifixion of Jesus was not the result of Roman justice. It was the result of Roman injustice in His particular case.

#### IV.

If we object to the use of force because it involves war, and war is revolting, let us remember that though war may be revolting to *ourselves*, it may not be revolting *in itself*. It may be the expression of the sacrificial passion of men and women who are prepared to deliver themselves up to its horrors that international justice may be established on the earth. We are all agreed that it is a horror that men should use bombs and poison gas on innocent women and children to secure territory, or for the sake of "glory" or the greed of gain. We may maintain that these things are so horrible that they should not be withstood, or we may maintain that they are so horrible that they must be withstood, and the withstanding of them in the interests of an international control and pacification is a high and holy duty. There are some Christians who say they cannot, under any circumstances, take part in the bombing of women and children. There are others who say that if a whole nation has lent itself as the instrument of an ungodly purpose, it must be checked and made to conform to the common weal of the world, even to the extent of employing these dire depths of horror. There are those who say that the last war was a ghastly failure. There are others who say, with much more truth, I think, that the peace treaty was a ghastly failure. If we were able to distinguish between the spirit in which we took up arms and the spirit in which we made the Treaty of Versailles, we might have a clearer vision of the place of war in the establishment of international righteousness. Men died for righteousness, but was it their use of arms in such a cause that was immoral, or was it the use that was made of their sacrifice that was immoral? What the world needed, and what we still need, is an Abraham Lincoln.

The policy of "sanctions" or the policy of non-resistance, which is Christ's? I do not believe that either is Christ's, for I believe that Christianity is not a policy, but a spirit. It is the spirit of complete surrender to the Father's Will in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. There is no "Christ stereotype" for our actions. There is only the Christ spirit. I believe that as we enter into Gethsemane in the crucial hour the Father's Will is revealed to us. Our nation is entering it now.

We would make a plea for Gethsemane, for religious seriousness, for an utter surrender to God, for agonizing prayer that His will may be known and done by us. A nation whose churches are almost empty, and which has lost the spirit of prayer, has no right to talk of a Christian policy. Let us achieve Christ's spirit, and in that spirit alone step into the darkness. If we go in without God we shall come out without God, and chaos shall descend upon the world.

## REVIEWS

### of

# "OTHER LITTLE SHIPS"

THE WATCHMAN-EXAMINER

New York

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

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

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES

Philadelphia

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

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

THE MOODY MONTHLY

Chicago

"Other Little Ships". By T. T. Shields. 261 pages, 7¼ x 5 inches. Hunter-Rose Company, Toronto. C.H.B.

Sermons of this well known Toronto preacher are now being published weekly in THE GOSPEL WITNESS and some of them are reprinted in *The Christian Herald* of London. The selections made for this particular volume are those which have been repeated from the pulpit and reprinted, and in many instances the supply of copies exhausted. The simple message that gives the volume this title was printed four times, and the sermons entitled, *Is It Nothing to You?* *Eternal Life*, and *The Second Mile*, have likewise been reprinted in various papers, reaching a circulation of hundreds of thousands. The reader will appreciate in all these sermons a devotion to the gospel message and an unusual appeal to and an understanding of human nature.

THE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN

Toronto

"Other Little Ships". By T. T. Shields, D.D., Toronto: Hunter-Rose Co. \$1.50.

Here is a volume that every lover of great preaching will hasten to secure. The author of it has been the storm centre of controversy for years, and many of the fourteen sermons included have no doubt been born in tribulation. A sub-title of the book tells us that they are "freighted with comfort". Many will find solace and strength in the pages of this volume. It takes its title from the first sermon, which is one of the best in the book. It is foolish, however, to make comparisons with such rich, spiritual material before us. Dr. Shields is a great preacher. Of that there can hardly be any question, and here is evangelical preaching at its highest and best.

## Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 46 Fourth Quarter November 17th, 1935

### EATING, DRINKING, AND WORKING

Lesson Text: Proverbs, chapters 23 and 24.

**Golden Text:** "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright."—Proverbs 23:31.

**BIBLE SCHOOL READINGS**—Monday—Deut. 1:9-18; Tuesday—Ps. 146:1-10; Wednesday—Is. 58:1-7; Thursday—Ezek. 33:1-6; Friday—John 6:26-40; Saturday—I. Tim. 6:1-12.

### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The proverbs of this chapter relate to restraint in the presence of the king, the uncertainty of riches, eating with deceitful men, the fool, the fatherless (vs. 1-11); correction of the child, envying sinners, drunkenness and gluttony (vs. 12-21); buying the truth, the strange woman, and winebibbing (vs. 22-35).

The exhortation respecting restraint of appetite may not be needed by all, but it is required by some. Most people eat to live, but there are certain individuals who seem to live to eat. Appetite controls them. The proverb of our lesson relates to eating with a ruler, but the underlying principle is applicable on all occasions. Self-control affects not only the words and deeds, but the appetite. Note the danger of the uncontrolled appetite, physical, moral, spiritual. Riches next receive attention: "Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom"—"for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." Many since these days of depression have come upon us, have discovered the truth of this transitory nature of riches. Once wealthy, they are now poor. Their riches have taken wings, and have flown away. Note the foolishness of labouring for riches, because of their uncertainty, their unsatisfying nature, and the low plane of endeavour implied. We are enjoined not to labour for the meat which perisheth, "But for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (John 6:27); and to lay up treasure in heaven, not on earth (Matt. 6:19-21). The highest form of life is that which is lived for God, the aim of which is to please God; and if riches come to such a life they may be used to the furtherance of the work of God. The dangers of seeking to be rich need careful consideration (I. Tim. 6:9).

Winebibbing is again dealt with in this chapter. Separation from winebibbers is enjoined; the fate of the drunkard is stated; and the sorrows attendant upon partaking of strong drink are described (vs. 20, 21, 29, 35). They are woe, sorrow, contentions, babbling, and redness of eyes. They reel as persons in the midst of the sea, and suffer as one who has been beaten. The drunkard is well described in these words. The evil nature of strong drink requires to be pointed out to young people, and the older ones need again to be reminded of it. Respect for parents receives attention in the words, "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old." Disregard for parents manifests unthankfulness, thoughtlessness, foolishness, and sinfulness. We are taught to honour parents (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3); and such an attitude is pleasing to God, and wise for the individual. He thus gives honour where honour is due, gives evidence of a right spirit, and gains from the experience of those who love him. The truth's value is made clear in the exhortation to "buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding". This implies the necessity for the truth, and its blessedness to the individual. Our Lord is the truth (John 14:6), and every one needs Him. Note the nature of truth, as opposed to error and lies; and its purpose respecting the revelation of God, and the enlightenment of man. Many have given up truth, and live in an atmosphere of lies. We are enjoined to get it, and to hold on to it. These are days when the enemies of truth are specially active; there-

fore we need more than ever to study the revealed Word of Truth, and to give it forth with no uncertain sound. Truth is necessary for life, for salvation, for understanding, for conflict, and for service. How may we live the truth?

### CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The proverbs of this chapter relate to envy, housebuilding, wisdom, the day of adversity (vs. 1-10), neglect of duty, the wicked and the righteous in conflict, rejoicing over a fallen enemy (vs. 11-18), fearing the Lord, justifying the wicked, witnessing against a neighbour, and the slothful person (vs. 19-34).

All proverbs are of interest, and are duly significant; but some claim special attention. Among these, note that relating to envy: "Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them." Their position in life, their wealth, their personality, or their influence, may tempt the spirit of envy. But the remembrance of their character should be sufficient to discourage such a feeling, "for their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief." The only right attitude toward them in their wickedness is that of separation (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1). Note the injunction respecting contentment with godliness (I. Tim. 6:6). Seeking the things which are above is the remedy for earthly envy (Col. 3:1-3). No company should be kept with the evil man; and instead of envying him, he should be pitied, for there is no reward for him, and his candle shall be put out (vs. 19, 20). Observe in the second place the subject of testing: "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." The day of adversity is the time of testing, and if our faith cannot stand at such a time it must be weak indeed. God's grace is sufficient for all trials (2 Cor. 12:9). He does not permit His own to be tested more than they are able to bear (I. Cor. 10:13). Therefore if any fail, it is due to human weakness, and not to lack of divine power. Note the necessity for keeping close to the Lord at all times, and of strengthening faith by more implicit and continuous dependence upon God.

Neglect of duty, with its eternal consequence, may be noted in the third place. If excuses are offered for neglecting to deliver those who are "drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain", we are warned that God takes note of such conduct, and will "render to every man according to his works". Similar warning is found in Ezekiel's prophecy in relation to the watchman (Ezek. 33:1-6). In its present-day application it means that God will hold us responsible for the proclamation of the gospel message of salvation to those who are on the way to destruction. Observe the condition of those outside of Christ (Eph. 2:1-3), and the duty and possibility of all children of God seeking their salvation (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 8:1-4). Paul saw to it that he was clear of the blood of all men (Acts 20:26), and so ought we. When we are tempted to excuse ourselves from the performance of duty, let us remember the awful condition of the lost, and the coming judgment for the saint. In the fourth place we are exhorted not to rejoice over a fallen enemy, or return to him evil for evil (vs. 17, 18, 28, 29). The manifestation of such an evil spirit is displeasing unto God. The Lord has freely forgiven us (Col. 2:13; I. John 1:9); and our duty is to forgive others (Eph. 4:32); even until seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22), and at the same time return good for evil (Matt. 5:44). Our Lord prayed for His enemies (Luke 23:34). Stephen followed His example (Acts 7:60). Paul was willing to be accused for his people, many of whom persecuted him (Rom. 9:3). And the love of God in our hearts will enable us to show the same spirit. Note in the fifth place the slothful man and his work. How may we manifest more of the spirit of Christ?

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# 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 midnight oil. There is somehow the reminder of the old hand pump and not of the easy rush and flow of the spring on the hillside. It is perfect ease and naturalness that is characteristic of Dr. Shields' work. The sermons are like the flow of a mountain river that has reached the valley, in which there is no suggestion of toil, or the faintest hint of exertion, or of exhaustion. It just flows and gives you the impression that it could flow

for ever and know no weariness. The greatest matters of life are presented and discussed with perfect ease. Take the sermon on "The Culture of the Soul", on page 209. It is a profound philosophical discourse, but its sunny ease has a charm like the singing of birds.

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

"I heard Professor George Jackson deliver an address before the Toronto Ministerial Association. The subject was, I think, 'John Morley, the Priest of the Outer Court'. He extolled John Morley, the biographer of Gladstone, he described his blameless character, his wonderfully serviceable life, his amiable disposition and held him up as a kind of superman; being careful to point out that in the production of this character religion had no part; for John Morley was an agnostic. I happened to walk up the street with Dr. Jackson after the meeting and I said, 'Doctor, has it ever occurred to you that Morleyism never yet produced a John Morley, that you cannot find a John Morley 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.

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