

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.

Editor: T. T. SHIELDS

Associate Editor: ALEXANDER THOMSON

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

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

Vol. 14, No. 30

TORONTO, DECEMBER 5, 1935

Whole Number 707

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST—WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE"

A Sermon by Rev. E. E. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 1st, 1935
(Stenographically Reported)

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."—Eph. 3:17-19.

Love is an intangible quality of the heart, which defies analysis. The parent's love for the child may be understood in part by the child, and in part by the parent; but it cannot be measured; it cannot be weighed; it cannot be analyzed—it is beyond our understanding. Even the mother does not precisely know why she loves her child.

This word speaks of an attitude of the heart of God toward men. But it is more than an attitude. There is a surging, a swelling, an outgoing, a yearning of the heart of the Eternal toward a lost and ruined world. We do not understand it, yet we may believe it; we may come to a fuller comprehension of it than we now possess.

There is a young man who thinks of a certain young lady. She may be one of ten down in Devonshire, or she may be the only one in the household; but somehow—and he does not know why—he finds something in his heart going out toward that lady. He thinks about her—and he cannot help thinking about her. And she thinks about him—and neither knows why. They do not understand their affection; they can neither measure nor define it. Least of all do others understand it who are on the outside of the romance. They are going to be married at Christmas time, or in January, or June—therefore you had better mind your own business. They are in love. You are interested. They appreciate your interest as to the happy day, but they do not want your opinion as to whether either is making a wise selection. They are indifferent to your opinion; they will appreciate your discretionary preoccupation with your own affairs.

Is it not strange, this principle being so emphatically and indisputably true, that men are so little interested—

and never at all until enlightened by the Spirit of God—in the most thrilling story in all the annals of romance? The Book, if we properly understand it, is God's love-letter to men. The love of Christ for His church is really, the only case of true love in the world. He is the dauntless Lover Who woos until He wins—wins someone who is entirely opposed to the match. But He is determined to have His bride—and that the marriage shall ultimately be celebrated. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." That is the perfect marriage, of which all other marriages are but faint types. Granted that all marriages have failed—and certainly none of them have been paradise—God is going to present to the world one illustration at least of an absolutely and eternally happy marriage. When Christ, having won His bride, presents her to Himself a holy church, and the wedding day dawns, the world will know what love really is.

The desirable thing is that we all should be called, and should sit down at the marriage of the Lamb: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Some of you have answered the call, and are on the way to glory. You know it, God knows it, the angels know it, friends with whom you regularly consort know it. They know that that which dwells in you is not of man, but of God. They have seen Christ in you.

There are others here who do not belong to this company; and the reason you do not is because you mis-

understand God. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee", said the Psalmist. If you only knew God, you would put your trust in Him. Moody once said that as soon as any man really believes that God loves him, he comes to Christ. If you are outside of Him, you do not believe the love that God has for you.

The message of the evening has to do with God's great love for humankind. We cannot weigh it; nor measure it; nor fully comprehend it. Our text tells us that the love of Christ "passeth knowledge". Yet we may know that which passeth knowledge. You can scoop up some of the ocean, but the ocean "passeth knowledge". You can sail on the surface of the ocean, and keep on sailing for weeks and never see land, but you cannot comprehend it. But there is One Who knows, Who has "measured the waters in the hollow of his hand", and has "set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth". He knows precisely what the ocean is; and we may have some apprehension of it by sailing on it, or living on its shores. Thus though we may not fully comprehend the love of God, we may have a clearer understanding of it than we now possess; and I suggest that we endeavour experimentally to explore this ocean of love.

I can imagine some navigator sailing the sea, and dropping his sounding-line here and there, to find out to a nicety the ocean depth at certain points; then coming to another place and saying, "It is useless to drop the line here; the depth is beyond my knowledge." And yet that man would have some appreciation of the depth that passeth his knowledge by the fact that it is deeper than his longest line. We shall drop our sounding-line, if you will, into this ocean of love and understand it better by the discovery that it passeth all understanding.

I.

Let us first measure this ocean by THE SOUNDING-LINE OF HUMAN FRAILTY AND ENMITY. "While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Over against God's love, God's yearning for lost men, we need to put the attitude of the same man toward his fellow in order to appreciate it. It is lamentably true that the men and women of the world who are frail, weak, poor, who lack initiative, who lack almost everything—are the people who are least considered. Indeed, there are Christian people who will pass them by. Did you ever hear it?—"It is no charity to help that man. If he had more will power, and would bestir himself, it would be better for him. I am tired of going after him. I will waste no more time. I will go after other people who make greater response."

But what if the Saviour of men had so treated us when we were undone, when we were "without strength", when we had no will to serve Him, not the slightest desire to know Him, no power to walk even one step in the path of righteousness, weak and undone, without any knowledge of God—what if God had left us because we were such wretches—what then? He loved us notwithstanding our natural weakness. There is no Christian here to-night who is not deeply aware of the fact that, of himself, he would never have chosen God. If we know Him, it is because God's sovereign, electing, love has chosen us, and sealed us.

We were not only weak, we were not only unable to go Godward: we went with all our powers hellward. We could sin, but not serve. We could love sin, but not

God. We could hate God, but we could not hate sin. We were sold under sin, "without God, and without hope in the world". That was our state when Christ came to save us. The effect of Adam's sin, and of our own, being marked in us before God, He was able to see and accurately to appreciate the degree of our iniquity in His sight.

A father told his boy to drive a nail into a post upon every occasion of his offending against him, and when he pleased him to draw one out. After he had cancelled the list, and drawn the last nail, he came to the father and said, "I have drawn all the nails out, but the scars are there." That is our condition. The sin of yesterday is not past; the sin of last year is not past. It has registered in the individual. It is in the heart. The man is farther away from God because of his persistence in iniquity. Some of you unsaved have resisted the gospel of God's grace scores of times, and because of that you are farther away from God than you were last week. You have persisted in sin; you have continued to sin against God. But the wonder of it is that God loves us in spite of it all.

Dr. John G. Paton, the great missionary to the New Hebrides, told of churches composed of members every one of whom had drunk human blood, and feasted upon human flesh. But "the grace of God that bringeth salvation" had come to them, and their hearts had been changed. God loved them while they feasted upon their enemies; and that grace was sufficient to cleanse them, and set them upon their feet, enabling them to hate the things that formerly they loved, and to love God Whom they had formerly despised and hated.

I once heard a man named Rawei, a Maori, one of the aborigines of New Zealand, a black man who had been educated by an English lady. He passed through this country preaching and lecturing. I heard him tell the story of going to preach at a chapel in New Zealand, a chapel of which the chief of the tribe was pastor. Sunday morning Mr. Rawei went out for a walk about the place, and came upon the chapel, which he had not seen before. He entered, and there found in the middle of the building an immense rock, with the seats built around it. On his return he said to the chief, "I found the chapel, and went in. It is a delightful place, but why have you that ugly rock in the middle of the building?" The chief replied, "In our intertribal wars when we captured prisoners we used to put them to death. When this tribe captured prisoners we sacrificed them on that rock. But the gospel of the grace of God came to us, changed our lives entirely; and we thought it would be a good thing to remember what we were, not to forget that from which we had been saved. Therefore we put that rock in the chapel that it might continually remind us of the love of God in Christ Jesus."

Years ago I saw the picture of a child horribly deformed. It had been blind from birth, and lacked several of the senses ordinarily possessed by human beings. It had had no reason. Yet the parents loved and nursed the child for years. Then the child died, and the picture I saw had been taken after death—horrible beyond description. It makes me shudder even now. But it seemed to me then—it seems to me now—that it was an apt picture of our state by nature. We are horribly marred and marked by the Fall. Adam's iniquity, with all our individual sinning added to it, presents a horrible picture—marred, deformed, befouled, dead, decomposed, a

stench in the nostrils of God. Yet you may go to the foulest of all mankind and say, "Brother, God loves you."

"He saw me ruined by the fall,
Yet loves me notwithstanding all."

How marvellous it is! How wonderful God's attitude toward us—that He provides for the taking away of all our iniquity, and loves us in spite of it.

But if He did not, what chance would there be for any of us? The only reason we are here as saved men and women this evening is because of that deathless, immeasurable, incomprehensible, love of God in Christ that reaches down after us, and continues to love us in spite of our sin.

I heard an evangelist relate how the devil got into him, and stirred him up to believe that his father did not love him as he loved his other son. He resolved to run away, and run away he did. He went to London—rather thinking the father would come after him. Sure enough one day he looked up and saw the father coming, with a big stick which he always carried as he walked. "It is all up now," he said to himself, "I suppose I shall have to meet him." But instead of the "big stick", the father put his arm around the boy's shoulders and said, "Walter, do come home." That broke the boy's heart, and he went home.

That is the way God deals with men. He says, "Whoever you are, do come home." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He saved us: He will save you. If our iniquity has been paid for by the blood of the cross, so has yours. If His grace has abounded toward us, it is extended to you. This very minute, if you will come, you will find His love will reach you, His grace will save you, and you can go out of that door rejoicing in the finished work of Christ—know beyond all doubt that you "have passed from death unto life".

I wish you could know Bob. Bob is a French-Canadian whom I met in Chicago, an elderly man now. He had run long lengths in sin. I met him in a little mission where I preached for a friend, where men congregated—men who seemed to be beyond all hope. Bob was always there, and the leader of the meeting usually called on him to pray. Bob often gave his testimony as well. He had been a dope fiend, a drunkard, and I know not what beside. But Bob had been redeemed; and I have heard him, with an unction manifestly of the Spirit of God, pour out his testimony to that crowd, telling them that when prisons could not help him, when dope and drink cures were of no avail, when the pledge could not save him, and when he was on the brink of the grave and of hell, God in Christ reached down and saved him. His word would be taken in any court in the land. He is cleansed, happy, hopeful, rejoicing in Christ. What a wonderful salvation is this, that God loves us in spite of our iniquities, that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"!

Sometimes we are inclined to draw a line of demarcation which God has never drawn, between those who may be saved and those who may not. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost (completely) that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession

for them." Without any reservation as to the degree of iniquity, the Saviour of men is able to save us.

Notice too that God loves us, not only when we are weak, not only when we are without strength, but when *we are positive enemies of God and His truth*. There was that man on the way to Damascus "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord", his whole being going out in opposition to Christ and His cross. But there "shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." And you remember the sequel, how when Ananias demurred at the command of God to go to him, the Lord said, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." Arrested in his iniquity—not weakness merely, but positive enmity toward God and the cross of Christ—he was transformed by the blood of Christ into one whom God would show "how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." "The carnal mind" is not only *at* enmity with God, but it *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." In our natural state we cannot please God. In our natural state, no man in the history of the world, ever did please God. It cannot be until men are made new creatures in Christ.

This Word says that "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Oh, the marvel of it! When Christ says to us, "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", He simply tells us to pray His own prayer, by His own Spirit. That is possible only as we have the Spirit of God. No man naturally loves his enemies. But when we have the Spirit of that Christ Who prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do", we can pray for our enemies. And not only pray for them, but yearn over them with the yearning born in the soul by the Spirit of God.

Let us learn from Him how to love men. It was love that enabled Him to redeem us, in spite of our sin. "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." In spite of their forsaking him, in spite of their denials, in spite of their weakness, He loved them "unto the end".

II.

But let us measure the love of God by ITS ENABLING POWER IN THE LIVES OF MEN. It may be there is someone here this evening who is being permitted to live for the sole purpose of demonstrating the power of the love of God. You have sat in a room sometimes when suddenly the sunlight broke in. You have wondered, because the sun was on the other side of the house. You examined things a little, and discovered there was a mirror on the wall opposite the window, and the sunlight was being reflected, flooding the room with brightness. There are people in this world whose sole purpose seems to be to reflect the love of God in Christ Jesus. I have seen people who seemed to exhibit no reason why they should continue to exist upon earth. Their lives had been crucified; death had swept the entire family; disaster had followed disaster in their experience; they had had enough sorrow to break ten people down—yet they lived, and smiled. I have wondered why the Lord

did not take such an one to glory—who was denied activity, denied the privilege of going with the gospel story, shut up in some dull house. But nobody could come in touch with that life without thinking of Christ. Nobody could see that countenance without exclaiming, "It baffles description. I know God lives and loves because Mrs. So-and-So is able to endure like that."

If you would know the secret of the martyrs' courage, if you would know why men stood firmly in spite of persecution, if you would know how men could wear shining faces, while hunted in the mountains; how others could, without fear, face caldrons of boiling oil, crucifixion, burning at the stake; if you would know the secret of Smithfield's Martyr Fires, and other persecutions of that day, together with those of modern times—the awful persecution of the thousands who have met death for Christ's sake in Russia—you need only know something of the love of Christ "which passeth knowledge". It is by His love men endure. He enables men to live for Him; and, if necessary, to die for Him.

There is a story of the sainted George Matheson, which I use with reserve, for I am not positive of its historical accuracy. But the story is that he was engaged to a certain lady. The time came when the specialists informed him that his sight was going, and told him that he would ultimately be blind for life. He assumed the lady to whom he was engaged to be married would receive him sympathetically. He went to her and told what the doctors had said. It is said she received the news without apparent shock, and, in effect, said to him, "Of course, Mr. Matheson, you would understand that under the circumstances our engagement must be broken." She could not think of marrying anyone who was to be blind for life. According to this report, it was then George Matheson went home and wrote, inspired by his broken romance and prospect of blindness, that hymn that has brought comfort to countless thousands:

"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

"O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

"O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

"O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

III.

And shall we measure the ocean of His love by THE MEASURING-LINE OF DIVINE SUFFERING. A mother's love, next to the love of God, is the deepest and tenderest, and most enduring, love in the world. When Jesus died, and the disciples had forsaken Him, when Peter had denied him, and while the heavens were clothed in blackness because God, looking upon Him clothed in our iniquity, had forsaken Him, there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother. The mother will go through fire and flood for

her child, and yet the Scripture tells us that even a mother may sometime forget her child, and allow her heart to turn into utter selfishness. Under the strain of hunger and pain, mothers forget even their own children. In the straitness of the sieges in Israel, because of the enemy, the men and women of Israel were reduced to cannibalism. Jeremiah laments this when he says, "The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people." Even a mother's love may be worn out by pain.

But what of the love of God which endured in spite of the agony of Gethsemane when all the iniquity and the sorrow of the world were concentrated in that body? He agonized in travail for the salvation of men, so that blood oozed from the pores of His body and dropped to the ground. What did He endure when, in that darkness, He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What did He suffer?

"None of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord
passed through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost."

And the marvel of it is that He endured the agony, and loved men "unto the end". He laid down His life, and His love was equal to the sacrifice. Oh the wonder of it! Oh that we may come to understand more fully the love of God which gave Jesus to die!

I rather think that we have in the Scripture which I read to you a hint as to the purpose of God in the choice of the time of the crucifixion: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." In this day, God has set Christ forth "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." That is to say, the sacrifice of Calvary covers believing souls both ways—those who believed in Christ prior to His crucifixion, and those who have believed in Him since. It might have been possible for God to put the crucifixion forward indefinitely, and have us preach the gospel to-day of the Saviour Who was to come, instead of the gospel of a Saviour Who has come. God seemingly arranged that He should die for us "while we were yet sinners", in order to commend His love to us; as though He said, "You loveless souls, you folk who do not love me, allow me to demonstrate my love for you, and convince you that I love you by causing my Son to die on Calvary, so that the whole world may know how I love the sons of men." That is the meaning of the text so often quoted, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A Japanese legend tells the story of a certain villager who sought for years to cast a bell that would give a perfect musical sound. But try as he would there was always a flaw. Time after time the bell cracked just as the casting was effected, until, the legend says, the oracle revealed that human blood must be mixed with the metal in order to the obtaining of the master's purpose; and that someone near and dear to him must give his or her life in order that the bell might be saved from cracking, and consequent discord. The daughter of this man overheard the story of the oracle, and resolved, true to the sacrificial life of that strange and intense people, to

make the sacrifice. She waited until again the molten metal was being poured into the mould; then she appeared in their midst, and, with a cry of joy, hurled herself into the molten mass. In a moment her body was consumed; and, lo, the legend says the casting was complete, and the bell rang out with that magic tone which has made the bell of Kioto famous throughout all the world.

Do not carry it too far, but it is truly suggestive of the truth that the gospel bells which ring the music of everlasting life make their melody because there has been the admixture of the precious blood of Christ, because He died, because He died for human sin. There is no gospel apart from that of the Son of God. And the preaching of this gospel—the *preaching* of it—is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

And you unsaved men and women here this evening may receive the word of God into your hearts, respond to it, and be saved. Will you not come? Will you not trust in His love? Will you not be done with sin, and flee from the wrath to come? Will you not make your choice now? I set before you this night a blessing and a curse, life and death. You can have your sins, and go to everlasting punishment; or, you may part with your sins, and be guided by God's counsel, and afterward be received into glory. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, has made atonement for your iniquity. It is by that blood, and that blood alone, that it is possible for even a holy God to “pass over” your sins. God cannot recede from His arrangement. He cannot violate eternal justice. He cannot, if He would, recall His word; and He has said, “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” But He loves you. The great heart of God is yearning over you. He is following you every day. He marks your every step. He is reaching out after you, and longing to save you. “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” He is “not willing that any should perish.” If you will come now, you may have salvation by the blood, the salvation which began before the foundation of the world, and which shall last forever: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

What a salvation! Free as the air. Will you not have it to-night, if you are out of Christ? What will happen if you refuse this gift, if you do despite to the Spirit of God? I cannot dwell on that aspect of the matter this evening, but rather urge upon you the claims of the love of God “which passeth knowledge”.

“O Love of God, how strong and true!
Eternal and yet ever new;
Uncomprehended and unbought,
Beyond all knowledge and all thought.

“O Love of God, how deep and great!
Far deeper than man's deepest hate;
Self-fed, self-kindled like the light,
Changeless, eternal, infinite.

“We read thee best in Him who came
To bear for us the cross of shame,
Sent by the Father from on high,
Our life to live, our death to die.

“O Love of God, our shield and stay
Through all the perils of our way;
Eternal Love, in thee we rest,
For ever safe, for ever blest!”

THE EDITOR TAKES TWO MONTHS' REST

It is so easy for reports, in the course of circulation, to become exaggerated, that one is almost afraid to report the simple fact about any man in a public position, lest the report of it should become enlarged beyond recognition. A year or so ago the Editor of this paper, like every other mortal of whom we ever heard, had a cold, accompanied by a slight cough. That cough was heard over the radio, and a report was set in circulation that the Editor was suffering from a malignant disease of the throat. There never was an infinitesimal element of truth in the report. Notwithstanding, it became necessary to answer letters on the subject from England, India, China, and Africa, as well as from many points on this continent.

We now report that the Editor has been ordered to take a two months' rest, or until the end of January. He fell on the stairs in his own house October 8th, and had a shakeup which seemed quite slight at the time, but which troubled him later. A most thorough examination showed no bones broken. The report of a consultation of doctors reveals every organ of the body in perfect condition, and predicts that the Editor ought to live in full vigour to be about one hundred years of age. We sympathize with those to whom such a report might not be welcome news, if there are any. Notwithstanding, the doctors say that he can do more work in four months than in six, if he takes this time of rest, which he ought to have taken last summer, or other years. He has decided—like a good little boy—to obey the doctors' orders. His own physician recommends such a holiday with a view to the next fifteen or twenty years of one hundred per cent usefulness!

All this goes to show that the Editor is ridiculously young and vigorous; but, like a brand new car just out of the shop, he has to stop at the service-station to lay in a supply of energy.

THE MANAGING EDITOR

During the Editor's absence from the office, THE WITNESS will be under the editorial management of Miss Violet Stoakley. The Editor may, if he gets the inspiration to do so, write an article or two from his resting place; but in that event, the article will be signed. Rev. E. E. Shields, the Editor's brother, will very probably make some editorial contributions, as well as members of the Seminary staff, and others. But in every such case, the articles will be signed either by the full name or initials of the author. But the editorial management of the paper will be entirely in the hands of Miss Stoakley during the Editor's absence.

JARVIS STREET SUPPLY

At the invitation of the Deacons, the Pastor's brother, Rev. E. E. Shields, has consented to supply the pulpit each Sunday until the Pastor's return; and also to teach the Pastor's class Sunday morning, to give an exposition of the lesson at the teachers' conference Monday night, and the Bible lecture each Thursday evening. Mr. Shields' sermons, as preached in Jarvis Street, will appear in THE WITNESS as often as may be convenient to him.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 10

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 51 Fourth Quarter December 22nd, 1935

THE EXCELLENCE OF WISDOM

Lesson Text: Ecclesiastes 7 to 12.

Golden Text: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."—Eccles. 11:9.

Bible School Reading: Eccles. 12:1-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Monday—II Kings 17:16-23; Tuesday—Job 21:17-26; Wednesday—Ps. 71:17-24; Thursday—Mic. 7:17; Friday—Romans 2:1-6; Saturday—II Thess. 1:7-12.

REMEDIES FOR VANITY (7:1-29)

The first part of Ecclesiastes deals with the vanity of all things under the sun; the second part, beginning with chapter six, verse twelve, gives an explanation of that which is man's chief good in life: "For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?" In answer to this, certain remedies are first stated in relation to vanities. These are introduced with a statement respecting a good name (v. 1). Such a name implies character—that which a person is in reality, not mere reputation in the estimation of man. Note the similarity between a good name and precious ointment, in the fragrance of both; and their dissimilarity manifest in the permanence of effect of the good name, and the temporary nature of the ointment's fragrance. Observe also the general blessed results of a good life; the significance of the term, "Anointed One", as applied to Christ; and the advantage of death over life for the child of God (Phil. 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:1-10).

Continuing the thought of the end of life, the blessedness of attending the house of mourning is set over against attendance at the house of feasting. In the former, we are brought face to face with the great realities of life, affecting time and eternity, with beneficial effect in purpose and deed; while in the latter there is apt to be forgetfulness of the things of God. The benefit of listening to the rebuke of the wise is thereafter intimated (vs. 5, 6); after which various observations are made relating to oppression, bribery, patience, self-control, and submission to the will of God (vs. 7-10). The rest of the chapter deals with the subject of wisdom. Wisdom is better than an inheritance (v. 11). It is a defence to those who trust in it; after referring to the unchangeable nature of God's actions, to the day of prosperity, and the day of adversity, and to certain things which he had seen in the days of his vanity relating to the just and the wicked, wherein he advises concerning self-righteousness, wickedness, and the fear of the Lord (vs. 13-18), he informs us that "wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city" (v. 19). Note the source of true wisdom (I Cor. 1:30); also the sinfulness of man (v. 20; Rom. 3:23), the necessity for a reasonable attitude toward others (vs. 21, 22; Matt. 7:12), and the security of upright persons (vs. 23-29). How may we be righteous in God's sight?

COMMENDATION OF WISDOM (8:1-17).

In this chapter praise of true wisdom is continued. Wisdom makes a man's face to shine (v. 1). The face is the index of character, and betrays the inner life of the person. Note our Lord (Matt. 17:2), and Stephen (Acts 6:15). Wisdom performs its duty to the king (vs. 2-5; Rom. 13:1-7), with a special reference to the King of kings. Wisdom leads a man to prepare for judgment, while the foolish person neglects to do so, and suffers the evil consequences thereof. Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation (vs. 5, 6; 2 Cor. 6:2). Death is certain for all; man cannot prevent its coming; therefore the only wise course is to prepare for it (vs. 7-10; Amos 4:12). Note man's frailty and helplessness. Observe also the effect on the wicked of delay in divine judgment (v. 11), the certainty of that judgment (vs. 12, 13), the fact that all do not receive to the fullest extent in this world their just reward (v. 14), God's reason

for seeming delay in judging men (2 Peter 3:9), life under the sun (v. 15), and man's inability to understand God's dealings with men (vs. 16, 17). The certainty of death and judgment requires special attention, together with the necessity of preparing for them. How may we prepare for death and judgment?

DEATH UNIVERSAL UNDER THE SUN (9:1-18)

Continuing with the results of his investigation, Solomon refers to God's knowledge of man, and the fact of death coming to both righteous and wicked. It comes to all ages, classes and conditions. It passes none, and cannot be hindered by man from performing its mission. God alone has power over it (Heb. 5:17). There is hope of repentance for all while living; but after death such hope vanishes (vs. 4-6). As far as this world is concerned, the dead know not anything. Such a statement does not imply extinction of being, or lack of consciousness in the future state. The rich man was conscious of his condition in Hades (Luke 16:19-31), and the dead in Christ are in the presence of their Lord (2 Cor. 5:1-10), a condition far better than their earthly one (Phil. 1:21, 23). Advice is then given to the righteous respecting certain actions of life (vs. 7-10), relating to eating, drinking, clean garments, married life, and hearty service. It should be the endeavour of all to keep their garments clean (Rev. 3:4), and to work to the best advantage while in life, realizing the time is short, and that some day we must give an account of our stewardship (Rom. 14:12). Further observations relate to the uncertainties of life, the greatness of wisdom, with its lack of recognition on the part of men, and the power of folly to destroy good (vs. 11-18). In the service of God one must be willing to be overlooked by the world. How may we be content to labour for God in spite of the world's indifference?

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH IN CONTRAST (10:1-20)

Continuing his observations relating to wisdom, Solomon contrasts the wise person with the foolish one. He shows first of all how a little folly affects the one had in reputation for wisdom; after which he intimates the advantage of wisdom, the unconscious testimony of the fool, wise conduct in the presence of the king, social incongruities, the certain reaping of that which is sown (Gal. 6:7; Esther 7:10), the words of the wise, and the fool, and the consequences of good and evil rulers. Observe the fact that wisdom and folly are manifested consciously and unconsciously in the attitude, conduct, and words of the persons governed thereby. The inner life, or the character of the individual, shows itself in the outward manifestations. Care should therefore be taken to keep the inner life right with God. How may we be guarded from foolish actions?

LIBERALITY ENJOINED (11:1-10)

Using the figure so well known in certain parts of the East, of sowing on the overflow waters which covered the soil, Solomon enjoins all to sow the seed of liberality freely (v. 1). No argument of future evil days of personal need should prevent this (v. 2), and such sowing should continue despite unfavourable circumstances (vs. 3-8). A warning closes the chapter. Note the duty toward the poor (Deut. 15:7-11), the reward of helping others (Matt. 25:34-40), and the warning respecting future judgment (Heb. 9:27). Many are living as if there were neither God nor eternity, and require to be reminded of both. How should the young be taught to live?

REMEMBRANCE OF GOD, AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER (12: 1-14)

In a most interesting and somewhat picturesque manner the necessity for remembering God in youth is emphasized by Solomon (vs. 1-7). God should receive the very best of life, not the dregs. He is also needed throughout life, as well as at death. Note the description of old age in these verses, with its culmination in death. The dust returns to the earth, while the spirit goes to God Who gave it. Observe also the implication of immortality in this last statement. The body goes to dust, but man lives on in eternity. A closing observation is then given in reference to the investigation (vs. 8-12), and the conclusion is stated in relation to the whole matter. In these, note the effect of wise words, and the whole duty of man. God is the Creator and Redeemer of man; therefore He should be feared and obeyed. He should be first in affection, in consideration and plan; and the whole of life's endeavours should be followed out with His purposes in view. Note also the reckoning time, when every work shall be brought into judgment. How may we live with the judgment seat in view?

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

Liberia

Last week we gave news of the Geah-bar Zondo Station of our Mission in West Africa. This week we quote from a letter received from Mrs. H. L. Davey, of the New Cess Station, dated October 10th, 1935.

"Since writing last, Mr. and Mrs. Mellish and Miss Lane have arrived, and are at work again. We had a time finding a corner for them all while passing through. Our accommodations are limited at the best of times, but with the addition of four more, plus torrents of rain, it became somewhat of a problem. . . . As soon as the rain showed signs of stopping, the Mellishes and Mr. Clubine left for Zondo. The streams and rivers were very high, but they arrived safely.

"The Lord is blessing the work, and many come now for the different services. Now the rice is cut the people are coming back in greater numbers than ever. Next Sunday we hope to have a special harvest thanksgiving. Last year our hearts were greatly rejoiced as one by one the people brought their gifts and told us that they no longer trusted in their 'medicines' to give them a good crop, but they were trusting in God. The heaviest rains will soon be over for another year, and we are looking forward to some intensive village work again. This is impossible when every path becomes a river, as it does out here during the rains.

The little ones are recovered from the whooping-cough, for which we praise God. What a time we had, nearly three months' watching. There were many deaths in the villages around through it, but our babies and children were all spared."

London and Nissouri

On Sunday, November 24th, Rev. Robert D. Guthrie, pastor of Briscoe St. Baptist Church, London, preached anniversary services in the East Nissouri Baptist Church, where his friend, Rev. DeLos Scott, the energetic and highly esteemed pastor, is doing a splendid evangelical work for the Lord. While these two pastor friends are only some twenty miles apart, this was the first day of fellowship and service enjoyed together since Mr. Scott assumed the pastorate at East Nissouri.

The weather for the 74th anniversary of the church was ideal. Although the sun had not shone for many days, Sunday, November 24th, was exceptionally bright and clear. It made the Lord's people feel that they were especially favoured by the Lord on the happy occasion.

At the morning service the church was packed to capacity, while a number of extra chairs had to be pressed into service. The Lord was in the midst of His people, and the anniversary speaker enjoyed the liberty of the Spirit as he discussed the subject: "A Good Man in Bad Company".

At the evening service, the seating capacity of the church, including a large number of extra chairs, was taxed long before the time to start the service. At 7.30 the vestibule space was occupied by those who were willing to stand. A number of the members of the church sat on the platform, while another company sat on the baptistery steps. The Enquiry Room was also made use of; although those who resorted thither were out of sight, they could hear the preacher's voice. A great host in the audience was numbered amongst the regular radio listeners of the Briscoe St. Broadcast the third Sunday of each month. All who arrived after 7.30 p.m. could not gain admittance, and had to return home disappointed.

Mr. Guthrie's subject was, "The Trial and Re-trial of Jesus". The great crowd paid rapt attention for one hour while the Lord Jesus was re-tried in the midst, and sinners called upon to reach a personal decision, and present a verdict to the question: "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?" Three precious souls responded to the gospel appeal.

After the service was dismissed, the crowd dispersed, and for half an hour the cars were heard humming, and a stream of car lights was seen going in every direction. It was a day in the courts of the Lord's house, which was better than a thousand.

While Pastor Guthrie ministered at East Nissouri, Rev. E. E. Hooper from St. Catharines occupied his pulpit at

Briscoe Street. He delivered two splendid messages to large congregations. In the evening every available seat in the church was occupied, while some were content to sit on benches in the vestibule. Brother Hooper's first visit to Briscoe Street was greatly appreciated, and just paved the way for another such visit when the occasion arises.

Revival Blessing Continues at Bobcaygeon

Special meetings have been in progress in Bobcaygeon and district for the past eight weeks, during which time the Spirit of God has been abundantly manifest in the salvation of many dead in sin, and in the quickening of believers. A unique feature of the meetings has been the unabated interest manifested on the part of the people and of the whole countryside. Many have been driving from ten to sixteen miles night after night, and some walking six and seven miles to hear the gospel.

During the past week, November 21st to 27th, we have enjoyed the teaching and preaching of Rev. P. B. Loney of Toronto. During this time a good number have taken a definite stand for baptism and church membership. In spite of several nights of inclement weather, the church was well filled nearly every night. The services of Sunday will long be remembered, when before a packed house several put on Christ in baptism, and in response to the appeal at the close of the message, five adults came forward taking Christ as their Saviour; and others for baptism. Following the regular service, the Lord's Supper was observed, when eight new members were added unto the church. The meeting continued until nearly midnight in praise and testimony.

The meetings will continue for another week. Rev. and Mrs. E. Hancox will be with us from November 29th to December 6th, and Rev. Alex. Thomson will preach December 7th and 8th. We solicit the continued prayers of the people of God that the revival fires may spread.

M. B. GILLION, Pastor.

York Road, Guelph

The York Road Baptist Church, Guelph, of which Rev. H. H. Chipchase is Pastor, reports good news, also. "Tonight (December 1st) we had the blessed experience of seeing another soul come out. This makes four during the last month. How we praise God! It was a great service. A number were under conviction. With the one who came out to-night, came one who took her stand after the meeting two weeks ago and who wanted to make her stand a public one. We are enjoying a time of real awakening, and feel that we are on the verge of greater times."

Rejoicing Together

We are full of rejoicing over the news which has come to hand of blessing among the churches, and which we have shared with our readers. But we are sure there are many of our churches from whom we have no word who are likewise receiving blessing from the Lord, and we should like to hear from them also. Let us hear from you soon, and often!

OTHER BOOKS BY DR. T. T. SHIELDS

"CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT".

A Series of Week-Evening Bible Lectures from Genesis to II. Samuel. 50c.

"THE MOST FAMOUS TRIAL OF HISTORY".

A series of sermons preached in Jarvis Street Church, on "The Trial of Jesus". 50c.

THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT ANALYZED.

A booklet of 40 pages. Five cents per single copy, 25 for \$1.00, and 100 for \$3.75.

“What Shall I Give For Christmas?”

The practice of making gifts to friends at Christmas time has become almost universal, and the practice very often involves a problem. We have no doubt that, at this Christmas season, literally millions of money will be spent throughout the world in the purchase of practically useless gifts.

The department stores have offices where people can exchange their Christmas presents. It is no reflection either on the giver or the recipient. It is difficult to know another's possessions, and still more difficult to judge of another's taste.

But a book, providing it is a worthy book, is always in good taste. One can send a book to anyone without embarrassment. But a Christian would like, surely, to make a gift which would be beneficial to the recipient in a spiritual sense. What better, therefore, could you do than present your friends with a copy of “Other Little Ships”? We have heard already of conversions resulting from the perusal of the messages in this book. It is, indeed, doubtful if there is one message in it that has not been used of God to lead great numbers to Christ, and to build up the saints in their most holy faith.

A story book, however good, when read once, is usually laid aside. But such a book as this is likely to be read many times; and may continue to be a source of spiritual blessing in the household for years to come.

NOW PUBLISHED IN ENGLAND

“Other Little Ships” has recently been issued by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London, England; and we have just received to-day a copy of *The Christian* of November 21st, in which “Other Little Ships” is reviewed. The article has also been sent us by friends, with the request that it be published; and we venture to reproduce that review here for the benefit of our readers.

A CANADIAN PREACHER

“It is always a risky thing to compare one man with another, particularly when both are preachers. We have heard Dr. Shields spoken of as ‘the Canadian Spurgeon’. There are some among us even yet who could find no higher compliment than that for any minister of the Word. Consequently, we are a little jealous about its use. With this volume before us, however, we are inclined to confirm and to echo the judgment of those who, seeking to acknowledge the inspired genius of Dr. Shields, accord him such high honour as to class him with ‘the prince of preachers’.

“Other Little Ships” is a selection of sermons preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, the pastorate of which has been Dr. Shields' responsibility for a full quarter-century. Twenty-five years in one pulpit is sufficient time to test any man's ability. On the other hand, that church is indeed fortunate which can retain over so long a period the ministry of a man whose preaching is of such a standard.

“Dr. Shields has a reputation in England as well as in Canada. He is held in high esteem as a fearless leader in the controversy between scriptural supernaturalism and the destructive criticism of materialistic unbelief. He is known as a man with a sword—and that a highly-tempered blade that can be wielded with devastating effect. But this David can sing psalms as well as slay Goliaths. There are some men who cannot engage in defensive witness to God's unchanging truth without sacrificing all gentler qualities of the soul to an unattractive aggressiveness. These pulpit utterances of Dr. Shields plainly show that he is not of their number. The gospel is presented to the sinner in terms of loving appeal, and to the saint with a tender sympathy and understanding which breathe the very winsomeness of heaven.

“The preface of this most welcome volume informs us that the sermons selected have been ‘specially used of God’. We cannot doubt it. And we are confident that, as these messages reach a new and larger circle than they have even yet influenced, they will continue to prove as honey-drops of gospel cheer and consolation.”

WITNESS READERS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

GOSPEL WITNESS readers in Great Britain and Ireland who desire to obtain the book for Christmas should order it of Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 12 Paternoster Bldgs., London, E.C.4. The price is five shillings.

Canadian or American readers may order direct from THE GOSPEL WITNESS office. We print below an order form, offering FOUR COPIES OF “OTHER LITTLE SHIPS” FOR \$5.00 or, one copy and THE GOSPEL WITNESS to new (subscribers) for \$3.00.

An Appropriate Christmas Gift!

“OTHER LITTLE SHIPS”

Perhaps you have four friends to whom you would like to give Dr. Shields' book as a Christmas gift. We are making a special offer of

FOUR COPIES FOR \$5.00

Send your order at once. If so desired, books will be held for Christmas mailing, and sent directly to the recipients, postpaid, enclosing greeting card from the sender.

Single copies at \$1.50 will be treated in the same way.

Or, to new subscribers only, we will send, “Other Little Ships” (\$1.50), and “The Gospel Witness” for one year (\$2.00), both for \$3.00.

Send your orders to “The Gospel Witness”, 130 Gerrard St. E., Toronto.